

socialist
REVIEW

18
**Steel:
Behind the
Picket Lines**

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Deadly Games... Afghanistan a Pawn
Slave owners' join 'Free World'
Oppression in USSR... Pentagon

INDIA

Only a Pawn in Their Game

Our last issue carried a short editorial piece headlined, 'A New Cold War' as a question. The question mark hardly seems appropriate now, after the further raising of US arms spending, the attempts to sabotage the Moscow Olympics, Carrington's tour of the various dictators and slave owners who run the West Asian chunk of the 'free world', Carter's insistence that the US must be 'the most powerful nation on Earth'.

For this reason we make no apology for devoting a sizeable chunk of this issue to the new cold war. In factories and workplaces arguments over it have confronted socialists arguments that have not always been easy to deal with. And so we also make no apology for summarising our main conclusions here.

* Afghanistan has not been the *cause* of the drive towards the new cold war. Henry Kissinger admitted that the country was '80 per cent' under Russian influence long before the day in December when Amin was replaced by Karmal. The blast of propaganda in the West about a 'Russian threat' to Asia is not motivated by the coup in Kabul, but by a desire to justify a *Western build up* of arms that began well before that coup (see Andrew Milner's article).

* The 'revolutionaries' whose governments have succeeded each other in Kabul were not put in power initially by the Russians. They were based on a section of the local middle class that sought to push the country along the road of national independence and capitalist or state capitalist 'modernisation', so that it could overcome its backwardness and be like any other country. They were 'progressive' in the same sense, and only in that sense, as the regime of Nasser in Egypt or Boumediene in Algeria. Their goal meant uprooting age-old forms of oppression, but it also meant imposing new forms of domination and exploitation.

It is a general rule that the more backward (or devastated) a country, and the later the attempt to travel along the road of state capitalist 'modernisation' and economic independence the greater the barriers to success. For those who try it appears that only the crudest and bloodiest repressive measures can break through these. For the mass of people the resulting oppression can be as great as anything they suffered under the old order. Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia provides testimony to what this can mean in extreme instances.

In the modern world 'progressive' national development can bounce back from the barriers to its advance and even force society backwards.

That is why in Afghanistan the Taraki regime fell to the Amin regime, and why the Amin regime lost control of much of the country to the rebels. The efforts of the

urban middle class to uproot the past had reached an impasse. The 'progressive' middle class could break eggs with increased repression, but it could not produce the omelettes which would, in its own terms, justify the viciousness of its measures.

* The rebel movements did not grow up, in the first place, as national liberation movements. They emerged when the Russian presence was still restricted to a relatively small number of 'advisors', *in opposition* to the nationalist, modernising zeal of the middle class in the towns. They were fighting to defend old localised forms of oppression and exploitation. They stood for the semi-feudal land system as against reform, for the traditional subjection of women as against moves to reduce the bride price, for petty local tribalisms as against the creation of a genuine national entity. It was these aims that gave their Islamic ideology its material content.

If comparisons have to be made, they should not be with liberation movements like those fighting against western imperialism in Africa or Latin America, or under attack from a Russian backed regime in Eritrea, but with the reactionary movements based among sections of the peasantry, that opposed the bourgeois revolutions of the West: the peasants of Western France who rose in the Vendee Royalist revolt against the French revolution; or the Carlists peasants of Northern Spain who fought under religious banners against the most minimal attempts to introduce liberal reforms into Spain in the civil wars of the 1830s, the 1870s and 1936. The fact that such movements gained genuine local support, even from the poorer peasants, does not make them into movements for national liberation.

In the case of Afghanistan, the Western powers are seeking to utilise the rebels, not to liberate the country, but to replace Russian by Western domination. The character of the rebel movements will most likely make them easy meat for such manoeuvres.

* The Russian takeover will not break the impasse faced by the regime in Kabul. It will not, in any sense, take Afghanistan forward. In all likelihood it will turn against the regime much of the urban middle class as well as the Muslim tribesmen. It will encourage precisely the clinging to archaic religious beliefs and customs that can be witnessed among the Muslim peoples of the USSR itself (see the article by Victor Haynes). This is shown by the fact that Karmal has already retreated from some of the reforms imposed by his predecessors Taraki and Amin. The Russian presence cannot in any sense solve the problems of the Afghan people. It can only make them worse.

* The motives behind the Russian invasion have nothing to do with a desire to advance 'progress' in Afghanistan. Like the Americans in Vietnam in the mid-sixties, the Russians are out to prove that they can police their own sphere of influence. They were worried by the threats to the regime in Kabul because its downfall would have been a blow to their prestige and made it more difficult for them to control the Czechs, the Poles, the Hungarians, the national minorities inside Russia. One of the aims of the tank movements near the Kyber has been to remind workers in Prague and Budapest and Warsaw and Leningrad of what happened in 1956 and 1968.

* Afghanistan will never begin to be able to escape from the morass of oppression and poverty until it is free from the attentions of *all* imperialist forces. The Russian troops are not going to solve its problems. Neither would the installation of a US-backed 'rebel' regime — it is worth remembering the hundreds of thousands who starved in the famine of the early 1970s, unnoticed by the Western media because there were no Russian tanks to blame.

Even if, by some miracle, the rival imperialisms were to leave Afghanistan alone, the problems facing its peoples would be all but insuperable. The physical resources just do not exist for either capitalism or 'socialism' in one country. They could only be provided by a revolutionary breakthrough on an international scale — whether beginning in Iran and the Arab states to the West, the Indian subcontinent to the South, the Russian state capitalist giant to the North, or for that matter, in the distant heartlands of Western imperialism.

* The future for the peoples of the whole world will be grim if, on each side, they allow themselves to be enveigled into supporting their own ruling class and the bloc to which they belong against rival ruling classes belonging to the other bloc.

We have to do our utmost to resist the pressures in this direction, which means standing up against the attempts to create popular enthusiasm for the new cold war in the country in which we find ourselves.

If we were in Russia, that would mean vigorously arguing against the takeover of Afghanistan and welcoming every defeat of the army of occupation. But we are in Britain, where the slogan 'Russians out of Afghanistan' is being used to justify increased arms spending, the movement of the US Fleet to the Gulf, the British base in Diego Garcia, the British officers in Oman, the supply of guns to the hangman in Pakistan. We have to oppose these moves and the ideology behind them.

We have to insist: *All* imperialist hands off Asia: No arms for the hangman who rules Pakistan or the slave owners who rule the Gulf states: End the American threat to Iran: the US Fleet out of the Gulf: the British mercenary officers out of Oman *and* the Russians out of Afghanistan.

Hot Air and Cold Steel

'We are not talking about revolution or a general strike in the sense of bringing the government down. But we are talking about industrial action. We are talking about protest loud protest.' (Len Murray, TUC General Secretary, BBC TV 31 January).

'Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, said the protest in South Wales was the starting point for a 'revolution' against reactionary government policies . . . Mr Sirs wondered aloud whether the present government policies might lead to a general strike . . .' (*Financial Times* 29 January).

So pigs do have wings? Not quite. But when the sty is on fire they sometimes give momentary thought to trying to launch themselves into space. The heat is on the trade union leaderships at the moment. The government is attempting to use the economic crisis to push through changes that cannot but annoy them.

It is cutting back whole industries, and with them the trade union memberships that provide sections of the trade union bureaucracy with privilege and seeming importance.

Hence some of Sirs' wild pronouncements in between attempts to sell out the steel strike. If he ends up running a union only half its present size, top industrialists are only going to be half as inclined to cavort with him.

Hence too the TUC demonstration organised for 9 March and the general strike which some sections of the bureaucracy in South Wales claim to want for the next day.

For, the government is trying to reduce the influence exerted by unions in key industries:

'There is a common thread running through labour negotiations now in progress in several major state owned corporations, including British Leyland, British Steel and British Rail. This is the desire of management to break out of the straitjacket of union influenced rules over the way manpower is deployed. This has become 'custom and practice' for as long as anyone can remember.' (*Financial Times*, 20 January)

Such moves do not in themselves worry the likes of Sirs and Murray. But they can upset some of the right wing and non political activists at rank and file level, who have provided them in the past with the support needed to beat off any left wing challenge. The workers from the pits and steel works who thronged the streets of Cardiff during the one day general strike,



were not by and large left wingers. Nor were the steel pickets who two days later marched on the law courts demanding to see Denning. Both ended up singing of Sirs, 'for he's a jolly good fellow'.

But Sirs and Murray know that such moods can change very quickly once people are in motion. A misplaced word and Sirs could have been lynched not lauded. Hence Murray's warning to the government. Hence Sirs' wild language even as he prepared to tell the steel union executive that without obedience to the 'law' there would be anarchy. How should the genuine left react in such situations?

We are faced with both major opportunities, and major challenges. For the first time since the fall of the Heath government there is a generalisation of class attitudes taking place - something which did not happen for instance, a year ago when the lorry drivers pickets were drawing the fury of Tory and Labour politicians. The union leaders' statements are a response to this - a response which can have the side-effect of spreading the generalisation even further to previously passive groups of workers.

It would be folly of the left not to take advantage of this. We have to seize upon their momentary mutterings about 'general strike' and 'industrial action', urging loud and clearly that if they were really serious about beating back the government's offensive they would be organising such actions not merely muttering about them.

It is necessary for instance to hammer home the point that if there was a one day stoppage in South Wales on 28 January and not an all out strike, the responsibility lies not with the rank and file (the miners voted 9 to 1 for a general strike) but with the TUC and the Welsh TUC who postponed the strike.

However, it would also be folly to ignore the dangers in the situation. The more generalised the level of struggle, the more central the question of leadership becomes. A general strike under bad leadership can be a disaster for the class - as the experience of 1926 showed all too clearly.

It should not be necessary to labour the point that the only national leadership existing for the working class at the moment is a bad leadership. Just look at the record of the last few weeks. The steel strike started with industrialists boasting that they had a minimum of eight or nine weeks of steel stocks in hand. Yet Sirs began by opposing secondary picketing of private steel and was

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able to prevent private steel being called out until the fourth week.

The rank and file in many areas ignored Sirs' plea and engaged in powerful secondary or even tertiary picketing. They found against them not only Sirs but also many trade union officials not traditionally on the right. The Scottish TUC urged them to lift pickets from steel-using plants; the Broad Left controlled Sheffield District Committee of the AUEW, put pressure on for the removal of pickets from the city's engineering plants. And numerous transport union officials told drivers up and down the country to ignore picket lines.

Even the Yorkshire NUM led by Arthur Scargill, told its members not to interfere with the movement of steel from NUM depots to pits.

The overall effect of these pressures could only be to lengthen the period big business could carry on without being unduly squeezed, perhaps sufficiently for the steel strikers to lose heart and opt for the sort of miserable deal Sirs has been seeking. The crisis of leadership becomes more marked, the more the odds in the struggle are raised.

Indeed in some ways it is worse than during the struggles under the Heath government. Then it was possible for the network of militants which made up the Broad Left in the key unions closely linked to the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, to provide a practical alternative focus for national action to that of the established leaderships. It was these networks which provided the impetus to the first unofficial, one-day stoppages against the government's anti-union laws, and which ensured massive financial and moral support for the UCS work-in against redundancy and the miners pickets in 1972. Even when during the imprisonment of the dockers, the Liaison Committee failed to do anything, the network of militants persisted for the dockers themselves to use.

This time around the networks all too often have been found to be lacking. In London, for instance, rank and file trade unionists have been only too willing to provide solidarity with the steel workers. But no prior network of activists was in existence to organise that solidarity, with the result that it was the fourth week of the strike before pickets were invited to London to make collections. The Liaison Committee conference visibly failed to provide any focus for support, (see elsewhere in this Review).

Those of us who are in the Socialist Workers Party are only too aware that we cannot provide the alternative national focus by ourselves, even if we do have a stronger presence in key industries than we did at the time of Sattley and Pentonville. Yet without at least the beginning of the building of some alternative focus, the more generalised the struggle the more dangers of defeats that could set us all back for months or even years.

That is why we have been putting so much stress on the need for united left

action—for instance pushing at the Liaison Committee conference for united action with the Defend Our Unions Conference. It is not that we want to forget our differences that exist with others on the left, whether over the role of the union bureaucracies, or the question of import controls, or the

A Law for Denning?

The Denning judgement, stopping the strike and picketing in private steel already looks like a three day wonder. For once the intrigues and animosity within the ranks of the judiciary were stronger than their ruling class solidarity.

Yet the way in which the strike in the private steel—and with it the whole future of the steel strike—came to depend upon the willingness of the law lords to overturn Denning, reveals immense dangers. The Tories are already working on ways to amend their Employment Bill so that it will give new statutory authority to the sort of judgements Denning likes to make.

Denning's judgement destroyed the momentum of the steel strike for three days. If the Tories get their way similar judgements will destroy the momentum of the next big strike for good.

Yet the strike did not need to come to depend on the whim of the law lords. Had the steel union executive ignored Sirs' advice and defied the Denning injunction, it is hardly likely that Sirs would have gone to jail. And even if he had, it would have been extremely unlikely for him to have stayed that long. For although the judiciary and the Tories are often keen to intimidate trade unionists with the threats of imprisonment, they are still frightened enough by the balance of class forces to be unkeen to put

alternative economic strategy. Arguments over such issues will continue to be crucial. But they will take place in a vacuum unless we build networks of rank and file activists, capable of providing alternatives in action to the misleadership of the Sirs and Murrays.

the threats into effect.

Denning himself has revealed in a book to be published shortly (quoted in *The Observer* 3 February), how uneasy he feels about the whole business. He explains that he released the Pentonville dockers from prison after they had contemptuously defied the Industrial Relations Act in 1972, because 'there was a virtual certainty in his opinion of a general strike'. His general conclusion is that 'the weapon of imprisonment should never be used in the case of industrial disputes.'

Unfortunately for the trade union movement, the response of trade union leaders to the increasing flow of injunctions over the last couple of years has *not* been to call their bluff. It is more and more taken for granted that you cannot successfully defy the courts. And that is something that will be very dangerous once the Employment Bill becomes law.

The demonstration called for 9 March by the TUC provides socialists everywhere with an opportunity to campaign against the threatened new laws. The new activism which has grown up in solidarity with the steel strikers must be carried over into this issue. But we must go beyond the demands of the TUC leaders and insist that only *defiance*—official if possible, unofficial if necessary—can beat the law.

After the Steel Workers

The steel strike has meant that a lot of other issues on the wages front have been swept aside: even the fact that the threat of strike action in the water industry has forced the employers to improve their offer to about 17 per cent has been obscured. And the Leyland ballot on the abolition of mutuality, shop-floor rights etc—in return for a 5-10 per cent increase—has been overshadowed by the threat of lay-offs and short time.

The fact is, however, that the central aim of many employers in this year's wage bargaining—to get a productivity price for paying cost of living increases—seems to have been blunted. This was a very real threat. For example, there was the crushing defeat of the Talbot strike—5½ per cent, the original offer, after 14 weeks outside the gate. Talbot has now got its new productivity deal into operation. The stewards at Ryton and Stoke have made concessions on flexibility, manning and demarcations, in return for which productivity payments start at 5 per cent of basic pay (for standard performance) instead of 2 per cent as last year. The net effect of this is that instead of

getting 6 per cent for an extra 10 per cent productivity, you now get 10 per cent for 10 per cent. But it still means the Talbot workforce have to raise productivity by about 15 per cent just to keep pace with inflation.

Leyland Vehicles in Lancashire concluded an even worse deal at about the same time—without a fight. The overall increase was worth 9 per cent—but different grades got different increases. On top of this the stewards accepted that even this increase depended on meeting productivity targets. The 9 per cent can be reduced down to zero, proportionate to the non-achievement of targets. This is the third punitive deal in a row that the Leyland Truck and Bus stewards have accepted under the auspices of the broad left plant leadership, and the 'third man' in the Derek Robinson affair, Len Brindle. They have in fact given up nearly all Edwardes wants in the car plants with hardly a murmur of opposition.

But against this trend—which has not been confined to the motor industry—we can point to some examples the other way.

The Distillers strike in Scotland which won 23 per cent without strings. The lorry drivers 20-21 per cent with no strings. Ford, the miners, BOC - all winning big basic pay rises, without strings. At lower levels companies which didn't want to pay out much like General Motors, Metal Box, the machine tool firms have had to pay out 14-16 per cent on the basic and have not got any concessions. The engineering employers don't seem to be able to insist on productivity concessions in return for implementing the national agreement despite the Duffy/Boyd concessions on productivity at national level. Even the

clothing workers have got 18 per cent in two stages (September and March) and the bakers got 15-18 per cent without strings just a year after the national strike was smashed and the closed shop deal withdrawn by the companies.

The effect of all this has begun to make itself felt among the employers. The CBI estimates of wage increases have begun creeping up and the EFF has started pushing a new line about inflation which, wonder of wonders, is now claimed to be 'only' 13 per cent.

A steelworkers' victory, however disguised, would obviously be a massive shot in the

arm for all those arguing against the idea of viability and profitability. The strike itself has already done quite a lot to alter the mood--there are real pay disputes in the docks for the first time in several years. But however the steel strike goes there are lots of other groups of workers with a fight on their hands to maintain their standard of living without conceding ground or selling jobs. The sudden announcement of hundreds of redundancies in engineering over the past few weeks by various firms is the face of things to come.

Dave Beecham

Iran: It's Not Over Yet

One of the effects of the Afghanistan crisis has been to shift Iran off the front pages, to relegate it to just one other area allegedly threatened by Russian 'expansionism'. But outside the headlines the revolutionary process in Iran is continuing apace. This was made clear by Shirin Rani a sympathiser of the Iranian Revolutionary group Etehad Chap, (Left unity), in a recent interview with Socialist Review.

Shirin started with the aftermath of Khomeini's invasion of Kurdistan.

'The initial military successes were deceptive. The kurds put up some resistance but left the towns and went into the mountains, because they were unable to deal with heavy concentrations of tanks. As soon as the army and the revolutionary guards were in the cities they were subject to severe attacks by Kurdish guerrillas. And when the winter came this forced them to withdraw. For the time being the Kurds rule the area, about three times as much as they controlled immediately after the revolution.'

The defeat of the regime in Kurdistan has profound effects:

'It put a large question mark over the ability of the new regime to actually rule the territory of Iran, to have a monopoly of armed power.'

And that has affected the repression.

'The campaign of repression in the cities was never consistently done. There was a short period of violence on the streets, all the left wing press was made illegal and the critical bourgeois papers closed down. But most of the publications reappeared, underground, but not particularly persecuted.'

'There are still no legal revolutionary papers. There are a few pretend ones like those of the "Trotskyist" HKE and the Communist Tudeh. But both these slavishly follow Khomeini. All the newspapers of the Fedayeen and the other revolutionary groups are still illegal. But despite this they have quite large circulations, and are sold semi-openly in certain places like the gates of Tehran University.'

'People continue to get arrested, but normally for a short period of time, one or two days, and at worst get a mild beating.'

The defeat in Kurdistan also had an effect on the composition and direction of the Khomeini regime.

'It destroyed what little prestige the army had left. It was a defeat for all those who thought that the revolution meant the replacement of the Shah by a combination of small, businessmen, bazaaries and a few clergy. This led to the development of the more fundamentalist Islamic movement who had been suspicious of Bazargan and people like him all along, feeling that they weren't one hundred percent down the line muslims.'



'After the revolution, the social base of the incoming Islamic republic was quite wide, ranging from the urban poor right up to the richest bazaaries. In the course of the period since the revolution that has become highly differentiated. The richer bazaaries are now screaming like mad at all the controls on imports, export and the economy generally claiming that they are ruining them. They've withdrawn their support and that is slowly working its way down the bazaar community as each new layer is affected by what they believe to be true Islam.'

'Right at the bottom of the bazaar, related to them large sections of the urban poor remain loyal to Khomeini and retain their

belief in him as the man who can work the miracles that will solve their problems. That remains his main base. Attached to it is a section of the petty bourgeoisie from the villages and small towns and to an extent in the large cities. Some of them in the cities are recent converts to Islam -- these can be the worst fanatics of all, like some of the revolutionary guards who haven't seen the inside of a Mosque for many years. Khomeini still has the overwhelming support from the urban poor, the petty bourgeois and the workers in the central, Persian speaking area. But there is one important qualification on the support from the workers.

'One of the elements of Khomeini's appeal is the simplistic formulas he advances, which have different meanings in different social groups. For example, at one level you can see Khomeini's stuff as being radically egalitarian. Within the factory this has a different meaning to what it has in the small shop. Within the factory it has led, in the major working units, to almost continual crisis.'

'There is an implied rejection of management, based on Khomeini's own statements. It's almost certainly not Khomeini's intention that there should be no management. But there is no central state authority to enforce what management there is. And the workers often have much better contacts with the local revolutionary guards and committees than management sent in from the outside. So with the combination of armed support from the revolutionary guards or committees and the workers own opposition to even Islamic appointees, management in factories have a very short lifespan. Mostly they seem to get sacked or just leave.'

Shirin qualified these last remarks about the factories by observing that there was very little explicit class organisation.

'There are no effective trade unions. There are small, mainly leftist, unions, plus councils in the factories. Most of these councils have been made Islamic, but they do have class aspects to them, they will not put up with lots of things from management.'

But they are a long way from trade unions in the Western sense or from true workers councils. One of the effects of the Islamic movement is to inhibit the crystallisation of class identity by its concentration on the idea of 'the masses' undifferentiated socially.'

The Embassy Occupation

This contradictory character of the Islamic movement emerges again in Shirin's comments on the embassy occupation. On the one hand Shirin stressed that, whatever students' intentions, the occupation was to a large extent a diversion, manipulated from the top:

'It was something of a coup by a section of the clergy who were determined to break out of the limitations imposed on them by the Bazargan government. Of course the vast majority of people want the Shah returned but these feelings are being manipulated so that they can have their vote for the constitution without any problems. Just before the occupation feeling was running low for Khomeini. Now he or the students in the embassy can select who they want to be president. The elections won't need rigging.'

'On the whole events around the embassy have been fairly highly orchestrated. There have been some big spontaneous demonstrations, but these have been on days of big religious occasions which were simply brought past the embassy. Of course no-one objected. But most of the smaller demonstrations are bussed-in groups of workers, bank employees, soldiers and so on. Bussed in, march up and down, and then back home.'

But the revelations from the embassy have a tendency to get out of hand:

'The students chose to reveal documents linking to the CIA some of the people being nominated as Presidential candidates. Some of the documents weren't particularly impressive, basically they just amount to saying 'So-and-so is a bourgeois politician'. Because it's quite normal, anywhere in the world, that bourgeois politicians go out and have dinner with the charge d'affaires at the American embassy. It probably doesn't actually amount to spying, but for the students that's enough.'

'But of course the charge d'affaires goes back and writes a report, it goes on the files and ten years later the students have got the files. So bourgeois politicians are very frightened and have gone very much underground.'

'The activities of the students occupying the embassy are extremely destructive within the Islamic movement. The students are partial outsiders to that movement, just as suspicious of many clergymen as they are of some bourgeois politicians.'

'Several leading clergymen had even closer links with the United States and the embassy than some of the people the students have already denounced. It is quite certain the students have documents on this.'

'So there are a lot of people who would

like to shut the whole show up, including almost everybody on the Revolutionary Council, but the students don't make it easy.'

'Khomeini could only call the thing off at great strain to his credibility, particularly if there were no tangible results. I believe that despite the embassy occupation Khomeini's popularity continues to fall. The mass of the population want some results from the occupation, perhaps not of the purity the students insist on, but they want results.'

The Kurds

Alongside this crisis in the central Persian speaking areas, the national minorities remain as intractable as ever.

'Clashes around Kurdistan are inevitable. The Kurds control a very large area of Western Iran. The army has garrisons in the area, but does not conduct any military operations.'

'So the central question about Kurdistan is the state's monopoly of violence. It's not a question of a constitutional arrangement giving the Kurds some devolved powers. The essence of the Kurdish position is the right to maintain their own armed forces. And this is ultimately unacceptable to all bourgeois states.'

'Politically the Kurdish organisations are the most advanced in Iran. They are well based among the Kurds themselves. They have considerable popular support. The amount and quality of the political work they do is variable. But people do identify. There is one large group, the Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Kurdistan, The Komallah, which is not only openly Marxist, but is successfully openly Marxist. It has been able to organise as a result of its work in the villages and towns. There are very few workers in Kurdistan, largely a peasant or small commodity producing town population. It has been successful in organising a military force on the basis of its earlier non-military work.'

'The social content of the Kurdish struggle is more advanced than any of the other minorities, in so far as the struggle against the central government is linked with the struggle within Kurdistan against landlordism.'

The regime continues to face problems from the Arabs, Baluchis and Turkomanis, though none of these groups has anything approaching the organisation and political development of the Kurds. But now a new factor has appeared on the scene:

The Azerbaijanis

'The Azerbaijani Turks are the largest minority — in fact they do not see themselves as a minority, they see themselves on an equal status with the Persians. There are something of the order of 12 million of them. There are very large Turkish communities in all the major cities of Northern Iran. They have therefore always seen themselves as potential group for national power. There are very promi-

nent Turks in the army and in the state establishment, which is not the case with the other minorities.'

'Many of the key Ayatollahs are Turkish. Including the most senior, Shariat Madari. The head of the central committee in Tehran is a Turk. There also a whole crowd of Azerbaijan Khomeini supporters. And in the small towns of Azerbaijan it is probably the case that Khomeini has more support than the man who is seen as the Turkish Ayatollah, Shariat Madari. He is a bourgeois politician. He played a fairly important role at various stages in the revolution. But he lost out to Khomeini a bit just before the end. Khomeini is deeply suspicious of him.'

'But many of the high ranking clergy look to Shariat Madari, not to Khomeini. Some regard Khomeini as a bit of an upstart. There was always a deal done with the Turks, that they could have their man in Qom. Shariat Madari was their man in Qom. He is opposed to many of the things that Khomeini is attempting. The Turks are opposed to those things — one of the things they are most opposed to is that Azerbaijan was not trying to be run by Turks, even though they expected to be running Iran. That was a real slap in the face. So there is considerable opposition to the central regime.'

'The Turks have a long tradition of what you might call 'democratic struggle' — the level of literacy in the villages is higher than in any other part of the country, with newspapers in their own language, despite attempts by the monarchy to suppress it.'

'So here are two struggles — with Shariat Madari trying to use the national struggle for his machinations against Khomeini. On the other hand the people of Tabriz have a long tradition of political activity for democratic rights over a period of 70 years.'

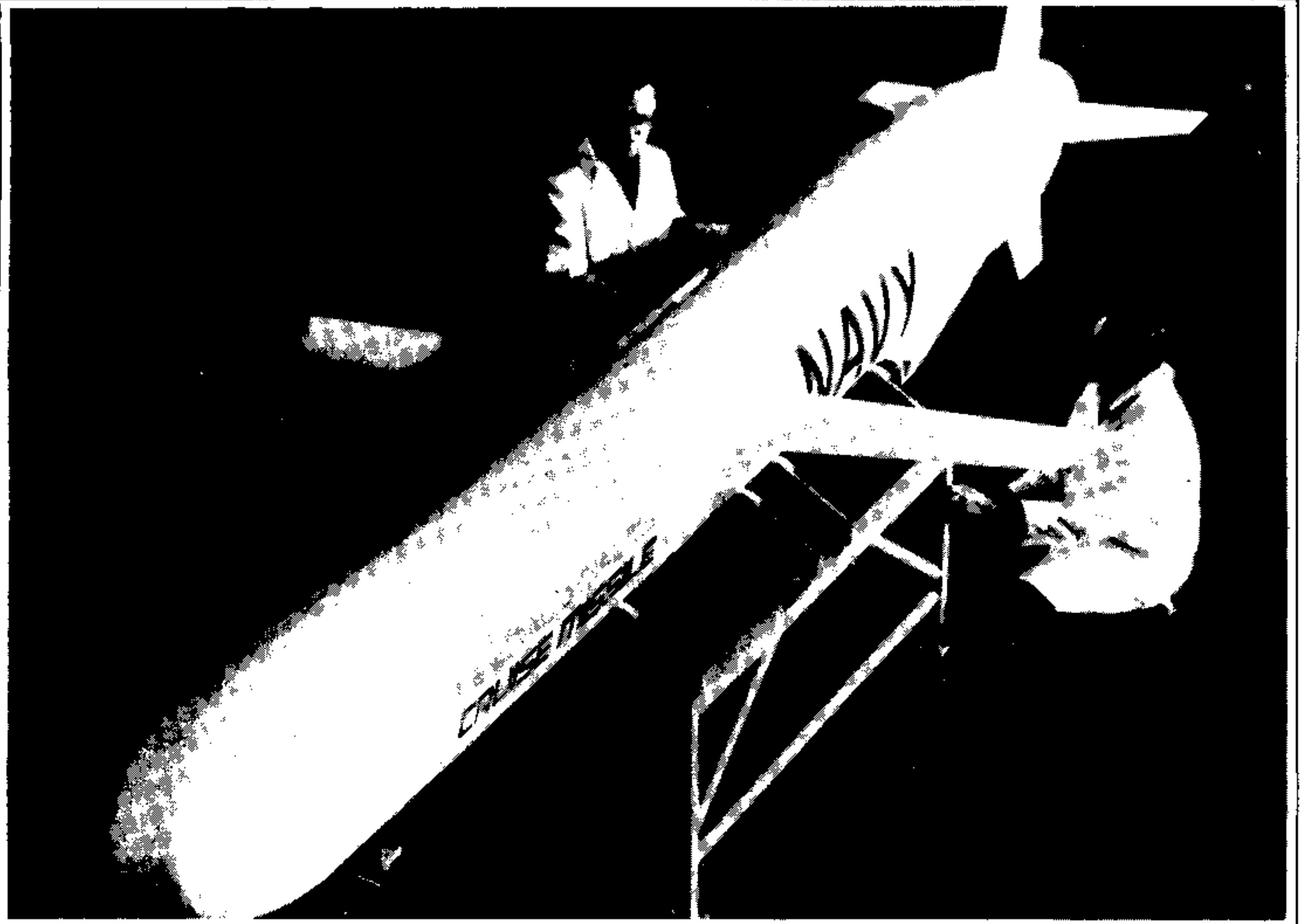
'Shariat Madari will say that the prisoners from the Muslim Peoples Republican Party — the Turkish Party — should be released. So a few days later armed men from this party took hostage 10 revolutionary guards and demanded back the arrested people in exchange. It's not that Shariat Madari orders them to do things, but he provides them with an umbrella under which they can operate. The problem is that they do not do much independently of him.'

What has been the response of the left to this developing crisis?

Shirin was very critical of much of the left. The Tudeh and the HKE simply tailing behind Khomeini. The Fedayeen being disoriented by what attitude to take to the embassy occupation — was it a mass movement or not — by what attitude to take to events in Tabriz, and so on.

But on balance the picture is optimistic:

'By and large workers have responded quite sympathetically to the left, although very few have joined the organisation. There is every reason to hope that in the new round of struggles the left will get stronger. That in the next year the revolutionary organisations will be able to sink real roots.'



How the Pentagon Upped the Stakes

If the western press is to be believed, there are two possible explanations for the breakdown of *detente* and the beginnings of what appears to be a 'new Cold War.'

The first, the simplest of the two, is that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in late December of last year triggered off the whole process, and that the new western distrust of Russia is simply a response to that aggression. The second, rather more credible explanation is that the long-term build-up of Russian armed power over the last 10 years has revealed the insincerity of Russia's commitment to *detente* and has thus necessitated a corresponding response on the part of the west.

The key word in both explanations is 'response': the blame for the present state of affairs rests fairly and squarely with the Russians; the west has had no choice but to respond.

So runs the myth which the NATO propaganda organs have been assiduously cultivating over the last few months. But, in whichever of the two forms it comes, the myth of Russian aggression and western response remains essentially false.

In the case of the 'Afghanistan explanation', this is very clear indeed. Given the lack of any vital western interests in Afghanistan and given, too, the fact, readily admitted by both western politicians and the western

press, that Afghanistan has been firmly in the Russian orbit for many years, the idea that that invasion alone could have triggered off the breakdown of *detente* seems inherently implausible. To be blunt, Afghanistan just isn't that important. But much more significant is the fact that western attitudes towards Russia had been steadily 'hardening' for months *before* the invasion took place.

As early as January of *last year*, President Carter announced substantial planned increases in American 'defence' spending. As *Business Week* reported at the time: "Congress is only beginning to comprehend the disparity between the fat defense budget and the leanness of all other spending. 'Defense will look like a mountain rising from the plain,' predicts a top Senate Budget Committee staffer."

In the end result, the defence budget got even fatter, the mountain even higher, than *Business Week* had anticipated. Carter's January 1979 budget proposals had allowed for \$123 billion to be spent on defence during 1980 (an increase of \$11 billion over 1979).

In June, Carter signed the SALT II agreement and was faced with the immediate problem of negotiating its passage through the Senate. Senate 'hard-liners' made it clear that the price of their support

would be further increases in defence spending. Thus in August, Georgian Senator Sam Nunn, one of the Pentagon's key sympathisers in the Senate, demanded a 5% per annum increase in real defence spending for the next 5 years, as the condition for his agreement to SALT II.

Nunn's proposals would have taken the defence expenditure figures for 1980 up to over \$132 billion, and for 1981 up to \$150 billion.³ In mid-December, Carter once again announced substantial increases in the defence budget, increases which in effect met Nunn's demands. The 1981 defence expenditure figure was now fixed at \$157 billion (\$7 billion more than Nunn had asked for), and the administration committed itself to a real annual increase in defence spending of at least 4½% for the next 5 years.

Carter justified these increases, not as part of a SALT II package, but rather as marking a substantial shift in American foreign policy. 'We have learned the mistake of military intervention in the internal affairs of another country when our own vital security interests were not directly involved,' said Carter. 'But we must understand that not every instance of the firm application of power is a potential Vietnam. The consensus for national strength and international involvement, although shaken and threatened, survived that divisive and

Table 1: American and Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces 1970-79

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Long-range bombers										
USA	512	479	430	430	390	369	348	348	348	348
USSR	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Submarines										
USA	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
USSR	22	29	35	42	49	54	60	65	70	72
USSR (modern)	14	21	27	34	41	46	52	54	62	64
SLBM launchers										
USA	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656
USSR		360	459	567	651	711	791	867	947	979
ICBMs										
USA	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054	1054
USSR	1487	1527	1527	1547	1567	1587	1547	1447	1400	1398
Total (Long-range bombers and missiles)										
USA	2222	2189	2140	2140	2100	2079	2058	2058	2058	2058
USSR	1875	2027	2126	2254	2358	2438	2478	2454	2487	2517

Source: World Armaments and Disarmament: Stockholm Institute for Peace Research (SIPRI) Yearbook 1979, p. 422-423.

(SIPRI figures are taken from official government sources where possible. Most press commentaries on Russian military strength do not use these figures, but rather the much higher NATO estimates. It may well be that the SIPRI figures underestimate Russian strength, but I have used SIPRI figures rather than NATO figures since, whereas NATO officials may have reasons for systematically overestimating Russian strength, SIPRI has no corresponding interest in deliberate underestimates.)

tragic war.⁴

The Vietnam trauma was over, and firm applications of power were back in fashion. All of this occurred *before* the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

The upward shift of American defence estimates is in fact only one of many symptoms of a steadily hardening western defence 'posture' (to use the military's own jargon).

The US Government has for some time been on the look out for new military bases. On 17 December, before the Afghanistan crisis broke, a team of top Pentagon and State Department officials left Washington for the Middle East to discuss the possibility of establishing new American bases in the region with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kenya and Somalia.⁵

The U.S. has also been pressing all of its NATO allies to increase their own defence budgets by at least 3% per annum in real terms. And Britain, at least, has fulfilled American requirements. Last year's *U.K. Defence White Paper* fixed defence expenditure for the fiscal year 1979-80 at £8.6 billion, which is a real increase of 3% over the 1978-79 figure, and promised a further real increase of 3% for 1980-81.⁶

But, of course, the single most spectacular evidence of this 'hardening posture' was the NATO decision in mid-December to deploy a new generation of US nuclear missiles, the Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles (both of

which are capable of striking at the heart of the USSR), throughout Western Europe (160 are scheduled for Britain, 48 for Holland, 48 for Belgium, 112 for Italy, and 204 for West Germany).⁷

This decision, which outraged the Russian Government and provoked angry denunciations in the Russian press, was taken *before* the invasion of Afghanistan. The pattern is very clear: the United States in particular, and the west in general, had been progressively disengaging itself from *detente* well before that day in December when the first Russian tanks rumbled down the road to Kabul.

American policy is *not* simply a response to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed, it's clearly not a response to any particular Russian political initiatives. It developed momentum, during the second half of 1979 in particular, despite not only the absence of any overt Russian aggression, but also the presence of clear evidence on at least two occasions of Russian good will.

The two occasions were, of course, firstly Brezhnev's 6 October announcement of the unilateral withdrawal of 20,000 Russian troops and 1,000 tanks from East Germany and, secondly, the announcement, at the first day of the session of the Supreme Soviet in November, of substantial cuts in the Russian arms budget (the budget was reduced by £75 million, leaving defence expenditure for next year at £12.5 billion).⁸

Neither occasion triggered off any western response—apart, that is, from polite indifference. Clearly, the fundamental causes of recent changes in American defence policy lie neither in Moscow nor in Kabul, but rather in Washington itself.

But what about the second type of explanation? If the new western militarism isn't a response to the Afghanistan crisis, then is it perhaps a general response to the long-term build-up of Russian military power? Certainly this is a more plausible explanation, for there has indeed been such a build-up.

During the 1970s, the balance of nuclear terror did shift in favour of the Russians. In 1970 the USA possessed a total of 2,222 strategic nuclear delivery systems (both long-range bombers and missiles) and the USSR a total of 1,875. In 1979 the USA possessed 2,058 and the USSR 2,517.

Over that period, clear American superiority in nuclear submarines and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) had turned into clear Russian superiority and, though American superiority in long-range bombers remained, the gap between the two powers had closed. As a counterweight though, initial Russian superiority in inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) had declined somewhat (see Table 1).

A similar shift occurred in overall expenditure patterns. Whereas in 1968 the USA was spending almost twice as much as the USSR on 'defence,' by 1978 the two superpowers were spending roughly similar amounts (see Table 2).

But this shift can hardly be seen as a move towards a dramatic imbalance in favour of the USSR. Rather, it represents a movement away from a situation of clear American superiority towards something much more like parity. In any case, the sheer destructive power which both sides possess, the sheer scale of these nuclear arsenals, makes any talk of imbalance seem merely abstract. Both possess the capability to destroy the other, and both know it.

Nor indeed do these figures tell the whole story. Whilst it is true that the Russians now possess more nuclear delivery systems than the Americans, they nonetheless have far fewer deliverable warheads. The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates that in 1979 the USA held about 11,000 deliverable warheads, and the USSR only about 5,000, though this latter figure is expected to rise to about 7,500 in the early 1980s.⁹

Furthermore, the military arsenals of the USA's NATO allies are much more impressive than those of Russia's Warsaw Pact satellites. Both Britain and France possess their own nuclear 'deterrents'. And the West German Bundeswehr, with 340,000 men under arms, remains the largest single army in Central Europe.

Thus, though total American and Russian military expenditures during 1978 were of a similar order, total NATO expenditure far exceeded total Warsaw Pact expenditure (see Table 2). In the crucial 'European theatre,' the two 'sides' are, in fact, very

Table 2: Military Expenditure, USA, Total NATO USSR and Total Warsaw Pact 1968-1978 (in US \$ million at 1973 prices and exchange rates).

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
USA	103077	98698	89065	82111	82469	78358	77383	75068	71022	73966	71475
TOTAL NATO	140872	136331	127446	122523	125088	121684	121960	120751	117664	121247	119412
USSR	58000	62000	63000	64000	65000	66000	67000	68000	69000	70000	71000
Total											
Warsaw Pact	63396	67796	69158	70537	71678	73025	74378	75808	77257	78526	79816

Source: SIPRI Year book 1979, p.35.

closely balanced. The International Institute for Strategic Studies calculates that whereas NATO has 1,065 'nuclear systems' deployed in the European theatre, the Warsaw Pact has 1,209, a situation which the Institute itself sees as one of near parity.¹¹

And the balance of conventional forces is even closer still. In 1979, NATO had 64 divisions spread over Northern, Central and Southern Europe, and the Warsaw Pact 68.¹²

Since American divisions are larger than Russian divisions (a US armoured division contains 18,900 men and 324 tanks, a Russian armoured division 11,000 men and 325 tanks, a US mechanised division contains 18,500 men and 216 tanks, a Russian mechanised division 13,000 men and 266 tanks), the actual balance in terms of manpower must be very close indeed.

There is a widespread popular belief that though the west has more and better nuclear hardware, the Russians have the edge in troop numbers. The opposite is the case. It is the west which possesses slight superiority in terms of manpower: the Warsaw Pact has 2,647,000 soldiers and marines under arms, and NATO 2,842,000.¹⁴ The overall pattern is one of balance.

There has been a Russian build-up, but the effect of that build-up has been to establish a closer military balance, rather than to upset a pre-existing balance and turn it decisively in Russia's favour.

In any case, all of this has to be set in the context of an overall relative decline in levels of defence expenditure in both camps. Whilst absolute levels of Russian military expenditure rose significantly during the 1970s, the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) devoted to military expenditure declined in both the USA and the USSR every year (except 1974) during the decade 1968 to 1977 (see Table 3).

It is, of course, this steady decline in the proportion of GDP devoted to defence in both the USA and the USSR which explains the progressive undermining of the permanent arms economy's stabilising role during the 1970s.

But setting that aside for the moment, what should be clear is this: *detente* had a very real material basis. Throughout the 1970s, both superpowers consistently devoted smaller and smaller proportions of total productive capacity to military production.

Their reasons were similar, though not exactly identical. In the west, massive American (and British) military com-

mitments, whilst stabilising the world economy as a whole, had undermined the relative competitiveness of American and British capital *vis a vis* those rival capitalist powers, notably Japan and West Germany, which were relatively free from such commitments. The result was the incorporation into government policy of defence cuts as part of an economic strategy to re-establish international competitiveness.



Brezhnev and Carter at the signing of the SALT II treaty

In the east, the pressure of international competition worked itself through in rather less direct fashion. But the rising price of imports from the west, and the consequent massive increases in the scale of the east's indebtedness to the west, placed a strain upon domestic production (and occasionally as in Poland - upon domestic political stability) which there, too, resulted in a gradual relative transfer of resources from military to non-military production.

Thus, it was in the material interests of both the American and the Russian ruling classes to establish some form international *detente*.

This state of affairs was quite clearly not

one in which the steady narrowing of the gap between Russian and American military capabilities would appear, even to the Americans, as the *salient* feature of the world situation. The fundamental reality of the 1970s was the connection between declining relative levels of military expenditure, clear material interests in the continuation of that decline, and clear political interests in the construction of *detente*, on both sides.

Set against this background, increasing American militarism cannot be seen simply as a response to the Russian build-up (and nor can the converse, Russian aggression as a response to American militarism, be true either).

What, then, did cause the breakdown of *detente*? Let us be clear, in the first place, that both the American and Russian ruling classes must contain within their ranks a *permanent anti-detente* lobby. Whilst it is not true that (as some writers thought in the 1950s and 1960s) both America and Russia are ruled by a 'military-industrial complex'; it is very definitely the case that both ruling classes contain a distinct military-industrial complex, a section of the ruling class whose power, influence and profit arises directly out of the continued existence of the permanent arms economy.

This military-industrial complex, the section of the ruling class which staffs the higher ranks of the military and the top management of the armaments industry, has a permanent interest in a relatively high degree of international tension.

Presumably, there is something like near-permanent pressure from this quarter, in both the USA and the USSR, for both increased military expenditure, and a harder line in international politics. The important question is: under what circumstances will this section of the ruling class win out over other sections?

That such a conflict has occurred, and

Table 3: American and Russian Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP, 1968-1977

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
USA	9.3	8.7	7.9	7.1	6.6	6.0	6.1	6.0	5.4	5.3
USSR	11.0	10.9	10.0	9.7	9.6	9.0	8.7	8.6	8.3	8.0

Source: SIPRI YEARBOOK 1979, p. 38-39.

that the outcome has been a victory for the military-industrial complex, is fairly clear from recent events.

Let's consider the process where it's easiest to observe, in the USA, where the ruling class conducts its business in a much more open fashion than in Russia. It seems pretty clear that Carter's earlier commitment both to *detente* in general and to strategic arms limitation in particular was genuine enough.

His steady insistence that the SALT II treaty should be considered separately from all other questions of international politics indicates this very clearly. In June of last year, when Carter and Brezhnev signed the treaty, the road to *detente* still looked pretty open. But, as we noted earlier, Senate hard-liners immediately voiced their opposition to the treaty, and their interest in massive increases in defence expenditure.

As the *Financial Times* explained at the time, Senator Nunn, who led the opposition, 'took his cue on SALT II from the hemedalled Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose phlegmatic chairman, General David Jones, told the Senate: 'None of us is totally at ease with the provisions of the agreement...' The chiefs coupled this lukewarm endorsement of the treaty with a plea for more defence spending.¹⁵

If anyone speaks for the American military-industrial complex, then clearly it is the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nunn's proposals, which were at that time in opposition to those of the Carter Administration, but which Carter accepted in mid-December, were almost certainly what the military-industrial complex was after. But there was more to it than that.

Dr Henry Kissinger was another critic of the Carter Administration's policies, and the *Financial Times* commented on his opposition too:

'The former Secretary of State scorned the Carter administration's refusal (or inability) to use the evident Russian desire for SALT II to curb their military activities in and around the Third World. He proffered the suggestion...that the Senate should be able to vote to suspend future SALT talks if the Russians grossly misbehaved. This idea pleased some Senators...It also coincided fortuitously with a demonstration of Soviet economic dependence on the U.S. Last week the Agriculture Department announced the US would next year sell at least 13 m tonnes... of grain to the Soviet Union...The redoubtable Dr Kissinger also proposed that passage of SALT II be made conditional on increased US defence spending.'¹⁶

Here, in a report from Washington written *last August*, is, in brief outline, a picture of a strategy towards the Russians, which the Carter Administration at that time rejected, and which it came to accept, in part, last December, and virtually in its entirety this January, after the invasion of Afghanistan.

The obvious explanation for this sequence of events is that the military-industrial complex has been in favour of

such policies for some time, and that, over the past 4-5 months, it has succeeded in pushing an initially reluctant administration into adopting them.



Ever the Hawk: Henry Kissinger proposed that passage of SALT II be made conditional on increased US defence spending.

It's more difficult to sketch out a similar sequence in Russia—simply because the Russian ruling class is so secretive about its inner workings. But there is no reason to believe Brezhnev any less sincere than Carter in his initial commitment to SALT II. Nor is there any reason to believe that the Russian leadership is so stupid as to be unable to anticipate the way in which Afghanistan might be used (especially in an American election year) to prevent the ratification of the SALT II treaty.

As the western press has observed, the invasion seems to have been a controversial proposal even within Russian ruling circles. Brezhnev's insistence on the complexity of the decisions involved is, according to western Kremlinologists, a clear indication to the outside world of substantial disagreements within the Kremlin. We can surmise, then, that a roughly similar sequence of events occurred in Russia to that which occurred in America.

But why did the 'hard-liners' win out? The question can only be answered in general terms, quite simply because we don't actually *know* what goes on inside the American and Russian ruling classes. But two factors can be identified.

Firstly, both countries are faced with serious economic crises—crises caused by that very decline in arms spending which helped to make *detente* possible in the first place.

Whenever ruling classes are faced with such crises (and with the consequent threat of declining or, at least, stable living

standards), there is a tendency to opt for militarism abroad in the hope of cementing national unity at home.

In the Russian case, the possibility of serious internal disorder, in Eastern Europe if not in Russia itself, doubtless provides an additional encouragement to arms spending. And in the United States, the prospect of some limited 'job creation' in the armaments industry (and not so limited in the Army itself, now that Carter has decided to reintroduce conscription) probably does likewise.

The second factor is surely the developing political instability of the international system, quite apart from the question of direct Russo-American relations.

When the process of *detente* first began, most of the world was neatly divided up into pro-American and pro-Russian zones, and increasing accord between the two superpowers could in itself be predicted to lead to a lessening of international tension. But today, the growing uncertainty and unreliability of political alignments, particularly in the so-called 'Third World,' makes the case for an increased militarism all the stronger within the ruling classes of both superpowers. Ian Birchall has described the situation which surrounded the beginnings of the first Cold War in these terms:

Neither side was satisfied with the 'sphere of influence' settled at the post-war conferences. Both sides had pressing economic reasons to extend their zones. And both found it very useful to deflect discontent at home by creating the spectre of a rapacious and aggressive enemy.¹⁷

That description is strikingly, and depressingly, appropriate today.

Footnotes.

1. 'It was Henry Kissinger's opinion (in a 1978 newspaper article) that the country (ie. Afghanistan—A.M.) was '80 per cent in the Soviet sphere of influence to begin with,' Peter Jenkins, 'Commentary,' *the Guardian*, January 23, 1980.
2. 'A hardware bonanza for Defense,' *Business Week*, January 29, 1979.
3. David Buchan, 'Senate finds new focus on SALT II,' *Financial Times*, August 21, 1979.
4. Jurek Martin, 'Carter makes big five-year defence spending increase,' *Financial Times*, December 13, 1979.
5. *The Times*, December 19, 1979.
6. 'Defence Equipment Industries,' *Financial Times Survey*, September 24, 1979.
7. Reginald Dale, 'NATO's strategists finally stir in the West,' *Financial Times*, December 14, 1979.
8. *Financial Times*, November 28, 1979.
9. *The Military Balance, 1979-80*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 3-4.
10. Paul Lendvai, 'Prodding the troop cut talks out of the trenches,' *Financial Times*, May 9, 1979.
11. *The Military Balance, 1979-80*, pp. 118-119.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
13. *Ibid.*, p. VII.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
15. *Financial Times*, August 21, 1979.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Ian H. Birchall, *Workers Against the Monolith*, p.45.



Preparing for the big carve up—the Big Three at Yalta

The First Cold War

In one sense the Cold War can be traced right back to the Russian Revolution of 1917. A new model of society, linked to the international workers' movement, could scarcely be anything but a threat to Western capitalism. But by the thirties, many of the more sophisticated bourgeois politicians had come to realise that Stalin was really one of their own kind, or at least was a much preferable option to Trotsky; but the Bolshevik threat was still a useful one to wave.

The alliance of Russia, Britain and the United States in the Second World War was forced upon the partners by Hitler's aggression rather than freely chosen, and even during the war some Western politicians saw Russia as ultimately the enemy. Thus Harry Truman, a future US President, commented on Hitler's invasion of Russia:

'If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances.'

At the end of the Second World War the victorious allies stayed together long enough to carve up the spoils. In October

1944, Winston Churchill visited Moscow and agreed with Stalin, on a half-sheet of paper, the division of the Balkans into British and Russian spheres of influence. Subsequently, at the conference at Yalta (January 1945) and Potsdam (July 1945) the allied powers divided up the world between them. The 'spheres of influence' so much discussed today date from that carve-up.

But to enforce the carve-up meant strangling a potential revolution. Throughout the world, and especially in those countries which had been occupied by the Nazis, millions of ordinary people — workers and peasants — had shown enormous sacrifice and heroism in organising Resistance. Their motives were not simply to revert to the pre-war world — a world of poverty and slump—but to transform society from top to bottom. With the right leadership — a crucial condition — the whole world was a potential powder keg of revolution.

That was why the agreement with Stalin was so important for the Western powers. Militarily the US was ahead of Russia, being in possession of the atomic bomb. But Stalin still had an iron grip over the Communist Parties of the world, mass movements in such key countries as France, Italy and

Greece. In return for a free hand in Eastern Europe Stalin agreed to call his boys to heel: in France and Italy Communists entered governments, opposed adventurist actions and called for a ban on strikes. Maurice Thorez of the French CP summed up his position with regard to De Gaulle's bourgeois state: 'One state, one army, one police force.'

As the potential for revolution was disarmed and crushed, the world situation reverted to a contest between competing powers. The cooperation in carving up the world gave way to a struggle for influence and power. While neither side went so far as to challenge the basic division of 'spheres of influence', each side sought to modify the balance to its own advantages.

In 1946, Winston Churchill made his famous speech at Fulton Missouri where he spoke of the 'iron curtain' dividing Europe (the phrase 'iron curtain' was in fact borrowed from Goebbels). But the real turning point came in March 1947, when US President Truman announced that the USA was taking over Britain's military role in Greece. He used this to launch the so-called 'Truman Doctrine', a commitment that the US would intervene in any revolution it believed to be Communist (in fact an excuse



Senator Joe McCarthy. In the United States McCarthyism effectively destroyed what was left of a socialist tradition inside the working class.

for intervening against moderately reformist regimes that threatened US interests, as in Guatemala in 1954).

The Truman Doctrine was followed up by Marshall Aid, a massive programme of economic aid to Western Europe which had still not recovered from the impact of the war. Marshall Aid was a two-pronged weapon. On the one hand it prepared the way for the penetration of Europe by American multinationals; on the other it provided a means of political bargaining. One of the fundamental conditions for the receipt of Marshall Aid, for countries like France and Italy where Communist ministers still sat in the Governments, was that these were excluded.

It is important to remember that the Cold War was launched, not only against Russia, but against Communists in the labour movement. It provided an excellent opportunity to carry home the disarming and weakening of the working-class movement. In France and Italy American finance and intrigue helped to engineer splits in the trade union movement in order to weaken Communist influence in the working-class. The effect was in fact to divide and demoralise trade unionists and cause a huge fall in the number of organised workers. In the United States a wave of anti-communism, building up to a crescendo in

McCarthyism, helped to destroy what was left of a socialist tradition in the US working class; in Britain Communists were witchhunted in the unions and May Day marches were banned.

Perhaps the most significant use of the Cold War to intervene against the working-class movement was in the Italian elections of 1948, when there seemed a serious chance that the Communist-Socialist slate would win. Marshall Aid ships arrived in Italy while US battleships were anchored offshore, and the US State Department announced that no Italian who had voted Communist would be allowed to emigrate to the US.

The Russian response was to set up the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), who proclaimed an analysis that the world was divided into two blocks — the 'anti-imperialist democratic' and the imperialist anti-democratic'. The major Russian attempts to shift the balance — the Czech coup of 1948 and the Berlin blockade of 1948-49 — can in fact be seen as a response to the US offensive. The formation of NATO in 1949 completed the line-up, though the Warsaw Pact was not founded till 1955, in response to the admission of West Germany to NATO.

One factor of imbalance remained. In 1945 the West already had nuclear weapons,

and used them on Japan; at this time the Russians were without nuclear weapons, and hence the Russian control of the international Communist movement was still a key factor in diplomacy. By 1953, when the Russian hydrogen bomb was announced, a balance was established. The role of the Communist Parties thereafter became very much a subordinate factor in Russian bargaining.

Nuclear weapons also made the possibility of all-out-war — at least intentionally — less likely, since neither side could hope to come out of a nuclear conflict with any real advantage. Hence the Cold War came to be more and more exported to the Third World.

The classic case was the Korean war. Korea had been partitioned hurriedly at the end of World War Two, with the Americans setting up their puppet in the South and the Russians theirs in the North. In 1950 the Northern regimes made a push — almost certainly under Stalin's pressure — to seize the South. The Americans welcomed an opportunity to push up their arms spending (and ward off a developing recession), poured troops into the South and provoked China into joining in on the Northern side.

The people of Korea had little or no say in what went on. The whole thing was an attempt by both sides to push back the frontiers of their sphere of influence: eventually it ended in a rather squalid draw, in which the real losers were the Korean people.

Russian strategy towards the Third World also began to change. Whereas initially the Russians had had little time for such Third World nationalists as Nasser of Egypt and Nkrumah of Ghana, there was a sharp shift in Russian policy between 1953 and 1956 which called for closer links with all 'anti-imperialist' forces.

The replacement of Stalin by Khrushchev led to Russian advocacy of 'peaceful coexistence'. Arms production compelled by competitive pressure from the West was a continual strain on the Russian economy in particular, the weakness of Russian agriculture can be blamed largely on arms spending. Hence Russian anxiety for summit conferences, disarmament agreements and so on.

The end of the Cold War, at least in its first classic phase, comes in 1962. Castro's revolutionary regime in Cuba had been pushed into Russian arms by US boycott. In 1962 Che Guevara signed an agreement to site Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba. US President Kennedy threatened military action if the missiles were not withdrawn, and, after the world had spent a few days apparently on the brink of nuclear war, Khrushchev withdrew. The 'confrontation' phase of the Cold War was over.

This meant that a certain space was opened for anti-imperialist struggles which were not immediately caught up in the inter-bloc rivalry. The war in Vietnam developed with a dynamic quite different to that in Korea, and this in turn had monumental effects on the whole world balance.

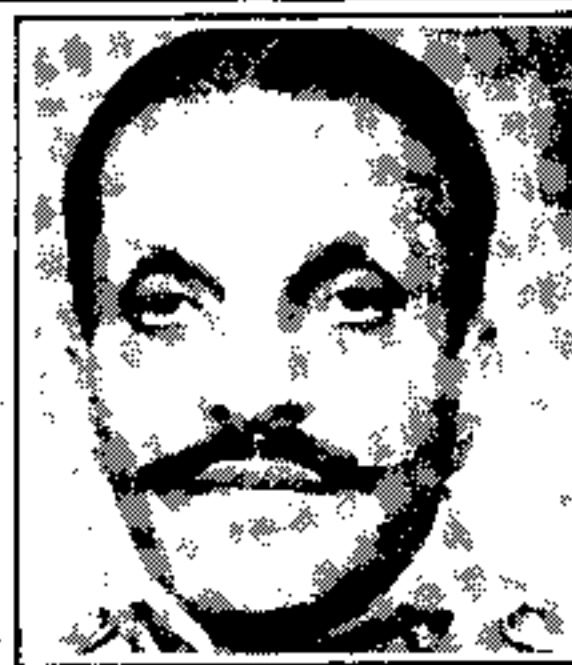
Ian Birchall



King Khaled of Saudi Arabia



Sultan Qabous Bin-Said of Oman



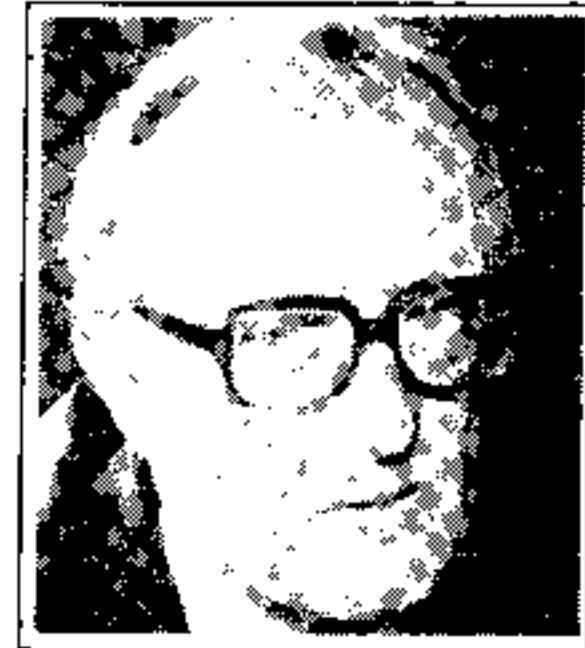
General Zia Ul-Haq of Pakistan



Prime minister Demirel of Turkey



Prime minister Indira Gandhi



Foreign secretary Lord Carrington

The Crook's Tour

Nothing demonstrates more clearly the mind-blowing cynicism of the Tories' response to Afghanistan than Lord Carrington's little jaunt through the Middle East and South Asia. Carrington visited Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Turkey and India, and returned with the following comment:

"Despite the obvious differences of perspective, certain important points of agreement emerged . . . in particular, the need for *solidarity among like-minded people*, and for a fresh effort to overcome divisions of the past was widely recognised." (House of Lords, January 24th).

So just who are these "like-minded" statesmen, with whom Lord Carrington got on so well?

Ruth de Silva takes up the story in Arabia.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia is the most closed society in the world with absolute rule by the House of Saud and a strict and medieval Islamic legal system. There are thought to be about 5,000 political prisoners in the main prisons—Qasr Hizam (Jedda), Mecca, Riyadh and Dammam. Opposition to the rulers in any form is swiftly and brutally suppressed. There was rumbling unrest among the workers in the oilfields throughout the 1950s and various coup attempts reported in the 1960s.

There are no political institutions and political organisations are banned. The siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca last November was the first such incident which has come to public attention and even then

those responsible stood little chance of having their views or opinions considered. Once the extremely efficient security services had ended the siege the perpetrators were publically beheaded a fate which customarily befalls opponents of the regime according to the fundamentalist Islamic law operating there. Other Islamic punishments like public flogging and amputation of limbs are also common.

Considerable hypocrisy characterises the regime, for while dire punishments befall those discovered consuming alcohol, the rulers are known to have stocks of expensive liquor in their palaces and to indulge in public drinking when out of the country.

Adultery is similarly punished as the incident of the princess who tried to escape with her lover in 1978 showed. Both were publicly executed when caught.

The position of women in Saudi Arabia is the most oppressed in the world. They are not allowed to drive, to venture out without male relative company, to work with men or to walk in the streets unveiled. The new universities being built have separate campuses for women and any lectures which they need to share with male students are viewed on closed-circuit television.

OMAN

"Democracy" and "human rights" are concepts which have little meaning in Oman. The Absolute Ruler, Sultan Qabous Bin-Said, admitted as much in 1973 when he told an interviewer that "the people are not mature enough for Western-style democracy".

Even if this were true, it would hardly be surprising as the regime of his father, Sultan Said Bin-Taimour, which ended in 1970 still ran a society based on slavery. The system was so oppressive that the British who were then openly in control of the country, engineered the coup which brought Qabous to power. Little has changed, however, except that Qabous is somewhat more efficient than his father and is aware that such abuses must at least not be seen to occur. The British are still there but less conspicuous.

Oman in one way is Britain's Vietnam. For the British orchestrated the war conducted by the Sultan's regime against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) freedom fighters in the Dhofar province in the 1960s and early 1970s. In order to "pacify" the "rebels" of this province the British Special Air Service (SAS) used all the well-tried counter-insurgency tactics including herding the population into "protected" areas, starving the guerrillas into submission and burning down villages. Napalm and other anti-personnel weapons were used extensively. However it took the presence of 35,000 Iranian troops to "subdue" the rebels who temporarily gave up the unequal fight in 1976. Now the Iranians have been withdrawn, however, the PFLO is becoming active again.

There are thought to be about 1,000 political prisoners in Oman, the main prisons being Kut al-Jalali (Muscat), Beit al-Falaj, Salala and Nizwa. Secret trials, death sentences, torture and refusal of appeal are the order of the day.

Oman has a certain amount of oil wealth and development is proceeding fast. But new luxury housing is reserved for the expatriate experts and workers and military advisors. The literacy rate in Oman is about 15 per cent.

PAKISTAN

General Zia-ul-Haq must have carved himself a special niche in the pantheon of dictators. Not only has he shot down, tortured, flogged and imprisoned tens of thousands of workers, peasants, and political opponents. Not only has he judicially murdered a prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. But in cancelling the planned elections--indefinitely--he has made an original contribution to President Carter's human rights initiative:

"75 per cent of the peoples of Pakistan are illiterate. How do you expect illiterates to decide for themselves what is good and what is bad for them? Somebody else has to tell them this is good for you and this is bad for you . . . Forget your Western ideals and your Western standards of freedom and democracy. You are in a Muslim developing country, and Islam says that if somebody says something against your integrity, against your religion, against your anything chop him. Teach him a lesson."

(General Zia talking to The Guardian 18/1/80)

His reluctance to hold elections may have something to do with the probable victory of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, following which the Bhutto family would undoubtedly take his Islamic advice seriously.

The present crisis offers the regime a new chance to keep the Pakistani state together. It is an artificial construction and close to disintegration. A foreign threat is a godsend in such circumstances--especially if it can be stretched to include Pakistan's *raison d'etre*, a hostile India. For Zia it means lots of guns from the USA and China and better

still, probably more financial aid to shore up the economy and more US aid to overcome 'internal subversion.'

So three out of five of Lord Carrington's "like-minded" regimes do not even make the pretence of being democratic. The other two, on occasions, do. With what justification we will leave you to judge

TURKEY

Turkey has had long periods of military rule, and is very likely to be in for another. Already something like a third of its provinces are under martial law.

The reason very simply is that Turkey is bust. 16 billion dollar foreign debt. 4 billion dollar annual balance of payments deficit. Unemployment 20 per cent. Inflation up to 70 per cent.

The mildy social democratic prime minister Ecevit (who incidentally introduced the martial law) was replaced last year by Demirel of the conservative Justice Party. In Demirel's last administration he had a fascist as minister of education, which resulted in the fascist fighting squads, the Grey Wolves, flooding the universities. Today Demirel is on slightly better behaviour, which does not stop political assassinations, mostly by the right, being a daily occurrence.

INDIA

Which leaves us with India, whose democracy not long ago included the infamous 'emergency'. Here, however, Lord Carrington will not have got such a friendly reception. Barry Pavier describes why . . .

In 1944 a group of leading Indian capitalists produced a plan for the economic development of an independent India. It provided for the construction of a large state sector especially in steel, coal, heavy engineering, machine tools and so on. These were the parts of the colonial economy which were especially weak.

So foreign aid was needed. And without the West's prejudices in favour of private capital, it was the Russians who provided the aid for the state sector. They also concluded important trade agreements, allowing the Indians to pay in the virtually unexchangeable rupee.

Thirty years of the expansion of the state sector on this basis has substantially shifted the balance within the Indian ruling class. The bureaucracy associated with state capital not only run important industries, but are present in virtually every other part of state life. So there is a constant hostility to the USA and the West, who try and promote private as against state capital, and who have backed India's main opponents, Pakistan and China. American support for Pakistan in the 1971 war has not been forgotten. Russia on the other other hand has supplied large quantities of arms to India in the last 15 years and backed it in international conflicts.

Not that India is becoming a client state like Cuba or Ethiopia. But it has produced a permanent prejudice towards Russia in foreign policy.

And this is not simply under Mrs Gandhi. Private capital is too dependent on state-capital to effectively pursue its pro-western inclinations. The Janata-Lok Dal governments did attempt to shift away from a pro-Russian position and a pro-American civil servant was appointed to head the foreign ministry. But he was driven out *before* the election, because the *whole* of the bureaucracy at the Foreign Ministry reflects the pro-Russian bias of state capital.

So Lord Carrington will not have got much joy out of trying to tempt India into a bloc against Russia over Afghanistan, especially as such a bloc means strengthening China and Pakistan.

Henry Kissinger was a master of the Crook's Tour. Despite the little local difficulty with India Lord Carrington seems to be doing very nicely on the economy package.



Ayshe Seytmurova

Back in the USSR

Events in Iran and Afghanistan have highlighted the position of Moslems in the Soviet Union. The vast majority of the estimated 40-50 million Moslems live in the six southern republics. Unlike the 150 million Russians, they have a high birth-rate and, if current trends continue, there will be nearly 100 million of them by the end of the century. The Soviet government is trying to persuade Russian women to stay at home and breed but, in a speech at Baku in September 1979, Brezhnev urged Moslem women to go out to work.

The Moslem peoples, particularly the small nationalities, have a history of repression from Moscow. In 1944 the small nationalities around the Black Sea were deported from their homes and dispersed in Central Asia. The first survivor of this deportation to reach the West is Ayshe

Seytmurova, now a leading representative of the Crimean Tartars. Her help has been important in writing this article. She was seven when she took part in the deportation in sealed trains without food or water. Of 238,500 people who began the journey, 100,212 arrived dead. In Uzbekistan, Ayshe and her six young brothers and sisters were put to work in the mines.

All of the deported nations have ceaselessly campaigned for the right to return home but still, today, the Crimean Tartars and Meshketian Turks, together with the non-Moslem Volga Germans, are in Central Asia and still fighting to return home.

The Crimean Tartars have a national organisation which includes every member of their population. In 1964 they presented a petition with 130,000 signatures to the

Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow. Between 1964 and 1968 they organised massive demonstrations in every major city in Uzbekistan. The largest of these, on 21 April 1968 in the town of Chirchik, was broken up by the Army. In these campaigns, the exiled nationalities have been helped by the local Moslem population.

Islam has been a powerful unifying factor. Despite substantial state persecution, it has survived better than Christianity. A survey in the Caucasus in 1974 discovered that 46 per cent of Dagestanis and 53 per cent of Chechenas believed in God, compared to only 12 per cent of Russians. Even those who openly declared their atheism still regarded themselves as Moslems.

The state has fought against this. Before 1917 there were about 25,000 Mosques in the Soviet Union; now the official estimate is 300. Baku, with a population of 1,600,000 has only two. There are only 2,000 registered mullahs. But unofficially things are very different. Religious festivals are held in private houses and there are large numbers of unregistered wandering mullahs. In Tadzhikistan in April 1973 the Communist Party leader M. Gapurov admitted: 'the number of people observing religious rites is not decreasing in our republic.'

Islam, however, is more of a social than a religious factor. The population is still largely rural. According to the 1970 census, 90 per cent of all Khirgiz, 80 per cent of all Tadzhiks and 75 per cent of Turkmen and Uzbeks lived and worked on the land. Along with this go the traditional extended family structures and communal housing. On that basis, much of the old culture survived. Soviet Moslems still prefer to sit on carpets on the floor, circumcision is still almost universal, pork and alcohol are still taboo and the staple food is the traditional plov (pilau). The attitude to women persists too. They are still regarded as inferior and not allowed to eat with men. Religious marriage is widespread. Girls are still married very young without their wishes being consulted, and the groom still pays a 'kalym' or bride price. In the mid-sixties the Uzbekistan Communist Party estimated the normal price at '500 roubles, 200kg of flour, eight kg of rice, two sheep and nine dresses.'

The Soviet attempt to develop the resources of Central Asia has led to a huge influx of Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians. The resources of Central Asia are under the control of Moscow and used in a way which, to Moslem eyes, looks very like colonial exploitation. The gas of Uzbekistan, in Ayshe's words, 'goes straight out of the republic in two pipe-lines—one to Urals and one to Moscow, while many of the villages in Uzbekistan have no gas supply.' Central Asia's gold deposits earn Moscow foreign currency. Central Asia supplies the Soviet Union with all its raw cotton but the plan from Moscow does not allow the region a textile industry large enough even to supply its own needs. For example, Uzbekistan supplies 67.7 per cent of all the USSR's raw cotton in 1969, but only 2.8 per

cent of its cotton textiles. Cloth, cotton thread and cotton wool are scarce in the shops.

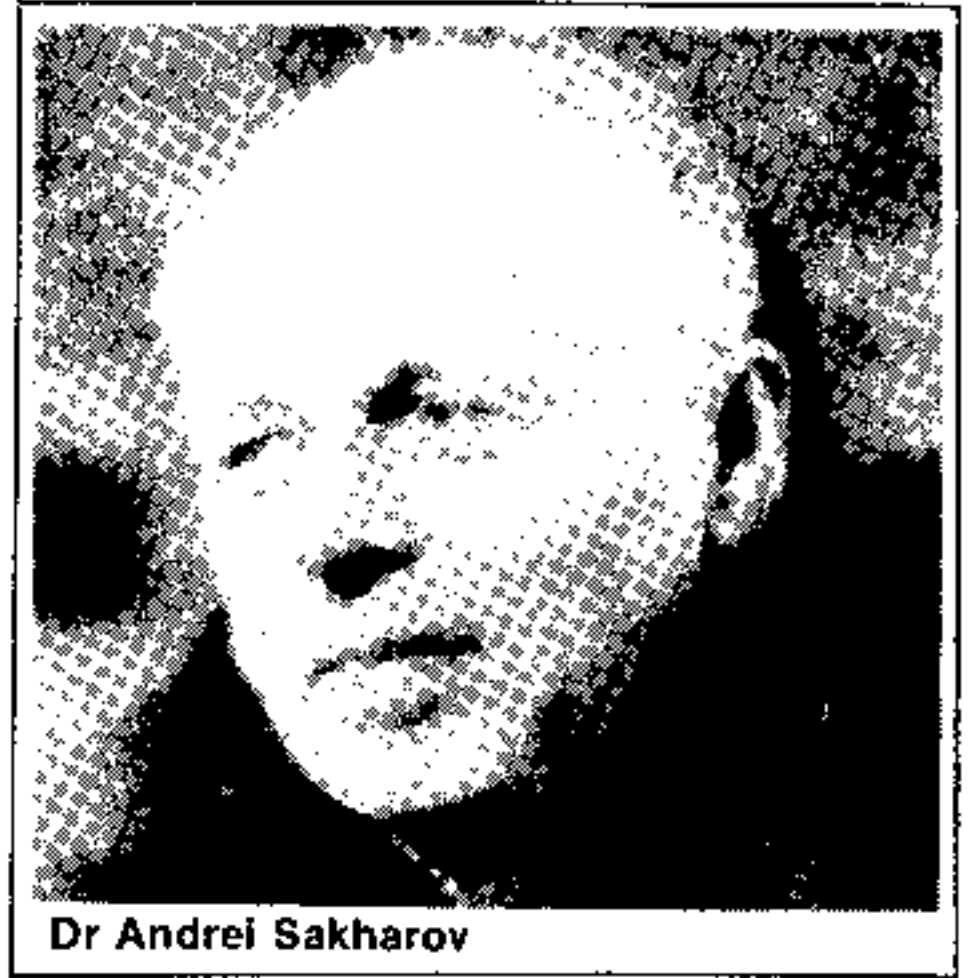
The industry which has developed has become the province of the immigrants. Russian is the language of the factories. In Alma-Ata 87.5 per cent of the population in the town is non-Moslem. Rebuilding after the 1968 earthquake which destroyed traditional Moslem houses was entirely on the plan of Russian-type blocks of flats.

Together with this goes political control. Russians are always placed in the position of Second Party Secretary. In 1971 six out of eleven members of the Uzbek Central Committee were Russians.

Social mixing is very rare and there is little intermarriage. Despite state efforts, only 16 per cent of Moslems speak Russian with any fluency, and Russian settlers send their children to special Russian schools. There are numerous examples of tension between the two populations and the Russians often display the crudest form of chauvinism. Much of this is in the form of daily petty insults but it occasionally boils over into large disturbances. The best example was in Tashkent in May 1969 and started at a football match between the Russian team *Torpedo* and the Uzbek team *Pakhtakor*. *Pakhtakor* scored a goal and a Russian in the crowd shouted in disgust 'The animals have learned how to play!' An Uzbek hit him over the head with a bottle and a general riot broke out amongst the 10,000 fans. From the stadium it spread to the streets. People were injured, trams were overturned and spontaneous meetings and demonstrations were held. Slogans appeared saying 'Russians out of Uzbekistan'. The army was called in but incidents continued for several weeks.

Feeling against the Soviet Union is growing in Central Asia and it is fed by events in Iran and elsewhere. But it is not taking the form of religious conservatism. The development of the region has led to increased urbanisation amongst Moslems and a local intelligentsia has grown up. At the same time, the flow of Russian immigration has largely dried up. In addition, nationalist feeling has been fed by over-population on the land. There is already a surplus of labour in every Moslem republic apart from Kazakhstan. There is already considerable unemployment in old irrigated areas like the Fergana valley and the problem will become more acute with the mechanisation of cotton growing.

Deporting large numbers of people, as the example of the Crimean Tartars shows, is not a solution. Even though areas like Siberia are short of labour, resistance is likely to be intense and prolonged. But as rural unemployment grows it is likely that the local population will turn increasingly on the European settlers with the demand that 'Russians go home'. The failure of the Soviet government to Russify its Moslems, together with the population explosion, means that the Moslem population of the USSR is likely to be a major source of problems for Moscow. **Victor Haynes**



Dr Andrei Sakharov

Some Dissidents Are More Equal Than Others

On January 23rd Dr Andrei Sakharov, an internationally known Russian dissident, a Nobel prize winner and a distinguished physicist, was arrested in Moscow and sent into internal exile in the city of Gorky.

In Washington a State Department official reacted by saying that the well being of Dr Sakharov was 'of great concern' to the Washington administration. Margaret Thatcher announced that her government 'took a very serious view' of the arrest and would take it up with the Soviet Union. The West German government demanded Sakharov's immediate release, while Mr Willy Brandt who has been an ardent champion of the movement towards detente, said he felt personally touched by Sakharov's fate. In Italy the President and most political parties, including the Communist Party, condemned the arrest. Mr Jacques Chaban-Delmas, the Speaker of the French National Assembly, was in Moscow at the time of the arrest for talks with Brezhnev. He flew home to Paris immediately in protest.

Such high level international concern over the fate of a single dissident is indeed unusual. But with the increasing tension towards Russia, the West has been using every opportunity to snipe at the Russian system. Sakharov's fate became an international cause celebre and an ideological attack on Russia all in one. How justified the West must have felt, therefore, when two days after his arrest, Sakharov along with other prominent Russian dissidents, put his name to a letter calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

The Moscow newspaper, *Izvestia*, has accused him of being a renegade and a traitor to his country, of 'being used by the special services of imperialist powers to spy out important state secrets of the Soviet Union' and of 'psychological war' against the Soviet Union.

But is Sakharov really the pro-Western nasty that the Russian press accuse him of being? And is he really an agent of Western

governments?

The truth is that Sakharov, like other Russian dissidents, is being used by the Western press and by western politicians as part of their aggressive onslaught on Russia. In the process much of what he stands for is obscured, and the many thousands of Soviet political dissidents for whom he has been a spokesman are conveniently forgotten.

Sakharov, a brilliant and well respected member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, was one of the Russian scientists who worked on developing the Russian H-bomb. For this reason he is often referred to in the western press as 'the father of Soviet the H bomb' although he himself has said that this description 'reflects very inaccurately the real (and complex) situation of collective invention'.

During the period he was working on nuclear weapons he believed that he was 'working for peace'. He reasoned, as did other scientists East and West, that if *both* Russia and America had nuclear weapons then they would be forced to work together rather than destroy each other.

For his contribution to the Russian military machine, he got the highest honours. He was awarded the Stalin prize and three Orders of Socialist Labour—the highest civilian honour in Russia. With these came material benefits—a huge salary, special housing, access to restricted consumer goods, body guards and a limousine complete with chauffeur. As a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, to which he was elected in 1953, he has been able to retain many of these privileges despite his outspoken opposition to the regime and his defence of other dissidents.

His opposition began not long after the bomb had been developed. Sakharov disagreed with the policy of testing nuclear weapons in the atmosphere and tried to stop a series of tests. He argued that the radioactive products of nuclear explosions affected billions of people, causing disease and defects in new born babies. This caused him to think about his work in a wider context and he came to 'gradually understand the crucial nature not only of nuclear

tests but of the enterprise as a whole. I began to look on it and other world problems from a broader human perspective.'

He campaigned vigorously against all tests, using all the pull that a top scientist could muster. And when in 1963 the US and the Soviet Union agreed to halt tests he felt justified in taking some of the credit for the agreement.

But he took up other issues as well. Lysenko was a geneticist who sprang to meteoric fame under Stalin because of his scientifically unsound, but politically convenient theories which promised a rapid increase in the Soviet wheat production. Lysenko faded after Stalin died but was being rehabilitated under Khrushchev. Sakharov campaigned against him and halted his rehabilitation.

Sakharov also campaigned against the appointment of party hacks to the Academy of Sciences, presumably to protect his own base as much as to defend the interests of pure science.

Until 1968 he campaigned as a socialist who believed in reforming the system from within. In 1968 he wrote his manifesto which was circulated widely in samizdat. Titled 'Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom' it argued against the arms race, pleaded for co-operation and co-existence between the superpowers and identified the major problems of the world as hunger, militarism, racism, and the waste of resources.

But 1968 also brought the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Brezhnev regime which marched into Czechoslovakia also removed him from weapons research to a much lowlier job. With the realisation of the brutality of the regime Sakharov became more politically committed to opposition.

Still a well-known and respected scientist, he enjoyed a great deal of support and respect from the scientific elite. For this reason the authorities could not expel him from the Academy of Science. They could not risk alienating so vitally economically necessary a group as the scientific establishment. His status, as an Academy member, relative comfort—he still has a chauffeur driven limousine, and even in exile he has been given a new flat—a considerable cut above the other dissidents squatting in wooden huts on the freezing wastes of Siberia. And his status gave him something even more vital—a relative ease of contact with the western press. He was personally interviewed in many different western publications. And because of his ability to broadcast his views outside Russia, other dissidents flocked to get him to sign their letters, to lend weight to their cause.

The western media gave him room. His break with reforming Stalinism, in 1968 led him to believe in the need for international detente and a convergence of the two world systems. He was an early pioneer of the idea of detente.

His growing hostility to the Soviet system led him to expose its repressions and its injustices. He drew the world's attention to the conditions of the 1,700,000 prisoners in the USSR. He appealed to bodies like the

International Red Cross to abandon their policy of non intervention in the internal affairs of his country. And he campaigned consistently on behalf of those enduring horrendous conditions in the psychiatric prisons.

Russia had scored a first when in the early '60s, one of its leading psychiatrists, Snezhnevsky, identified 'exogenous psychiatric illness' as distinct from schizophrenia. This theory in which opposition to the system could be diagnosed as mental illness, laid the basis for a new form of torture. It swept away the necessity for public trial, and sentencing. And if you weren't mad to start with, you were certainly demented by the time the 'psychiatrists' had finished their treatment. Now the system has gone even further. Potential troublemakers are simply sent a card informing them that they are now on the outpatient list at the local psychiatric establishment. It is a grim warning of what awaits you if you continue to oppose official policies, and you don't have the prominence and pull that Sakharov has to protect you.

Not that Sakharov himself hid behind his immunity. He picketed and attended trials, demonstrated and signed statements. He published his views in the west.

Dissidents of every conviction are now being rounded up. The whole Ukrainian Helsinki group has been arrested. Religious groups, national minorities, intellectuals, artists and trade unionists are all victims of the new hard line in Moscow.

In the days of detente Russia signed any and every agreement on human rights in order to gain more economic trade with the west. Never implemented then, these arguments are simply irrelevant.

The Western politicians hypocritically support Sakharov, and his fight for civil rights. His ability to attract dissident support for 'western democracy' within the Soviet camp is seen as an effective undermining of the Stalinist system.

Soviet dissidents like Sakharov are fools in their uncritical support of Western democracy. Sakharov is fighting for civil rights. And we support him in that. But we cannot support the way his activities are used in cold war propaganda.

We have to realise that behind him stand thousands of less privileged dissidents. These nameless men and women have no limousines. Most of them have even been deprived of the right to work. And they remain largely undefended.

While Thatcher and Carter condemn Sakharov's persecutors, the TUC continues its prevarications, which have gone on for over a year, about whether to support Klebanov, the Soviet miner who was the founder of the Free Trade Unions in 1977 and is currently detained in a psychiatric prison hospital.

Today our task is clear. We side neither with Washington, nor with Moscow. Our task is to defend the 'common people'—those who are rotting in psychiatric hospitals all over the Soviet Union for the crime of fighting for workers rights.

Anna Paczuska



Tony Cliff
Marxism
and the
collectivisation
of agriculture
Reprinted from
International
Socialism
Winter 1984/85

The collectivisation of agriculture is hardly an important issue for industrial Britain, but it is for socialists all over the Third World where peasant farmers form a large proportion of the population. Cliff's pamphlet looks at the lessons to be drawn from collectivisation in Russia after the 1917 revolution.

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Imperialism, East and West

Old prejudices die hard, even on the left. So today, as in 1956 and 1968, you still find socialists who argue that there cannot be such a thing as Russian imperialism.

They usually put it something like this: imperialism, as Lenin showed, is not simply the conquest of one nation by another; it is a specific phenomenon associated with monopoly capitalism: finance capital dominates the economy, and its search for overseas investment leads the major imperialist states to 'partition and repartition the world': in Russia there is no finance capital (indeed, no capitalists of any sort!); therefore Russia cannot be imperialist. QED.

At one level, the argument is easy to refute. No Marxist has ever claimed that *only* with the monopoly stage of capitalism and the domination of finance capital do you get imperialism—after all, Marx wrote on 'British Imperialism in India' in the 1850s and 1860s, whereas the 'monopoly stage' of capitalism did not really start until the 1890s.

But the argument fails much more fundamentally than this. Not just on a verbal quibble, but on an inability to grasp the essential drives that underly the actions of the great powers in the West as well as in the East. Those who deny the fact of Russian imperialism reduce the nuclear warheads directed at Peking or the millions of Chinese and Russian soldiers facing each other along the Ussuri to a mere accident of history.

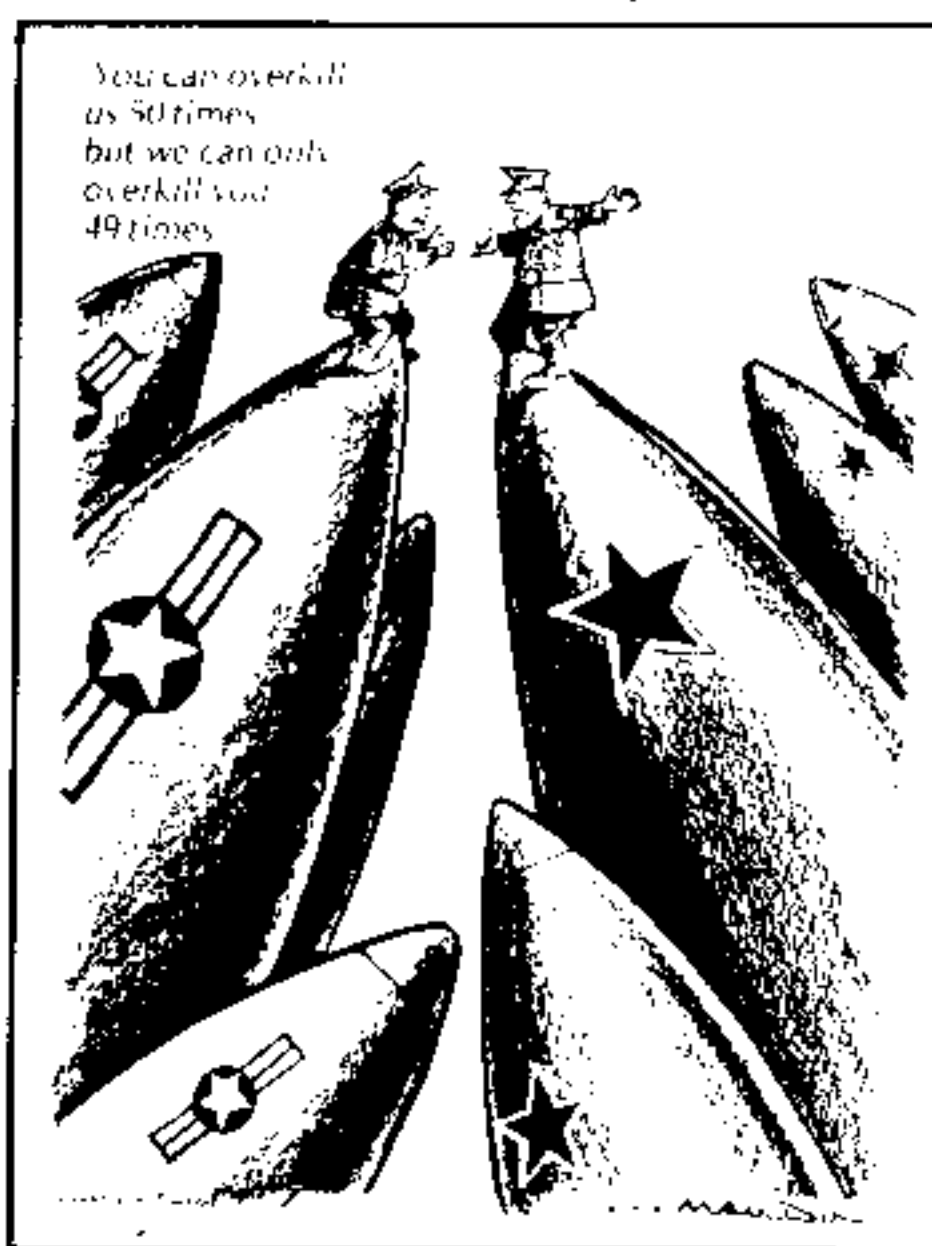
What was the point of the theory of imperialism as developed by Lenin (and his fellow Bolshevik Bukharin) in 1915 and 1916? It was to establish that the First World War was not an accident, due to the intrigues of reactionary court circles or to the pressures of a minor arms manufacturing part of the ruling class, but flowed from the inner dynamic of the whole of the ruling classes involved on both sides.

As Lenin wrote:

"In this pamphlet, it is proved that the war of 1914-18 was on both sides imperialist (ie an annexationist, predatory, plunderous war), a war for the partition of the world, for the distribution and redistribution of colonies, of spheres of influence of finance capital, etc..."

The point was that world capitalism had reached a stage where it was impossible for its rival ruling classes to co-exist without periodically being driven to war.

'Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars and in their turn grow out of wars. One is the condition for the other, giving rise to alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on one and the same basis, that of imperialist connections and inter-relations of world economies and politics'.



Capitalism could no longer survive without seeking to 'partition and repartition' the world. Lenin and Bukharin explained, because the scale of the concentration of production was so great that it could no longer simply be contained within narrow national frontiers. As Lenin put it,

'The capitalists partition the world, not out of personal malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to get profits . . .'

In Lenin's explanation of how this happened, finance capital (the banks) were seen as playing a central role. They had reached a higher degree of monopolisation than industry, and very much subordinated industrial capital to their needs. And their need was to raise the rate of profit by finding new outlets for financial investment. Hence the struggle to carve up what we now call the

'third world' into colonies.

Bukharin went on to develop a more general theory than that of Lenin (although Lenin's notes on Bukharin do not indicate any profound disagreement with it). He focussed not just on finance capital, but on the way that industrial capital also was driven to military adventures. This was because, although the ownership of industry was in general nationally based, the scale of its operations more and more reached beyond national frontiers.

The carving up of the national economy between a few monopolies in co-operation with the state was not enough if the national capitalism was to survive in international competition—it had to seek ways of organising production on a still wider basis. It could only seize the resources to do this from other capitalists (big and small) of other states by periodically substituting military conflict for economic competition.

There was clash between 'the national state' basis of industrial ownership ('appropriation') and the international character of the capitalist system (and therefore production). The more each state intervened to regulate the national economy in the interests of the monopolies, the more its efforts stood in contradiction to the more or less completely unregulated interaction of the different national economies in the world economy. It was a contradiction which national states could only seek to overcome by moving from 'peaceful' alliances to war.

Imperialism West

In many ways the history of Western capitalism in the last 50 years has fitted Bukharin's more generalised picture more closely than Lenin's rather narrower one with its concentration on 'finance capital'.

In the 1930s vast concentrations of industrial capital grew up: this was the period of the organisation of ICL, Unilever, IIT, the 'Seven sisters' of the oil world, and the great industrial firms linked into the German and Japanese war economies.

They retained an interest in colonies in the Third World. But increasingly what caught their eye was the concentration of industrial capital, usually in Europe, in the camp of rival capitalisms. So, for instance, for



Freedom fighters in South Africa engaged in a struggle which threatens the existing balance of power.

German capitalism the 1930s and the early 1940s meant successive military efforts to incorporate into its industrial operations economies formerly under Anglo-French influence: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, etc.

In the post-war years, the growing influence of industrial capital pushed even further this shift in the operation of imperialism. With their eyes now focussed in the main on the *industrialised* parts of the world, the relative significance of investment in the third world declined for the western capitalists. The Western ruling classes no longer felt that it was a life and death matter for each to guard its control over parts of the third world from its Western capitalist neighbour. France and Germany no longer threatened each other with war over the control of Morocco; Japan and Britain were no longer wrestling for control of the South China coast and the Malay peninsula. Decolonisation was possible because the partitioning and re-partitioning of the third world between the Western capitalist states was no longer a central issue.

The question of control of the resources within the advanced countries and the newly industrialised states around their fringes (such as Brazil, Hong Kong or South Korea) also ceased to be a motive leading to military conflicts between the Western states, although for a different reason. The expansion of all the Western economies meant that the annoyance of one national capital at the encroachments of its rivals was only marginal. There were plenty of good things to go round and they did not need to fight one another for them: a contrast to the 1930s when it had seemed to German and Japanese capital that the only way to shift the burden of crisis was through military expansion at the expense of other Western capitals.

The military aspect of imperialism did not disappear. But during the boom years it came to be directed outwards by an alliance of Western capitals, rather than inwards by each against the other. What mattered was defending a new international order against those who did not accept its rules fully: whether that was a Russia still apparently threatening to grab bits of Western capital's sphere of influence for itself, or some local national liberation movement trying to regain control of its own country's resources.

The Western powers were willing to permit each other to poach in their back gardens, whereas in 1914 and 1939 this had led to war, but they were not prepared to let anyone else to do so.

The huge arms expenditure was meant to deter anyone from even trying. The Americans in Vietnam, for instance, were out to prove that they could not be challenged with impunity anywhere in their sphere of influence.

What was at stake was not the role of the American banks in Saigon, but the long term safety of the huge concentrations of American owned industrial and financial wealth in Europe, Central and South America, Southern Africa, Australia, etc.

Imperialism East

How has Russia fitted into this picture?

If imperialism is the attempt by national rulers to control forces of production that operate on a scale wider than existing national boundaries, then the rulers of Russia are involved in imperialism as much as those of the Western states.

Since Stalin inaugurated the First Five Year plan in 1928-9, the main aim of the Russian rulers has been to 'catch up and overtake' the West. As they see it, there is no other way of safeguarding their control over Russia. Inside the Russia of Stalin's period this meant imitating all the means used by Western capitalism to industrialise (from wage cutting and piece work to driving the peasants from the land and employing slave labour).

External policy was motivated by the same pressures as internal policy. The first victims were the non-Russian peoples had been absorbed into the Czarist empire and then given the right to self-determination by the revolution; that right became a complete fiction as they were completely subordinated to the needs of industrialisation in competition with the West (see the article on the Soviet Muslims in this issue). Then it was the turn of the Baltic states and Eastern Poland, seized by Stalin 1939 and incorporated into the Soviet Union as part of a deal that gave Hitler a free hand in Western Poland. Finally, (as Ian Birchall tells in his article) it was the turn of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria and East Germany to pass under Russian hegemony in return for giving the West a free hand in France, Italy, Greece and the

Western colonies 'liberated' from the Japanese and Italians.

(People who don't believe Russia can be imperialist should also note that at one stage in the negotiations Stalin demanded the former Italian colony of Tripoli for Russia!)

In this early period Russian imperialism was very much like the early stage of Western imperialism in the 18th and early 19th century. It involved the wholesale looting of countries to the advantage of the Russian economy: the dismantling and removal of factories, the imposition of 'unequal treaties' which gave Russia for no cost a half share in joint companies exploiting key resources, the rigging of commodity prices to Russia's advantage (for details, see the denunciations of Russia made by both Yugoslavia and China after their break with Moscow, and the literature that appeared in Poland and Hungary in 1956).

But it soon underwent changes that made it more similar to the Western industrial imperialism of the 1930s. The East European economies were run under a system which gave them a degree of autonomy, but which subordinated their overall pattern of development to the needs of Russian competition with the West. So in the early 1950s workers and peasants throughout Eastern Europe saw their living standards slashed so as to build up the heavy industrial base of the Russian arms programme.

The pressure on workers' consumption relaxed somewhat after the popular uprisings of 1953 and 1956, but it has never grown at anything like the speed of industrial output, and is now under pressure again.

An imperial order can be stabilised on two bases: *either* by improving the conditions of the people incorporated within it so that they identify with its rulers; *or* by the crudest repression, aimed at intimidating them into submission, if necessary, denying them any vehicle such as local language and traditions that might enable them to organise a fightback.

The basic Russian goal of expansion of heavy industry in competition with the West ruled out the first strategy. And so the second had to be used. Inside the lands of the former Czarist empire that meant Russification aimed at down-grading local language and culture and upgrading Russian speaking minorities who could be

expected more easily to identify with Moscow. In Eastern Europe it meant exemplary displays of Russian armed might in 1956 and 1968 to crush opposition.

Repression was the glue used to bind a heterogeneous collection of peoples to the needs of economic competition with the West.

It was the means by which the Russian ruling class tried to control a concentration of forces of production that extended beyond Russia's border. Russian imperialism was the logical sequel to Russian state capitalism.

The Two Imperialisms in Conflict Today

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s the two imperialisms, each policing a string of regimes subordinated to its accumulation goals, could grow to mutually tolerate and respect each other. Both were experiencing high rates of economic growth, which guaranteed a certain acquiescence to their rule by many of their client states. So the Americans stood idly by while Russian tanks crushed Budapest and Prague, and the Russians were not too upset when Johnson and Nixon bombed Hanoi. No atrocity on either side, it seemed, could stop the movement towards detente.

Conditions today are rather different. Economic crisis has produced popular discontents which both sets of rulers fear

will upset their hegemony. In the West, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and now Iran have broken from the bloc. The US ruling class feel they have to make a show of strength if more valuable properties are not to be threatened.

They even fear that without such a show of strength their European and Japanese allies may begin to follow policies that no longer protect US economic interests (by imposing higher import duties and lower quotas for US goods, by not backing US policies over issues like Iran).

Very much the same considerations apply to Russia. There can no longer be any doubt about the reality of its economic crisis: last month the official press announced that 1979 had been the worst year for the Russian economy since 1945, with a growth of the national income of 2 per cent, only half that planned (compared with, say, a growth of the West German GNP of more than 4 per cent). This comes after reports showing industrial stagnation in much of Eastern Europe (see last month's issue of *Socialist Review*).

The East European rulers have tried for a decade and more to avoid economic crisis by a growing integration into Western markets, growing tie-ups with Western companies and growing dependence on Western bank loans. But this can only create unease in Moscow, where it seems that it is in danger of losing its economic hold over Eastern

Europe. At the same time, reports of widespread discontent, especially in Poland (where the Gdansk shipyard has been striking as we go to press) raise for Brezhnev and his friends the spectre of Budapest 56 and Prague 68. They too feel the need to reach for their guns.

The Russian rulers cannot sustain their competition with the US especially their military competition without marshalling the efforts of states which lie outside Russia's frontiers. But that means demonstrative action against any one in the bloc who steps out of line, even if in taking it they make their economic crisis worse, increase the resentments of the peoples over whom they rule, and heighten the odds in the war games with the US.

East and West, national ruling classes are compelled by their mutual competition to organise production on a scale which extends beyond national boundaries. They build up the fire power of their state machines to compel peoples outside their national frontiers to accept this and to keep foreign ruling classes from interfering in their spheres of influence. Their mutual interaction leads to a spiral of arms spending. And as each side, just to stay where it is, cracks the imperialist whip, the whole world moves a bit further along the road to Armageddon.

Chris Harman

Women and the Crisis

Margaret Thatcher and James Callaghan have both gone out of their way to extol the family. Government ministers have told women their main priority should be the home. Abortion is under severe attack. The Tories' Employment Bill will hit maternity leave, as well as the sort of picketing that recognition disputes usually need.

No wonder many people are talking about the Tory attacks on women. No wonder, too, that many people are saying that cuts and unemployment are going to force women back into the home. This often leads them to concentrate on organising women as housewives, rather than in the workplaces.

Yet the employment problems of women are far more complex than that. This article attempts to look at the situation, how the last five years' crisis has affected it, and what the implications are for women organising at work.

Since the second world war there has been an steady flow of women into the workforce throughout western capitalism. In 1959 7.2 million women in Britain worked, comprising 33 per cent of the total. By 1978 this had increased to 41 per cent (9.1 million). So far the crisis has not stopped growing numbers of women from working. In fact the years of crisis and high unemployment have seen *more* women entering work.

The impact of male unemployment on the family is to force the woman out to work.

This has been shown by two important studies of women workers in America by Kolka and Milkman. For the great slump, Kolko points out:

'From 1930 to 1940 the percentage of the entire female population in the workforce grew 22 per cent, the greatest single decadal increase in American history --not quite equalled by the 19 per cent increase during 1965-75.'

CHANGES IN WORKFORCE
March 1976 to September 1979
UK adult figures,
seasonally adjusted

	Employment	Unemployment
Male	-72,000	-89,000
Female	+401,000	+109,000
Total	+329,000	+20,000

Source: Department of Employment Gazette

While the traditional heavy industries declined, new ones provided jobs for women.

The pattern seems to be similar in Britain today. More women are still entering work, despite the growth of female unemployment and the fact that the percentage of women employed in manufacturing has declined more rapidly than that of men.

The explanation of this seemingly contradictory pattern lies both in the areas of

growth and decline of British capitalism, and in the traditions and expectations of women workers.

Steel, mining, shipbuilding have all seen a tremendous loss of jobs 'rationalisation'--which still continues. Engineering is in decline. Some women's manufacturing, such as clothing and textiles, has also been hit. Compared with this, there has been growth in the public sector (the civil service, local government, education, health), in catering, sales and distribution, and in light manufacturing.

Women are eminently placed for such jobs, from an employers' point of view. They are flexible, they often lack militant trade union traditions, and are willing to put up with worse conditions than many men. Above all there are two factors which the employers regard as favouring the employment of women--they are willing, and often need, to work part-time, and they are low-paid.

The Gain to Employers from Women Workers

More women work part-time in Britain than in any other West European country. They were 41 per cent of the female workforce in Britain in 1977, compared to 28 per cent in Germany and Holland. The advantages to the employers of part-time workers are several. They are exempted from a great

Employees in employment in manufacturing and services (UK)

	Thousands		% change
	1951	1976	
Manufacturing			
Females	2,984.4	2,114.7	-29.1
Males	5,761.5	5,131.0	-10.9
Total	8,745.9	7,245.7	-17.2
Services			
Females	4,009.4	6,745.7	+68.2
Males	4,864.1	6,134.9	+26.1
Total	8,873.5	12,880.6	+45.2

deal of legislation over things such as redundancy and also need much less expenditure than full-time workers. British capitalism benefits enormously. Indirect labour costs in Britain stood at 13 per cent in 1978 as opposed to 20 per cent in Germany and 25 per cent in Holland. Part-time work is regarded by many workers, both male and female, as an optional extra, which means it is often the first to go in redundancy schemes - such as the proposed one at British Leyland - and its phasing out will often meet little opposition either from the official labour movement or from the workforce itself. Many women will put up with conditions in part-time work that they would not normally accept because of its convenience for them.

Low pay is the other major reason for the increase in the number of women's jobs despite high overall unemployment. The Equal Pay Act of 1970 was never meant to protect women who didn't work alongside men, and therefore from the beginning it has little use to most women workers, who are stacked separately from men. Even so, in the years immediately following its introduction there was some narrowing in the differential between men's and women's wages.

Female earnings rose from 60 per cent of male earnings in 1970 to over 70 per cent in 1978. However, the last two years have seen the gap begin to widen once again as men's percentage wages gradually decline. It is too early to say whether the gap will continue, but it is certainly what some people prophesied about the Equal Pay Act: that it would narrow the gap temporarily but could do little to overcome the fundamental inequality which women face in capitalist society.

For many, such a cheap labour force has clear advantages for the capitalist class. Because women have been conditioned to accept that their wage is only a contribution to the family budget, they are more likely to work hard for far less money than men. As unemployment becomes more of a permanent feature, especially in certain areas, the attraction of to employers of a cheap and docile workforce with few of the demands of their husbands or fathers will become more obvious. Hence the continued growth of a female manual workforce, and the consequent fall in men's wages.

Conclusion

Government policies may act to counterbalance the forces which encourage women working: the savage cuts in public expenditure, and the

introduction of 'new technology' in the service sector.

So far, net employment in the public sector has continued to grow, if extremely slowly in the last five years. But the present government's cuts have yet to be really felt in job terms, and will undoubtedly hit women very hard.

The so-called 'second industrial revolution', centred on the use of the microprocessor, could drastically affect women's employment in the areas where it has least suffered so far. The service industries have always been labour intensive, and technological alternatives to cheap female labour were not available. The word processor and all the other equipment for the computerised office now makes it possible for the employers to introduce the type of 'rationalisation' which has produced severe job losses in the manufacturing sector. But as yet, the actual introduction of new technology is limited in Britain. The very speed of development of the technology combined with very restricted funds for investment may be deterring, or at least delaying, British employers from wholesale introduction of new equipment. They are afraid to buy new machinery which may be outdated by the time market conditions allow its full utilisation. It may be that the next 'mini-boom' (if there is one) will see more jobs lost through new technology.

The view that women constitute a reserve army of labour to be pulled into the

workforce in a boom and pushed out again at the onset of crisis is therefore a very simplistic one, which does not take into account the particular role which women's labour plays in British capitalism.

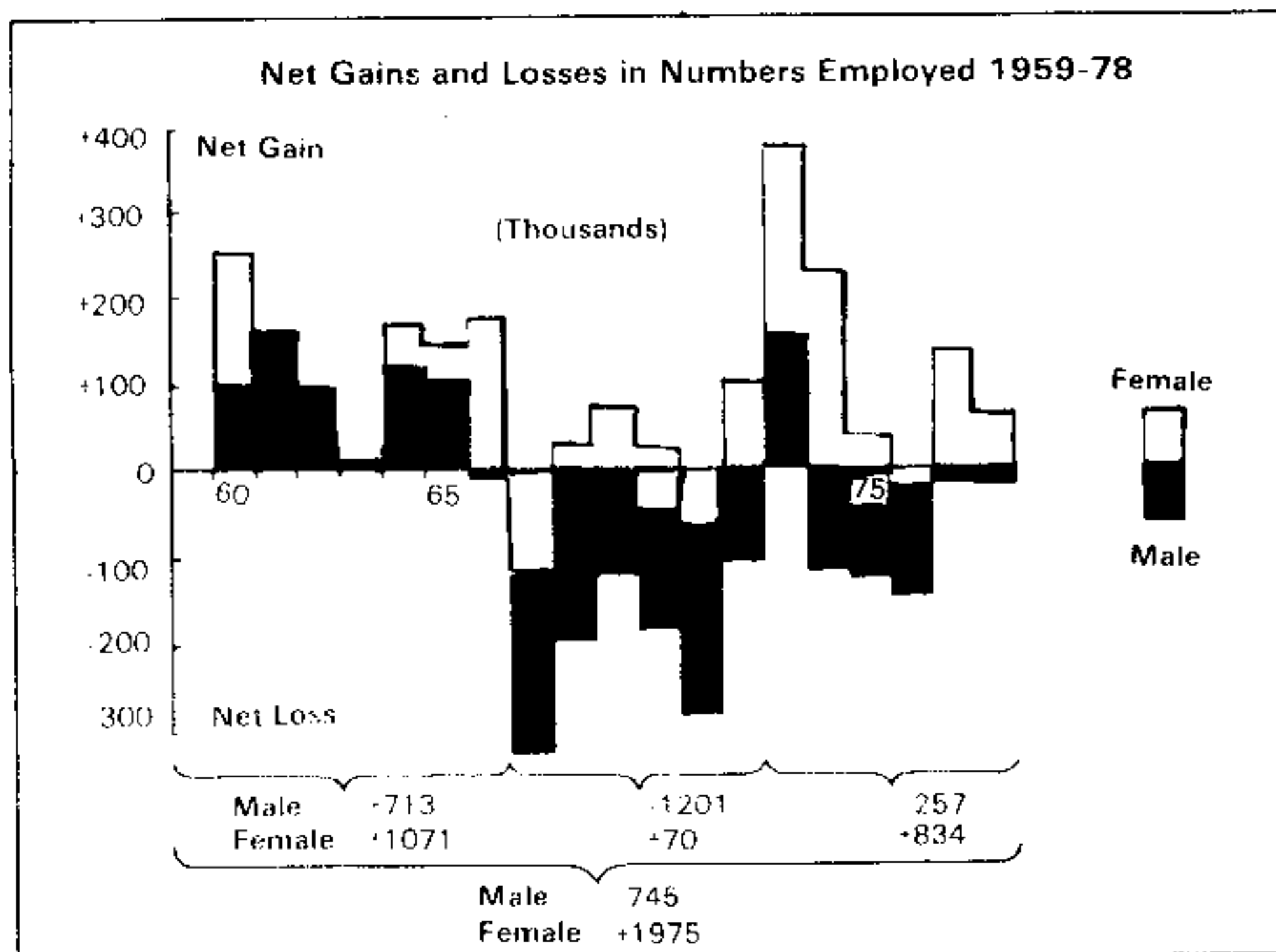
Of course that does not mean that the present emphasis on the family, and the attacks on women's rights are accidental, or unimportant. The ideological offensive which is accompanying the cuts, the Corrie Bill, and the reversal of the limited employment protection rights, is designed to reinforce the belief that women are primarily wives and mothers, and only secondarily workers. Women are encouraged to think that they have less right to their jobs than men, so as to make them less likely to complain about the conditions they face. This is clearly important when the question of redundancy arises. But even where jobs are not actually under threat, the attacks on the gains which we as women have made in the last decade will undermine the fight against low wages and rotten conditions. In other words, whether women are actually being forced out of work or not, the belief that they ought to be in the home can serve the employers very well.

It is a commonplace that capitalism thrives on a divided working class, and the sexual division is the deepest of all. The employers will be the only winners if the class as a whole fails to defend women's right to work in its widest sense, which includes the defence of abortion rights and social services. But if we are to succeed it is crucial that women organise as women, at work, in the unions. It is only there that the fight can be won.

Sue Cockerill and Lindsey German

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Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Steel: Behind the Picket Lines

Commenting on a strike in progress is a most foolhardy thing for a monthly publication. By the time it reaches the readers' hands the strike might be decisively won or decisively lost and the comment look ridiculous. Nevertheless, we could hardly let this issue of the *Review* pass without saying something about the organisation of the strike, for it is clearly one of the most important struggles waged by workers in this country for some time.

The safe bet, back before Christmas, was to say that the strike would be passive, demoralised and very easily beaten. The Tory press claimed that the strike would be an asset for British Steel, since they would be able to close down their loss-making plants for several weeks. In Yorkshire and South Wales and Teesside, many steel workers did not even bother to consider what they would do in the strike, since they assumed that Bill Sirs, the leader of the main steel union, would call the whole thing off at the last minute.

Yet the strike which began on the 2nd of January was the most militant and most active since the miners' strike of 1972. Nightly the television screen showed pickets boasting that they were 'secondary' or even 'tertiary' pickets. Local strike committees openly repudiated the promises made by union officials to private steel employers and stockholders. By the third week of the strike the government, although by no means defeated, was visibly wavering in its decision to see things through to the end:

The Observer told on 20 January 'How Margaret came back from the brink', claiming that 'the government now wants to settle the steel strike as quickly as possible', while *The Financial Times* noted that 'A number of Sir Keith's colleagues say that he has not helped the situation by his dogmatic approach.'

How did this all come about? Why did a union which has not called an official strike for more than 50 years suddenly do so? How did rank and file militancy suddenly emerge in an industry dominated for much longer than that by a stifling, right wing bureaucracy? How did the strikers come to organise themselves? What were their successes and failures?

We talked to steel workers and SWP members active around the strike in its most militant area, Sheffield, in order to find some answers to these questions.

Background to the strike

The main steel union, the ISTC, has been probably the most right wing of right wing unions for decades. It had no official strike action for more than 50 years. Right up until the second world war, its whole approach to wages was based upon forming a joint national committee with management to monitor steel prices and tie wages directly to them. Instead of paying for officials to negotiate wages, the members were paying for accountants to study price movements!

Under nationalisation the union has accepted all forms of collaboration and participation.

No room was left within the structure of the union for any rank and file organisation beyond the individual branch—and each section within a single plant was a separate branch. It was not allowed for the representatives of one section of a plant to meet the representatives of another section and decide on joint action. The most basic solidarity was ruled out.

The only form of liaison between branches allowed was through 'joint branch committees' which had no decision making power. They were always attended by a full time official who would make sure such powers were not exercised. So one section of a works could not take joint action with another section without first getting official support from the national leadership.

This did not mean that there were no strikes. Even the steel industry could not quite achieve this managerial utopia. A good branch secretary could use occasional industrial action or the threat of it to force up the wages of his own section. So, a few years back, the union's annual report could refer to 380-odd strikes taking place in a year. This provided a certain safety valve for the union bureaucracy when it came to buying off discontent, although it did not stop them telling any striking section to return to work immediately. What was ruled out completely was any possibility of an adjoining section linking into such action. The only link

between the different branches had to be the national bureaucracy. Indeed, until the early 1970s, even the most elementary link that exists in other unions, a national conference, did not exist.

Whenever rank and file steel workers began to agitate against this state of affairs, the union connived with management to get them sacked. This happened to many militants in South Wales in the 1930s; it happened to eight branch officials in Corby in 1962; just before the recent strike a branch secretary at the Stocksbridge works, near Sheffield, Brian Molyneux, was sacked for allegedly attending an 'unofficial' trade union meeting during lunchtime; another Sheffield branch secretary, Joe Herbertson, was also sacked at the same time.

In the course of the strike itself, the union has promised disciplinary action against a full time official in the Sheffield area, for saying in public he was going to ignore Sirs' instruction to moderate picketing.

Against such a background, any movements to reform the union have rapidly come to nothing. The most recent, at last year's conference, was smashed after Sirs denounced it to the conference as an 'International Socialist' front (even though the organisers had tried to ward off this allegation by keeping SWP members out of their meetings).

Yet even this tightly-policed right wing was forced to take strike action. Why?

An SWP member in Sheffield who has studied the union for many years explains:

'You have to look at the way the Steel Corporation did an about-turn on their expansion programme, cutting by 50 per cent what they previously planned to produce. They planned to produce 30 million tonnes; now they are cutting back to 15 million. They want to wipe out half the labour force - more than half if you look closely at the productivity targets they talk about. To make 15 million tonnes at a productivity of 250 tonnes a man means getting rid of 100,000 workers out of 180,000.

'But the Corporation cannot do that without smashing the union. For, however reactionary it is, it still has powers to negotiate the things the corporation wants to negotiate, like the complete closure of works, the introduction of complete flexibility throughout, the breakdown of all demarcation lines between jobs.

'So the corporation made a deliberately insulting pay offer—aimed at humiliating the union.

'That is why the union activists—even ones who always put up with Sirs in the past—are so bitter. The BSC had promised them all sorts of things with the huge investment scheme here. They promised them that their jobs would be secure, that conditions would be good, that wages would be good. And none of that has turned out. For years and years people went along with what management wanted—the productivity programmes, the job participation schemes, works councils, worker directors, even collaborating in works chaplaincy schemes. All this involved the activists in the branches for decades, and suddenly it's all

nothing. It's only led them to the lowest of low wage offers and the least secure jobs. It's no wonder there is a feeling of bitter betrayal by management.'

“What has characterised the strike, not having any traditions, has been pure enthusiasm”

The bitterness translated itself into a mass, spontaneous upsurge of enthusiasm the moment the strike started.

As one SWP worker explains:

'What we underestimated in advance was the enthusiasm for the strike. Take for instance my works, the Shepcote Lane works. What happened on the first day of the strike was that people lined up at the gates, as if they were going to work, and started picketing. The enthusiasm of the blokes especially from Rotherham, meant that if you'd gone along Attercliffe Common—the road from Sheffield to Rotherham—you'd have seen pickets at all the engineering factories, and they were 24 hour pickets, maintained over the weekend. Their presence cause a complete furore inside the factories. At Edgar Allen's foundries they turned away all the sand, and it was going to close. At Shardlows they turned back the bread and meat vans, so the canteen couldn't operate!

A white collar worker in the industry makes the same point:

'What has characterised the strike, not having any traditions, is pure enthusiasm. We've been battling away with our heads against a brick wall for rank and file organisation for a long time, and suddenly the response from the rank and file is unbelievable.'

It was this which caused Sirs finally to issue the call for the private sector to come out.

'Sirs has been under fantastic pressure because of what's been happening in South Yorkshire. Take for instance Simpson's; a BSC subsidiary in Manchester. The Stocksbridge people went to Simpson's to stop the movement of steel there. It's in another Division of the union, and the ISTC Divisional Officer comes along and says, "This is our territory, you've got no right to be here." The lads simply replied, "We're not leaving until you've got the pickets to take over." It is this sort of attitude around the country, with people prepared to break all the rules, that has put tremendous pressure on Sirs.'

The degree of active involvement in the strike varies enormously from area to area. But even in the weak areas the numbers picketing has been much higher than in strikes in traditionally militant industries.

One SWP member explains it like this:

'They've never been involved in such strikes before. They've only ever seen strikes on television where the emphasis is on the picketing and they think that going on strike means mass picketing.'

It's an amazing example of combined and uneven development of consciousness. A most backward group of workers learning a technique from the most advanced groups and raising it to a higher level.

The organisation of the strike

The organisation of the strike varies enormously from place to place. Even in the Sheffield area you can find examples of weak organisation as well as the most marvellous. But what seemed to characterise it everywhere in the first days was the complete loss of control by the old right wing officials.

The need to prepare for the strike and then to run it, threw to the fore the one thing the union bureaucracy had always stopped in the past—direct collaboration between the branches for the different sections within the plants. The previously impotent joint branch committees suddenly took on a new life and were transformed into strike committees which were able to ignore the officials.

'With the preparation for the strike, the joint committees began gradually to assert their authority independently of the full timers. The structure was already there. You had the officers of the different branches within a works, meeting together on a regular monthly or quarterly basis as a joint committee. As soon as the knowledge came that there was going to be a strike, they suddenly got up and said, "We're taking over the running of it". When the strike started, they moved into the full timers' offices.'

One of the steel workers tells what it's like in the Divisional union office in Rotherham:

'Go into the offices where the strike committee are very very busy. And Joe Pickles, the divisional organiser who used to be the man who ran the union in South Yorkshire, is sat in another room, on his own, irrelevant to the strike.

'He did sign a few dispensations, but the pickets wouldn't have anything to do with them. They said that only the strike committee could authorise such things.' The only official who has any influence over the committees is a left Labour organiser, Keith Jones.

The South Yorkshire strike committees developed a sort of pyramid structure. At the base were the local works' joint committees, one each for Stocksbridge, Rotherham and Scunthorpe. And above them was the divisional committee. In the case of Rotherham there were also three strike committees for each works in Rotherham.

The committees tended to be made up from those of the people who had been active in the union before the strike who took the initiative in the organisation of it. With only a couple of exceptions they were not politically involved, although some had been involved in the pressure to reform the



Birmingham Steel Workers' Demo



Bill Sims at Wales TUC Rally, Cardiff



Hadfields, Sheffield



Wales TUC Demo, Cardiff 28 January

union, and many are very much influenced by Arthur Scargill of the Yorkshire miners. As one SWP member points out:

'They invited Callaghan to address the big rally in Sheffield, although he didn't come. At the same time, however, they're very friendly to us. They read and respect *Real Steel News* and our meetings are advertised in the strike offices.'

The links between the committees and the active section of the rank and file are quite close. The thing that socialists normally demand in strikes, but rarely get regular mass meetings seem to be taken very much for granted in Rotherham and Stocksbridge.

However, some very important weaknesses had revealed themselves by the second week.

The first was that nothing like the same level of active involvement had occurred in Scunthorpe as in Rotherham and Stocksbridge. The proportion of pickets was much smaller, there were not the regular

mass meetings, and the strike committee seemed more influenced by the officials.

In Rotherham a different problem arose. The Divisional Strike Committee, although still quite independent of the right wing officials, showed signs of losing contact with the rank and file.

One SWP member saw it like this:

'The strike committee is tending to get bogged down in the sort of work that the officials or their office staff ought to do; for example, they have been organising a meticulous mailing system to send out to all branches affiliated to the trades council with collection sheets—a lot of envelope licking whereas what they ought to be doing is going round factory shop stewards' committees and speaking at factory canteens.'

Another saw it like this:

'It is much more bureaucratised than the local committees. But inside that building there's a lot of different things going on. The bit you see is more bureaucratised. A load of

people rushing round, not quite knowing what to do, people coming in and out. That's where employers go for dispensations, it's where the press and the TV go. It's so busy, you get the feeling of people running themselves off their feet and probably accomplishing very little. There's almost a sense of unreality up there.

'But what you don't notice unless you actually know the blokes is that inside there, there are area strike committees covering the Rotherham works. While the Divisional Strike Committee has been worried about having their heads chopped off—handing out dispensations when they shouldn't, pulling pickets off places and demoralising them—the local Rotherham strike committee has been very solid, very quiet, doing an effective job. Every decision is weighed up for the effects it will have on the morale of the pickets. They know there is nothing more frustrating than to be on the point of closing a place down and then to be told to lift the picket.'

The Stocksbridge strike committee has been an example of how a strike should be organised. You enter its office and you are immediately struck by the sense of order and purpose. On the walls are a dozen notices detailing picket destinations, pick-up points and times: as well as a notice for a steel workers' public meeting and a *Hospital Worker* social for the strike fund. Every three or four minutes the phone rings; a report from a picket line in Blackburn, a wife who wants to know whether her husband is out picketing today, an offer of some coke for the pickets' braziers. Each call is meticulously logged in a notebook—a quick read of the book shows you the successes and the problems of the pickets in a dozen parts of the country. On one of the desks is a number of typed sheets; a closer look reveals a numbered list of picket-volunteers, complete with addresses and phone numbers; the list contains more than 2000 names. Next to it are shorter lists, with perhaps a dozen names and phone numbers on each: the pickets due to go out tonight. Someone comes in: 'I've got 30 lads eager to go out and shut somewhere!' 'We can't send you until after the weekend; we haven't got the money for the petrol.'

Half an hour later in the welfare hall which is the main strike headquarters in Stocksbridge. A dozen or so men come in, and stand around for five minutes—middle-aged men in fur-lined wellingtons; a couple of greaser types with leathers and quiffs. Then one of the strike committee reads out a list. It's like being in the army, or at school. Each man answers his name. One of the drivers takes the list and signs it. He is given petrol money, while the men file out, each being handed his 'snap', a packet of sandwiches, as he goes. They are off to Blackburn in the minibus. Now a group come in and the procedure is repeated: they're for Manchester. Three or four sheets of Melt the Iron Lady stickers go with them. An SWP member involved in the picketing has described how this almost military level of organisation developed:

'We started out with something of an advantage in Stocksbridge, because the meeting shop had been out on strike since 7 December over the sacking of the branch secretary, Brian Molyneux. There had never been any sort of militant tradition in Stocksbridge, but the melting shop strikers had to learn to organise and to picket. That meant that when the national strike came on 2 January we had a hard core with some experience, who could teach others how to picket, how to stop a waggon and talk to the lorry driver.'

'The people involved in the Molyneux strike carried the picket line for the first couple of days. Then they got a mass meeting together, took the names and phone numbers of volunteers, phoned them up and got them going out. It's not a case of people just turning out. They get a phone call: 'Do you want to picket at such and such a place tomorrow?'

'The high proportion of the pickets has a lot to do with the location—the fact that Stocksbridge is built around the works. You've got the valley with the works on one side, the population on the other. You walk

down the road from your house and you're at the works' gate. You go out to do the shopping and you go past the strike offices. But it's also got to do with the telephone list, which means you can get in touch with people. We've got people from the works who live in Sheffield or Barnsley picketing.'



If the whole of the country were like Stocksbridge, the strike would soon have been won. Unfortunately it is not. We have already seen some of the weaknesses in the organisation. These weaknesses occur in a strike that has faced some major problems.

The comparison that leaps to mind when looking at the steel strike is the miners' strike of 1972. That, too, was said by the press to be doomed in advance. In that strike as well, it was the rapid build up of flying pickets that falsified such forecasts. It is quite likely that there have actually been *more* pickets active in the steel strike than there were in the 1972 strike. However, they have had to face greater objective difficulties than the miners did.

The miners could concentrate on about 200 power stations and a relatively small number of large coal and coke depots. The steel workers, by comparison, have been faced with about 2000 steel stockholders and, in the first month of the strike, a plethora of private steel firms producing more than a quarter of the industry's output. So although the picketing seems to have been fairly effective where it has occurred, there have been many outlets for steel not easily touched. Then there is another problem not seriously faced by the miners. Often the pickets are asking a firm's own lorry drivers not to go through its gates effectively they have been asking other people to come out on strike in solidarity with them, not always an easy thing to get.

Finally, the question of cash has also been a problem. The union nationally is very wealthy, with assets of £11 million. But it has been hanging tightly on to these, and

local strike committees have been having to raise their own funds. And here their lack of experience has been a hindrance. They have not had any tradition of going to other industries to raise regular amounts of money, and often have merely sent collection sheets or letters without insisting on speaking to the stewards and the shop floor. For example, the secretary of one engineering combine in Sheffield tells how three times he visited the strike committee in Rotherham, offering to introduce them to stewards, and each time his offer was not taken up. Yet the sending out of the flying pickets alone is costing hundreds of pounds a week, for the best strike committees.

The lack of experience of the strikers has been exploited both by their own leadership and by other bureaucratic elements in the trade union movement so as to weaken the strike.

This was most obviously so after the first week of the strike. The activism of the pickets caused consternation to Bill Sirs, who was already trying to do a deal with the Corporation and the government around productivity payments. He encouraged local officials to give dispensations to private steel, which demoralised strikers who had made great efforts to picket firms to a standstill.

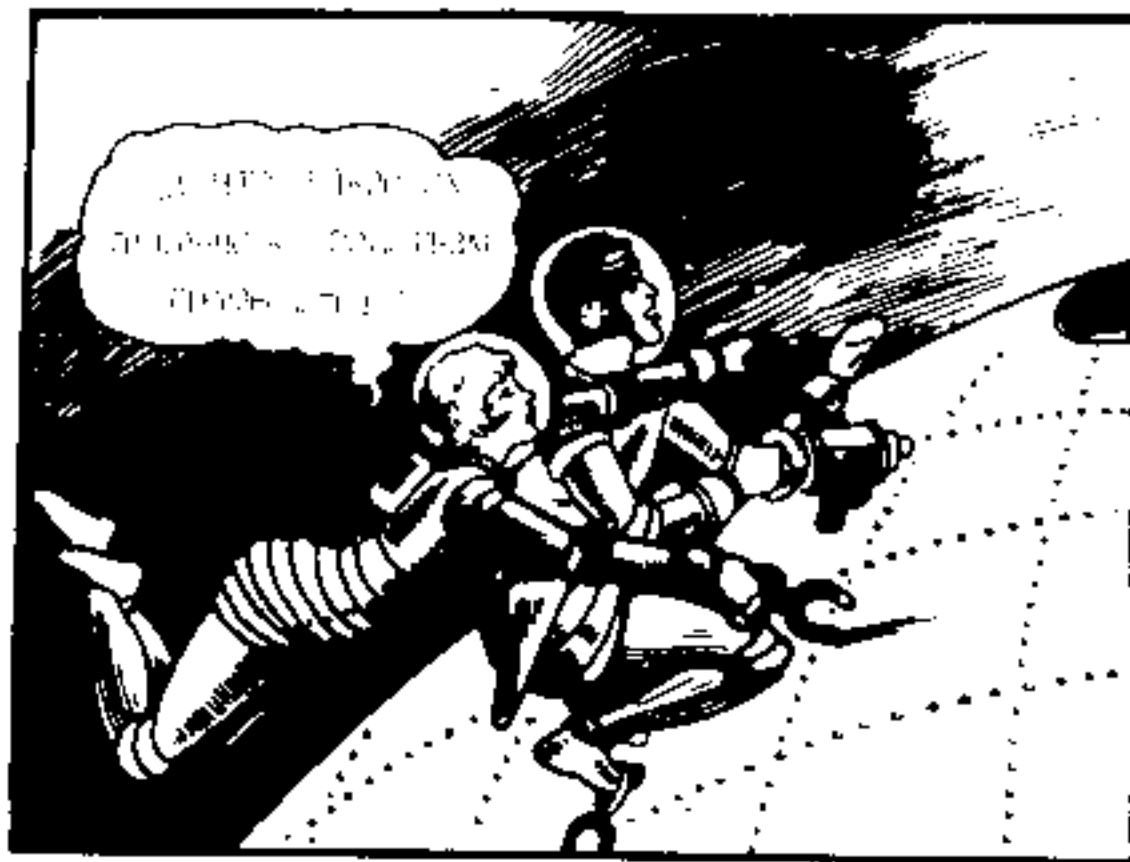
The strike committees which were close to the pickets saw the damage being done and ignored the dispensations. Their slogan was 'No Steel Moves'.

It was then that a different force came into play. In Sheffield the spontaneous pickets had hit many engineering factories. Inside the factories the stewards and convenors were often quite upset—for, in their inexperience the pickets had not thought to tell trade unionists inside the factories what they were doing. Unfortunately, at this point the CP-controlled engineering union district committee came forward with exactly the wrong response. Instead of explaining to its stewards that they had to bear with the pickets, as the only quick way to win a crucial dispute, it tried to pressurise the strike committee into withdrawing some of the pickets.

This pressure came just as the ISTC bureaucracy was applying similar pressure against the picketing of private steel plants like Hadfields. Instead of stepping up the scale of the pickets, the Divisional Strike Committee retreated, fearing it was becoming isolated from the rest of the country. The momentum of the picketing weakened a little—just as newspaper reports first began to indicate that the government was getting worried by the strike.

Examples like this show how, even in an inspiring, enthusiastic strike like the steel one, the spontaneous initiatives of people need to be complemented by revolutionary organisation, capable of spreading the experiences of the best areas like Stocksbridge to the weaker areas, and capable of arguing against every concession to the union bureaucracy. It is because such organisation has not existed in more than the most embryonic form in South Yorkshire that, as this article is written, the outcome of the strike is still in doubt.

Chris Harman



Soviet Science Fiction

Revolutionaries tend to despise science fiction—especially those who have made a study of the various 'texts'—Trotsky, Gramsci, Lukacs ... you name it and profess a view of what constitutes socialist art, or what attitude socialists should have to bourgeois writers. Science Fiction makes their hackles rise. Not only is it 'escapist' or 'artificial': it tends to be read by masses of people and it has now invaded both cinema and TV to an extent which makes 'War of the Worlds' look like an innocent skirmish. And all this has happened in the last 30 years or so—surely the most rapid emergence of a new form of literature in history.

But, says the academic, it isn't new at all. Utopias and escapist themes are old news, going back hundreds of years—and before you know where you are you have a formula like 'SF is the opium of the people.'

Now of course there's something in the 'escapist' slur. Vast tracts of what is listed as SF in the bookshop are not only pseudo-religious trash and sexist (generally written by men for men), but also very unscientific and badly written. There is also a variety which is so full of technical terminology as to be impossible to understand without a degree in quantum theory. And even when you get to something half-way decent it turns out to depend on views of social development which are so mindless as to destroy any value in the work—a feudal cosmos with interplanetary warp drive.

Occasionally, however, we science fiction addicts do find writers who raise revolutionary questions, who approach their subject in a way which opens completely new horizons for the reader. One or two novels by Ursula Le Guin nearly make this category, and some of the short stories by Stanislaw Lem certainly do. But the Russian brothers, Arkadi and Boris Strugatski, are something quite special.

The first thing about the Strugatskis' novels is that they aren't escapist—on the contrary, they contain a series of often quite sharp satires on the Soviet bureaucracy. Despite this they publish quite openly in Russian, selling in hundreds of thousands of copies. Their long short story 'The Second Martian Invasion' describes how all of a sudden the inhabitants of a small town discover that something in their lives has changed. There have been troop movements, a firework display—or was it an artillery battle?—on the horizon. Then the new instructions start coming—about a new strain of blue wheat for which enor-

mous subsidies are given; and a new coinage—gastric juices. Clearly the new Martian regime, whose secret police then appear, has its good sides and bad sides.

This story was written at the time of one of the Kremlin's more absurd agricultural production campaigns. The Strugatskis' novel 'Hard to be a God' was published in 1964 in Russia, in 1975 here. It is a description of a Soviet scientific team (members of the Institute of Experimental History) with a watching brief on a planet in the throes of feudal wars. They must not intervene; they can only learn and save the odd individual from murder. It is not a particularly subtle book, but it asks a lot of good questions. One of the scientists is confronted by a peasant revolutionary demanding arms, instead of the gold he is discreetly supplied with. It raises the central dilemma of the explorers:

'You will raze to the ground the castles of the feudal lords and drown the barons in the bay. The rebellious masses will shower you, their liberator, with all honours, and you will be a good and wise ruler—the only good and wise man in your entire kingdom; in your goodness you will distribute all the land among your comrades-in-arms, but what good will this land do your co-fighters without serfs? And the wheel will turn in another direction again.'

It is rare to have the arguments about uneven development, socialism in isolation and substitutionism raised in Science Fiction—quite apart from the question of 'Soviet' intervention in a backward country/plant....

The Strugatskis are, however, at their best describing the scientific community, its arguments, its place in society, even its revolutionary role. In 'Definitely Maybe' (a bizarre translation of the Russian title 'A Billion Years To The End Of The World') a group of scientists pursuing their own diverse bits of research each find they are being threatened by something utterly alien. Events seem to be conspiring against them; there is a force at work which they cannot identify. It might be nature itself, it might be something more tangible. The personal and collective dilemma the scientists go through when confronted by the choice between personal safety and the search for truth are the subject of the book. As the wife of one of them says: 'If it's the universe, you have to give in; if it's aliens, you have to fight.' And in the end, someone will fight, is the message:

'And after all, I won't be there alone ... and not only there ... and not only me.' And he said nothing else, but I felt he was still speaking. There's no hurry, he was saying. There's still a billion years to the end of the world. There's a lot, an awful lot, that can be done in a billion years if we don't give up and we understand, understand and don't give up.'

Another extraordinary novel, which is also wildly funny, concerns the operations of the secret Scientific Research Institute of Thaumaturgy and Spellcraft, which conducts endless strange experiments into the supernatural. Chiefly the book—'Monday Begins on Saturday'—is a vehicle for taking the piss out of pompous Stalinoid scientists. There is a wonderful satire on the attempt to create an artificial perfect man, perfect because he is the 'universal consumer who desires everything and correspondingly is capable of everything.' The needs are of course artificial and so is the fulfilment. But the Strugatskis also range more widely—with the story of the unspendable coin (a 5 kopeck piece that keeps on renewing itself) and a separate episode where the hero, a computer scientist, travels into the described future—divided by an iron curtain into the World of Humanist Imagination and the World of Fear of the Future.

The most recently published of the Strugatskis' novels is one of the best. 'Roadside Picnic' describes an area of Canada which has been visited by outsiders. They have left behind—junk. But junk of incredible value. Not surprisingly an immense and highly complex black market develops in the various stuff, most of which is extremely dangerous to human life. A community of pirates 'stalkers' emerges, specialising in extracting the goods for illegal syndicates. The book describes the effect of this weird zone on the stalkers—how it twists their genes, how it warps their minds, how it kills and above all how it makes them supreme individualists, not caring much even about the fact of their comrades unless they can make money out of it. At the centre of the zone it is rumoured there is a Golden Ball which grants wishes, and the Strugatskis describe a terrifying journey to recover it, and what results.

The book has one of the best endings of anything I've ever read. It should convince you that revolutionary Science Fiction is a fine thing, and that the brothers Strugatski deserve a place on any socialist's bookshelf.

David Beecham.

Unfortunately some of the books described here are not that easily available: 'The Second Martian Invasion' is a paperback, currently out of print, though it may be obtainable. 'Hard to be a God' is an Eyre Methuen hardback, published in paperback by Daw Books in the US. 'Monday Begins on Saturday' is also published by Daw as a 'The Paradise of Paradise' which I have not seen. 'The Second Martian Invasion' is published by Daw in the US, and is available in this country through Macmillan, as is another book I haven't yet called 'Vonnegut 21 Century'. Both are in paperback. Finally 'Roadside Picnic' has recently been published by Penguin, who have promised another Strugatski novel, 'Prisoners of Paradise', later this year.

Imports: An Exception for Coal

Over the last couple of months, the letters columns of *Socialist Worker* have contained conflicting views over the demand for import controls against coking coal raised in South Wales. Bill Message, of *The Collier* writes on the background to the demand.

The traditional, orthodox, internationalist argument is that demands for import controls are wrong, because they simply try to export unemployment to workers in other parts of the world and reinforce the narrow chauvinism of the British working class. Unfortunately, in the case of coking coal, the issue isn't as simple as that. Underlying it is the struggle of the miners of South Wales to save their jobs from a Coal Board offensive aimed at closing the majority of the area's remaining 37 collieries.

The Coal Board has claimed to support the call for controls on imports and subsidies for South Wales coking coal. But on 2 October last year it announced an investment of £40m in a project to produce open cast coking coal in Queensland Australia.

'The Australian coal', it said, 'could be vital to future steel production in Britain and the European Community'.

This fits in with overall plans which mean that 'coal mining will tend to contract towards the English Midlands and Yorkshire, as the old coal fields of Scotland, South Wales, Kent and Northumberland and Durham become less and less economic to work' (*Financial Times* 17 December 1979).

Yet the miners union leadership nationally and in most areas still pretends that the industry does not face a job crisis.

Coming to office after the 1974 miners' strike, the Labour government sought to incorporate the miners' leaders through tripartite talks with them and the Coal Board. These gave birth to the Coal Board's 'Plan for Coal' which set targets for an increase in output from 120 tons to 135 tons by 1985 and 170m tons by the end of the century. A massive investment programme was begun in order to achieve the increases. The miners' leaders, left and right, were euphoric.

Only the very small voice of *The Collier*, the rank and file miners' paper, warned that the government's predictions for coal were deliberately inflated. They took no account either of the world economic crisis, which was bound to slow down demand for energy, or of the commitment of the government, the Electricity Board and big business to nuclear energy. What is more, the investment proposed was totally inadequate if the targets were to be taken seriously. *The Collier* concluded the whole thing was a con-trick aimed at making it easier to get productivity dealing and to

concentrate output in the Midlands and Yorkshire.

Events since 1974 have proved us right. Output has *declined*, and productivity dealing has been accompanied by a pit closure programme. Meanwhile, the union's formal opposition to closures has been undermined by the success of the Coal Board, aided by Labour's energy minister Tony Benn, in getting all levels of the union to participate in viability discussions.

So when there were rumours of pending pit closures in South Wales last year, the discussion was channelled into a special area tripartite committee, with comparisons, pit by pit, in terms of profitability. On the initiative of Benn, it was agreed that the first dozen pits threatened would be reprieved, while the area was given five years to prove that it could be profitable.

The fall of the Labour Government stopped the compromise being put into effect, but the Coal Board had achieved a victory by persuading one of the traditionally most militant areas in the industry to accept the argument that pits could eventually be closed on economic grounds. In reality, there was not a hope in hell of the 38 pits in the Area achieving profitability within five years.

Within a few months the first pit, Deep Duffryn, was shut. And now the Coal Board are using a fall in the demand for coking coal from the Steel Corporation which will decline even more as steel production at Port Talbot and Llanwern is slashed - to excuse the decimation of the coal field. The South Wales Coal Board Director, Weekes, is complaining about the Steel Corporation's threats to his industry: yet 12 months ago he was proposing such threats himself.

There is a direct link between the coal board aim to close pits in the South Wales and the import of coking coal; it intends to cut its South Wales losses while making profits out of strip-mined (open-cast) coal in Australia.

There may be comrades who argue that it is wrong for miners in Britain to make demands that would save their jobs, yet put miners in other countries out of work. It is an argument that merits serious attention.

The two main centres of open-cast coal production in the world are the US and Australia. Since the oil crisis there has been a boom in open cast production. It involves far less capital costs and is therefore much more profitable. It also involves far less labour costs. Strip mining on this scale is carried out by gigantic machines that move across the land digging the coal out in mile wide strips. Very few workers are involved.

In the US the coal operators have attempted to use strip mining to break the power of the union, the United Mineworkers of America. Strip mining

produces an even larger percentage of the country's total output, and is very largely unorganised. When the American miners strike the coal operators have a large scab sector to help them hold out.

It can thus be seen that the question of coking coal imports in South Wales is not totally unlike the problem facing registered dockers a few years ago. They were fighting against the container depots and unregistered wharves which were threatening their organisation and their jobs. In many cases these depots and wharves were owned by shipping and transport companies that had previously given work to registered dockers.

It was this fight that led to the jailing of the Pentonville Five, the mass action that led to their release and the defeat of the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. Only the most blinkered of dogmatists argued that the dockers were wrong because the fight would 'take jobs away from container depot workers'.

Having said this, it is also clear that the fight against imports is not *enough*. By *itself*, in fact it *is* a blind alley that can lead to chauvinism and class collaboration of the worst kind. The Communist Party in South Wales published a leaflet at the height of the campaign against the sell out of the NUM wage claim last November. It said not a word about wages, but concentrated *entirely* on import controls and included the marvellously internationalist slogan 'We are selling the independence of Britain as an industrial power.'

Quite obviously we should have nothing to do with such clap-trap.

The other demand that goes along with that for import controls is for the government to subsidise coal. It is a powerful argument. In France the subsidy amounts to £54 a tonne, in West Germany £31 a tonne and in Belgium over £80 a tonne. In Britain it is £1.39.

Again we must realise that the demand for subsidies by itself is not enough. In 1925 a very vicious Tory Government granted a temporary subsidy in order to gain time. When the subsidy was withdrawn in 1926 the government had prepared, the TUC had done nothing and the working class as a whole was defeated after the union leaders sold out the General Strike.

The way ahead is shown by the strike on Monday 28 January in Wales which involved not just the miners but thousands of other workers in action in support of the steelworkers and in defence of their own jobs. Only that kind of experience can open workers' eyes and take them beyond the ideological prison of arguing about profitability and viability. The general strike raises automatically among other things the question of five days' work or five days' pay.

That is why the union leaders are so scared of it. That is why the Wales TUC retreated from an all-out stoppage called for 21 January. Instead they fixed on a one day stoppage for 28 January and an indefinite strike as from 10 March, giving themselves plenty of time for manoeuvre.

The Wales TUC demands are: the suspension of Sir Charles Villiers and the three top BSC executives; a two-year postponement of the BSC's cutbacks; an inquiry into the possibility of selective import controls; a subsidy to bridge the £10 gap between the price of South Wales produced coking coal and the imported product.

These demands are hardly revolutionary. In fact they are hardly even reformist! The question of the right to work, production for need rather than profit, never mind workers' control couldn't be further from the minds of the trade union leaders. Yet they are precisely the questions that the crisis raises.

Bill Message

The Real Steel Story

The steel strike has thrown into stark relief the problems of an industry in which traditionally there has been no left presence. Members of the Socialist Worker Party in the industry have been able to exert a little influence in the strike through their bulletin, *Real Steel News*.

National issues have been produced weekly during the course of the strike, in runs of 20,000 and more. So, for instance, within 36 hours of Denning's injunction against the private sector strike and pickets, thousands of copies were being distributed in all parts of the country calling for workers to 'Defy Denning, Spread the strike, Stop all steel'.

At the same time several local bulletins have been produced regularly. In Sheffield, 3000 copies were being produced about every five days and were soon found in all the strike offices and on all the picket lines. Many strikers saw them as *the* strike bulletin.

Joe Herbertson, the editor, told us how *Real Steel News* was built up.

'It started two and a half years ago. There was the occupation of a small BSC plant in Greenwich and six people were victimised. In the occupation they had discovered that the special branch and the Economic League had been supplying information to the Corporation. I read about this in the *Guardian* and thought, 'You can't just sit back and let that sort of thing happen. And so I got the stories from the *Guardian* and from *Socialist Worker* and put them together into one sheet together with a call for support. I got hold of a list of all the QUEW convenors in steel and sent copies to them. It was just sending something into the unknown. I then rang the convenors about three days later to see how it had gone down. It had created immense interest. Some of them had called stewards' meetings over the information.

'That created a starting point. I invited some of the Greenwich people up and took

them round those half dozen people. I went to Rotherham and they took us to a stewards' meeting. The stewards there suggested to us people in the ISIC who might be more interested. In that single operation, I got the hard core of a contact list, and those same people are more or less the people who are running the strike.

'We then decided to produce the sheet regularly. The next issue was actually called *Real Steel News*. I phoned round the 10 or so contacts I had made, told them a bit more I'd learnt about Greenwich and picked up one or two more bits of information off them, which I put in the issue. I operated it more or less alone to start with, putting in a lot of stories about what was happening, a lot of propaganda, quite long articles.

'A monthly rhythm developed, where before producing a *Real Steel News* I'd ring everybody up, tell them what I knew and learn new things. By doing so, I was providing a sort of link up between them which hadn't been there. I was telling them what each other thought, so appalling was the communication between different works and union branches. Then I would get out and distribute it to all those people.

'Before long I had a fairly good set of contacts at shop steward level round South Yorkshire. And I never had any problems with people not talking to me because of the SWP thing.

'There were a number of stories that gave *Real Steel News* credibility on the shop floor—like when we were able to give details of a River Don management binge to a golf tournament.

'Then again, by ringing up a former steward at River Don—I just used to ring up any name I came across to get information and make contact --I found out about how they were closing the Brightside Lane machine shop. We were able to give information completely different to what the stewards were saying.

'That was when we really got some credibility for being very accurate and very deep.

'Then there was a strike where a transport and general official was telling external T&GWU lorry drivers to cross an elec-

tricians picket line. We were able to print an appeal from the strike committee to the T&GWU workers inside the plant, who later that day kicked the fulltimer off the dispute.

'After about a year we began to increase our membership and to have a few individuals who in their own department or union branch had some sort of influence. We were quite lucky that a few SWP members just happened by chance to get jobs in Steel. With *Real Steel News* we were able to hold them together and exert an influence. Now we have some quite well established comrades in every works. So in certain instances we can actually influence the way things go.

'*Real Steel News* became less a monthly newspaper, and more something specific, backing up our members in mass meetings, disputes, lobbies of conferences and that sort of thing.

'We certainly began to have some influence.

'For instance during the strike over the sacking of Brian Molyneux, I went round the factories with one of the newer branch committee members from Stocksbridge, showing him how you could collect money. He then passed the experience on to a number of other members.

'Again with other people at Stocksbridge, they have been influenced by what we have to say about how the strike committee mustn't get divorced from the rank and file. Constant contact with *Real Steel News* over a period has influenced --sharpened-- such people. It is at Stocksbridge we have recruited most people into the SWP during the strike.

'When it comes to a strike, it's not just the ideas you've got but your credibility in putting them forward. The fact that we've been around and haven't disappeared, getting tired after a couple of months, means that if we put an idea up it's taken seriously. We produced 29 monthly bulletins before the strike, and that's given us immense credibility with leading militants in South Yorkshire.

'We do now have something of a base in all the main plants in the area.'

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Buzby's Broad Left

In recent years the major unions, or at least their leaders, have swung noticeably to the right. In a period of relative inactivity this is perhaps not surprising. One would expect this then to be reflected in the Post Office Engineering Union, but this is not so. The struggle for the 35 hour week of 18 months ago was undoubtedly the watershed. That struggle was initiated by the left and carried through by the rank and file. Since that time and in particular because of the ultimate sell-out by the overwhelmingly right wing executive, a change has come over the union.

There has always been a 'left group' in the POEU, the leading figures in the main were CP members. In the last two years, that group has become an open formal organisation, the Broad Left, without the CP in control.

The Broad Left brings together various political factions in what is, it must be admitted, an uneasy alliance. What is significant is that, unlike the old left group, the Broad left has attracted many of the rank and file members, not just the Branch Secretaries and Chairmen, who are disaffected with the official leadership of the union.

Some people will find this alliance unpalatable, given the experience of Broad Lefts in other unions, but the plain fact is that no single party or group is strong enough to organise alone within the POEU. The Broad Left then is born of a desperate need to challenge the established leadership.

Since its formation the Broad Left has made a considerable impact within the union, the most recent example being at the union's rules revision conference last November. We revise the union rule book once every five years and it is these rules that determine the extent of the democracy within the union. Prior to conference the Broad Left had circulated various rule

changes many of which were picked up around the country and eventually appeared on the agenda of the conference. That of itself is not unusual, what was unusual was the reaction to those proposed changes. The right wing, both delegates and executive, were quite clearly scared. Not only was there a coordinated and organised opposition but many so-called uncommitted delegates were prepared to support us.

For years, since 1948 in fact, there has operated within the POEU a right wing 'Bloc', originally with its roots in Catholic Action, but latterly a mish-mash of right wing hacks with but two aims—jobs for the boys, and to do that, to keep the 'reds' off the executive. This Bloc has always denied its existence and has operated in secret but has managed effectively to control the union.

Last year they were forced into the open. As delegates filed into the Conference they were met by leaflets announcing 'Mainstream' the voice of the silent majority! They warned of the evils of the 'Communist Militant Tendency' (I objected to that!), hell bent on the destruction of civilisation as we know it, but worse, daring to change the rules of the union. In contrast our leaflets concentrated on policy and the need to give the rank and file control over their union and the leaders. Despite the hysteria of the right we were successful.

Not all our amendments were reached and not all were successful, but we did defeat the executive and therefore the right, on many key issues. The changes may not sound so great to comrades in other unions but for us they are positively epoch making. The right of NEC candidates to publish manifestos, the right of branches to submit propositions to a Special Conference (if we had had that in 1978 we would have won the fight for 35 hours), the control by the floor of conference of our standing orders committee, are all significant gains, made in

the face of fierce opposition from the leadership. Many other changes were made, the detail of which would not interest readers, but for us they are important.

Overall the conference was a success, from the opening meeting attended by almost half the conference delegates through the nightly meeting attended regularly by nearly 100 delegates. The euphoria was of course temporary the right still control the Union, the left only has 7 out of 23 seats, on the NEC, and we still have a long way to go.

The Broad Left still has much to achieve, the organisation is still weak, and the political alliance unsteady. Sooner or later the fragile united front will crack but for the time being it serves its purpose, to destroy the right wing stranglehold and to win the union to policies demanded by the rank and file.

Bryan Macey

Secretary North London Internal Branch POEU



Premature Burial

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions is, in the words of the *Morning Star*, "Britain's most influential and powerful rank and file organisation." It played a leading role against the last Tory attempt to shackle the Unions, calling and leading big unofficial political strikes against the Heath Government.

The recent Conference was therefore an important one, particularly because it comes in the middle of a new Tory offensive on trade union rights.

The make-up of this 1000-strong conference told a story about the state of the movement. To quote the *Morning Star* once again: "Among the delegates along with many fresher and younger faces were those of familiar trusted and experienced shop stewards and convenors." The composition reflected two things. One was the erosion of trade union organisation in some of the traditional industries and the growth of organisation in new areas. The other was the problems faced by the Communist Party.

The Platform of the Conference was not all that impressive. There were no rank-and-file steel strikers and no Scargill. Even leading members of the CP like McGahey and Gill did not bother to attend. It is clear that only part of the CP worked for the Conference. The rest found association with such an 'unofficial' body a bit too much of a political embarrassment.

The Declaration carried unanimously at

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the closure of the Conference reflected two pressures on the organisers. On the one hand, it dropped any reference to import controls a nationalist demand which always rouses opposition from the left. The one speaker who did start to try it on—Labour MP Leslie Huckfield—was loudly heckled and forced to back down. In addition, the Declaration contained many of the points of the Rank-and-file code of Practice. But the pressure from the right also showed through too.

There was no mention of rank and file control of the running of strikes or agreeing on settlements, and the test of a rank and file movement was said to be 'the extent to which it ensures the executives of all unions and the TUC General Council provide leadership for consistent and militant action to defeat the Tory plans.' Unofficial action was clearly the sticking point and the real weakness of the LCDTU was that, unlike the early 1970s, it was not ready to call for strike action against the new law irrespective of the officials.

Many of the speeches simply rehearsed the tired old arguments and many were treated with a certain amount of scepticism from the delegates. Brett of the AUEW, for example, was frequently and loudly informed that he was going on a bit too long. Three speakers stood out. One was from Slough Trades Council and talked about real problems and practical unity. One was third from the ISTC Executive and called for help on the picket lines. The third was the GMWU official—who was called to speak *on behalf of* the Chix strikers.

For many of the delegates the feeling was that the whole business was a bit of a waste of time. They wanted to talk about united action and to hear the experiences of other workers. But it was clear that the organisers wanted a rally rather than a conference. It was because they realised that the majority of the delegates wanted a serious debate on unity that they refused to take a vote on the resolution from the Defend Our Unions Committee and closed the Conference early.

Such bureaucratic manipulation is not new to the LCDTU. There have been big rows over it at previous conferences. The difference this time was that the majority of the delegates—including many CP members—were not prepared to let them get away with it.

The outcome was a setback for the movement. Whatever its limitations the LCDTU still commands a lot of support and there is no way that the Rank-and-File can the chance to go it alone. Although last year's Defend Our Unions Conference was actually larger than the LCDTU it is still not true that it was in any position to call for militant action on its own. That is why the letter to Kevin Halpin sent the day after the Conference calling on the organisers of the LCDTU to re-consider the question of unity is so important. It may turn out to be the case that the organisers of the LCDTU are so blinded by sectarianism that they refuse to do anything, even call another conference, for fear that they might

be forced to make concessions. If that does happen, then the Rank and File may be forced to go it alone. But such an initiative will be very much weaker than a joint effort and nobody in their right mind could welcome such a situation.

It is therefore vital that militant work alongside CP members in pushing for the implementation of the Declaration and prove in practice that they really want unity.

The Great Clegg Con

The credibility of the Clegg Commission on public sector pay comparability is now at an all time low. The teachers are pissed off, the nurses and midwives are pissed off, the one million local government manual workers are pissed off and the NHS ancillary workers are pissed off. Very little criticism of Clegg is to be heard from the public sector trade union leaders however, because they were involved in setting the whole cumbersome process up in the first place to try to save the face of the dying Labour government in the spring of 1979.

Let's look at how local government workers pay has changed, because their case highlights what for many must seem like a process of one step forward, two steps back. In November 1978 they claimed £60 a week minimum for the bottom grade and pro rata rates above that for the other grades. After a long struggle and vicious press witchhunts, they settled in February 1979 for £3.50 a week increase and a £1 a week payment on account of the Clegg Commission's award. Part-timers didn't even get that much.

The Clegg Award was to be paid in two equal parts on August 1 1979 and April 1 1980. But the pay rates recommended by Clegg, based on comparisons with the pay in other jobs at November 1978, will not be paid in full until April 1980—a time lag of sixteen months.

The latest settlement, this January, is backdated to November 1979 and gives around 12.5 per cent increases on the basic rates at that time. This includes the first part of the Clegg award. But the second half of the award, still based on 1978 pay levels, is not even enhanced by this 1979 pay settlement. This means that the comparability increases are substantially eroded before they even get them, and that when the last bit of increase is paid, in April this year, three of the grades in the seven grade structure will still be on less than the £60 a week basic that they claimed in November 1978.

Nurses and Teachers

We are supposed to think that the comparability exercises carried out for the Clegg Commission are scientific and that as a consequence the final awards according to grade are closely allied to carefully calculated nationally based job evaluation. Nothing could be further from the truth. In

The Tory offensive is a very real pressure on the working class movement and it will demonstrate the need for unity to all but the blindest of hacks. But at the same time it is necessary to continue work around the Code of Practice, which fills in the important gaps left by the LCDTU and which may have to provide the basis for a fresh start in the fightback.

Caroline Conway.

the case of the nurses and midwives, the results of the comparability exercise produced uneven, if not eccentric, results. Clegg had to wave a magic wand over the percentage increases implied by the exercise in order to come up with a 'rational' system of increases that he could publish. Here are some examples:

Grade	Increase suggested by comparability %	Increase recommended by Clegg
Area Nursing Officer	-12.5	0.0
Senior Nursing Officer	21.2	18.0
Nursing Officer II	4.3	18.0
Sister	14.6	25.0
Staff Nurse	29.6	23.0
Auxiliary	7.1	4.3

In the case of the teachers, it has emerged that the delay in giving the first part of their Clegg award is due to the fact that the results of their comparability study, carried out by management consultants Inbucon, are so wildly erratic that even Clegg cannot massage them into shape. It appears that the results show that some teachers should get 70% increases, others nothing at all, and that some should get a wage cut.

What can we conclude?

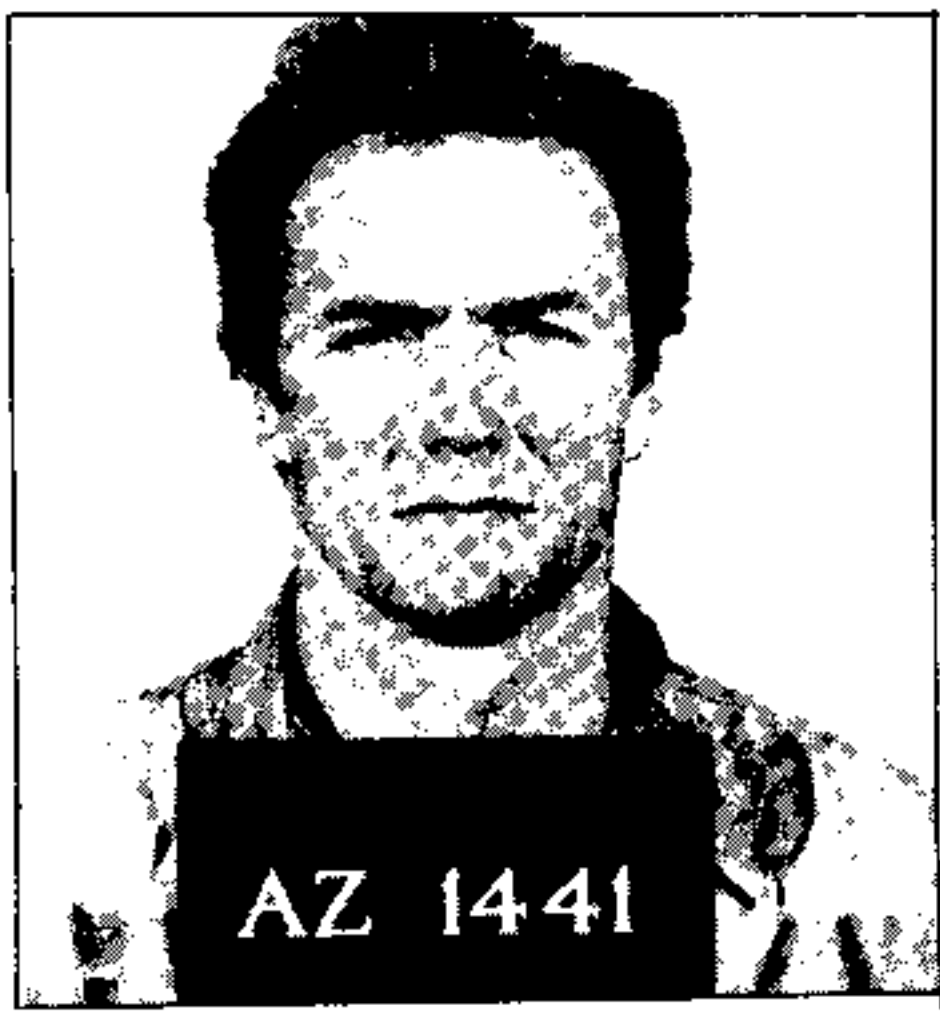
The whole Clegg exercise has been a cynical operation to buy time. Even the timing of the awards meant that any possibility of pay rates being brought into line with comparable levels elsewhere is nullified because of the time lag.

The low paid remain low paid and the trade union leaders in the public sector have done nothing to challenge what amounts to the institutionalisation of low pay.

The Tories are reaping the harvest of a dirty Labour deal. The whole Clegg operation is based on defusing organisation and militancy on the basis of promises of future increases. Better pay in the public sector is only going to be achieved through hard fought industrial action, not by being conned into the belief that some outside so-called 'scientific' exercise is likely to prove that anyone deserves more.

Jon Watson

FILM REVIEWS



Brother Clint?

Escape from Alcatraz
Director Don Siegel

Clint Eastwood is the world's top box office star. A position he has enjoyed for the past decade. His latest film *Escape from Alcatraz* has just opened in London. The film is directed by Don Siegel and marks a return to the Siegel-Eastwood partnership which produced such films as *Dirty Harry*, *Coogan's Bluff* and *The Beguiled*. But *Alcatraz* is a far cry from the Dirty Harry-style action movie Siegel is noted for. It also developed significantly the Eastwood character, that of the lone hard-man, which has been slowly evolving ever since the spaghetti westerns (*A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More*, and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*) directed by Sergio Leone.

The film is about prisoner Frank Morris who after numerous jailbreaks finds himself in Alcatraz, the island fortress from which escape is apparently impossible. Siegel's direction is faultless, the kind of near-perfect craftsmanship evident in earlier films such as *Madigan*, applied this time to a much more substantial plot.

Almost the entire film takes place inside the prison. It focuses on the development of Morris' relationship with a handful of other prisoners and their painstakingly detailed preparations for escape. During these preparations the tension never flags for a moment. Siegel's control though he has renounced the wham-bang dramatics of earlier films, never falters.

The prisoners are portrayed as a well-organised, sympathetic group of people who supported one another in their efforts to maintain their integrity and ultimately to attain freedom, for some of them at least.

The individuality of the prisoners is treated with sensitivity: Doc, who antagonises the warden by portraying his monomania on canvas; Litmus, who cherishes his pet mouse; English, a black prisoner serving two 99 year sentences for defending himself against Alabama rednecks. Eastwood as Morris, although it is he who masterminds

the escape, fits in as one of this group of individuals. This is an interesting development of the laconic loner image he has had on screen for at least fifteen years.

Sergio Leone's *Dollar* films turned the conventions of the traditional western on their head. Eastwood's *Man with No Name* was certainly not the conventional hero striving to make the West a safe place for women and children. He is a taciturn figure moving from one superbly choreographed gunfight to the next. The hypocrisy of the old western is done away with and we see the West as a desolate place ravaged by war and advancing capitalism, objectified in the coming of the railway. Whatever the *Man with No Name* does, he does for himself alone.

The films dented considerably the neat American-dream ideology put over by conventional westerns. At the same time they were enormously successful, and set Eastwood en route to the million dollar bracket. He has been developing this anti-hero image ever since.

In the tough cop movies of the early seventies—*Dirty Harry* and the films which followed it—the Eastwood figure emerged substantially unaltered. But controversy raged as to the politics and morality of these films. Transferred from the mythical plane of the old West to the streets of San Francisco, the values espoused by the lone hard-man became highly contentious. *Dirty Harry* wages a war against both a lunatic killer and an ineffective liberal bureaucracy. Siegel's neat direction allows his audience no option but support for Harry and this made people uncomfortable. Both Siegel and his film have been labelled 'racist' and 'fascist'. Eastwood himself defended his *Dirty Harry* character as operating according to his own 'higher morality'.

Since *Dirty Harry*, Eastwood has directed a number of his own films. Their interest lies in his various reconstructions of his own established image. In *Play Misty for Me* he relinquishes the image of self-sufficient tough guy in order to play a disc jockey murmuring sweet nothings on late night radio. Primarily the film explores this character's inability to deal with women. Caught between his independent girlfriend and a crazy seductress who would be quite at home in *Psycho*, he is completely paralysed. The film leads us to see the character's problems as forced upon him by a sexist world, rather than presenting him as a victim of women themselves.

The Gauntlet, which Eastwood also directed, takes this process one step further. Eastwood is back as the tough cop. But with a difference. The woman prisoner he is sent to extradite gets the better of him all down the line. She is smarter, wittier and in her own way as tough as he is. But the image is further tampered with in the action sequences which are played tongue-in-cheek, as houses collapse completely under a rain of bullets and Eastwood takes over the entire Arizona police force from a makeshift armoured bus. When he turned up in his next film, *Every Which Way but Loose* partnered by a gorilla it seemed possible he intended lampooning himself out of ex-

istence altogether.

But there has been another strand of development in recent films. In *The Outlaw Josey Wales* the *Man with No Name* begins to relate to other people. At the end of the film he settles down to share life with an assortment of outcasts like himself.

This ending foreshadows *Escape from Alcatraz*, where the solidarity and creativity of a group of people in pursuit of freedom are the key elements. (Those who have accused Siegel of racism and fascism should think again after this film.) So finally here in *Alcatraz* the Eastwood figure emerges as a brother of whom any one of us should be proud.

Jane Ure Smith

Older Yes, Wiser No

Wise Blood

Director John Huston

John Huston is a real grand old man of Hollywood. Now 74, his films include *The Maltese Falcon*, *The African Queen* and *The Asphalt Jungle*. The critics seem to have gone overboard about his new movie, *Wise Blood*. *Time Out* gave it a cover and a feature article. Nigel Andrews of the *Financial Times* went so far as to claim that the film would surely have won the Grand Prix at Cannes—had it been entered. (Which reminds me of Lady Catherine de Bourgh's comment in *Pride and Prejudice* that her daughter would have been a brilliant pianist 'if her health had allowed her to learn.)

Explaining the film, Huston says: "It is about the brief and ill-fated rebellion of a young fanatic against his faith. He is doomed from the start and destroyed by it in the end. It's a very convoluted, ingrown, terrible and terribly funny plot."

All over the place I have read reviews which back up Huston's assertion that the film is funny. I wonder whether the critics have actually seen it. Perhaps I have no sense of humour, but then neither does the rest of the audience who saw it when I did. There was the odd giggle, nothing more.

The critics also seem to think it says something profound about religious fanaticism. The young hero, Hazel Motes, blinds himself and, binding his body with barbed wire, proceeds to imitate the martyrdom of Christ. Why? Ostensibly because the local sheriff has pushed his battered old car into a lake. Now searchers for profundity will interpret the scene as follows: The car is the symbol of Hazel's rebel "Church of Truth Without Christ". The dumping of the car then signifies both the burial of Hazel's rebel "religion" and baptism into a new faith, namely Christianity, from which he has been trying to escape. Neat. But, so what?

All this wouldn't be too bad if we had some flesh and blood characters developing in the film. But Hazel, the mad preacher

rebel is just dumped inexplicably before us, to play out, rather boringly, his equally inexplicable fate. Neither word nor image lead us to understand Hazel or what prompts his actions.

But above all the film is just plain nasty. The most unpleasant bit is when Hazel, infuriated by an attempt to mimick his anti-christ preaching, runs down and kills the poor old drunk who has been paid to imitate him. The scene in the end only conveys senseless violence, because we never fully

understand Hazel's feeling nor Huston's attitude to them. An apparent attempt to blend comedy and tragedy fails miserably.

Whatever Huston intended he didn't manage to translate it on to the screen. The subject matter is ultimately tedious and irrelevant. Huston's technique, much praised by the critics, recalls the films of Jean Renoir and such Hollywood classics as *Best Years of our Lives*. But the easy style of these films with their minimum of editing and deep focus photography (you see the

background clearly too) served to enhance the warmth and generosity present in the narrative. In *Wise Blood* the use of such techniques is just a cover for emptiness and confusion within.

Ten years ago, Andrew Sarris in his book *American Cinema*, claimed Huston was a director without conviction, coasting along on a false reputation with an alibi for every bad movie. The critics have given him his alibi for *Wise Blood*. Make sure you don't. **Jane Ure-Smith**

LETTERS

Fight from the Inside

I read with interest the article of Mike McGrath in your last issue on the practice of the *Militant* group in the CPSA. As a rank and file CPSA member in the Newcastle Central Office branch I would like to make a number of comments.

In my opinion the *Militant* group very much fill the vacuum which in many industrial unions would be filled by the Communist Party. However, they are even more dangerous because they stand on paper at least in support of revolutionary ideas.

In Newcastle Central Office they have been in control of the branch since 1974 and have never been seriously challenged. They have been able to attract a lot of young workers to them with their socialist rhetoric. But now their politics are being put to the test by the cuts 'campaign'.

Their strategy of fighting cuts is one of counterposing long term intentions to fighting today. They argue that as we have no mass redundancies in the Civil Service we should call a halt to any industrial action and look to 'political' action over the next months. They counterpose to industrial action lobbies of parliament and regional demonstrations.

In order to carry this strategy in Newcastle they have resorted to disgraceful practices. They have not only successfully argued for the overtime ban to be called off, but they have also moved to oppose in elections for the Branch Executive Committee all socialists who argue for a fighting policy against the cuts.

While I agree with Mike McGrath that the *Militant* tendency have to be opposed, I think the fight would be strengthened if the SWP members in the CPSA participated in the Broad Left. It holds open annual conferences where policy can be discussed and a democratic slate can be worked out. Furthermore, all tendencies have the right to organise in the Broad Left.

The role played by it in the pay campaign last year and in the present cuts campaign has not been very inspiring. I would have almost as many criticisms on this score as *Redder Tape*. However, a few realities have to be taken into account. When the Broad Left was no more than an election machine, the *Redder Tape* group did organise many militants who wanted a strong, fighting union. But when the Broad Left began to

organise active regional groups, *Redder Tape* began to lose its appeal and now involves little more than SWP members.

The division in the CPSA about democracy is not mainly between NEC/branch officials and the rank and file, but between those who want fighting socialist policies and those who believe in class collaboration. Inside the Broad Left the Socialist Caucus is organising for policies such as opposition to Whitleyism and pay research, opposition to all incomes policies, opposition to racism and sex discrimination. We would be enormously strengthened if *Redder Tape* joined us in fighting for such policies *within* the Broad Left.

Phil Dexter, Newcastle

Apocalypse Acclaimed

Your film reviewers, Jane Ure Smith and Colin Brown, heap praise upon Brando's acting and, by implication, Coppola's skill as a director, without knowing it in their reviews of *Apocalypse Now*.

They both misrepresent what Kurtz represents in Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* and in *Apocalypse Now*. More seriously, both give free rein to middle class literary pretensions, and attempt to dress them up in Marxist terms. The result is that they are both cut to pieces by the intellectual sharpness flying about in the script.

Jane Ure Smith writes of Brando's Kurtz that he 'postures larger than life' and that he is 'vacuous'. Yes, he does posture and he is vacuous. Just like Conrad's Kurtz he is hollow to the core—one prick of a pin and all the hot air would come gushing out. Any sympathy we are supposed to have with him is the same as we would have for a sick animal we wanted to put out of its misery.

Conrad's Kurtz was the product of 2000 years of European civilisation, a white superman who ended up committing atrocities that had never occurred to the natives. Brando as Kurtz is the superman of the American military machine. The parallel should be obvious.

Colin Brown refers to 'the cynical black humour of the film'. He complains 'The high point of wit in the film is the incineration of a fishing village and its inhabitants so that the Americans can go surfing there for a few minutes.' Surfing is of course part of

American culture, and this particular scene is supposed to show the extraordinary lengths to which America will go in order to impose its culture on others.

The Heart of Darkness may challenge imperialism in such a way as to reinforce it. *Apocalypse Now* doesn't.

Tony Baker, Oxford.

Nuclear Nonsense

I was very disappointed to see such a petty, badly thought out article on the anti-nuclear movement by Mike Simons in your last issue.

The article criticises everybody, left and right, in the movement. It criticises both violent and non-violent action. But at the end 'rank and file trade unionists' and 'revolutionary socialists' will ride in like the Seventh Cavalry to save the day.

It says that the way the European movement is organised on a community basis is a source of weakness. Yet it admits that nuclear development has been stopped in Norway and Denmark, that the Swedish government has been toppled on the issue and that the Austrian people have voted 'No' in a referendum.

Surely some success is better than no success. Cynics might say that the SWP is now getting out of its armchair on the nuclear issue.

You misrepresent the libertarian fears about the Anti-Nuclear Campaign. One of the main fears is that instead of being in autonomous local groups, people will become demo-fodder to support the actions of others in lobbying MPs etc.

The ANC's main demands are ambiguous. 'Stop Nuclear Now' covers both those who want an end to nuclear power and those who merely oppose new developments. Again, 'Reduce energy waste and develop alternative energy programmes' covers those who argue for a low-energy strategy in a decentralised society based on community worker control and proponents of a high energy coal/gas future.

Mark Nelson, Huddersfield

Letters intended for publication in the next issue must be received by 28 February at the latest. Write to Letters, Socialist Review, POBox 82, London E2.

BOOK REVIEWS



Jean-Paul on a demonstration against police brutality

Torn from History

Mark Poster,

Sartre's Marxism,

Pluto, £6.95/£2.95

Istvan Meszaros,

The Work of Sartre, Volume I: Search for Freedom,

Harvester, £4.95

Poster's *Sartre's Marxism* is another step on Pluto Press's sad pilgrimage to irrelevance. It is indeed a sorry stalemate to Duncan Hallas's excellent *Trotsky's Marxism*, which stresses that the unity of theory and practice is the very heart of Marxism. (Incidentally, by what error or calculation is Hallas's book omitted from the list 'Also in this series' on the cover of Poster's book?).

A lasting socialist commitment must spring simultaneously from the head and the gut. Without theory the gut can be disoriented by change of tempo or bought off by reforms; but without the gut the head merely speaks words of ever increasing length into the void. It is this combination of head and gut that makes Sartre so exceptional among intellectuals in an age when theory is so easily divorced from practice.

Only a few months ago, when the young revolutionary Pierre Goldman was murdered by off-duty police, Sartre, blind and scarcely able to walk, joined the protesting demonstrators on the streets. It is Sartre's undying activism, his never-satisfied sense of responsibility, that earns him the respect of Marxists, however sharply they may criticise his ideas.

There is not a breath of this in Poster's antiseptic account, a great disappointment in view of his earlier and much better book, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser*. Poster actually boasts that he will avoid the temptation to 'historicise the theory' i.e. to locate the ideas within the practice that gave rise to them. Poster ignores—and indeed seems to be ignorant of—much of what is most interesting in Sartre's career.

Thus he claims that Sartre's thought before 1940 was 'apolitical' and that it was because of the Nazi occupation that Sartre 'chose the left'. But Sartre's pre-war collection of short stories *The Wall* (grotesquely retitled *Intimacy* in English to catch the porn market) contains searing attacks on Franco and on French anti-semitism.

Poster, in fact, confines himself to an analysis of one of Sartre's works, *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*. But if Sartre's Marxism stand or falls by the *Critique* then it surely falls. The *Critique* is overlong, rambling, turgid and frequently incomprehensible. It was written in the 1957-60 period: Sartre was deeply depressed by the failure of his own strategy of influencing the French Communist Party and above all by the failure of the French left to respond to the Algerian struggle for national independence. Simone de Beauvoir has given us a vivid account of how the *Critique* was written:

'To maintain this pace I could hear him crunching corydrame capsules, of which he managed to get through a tube a day. At the end of the afternoon he would be exhausted; all his powers of concentration would suddenly relax, his gestures would become vague, and quite often he would get his words all mixed up. We spent our evenings in my apartment; as soon as he drank a glass of whisky the alcohol would go straight to his head. 'That's enough', I'd say to him; but for him it was not enough; against my will I would hand him a second glass; then he'd ask for a third; two years before he'd needed a great deal more; but now he lost control of his movements and his speech very quickly, and I would say again, 'That's enough'. Two or three times I flew into violent tempers, I smashed a glass on the tiled floor of the kitchen.'

The *Critique* may be a salutary warning against the dangers of mixing drink and drugs, but it is far from the substantial

contribution to Marxist theory that Poster claims. Indeed, to understand why Sartre wrote it is necessary to see how it flows out of his earlier work, and in particular from two long polemical essays he wrote during the fifties.

The *Communists and Peace* (1952-54) was written at the height of the Cold War, when sections of the French bourgeoisie wanted to ban the Communist Party outright. Some leftists argued that since the CP was Stalinist and bureaucratic, its disappearance would be no loss to the French working class. To this Sartre responds that the existence of a class cannot be abstracted from the organisational forms it adopts, and that, whatever the weaknesses of the CP, an attack on the CP is an attack on the working class as such.

The *Spectre of Stalin* (1956-57) was a passionate response to Khrushchev's crushing of the Hungarian Revolution. For Sartre this posed another question: how could states which had established their economies on a socialist basis be guilty of the errors that led to the Hungarian rising and of the crime of crushing it? This must mean that the relation between the economic base and political superstructure is far more complex and tortuous than Marxists had hitherto supposed.

Now *Socialist Review* readers will have little difficulty in pointing to the gaps in Sartre's argument—the need for an independent, non-Stalinist revolutionary party and the recognition that the Stalinist states were state capitalist. But the two essays are none the less valuable, for they point, with clarity and honesty, to the real dilemmas of the left in the bleak years of the fifties. Sartre's solutions have been overtaken, but we can still learn from the questions he asks.

There is little of value in the *Critique* that had not already been developed, in a more concrete form, in the two earlier essays. By abstracting the *Critique* from the arguments that gave rise to it, Poster is making method an end in itself. Even if his account of Sartre's method is correct, there is no indication as to what political consequences it would lead to. There are now so many books on Sartre that even a specialist cannot read them all; this is one we could have done without.

Meszaros' book is a horse of a different colour. He begins by displaying, and communicating, a very obvious enthusiasm for Sartre that contrasts with Poster's desiccated style. Moreover, he makes the very valid point that 'it is Sartre's lifework as a whole that predominates, and not particular elements of it.' His references range far and wide through Sartre's well-known and lesser-known writings, showing that fragmentary and polemical texts are often richer and more concrete than the turgid attempts at system-building.

Meszaros confronts Sartre above all as a philosopher, in terms of the preoccupations of his own earlier works on Marx and Lukacs. In itself, that is no bad thing, for those preoccupations are those of an activist Marxism, centered on the problem of human freedom. Meszaros brings out strongly, if at times obscurely and at too

great length, the basic contradictions between the individualist framework of Sartre's thought and the Marxism he aspires to. Yet he shows too that this is not simply an incompatibility, but an ambiguity and a tension which have positive critical value.

Yet Meszaros too stands at too great a distance from history, and lets Sartre's thought appear as a self-sufficient system rather than as a response to the dilemmas of a hectic and confused historical period. Political questions drift into the background, or are presented in a brief and misleading form. Thus he can write of the period from 1944 to 1946 as a 'short interval of serene rejoicing over the shared victory over Fascism'; yet these were the very years when the French CP betrayed the possibility of revolution and entered the government as open strike-breakers. Sartre's play *Dirty Hands* catches the cruel dilemmas of these years: there is little 'serenity' about it.

A second volume of Meszaros' work, to deal with the *Critique* and Sartre's theatre, is still to appear, so it is not yet possible to make a final judgment on his achievement. In the meantime it is as well to recall that Sartre is his own best populariser: his novels, plays, and a host of articles and interviews bring out the contradictions and ambiguities that his attempts at systematic philosophy could never resolve. Which is why the most valuable book on Sartre is *The Writings of Sartre* by M Contat and M Rybalka, which consists simply of a chronological list of Sartre's writings, with ample quotation of the more obscure and ephemeral. Here Sartre in his own words tells us more about his failures and successes than any of his learned commentators.

Ian Birchall

Aggression, English-Style

When Britain Invaded Russia: The Consul Who Rebelled

Andrew Rothstein

Journeyman Press £2.75

The publication of this fascinating little book has come at a useful time. The British press is currently representing Mr Soames' scheming in Zimbabwe as delicate diplomacy and hitting new heights of hypocrisy over Russia's invasion of Afghanistan, while simultaneously supporting diplomatic recognition of Chile.

This book is about Douglas Young, a British consul in Russia's northern port of Archangel during 1918 when the British army invaded and fought the Red Army. Young was given orders from the Foreign Office in Whitehall to use propaganda to deceive the Bolsheviks. Young protested and was forced to resign. The Foreign Office made sure that his protests were stifled. The story of these events illustrates the lengths to which the British government will go to deceive, slant and distort the news, and how the Foreign Office is a major party to this work.

Alastair Hatchett

A Really Good Buy

A History of Economic Thought

by Isaac Ilyich Rubin

Ink Links £5.95

It's not often that you get a book to review that you can wholeheartedly recommend to the reader. It's even rarer these days when it comes to books which try to present Marx's ideas. Here a stream of pseudo-academic bilge has flooded the market ever since Althusser demonstrated the advantages to an academic career of expressing very crude ideas completely unintelligibly.

Rubin's book is a shining exception. I have no hesitation in giving it wholehearted recommendation. It stands in the starkest contrast to the ranting of the various latter day obscurantists. It is a clear and simply expressed account of the development of bourgeois political economy up to Marx's

day, putting in a readily accessible form many of the views Marx himself expressed in his *Theories of Surplus Value*. It shows how the material interests of the rising bourgeoisie led its thinkers progressively to cut through superficialities of economic theory to discover the underlying realities of capitalist production, until, ensconced in power the bourgeoisie found the earlier discoveries of its own thinkers an embarrassment. In doing so Rubin also enables you to see how Marx's ideas solved the contradictions in the thought of the great bourgeois economists at the same time as turning that thought against bourgeois society.

As such it is an invaluable guide to anyone who had dipped into *Capital*, come across references to Locke or Quesnay, Smith or Ricardo, Malthus or Sismondi

Bookmarks Publications

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Dear Comrade,

BOOKMARKS is launching a new publishing co-operative to give the Socialist Workers Party the ability to publish its own books.

Thanks to Socialists Unlimited, SWP pamphlets are now on a reasonably secure foundation. Six new ones have been produced in the past nine months, ranging from 'How Marxism Works' to 'Palestine Lives'. But longer texts have proved a problem - and a 45,000-word manuscript on fascism, written by Colin Sparks, has sat on the shelf for a year. Books are more difficult to handle than pamphlets, mainly for financial reasons.

The price of books have shot up recently, taking them out of reach of many workers. One primary aim of the new venture is to keep prices as low as possible - and in this it will have the help of Pluto Press, who have agreed to handle bookshop sales.

The second problem is the high cost of producing a book: a minimum of £1000. That's why we're calling it a 'co-operative' - to set it up we'll need the co-operation of members and supporters of the SWP. We're *not* asking for donations. Money spent producing a book, if well handled, is recovered as copies are sold. We're asking only for loans.

More precisely, we're asking people to take a share in the co-operative - a £50 unit that will be repaid later. Just about every supporter of the SWP must have £50 or so saved 'for a rainy day', in a bank, a building society, a savings bank. While it's there, it's being loaned to some businessman or other to further the aims of capitalism.

Wouldn't it be better if your £50 were loaned to a socialist venture to further the aims of socialism?

Books that are already on the 'possibles' list, as well as the manuscript on fascism, are Colin Barker on 'What is Marxism?', Chris Harman on the German Revolution of 1919-21, Steve Cherry's 'Short history of the British Labour Movement' - and Tony Cliff on the employers' offensive. If 30 people will take shares, we can publish the first of these straight away, in time to be useful when the fascists of the NE next try to raise their heads in the May council elections.

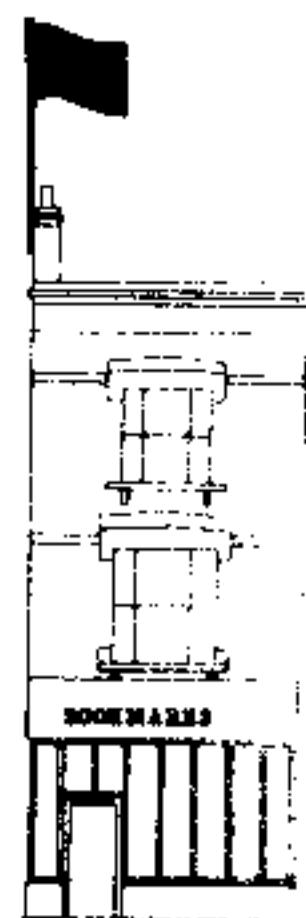
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Peter Marsden

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and felt baffled.

Rubin wrote it in the Russia of the early 1920s in order to enable a new generation to get closer to Marx. Most of that generation, like Rubin himself soon afterwards fell victim to Stalin.

But the work endures, marvellously translated, as an example of how the interpretation of Marxist ideas should be done.

I have only one criticism to make, and that is not of Rubin's book itself. For some obscure reason the publisher has appended to Rubin's beautifully clear exposition, a 50 page long essay, written in the typical obscurities of academic sub-Marxese, which purports to show how mistaken both Rubin and Marx were. The book would have been much better—and no doubt cheaper—without such revisionist inanities.

But don't let that stop you trying to get hold of the book if you are at all interested in understanding Capital—and capitalism today.

A Tragic Farce

Mussolini's Roman Empire

by Dennis Mack Smith.

Peregrine Books £2.50

"In 1939, the Fascist Party Machine believed Mussolini. Party newspapers proclaimed that no nation in Europe was morally and materially better prepared for war than Italy. They scented victory, the long awaited moment when Italy would impose on the world her own grandeur and her imperial ambitions."

"When the Second World War broke out, figures were given to show that Italy had 8,530 planes ... on further investigation the figures turned out to be 454 bombers and 129 fighters ... in 1940, it was officially confirmed that Italy's war capacity was less than in the First World War."

The gap between myth and reality in fascist Italy has never been so effectively exposed as in this book. While it only deals with foreign policy, it lays bare the utter bankruptcy of the fascist regime.

Useful to the ruling class only to destroy the insurrectionary workers' movement of the years immediately after the First World War, Italian fascism lived for the next twenty years off myths and lies. That it was allowed to, demonstrated the weakness of a ruling class which was incapable of finding any alternative to fascism.

Mussolini was propped up at home by repression backed by a massive "Ministry of Propaganda" and abroad by the fawning attitude of the "western democracies". None were more grovelling than the British ruling class. Churchill praised him, Lord Rothermere thanked him for his "great services to civilisation and humanity" and the wife of Austen Chamberlain, the foreign secretary, pinned a fascist badge ostentatiously on her dress.

Amongst the 'great services to humanity and civilisation' we could include such acts

Bookmarx Club

WINTER
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as the use of poison gas against Ethiopia and the systematic extermination of all its educated population.

This book is not a general introduction to Italian fascism, and does not seek to be, it therefore does not deal with the internal opposition to Mussolini at all. Further its author is no Marxist, but a liberal academic. Despite this it is a tremendous book, beautifully written and easy to read. It is packed full of anecdotes which, more than any analysis the author puts forward, throw real light on the monstrosities and absurdities of fascism in power.

Tim Potter

Muck on Brass

Corporations, Classes and Capitalism

(Hutchinson, paperback £3.95)

by John Scott

Who runs the big corporations? Has there been a separation of share ownership and managerial control? How much influence

do the banks and other financial institutions exercise? Is the state simply the instrument of monopoly capital? John Scott's book is a worthy if rather uninspired attempt to survey an enormous literature dealing with these and related questions.

Its best aspect is its summary of a wealth of data on patterns of share ownership, interlocking directorships and the like in several countries. A clear picture emerges of a tiny minority still wielding enormous economic power. The author notes the growing importance of the insurance companies, pension funds and investment trusts which now own over 40 per cent of UK companies' shares. There has been a long-term shift, he argues, from 'personal' to 'impersonal' forms of domination. There are few major companies still controlled by a single family, but top executives draw most of their income from shareholdings held in many firms not just their own.

Scott is at his worst in considering the wider implications of all this. Drawing eclectically on Marxist and non-Marxist literature alike he loses himself in a morass of references. It's a classic example of compendious reading being a poor substitute for a clear theoretical perspective.

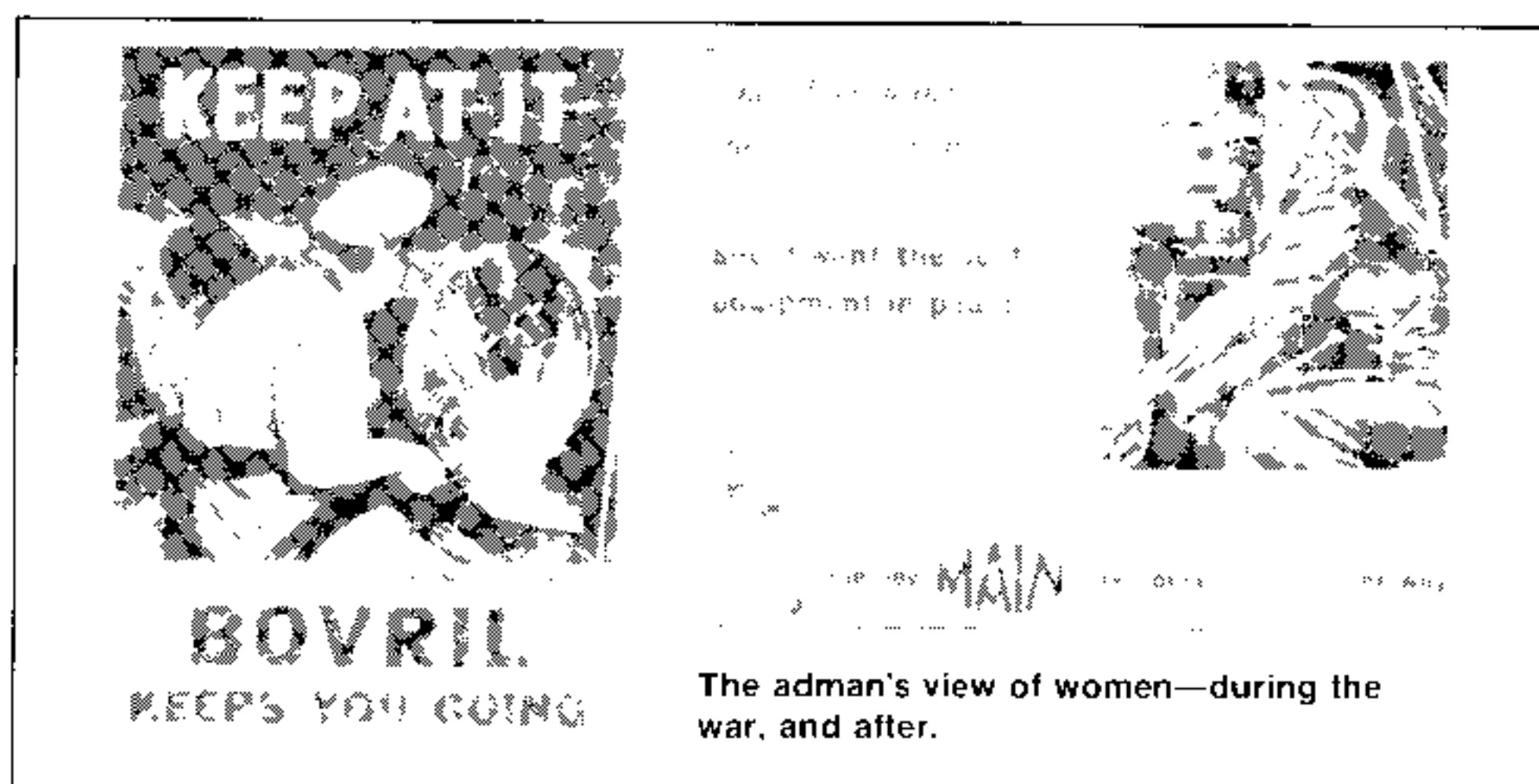
Every Picture Tells a Story

Photography/Politics:
(Photography Workshop, £4.95)

We live in a jungle of photographs: advertisements and holiday snaps; page 3 of *The Sun* and Russian tanks in Kabul; even, for those who like that sort of thing, prestige exhibitions in accredited art galleries. They have a big effect on us. But rarely do we stop and think what effect and why. Much of the left wing writing about photography is so difficult as to be obscure even to the small audience to which it is directed. Most of this book is very different. Its editors state that: 'Our starting point is the class struggle' and they have produced a book which, if not exactly popular, can reach quite a wide audience in the socialist movement.

The book contains a number of essays on different questions: the way advertisements work; the history of working-class attempts to use photography between the wars; how various socialist photographers use photographs today, and others. These essays are all interesting and some are very valuable. Some fascinating but previously obscure things are turned up. For example, there is an account of how the French bourgeoisie of 1871 bought large numbers of clearly 'forged' photographs showing the 'atrocities' of the Paris Commune. In addition a little industry sprang up around the sale of grisly photographs of workers executed in the reactionary terror after the defeat of the Commune.

Even more striking is Jo Spence's article about the way women were presented



during the Second World War. Before the war, advertising showed women being 'women'—housewives and secretaries. During the war, when women moved into heavy industry in large numbers there were advertisements featuring women as welders, machinists, etc. Immediately after the war, the emphasis shifted back to home and family: the text of one advert for Milk of Magnesia began: 'I've said good-bye to that war job, and now I'm going to enjoy the simple home life I've been so eagerly planning'.

The book deserves a wide audience: nothing better has yet been produced. However I have some reservations about the political direction of the book.

For example the editors want to build a model of the use of photographs in the class struggle which derived from the attempts by the Communist Parties in the 1920's and 1930's to organise those workers interested in photography and produce a 'proletarian' photography. This raises two problems.

The first is the extent to which these attempts were marked by the shifts in the line of the Comintern during that period. In some of the essays here, particularly those translated from the German, there is a heavy

dose of 'mao-stalinist' politics which praises the most sectarian ultra-left phase of Comintern policy between 1928 and 1935. In the essay on Britain, which covers both this period and the later shift to the right after 1935, there is clear evidence that this affected the photographic organisations but the author does not explore these matters. The consequence is that a book which is concerned with politics fights shy of discussions of actual politics.

The second problem is the mirror image of the first. While it is true that the direction of the various movements in the 1930's were deeply influenced by the changes of line of the Comintern, it is also true that the general condition for them existing at all was the fact that there were organised workers' parties which took the initiative to set them up and keep them going. But when it comes to a perspective for contemporary work in socialist photography, none of the contributors with the partial exception of Bob Golden (the man who did the Nazi snake poster for Socialist Worker) talk about the relationship of their work to any of the organised political currents on the left. Rather, we have the relationship between photographers and various poorly defined 'movements'.

Now, this is partly the inevitable result both of the lack of any generally accepted alternative on the left with the same stature as that enjoyed by the Comintern and of the small resources that are available from the left for this sort of work. But it is not entirely an inevitable result. Even if the contributors do not believe that, to take the obvious example, the SWP is the way forward, then they need at least to be clear as to the differences between their situation and that of their rightly chosen models. Ideally, one of the things that *Photography Politics 2* could start to look at is precisely the relationship between the organised left and socialist photographers.

But these criticisms are marginal compared to the real value of the book. Anyone who wants to start to work out the ways in which capitalism twists and distorts even the supposedly 'neutral' photograph and to learn something about the ways in which the working-class movement has fought back should buy this book and read it. It is well-produced and cheap by modern standards. It is a model of critical thought about capitalism.

Henry Brandler

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J is for sweet Jingoism.

that the bosses all think of the first.

The idea of a 'nation', one particular piece of land which is in some way unified and distinct from all others, is a product of the age of the bourgeoisie. It rests on the material foundation that the capitalist class needed a unified territory free of outside interference to develop their trade and prosperity. Out of that need grew the ideas of 'patriotism' and 'love of one's country.'

Like all ideas, these do not have fixed meanings. In the period of the rise of capitalism they were progressive ideas. Robespierre, St. Just and the other leaders of the French Revolution called themselves 'patriots' in their fight against the reactionary aristocracy who regarded land and peoples as the private property of kings and princes to be traded according to the opportunities of war and dynasty. Today, in countries oppressed by imperialist nations, Ireland for example, to be a 'patriot' is to be prepared to fight against the subjugation of one nation by another.

But in old imperialist nations like Britain the term has quite another meaning: it now means defence of the existing order against all who threaten it.

We saw last month how imperialism wrecks the society and economy of whole continents. It is usually justified in terms of some sort of 'civilising mission.' Britain, as one of the oldest imperialist powers, has suffered a great deal from this problem. Jingoism is one of the more hysterical forms.

The term entered popular currency, as the dictionary says, from a popular song of 1878, which ran as follows:

We don't want to fight;
But by Jingo, if we do,
We've got the men, we've got the ships,
We've got the money too.

By a curious irony, the enemy in question then was Russia, which was then at war with Turkey and the popular song was part of a war fever designed to ensure British support for the barbarous Turkish government.

The song sums up the new meaning of 'patriotism' perfectly. The mystical 'We'

who sang the song contained capitalists who certainly did have 'the money' and workers who certainly did not. The function of this sort of idea was, and is, to conceal class differences and to pretend that there is some sort of common bond between the gorged and the starving.

In order to do this it is necessary to appeal to the basest and most irrational aspects of human behaviour, as a writer in 1898 clearly recognised:

A large number of the Tommies had never been under fire before... and there was a curious look of suppressed excitement in some of the faces... Now and then I caught in a man's eye the curious gleam which comes from the joy of shedding blood that mysterious impulse which, despite all the veneer of civilisation, still holds its own in a man's nature, whether he is killing rats with a terrier, rejoicing in a prize fight, playing a salmon or potting dervishes. It was a fine day and we were out to kill something. Call it what you like, the experience is a big factor in the joy of living.

The murdering of the inhabitants of the Soudan is presented as the satisfaction of some natural human need and the local population is placed in the same category as rats.

The most famous expression of these sentiments was by the arch-Jingo Rudyard Kipling who coined the phrase 'The White Man's Burden' as the title of poem he wrote to encourage Jingoism in the USA in 1899:

Take up the White Man's Burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captive's need:
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

But the ideas of the Jingoists are not only used to justify the slaughter and exploitation of black people. They are also used whenever one imperialist power quarrels with another over the spoils. In the arms

race which preceded the first imperialist war there was continual agitation directed against Germany. Once again, the music halls coined the popular slogan of 'We want Eight, And we won't wait.' The 'Eight' in question were the number of new battleships the imperialists wanted to be able to fight the rising German Empire. They got what they wanted.

They also got the war they wanted, and this was the occasion for an outburst of hysterical jingoism. Once again, Kipling was in the vanguard, even robbing the literary grave of the seditious John Bunyan for supposed anti-German sentiments:

Emmanuel's vanguard dying
For right and not for rights,
My Lord Appollyon lying
To the State-kept Stockholmites,
The Pope, the swithering Neutrals,
The Kaiser and his Gott
Their roles, their goals, their naked
souls

He knew and drew the lot.

The importance of the ideas of the Jingoists is not their internal logic or literary qualities but the fact that they have often gained widespread support amongst the working class: over a million working class men *volunteered* to fight before conscription was introduced in 1916.

Consequently, the socialist movement has always been determined opponents of Jingoism and patriotism. The working class has nothing to gain from the continuation of national frontiers or the wars waged to defend them. It has everything to lose by lining up behind its own bosses in order to kill other workers lined up behind their bosses.

But the ideas of jingoism have often been difficult to withstand and there have been many occasions when socialists have capitulated to their own ruling classes. The most famous example is, once again, the first imperialist war when the leaders, and many of the rank-and-file, of the socialist movement throughout Europe supported 'their' country.

The ideas of jingoism are still part of the stock-in-trade of the ruling class. Thatcher and Carrington use them to justify a new arms race when they speak of 'the free world' facing 'the Russians'. They try to divert working class attention away from problems faced at home and direct hostility against an outside enemy. But British workers face no threat from Russian workers: the squabbles of the ruling classes in each country are of no value to us.

The development of capitalism itself has rendered the nation-state out of date, for production now takes place on a world scale and the real divisions are not between nations but between workers everywhere and bosses everywhere. In Marx's phrase: 'The working class has no fatherland.' In the face of the mounting hysteria of the bosses and their mass media we have to fight hard against the 'conjurer's gibberish' of jingoism.

Colin Sparks