

**FAIZ AHMAD FAIZ: IN MEMORIAM**

**ISRAEL'S ROLE IN THE  
THIRD WORLD**

**GÜNEY, TURKEY AND THE WEST**

**AN AZANIAN PERSPECTIVE  
ON NKOMATI**

**US INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR**

**AND LEFT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA  
SALMAN RUSHDIE: A REVIEW**

**RACE &  
CLASS**

## The Miners' Strike

*Race & Class* is delighted to record that a number of our overseas supporters have channelled donations to the miners' strike through us. And we take this opportunity to tell our readers that one of our black supporters in prison helped organise a collection for the miners among his fellow-inmates:

There are many here who hold the miners in the highest esteem for having the strength and determination to remain on strike for so long, and at such a heavy individual and collective price, to fight for their communities. Considering the main reason why most guys are here is because they didn't have any money when they were outside, to raise £102 is quite an achievement ...

The staff of *Race & Class* are more than happy to pass on funds on behalf of their overseas subscribers, but it may be quicker to send donations direct to:

London Miners' Support Group (a/c London Support Committee), Headland House, 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

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# Faiz Ahmad Faiz: in memoriam

Faiz Ahmad Faiz, who died in Lahore on 20 November 1984 at the age of 73, symbolised for millions in the subcontinent and elsewhere the struggle of the people of the Third World to regain their self-respect and put an end to the tyranny of colonialism and its 'post-independence' political and intellectual variants.

His stature as a major poet of our times is beyond question. What distinguished him from many of his contemporaries was his deep commitment to the victims of oppression and his unerring faith in the final victory of revolution and social change. Brought up in the great classical poetic tradition of the subcontinent, he used his power to articulate the hopes and aspirations of his people and people struggling for self-realisation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Rejecting the art-for-art's sake approach in his early youth, he identified himself with the masses, and though a classicist in his diction and technique, he was able to produce verse which both the literate sections of society and the common people could understand and identify with.

One of the leading lights of the Progressive Writers' Movement which transformed the literary scene in India in the 1930s, Faiz remained steadfast to his literary and political principles. Many times he went to jail and some of his best work was produced in confinement. To millions, he became a symbol of revolt against dictatorship and obscurantism. In a society where the ability to compromise generally connotes success, Faiz chose to follow a defiant, though often lonely, course.

He suffered more calumny and attack at the hands of right-wing and conservative forces than any other individual of his generation, but being of a patrician temperament, he never reacted to personal abuse. To him, what were fundamental were the issues of freedom, justice and social change.

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He left Pakistan after the overthrow of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a coup d'état in 1977. He lived in Beirut, where he edited the Afro-Asian Writers' journal *Lotus*, but returned to Pakistan in 1982, a move which put new life into the progressive forces fighting a reactionary and obscurantist military regime.

Faiz won the Lenin Peace Prize, in 1962. Though believed to have been considered a number of times for the Nobel Prize, he was too left wing to have ever become one of its recipients.

KHALID HASAN

### *Captivity\**

So what  
if pen and paper  
have been snatched from my hands?

I have  
dipped my fingers  
in the blood of my heart.

So what  
if they have  
sealed my lips?

I have  
put a tongue  
in every mouth of my chain.

### *The Morning of Freedom* *August 1947*

This stained light, this night-bitten dawn –  
This is not the dawn we yearned for.  
This is not the dawn for which we set out  
Hoping that in the sky's wilderness  
We would reach the final destination of the stars.  
Surely, the night's turgid sea will breathe its last  
On the inevitable shore.  
Surely, the boat of heart's agony will somewhere  
Come to a stop.  
The enigma of youthful blood – seductive hands –  
So many forsaken loves – plaintive looks.  
But irresistible was the radiant face of the dawn  
Even though love and beauty were within our reach.

---

\* A collection of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poems, translated into English by Daud Kamal, entitled *The Caravan of Pain*, is currently under publication in New Delhi.

The subtle sorcery of desire – the aching tiredness.  
 They say that darkness has been severed from light.  
 They say that the goal has been reached.  
 But the predicament of the grief-stricken  
 Has radically changed –  
 Ecstasy of union is allowed  
 And the torment of separation forbidden.  
 Torn nerves, glazed eyes, heart on fire –  
 There is no cure for the disease of separation.  
 From where did the morning breeze come  
 And where did it go?  
 The earthen lamp shrugs its head in despair.  
 The night is as oppressive as ever.  
 The time for the liberation of heart and mind  
 Has not come as yet.  
 Continue your arduous journey.  
 This is not your destination.

*For the Palestinian Martyrs*

Wherever I go,  
 My beloved land,  
 The pain of your humiliation burns my heart.  
 But there are compensations:  
 Your dignity enhances mine,  
 Your love walks with me,  
 The fragrance of your citrus groves  
 Breathes through my mouth,  
 All those friends whom I have never seen  
 Keep me company,  
 Their hands which I have never clasped  
 Make mine invincible.  
 Far away on the indifferent highways  
 Of foreign lands  
 Or on the unfamiliar streets  
 Of alien cities,  
 Wherever I unfurl  
 The banner of my blood,  
 There flutters the flag of Palestine.  
 One Palestine has been destroyed  
 By my enemies  
 But my agony has given birth  
 To innumerable Palestines.

*Lullaby for a Palestinian Child*

Don't weep, child.  
Your mother, after much weeping,  
Has just fallen asleep.  
Don't weep, child,  
A little while ago,  
Your father parted  
From his grief.  
Don't weep, child.  
Your brother  
Chasing the butterfly of his dreams  
Has gone far to another country.  
Don't weep, child.  
The wedding carriage  
Of your elder sister  
Has gone to an alien land.  
Don't weep, child.  
In your courtyard  
The dead sun was given the final bath  
And the moon has just been buried.  
Don't weep, child.  
Mother, father, sister, brother,  
Moon and sun are watching over you.  
If you weep, they will make you weep more.  
But if you smile, perhaps,  
All of them – one day – disguised,  
Will come back to play with you.

*We Will See...*

We will see.  
Certainly we, too, will see  
That promised day –  
That day preordained  
When these colossal mountains  
Of tyranny and oppression  
Will explode into wisps of cotton-wool –  
The day when the earth under our feet  
Will quake and throb  
And over the heads of despots  
Swords of lightning will flash –  
The day when all the idols  
Will be removed from this sacred world  
And we, the destitute and despised,



Will, at last, be granted respect –  
The day when crowns  
Will be tossed into the air  
And all the thrones utterly destroyed.  
Only the name of God will remain  
Who is both absent and present;  
Both the seen and the seer.  
The cry 'I am Truth' will rend the skies  
Which means you, I and all of us.  
And sovereignty will belong to the people  
Which means you, I and all of us.

*Speak...*

Speak – your lips are free.  
Speak – your tongue is still yours.  
This magnificent body  
Is still yours.  
Speak – your life is still yours.  
Look inside the smithy –  
Leaping flames, red-hot iron.  
Padlocks open wide  
Their jaws.  
Chains disintegrate.  
Speak – there is little time  
But little though it is  
It is enough.  
Time enough  
Before the body perishes –  
Before the tongue atrophies.  
Speak – truth still lives.  
Say what you have  
To say.

*Nimbus*

What is now  
The emblem of authority  
In the imperial court –  
The bejewelled staff  
Of the chamberlain  
Or the author's clotted pen?  
The prophetic voice  
Lost in the mountains –

Is it the prologue  
 To happiness  
 Or an extension of this  
 Night of grief?  
 Street-urchins are playing  
 With a rag –  
 Is it the remnant  
 Of my torn cloak  
 Or the banner  
 Of dead freedom-fighters?  
 The walls of the city  
 Are illumined –  
 Is it the reflection  
 Of martyr's blood  
 Or that of  
 Jamshaid's glittering gold?  
 Let us keep vigil  
 Around this dying flame  
 Like a halo.  
 There is still  
 Some light left  
 Little though it is.

*The Day Death Comes*

How will death come?  
 Like the first kiss –  
 Spontaneous, burning nectar.  
 Roses on a Caucasian plateau  
 And the moon's torment.  
 Early in the morning  
 Or late at night –  
 An icy torrent of stars  
 Cascading down a cobbled street.  
 Mysteriously the doors open.  
 Perhaps like the raw end of a nerve.  
 Shadow of the hangman's rope.  
 Dark clouds rubbing their bellies  
 On my rooftop. The stench of wolves.  
 But on scarlet-sweet lips, my name – my name.

*Chopin*

Rain-spears and the night a sieve.  
Weeping walls, houses sunk in silence  
And freshly-bathed plants.  
Wind in the lanes and alleys.  
Chopin's music is being played.  
The moon's pallor  
On the face of a wistful girl.  
Blood on the snow  
And every drop a leaping flame.  
Chopin's music is being played.  
Lovers of freedom ambushed by the enemy.  
A few escaped.  
Others were slaughtered.  
They will be remembered for ever.  
Chopin's music is being played.  
Abandoned by her companions  
A crane covers her eyes with her wings  
And weeps alone  
In the sky's blue wilderness.  
A hawk pounces upon her.  
Chopin's music is being played.  
Grief has petrified a father's face.  
The mother sobs as she kisses  
The forehead of her dead son.  
Chopin's music is being played.  
The season of flowers has returned  
And lovers rejoice.  
Everywhere there is the dance of water.  
Neither clouds nor rain.  
Chopin's music is being played.

*Legend of a Tall Tree*

It seems  
There is nothing now.  
Neither sun nor moon.  
Neither darkness nor dawn.  
No Aphrodite in the ocean's eye.  
No ship in the harbour of pain.  
Perhaps it was all an illusion.  
Legend of a tall tree.  
The last swirl of desolation  
In the butchered lane.

No one will come now  
 To this oasis.  
 No one will drink now  
 From this stream.  
 All attachments are snapped.  
 All friendships buried.  
 This is the worst  
 That could have been.  
 But courage – my heart –  
 This too will pass.  
 Do not despair.  
 There's a life to live.

*Poems translated by Daud Kamal*

To see a poet in exile – as opposed to reading the poetry of exile – is to see exile's antinomies embodied and endured with a unique intensity. Several years ago I spent some time with Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the greatest of contemporary Urdu poets. He was exiled from his native Pakistan by Zia's military regime, and found a welcome of sorts in strife-torn Beirut. Naturally his closest friends were Palestinian, but I sensed that, although there was an affinity of spirit between them, nothing quite matched – language, poetic convention, or life-history. Only once, when Eqbal Ahmad, a Pakistani friend and a fellow-exile, came to Beirut, did Faiz seem to overcome his sense of constant estrangement. The three of us sat in a dingy Beirut restaurant late one night, while Faiz recited poems. After a time, he and Eqbal stopped translating his verses for my benefit, but as the night wore on it did not matter. What I watched required no translation: it was an enactment of a homecoming expressed through defiance and loss, as if to say, 'Zia, we are here.'

EDWARD SAID

From 'Reflections on exile', *Granta* (no. 13, Autumn 1984)

## Israel's role in the Third World: exporting West Bank expertise\*

That Israel ranks among the world's major arms exporters is by now general knowledge. According to CIA estimates, Israel is the fifth largest exporter of arms in the world, and the largest supplier of arms to Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. But Israel's activities in Third World countries are, in fact, far more wide-ranging than just military sales. Israel has become active in all the dimensions of the global counter-insurgency business. Thus, for example, in Guatemala, 'Hit lists used by the death squads have been computerised. Technologically sophisticated murder is coordinated by a Regional Telecommunications Center built and managed by Israeli Army experts.'<sup>1</sup> Israel's multifaceted relations with Guatemala include the following:

- Since 1976 Israel has been the main provider of arms, aircraft and military training to Guatemala.
- Training of 800 air force pilots to fly Israeli-supplied Kfir fighter and Arava transport planes.
- Israeli-supplied radar systems throughout the country.
- Training of the military and G-2 police units in the use of

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interrogation techniques, modern intelligence methods, psychological warfare and terror.

- An Israeli-sponsored Army Electronics and Transmission School, opened in November 1981.

- Assistance from 300 Israeli advisers in the coup of March 1982 that brought General Rios Montt to power, and their training of officers backing him.

- Assistance from Israeli advisers in the design of the Programme of Assistance to Conflict Areas (PAAC), put into effect from August 1982. Developed jointly with advisers from South Africa and Taiwan, the programme involves the creation of ‘model villages’ that combine features of the ‘strategic hamlets’ implanted in Vietnam and Israeli kibbutzim.

- A training camp in Guatemala where Israeli experts train ‘*contras*’, that also serves El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, Chile and Bolivia and Argentina (at least before their return to civilian government).

- The construction, in the northern province of Alta Verapaz, of a factory for the production of 5.56 calibre munition and Uzi machine guns, which is to supply all of Central America.<sup>2</sup>

Israel is in the special position of having recent combat experience as well as current counter-insurgency experience (in the West Bank and Gaza). The lessons of the Middle East, as a testing ground for western military equipment against Soviet-supplied armies, are disseminated through the world via Israel. Especially during the past decade, Israel has come to specialise as a strong arm of the Pax Americana, and it has been performing this role not simply regionally but on a *global* scale.

Israel’s arms industry supplies, in Penny Lernoux’s phrase, a Who’s Who of dictators.<sup>3</sup> In *Latin America and the Caribbean* recipients of Israeli military sales include: Mexico, El Salvador (80 per cent of military imports between 1970-80), Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua (until the fall of Somoza), Panama, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina.<sup>4</sup> Security assistance to El Salvador includes the presence of 100 Israeli advisers, reportedly the use of Israeli pilots to fly Israeli-supplied fighters in combat missions against the guerrillas, and the installation of a computer system (that was also supplied to Guatemala and Paraguay) that monitors the use of water and electricity, irregularities in which may indicate resistance activity.<sup>5</sup>

In *Africa* the list includes: South Africa, Swaziland, Malawi, Zaire, Central African Republic, Kenya, Uganda (at least until 1972), Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Morocco. Generally, the countries mentioned are also allies of the United States; but in addition, Israel supplies arms to Ethiopia, as part of a security relationship that dates back to the time of Haile Selassie.<sup>6</sup> According to a March 1979 CIA report on *Israel: foreign intelligence and security services* – captured in Tehran in

1979<sup>7</sup> – Israel trained the Liberian security service and police, helped establish Ghana's military intelligence and assisted in the re-establishment of Moroccan security services. Relations also exist between Israeli foreign intelligence (Mossad) and the intelligence services of Kenya and Zaire. Remarkably, in the case of South Africa and Ecuador, Israeli security assistance and arms supplies are paralleled by the export of biblical films, handled by the same people!<sup>8</sup>

In *Asia* Israel maintains the closest relations with Taiwan. Next is Singapore, where Israel trains several units of the army. Thailand has been receiving military supplies and training from Israel since the military coup of 1976. Other recipients of military sales are South Korea, the Philippines and Malaysia. With regard to Indonesia, Chomsky reported<sup>9</sup> that Israel served as a conduit for the United States when Indonesia needed military aircraft for the massacre of the Timorese in the late 1970s. The above-mentioned CIA report notes:

The Israelis have operated for some time in East Asia. They have provided intelligence training to the government of the Republic of China and maintain liaison with it. The Israelis also have relations with the Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, and South Korean services, especially on terrorist matters. The major Mossad regional center in East Asia is Singapore. The Israeli station chief there frequently travels throughout the area and conducts business with neighboring nations. Indonesia as a Moslem nation does not have formal diplomatic ties with Israel. The Mossad-Indonesian relationship, therefore, is very discreet. The Mossad representative in Singapore is accredited to the Indonesian service. There are also Mossad officers in Jakarta under commercial cover. The primary reason for the Indonesian liaison is to gain aid in counterterrorist efforts. The Israelis, on the other hand, are not only engaging in antiterrorist operations but also have an opportunity to collect information and engage in political action in another Moslem power.

A recent addition to the Asian recipients of Israeli security assistance is Sri Lanka; an Israeli Interest Section has been opened in the US Embassy and Israeli advisers are reported to be training Lankan security personnel. In the Near East, Mossad maintains relations with the Turkey National Security Service, as part of a framework of cooperation, the Trident Organisation, that also included Iran's Savak and Ethiopia.

Since the early 1960s, Israel has been a member of the South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO), made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and South Africa, with Taiwan and Israel as the only non-Atlantic members. The organisation was established in secrecy, under US auspices, with General Vernon Walters performing a coordinating role, 'to counter the threat of the Soviet Union in the South

Atlantic'.<sup>10</sup> With the demise of military government in Argentina and 'openings' in Brazil, SATO may now be defunct. But cooperation between Israel, South Africa and Taiwan continues, notably in the nuclear field.

### **Israeli methods**

*'[The Israelis] taught the Guatemalans how to build an air-base. They set up their intelligence network, tried and tested on the West Bank and Gaza.'* (Bob Simon, *CBS News*, 16 February 1983)

Israel's security activities do not simply consist of cooperating with a number of Third World countries, but of also establishing and training military and security services in some of them. To understand Israel's methods, one must look at Israel's source of expertise in the field of counter-insurgency – the West Bank and Gaza.

In fact, the West Bank and Gaza form part of a series which includes Galilee (1948), Sinai and Golan Heights. One might add south Lebanon, which some have begun to refer to as the 'North Bank'. Israel's attitude with regard to these areas has been that of the exclusionist colonial settler state, an attitude which calls to mind the approach of European immigrants to American and Carib Indians, and European settlers in South Africa and Australasia. While all of these represent memorable contributions to the annals of repression and ethnocide, Israel has been making its own distinct contribution, beginning with the occupation of Galilee. The key problem that Galilee, and later the West Bank and Gaza, presented to the Zionists is that *they wanted the land but not the people*. It is this *exclusionist* element that differentiates Zionism from the Third World nationalisms. The major components of Israeli policy vis-à-vis the occupied territories concern land, control and population policy.

As Yigal Allon, commander of the Haganah forces in the Galilee, recalled in his memoirs: 'We saw a need to clean the Inner Galilee and to create a Jewish territorial succession in the entire area of the Upper Galilee.'<sup>11</sup> The massacre of 254 Arab men, women and children in the village of Deir Yassin in April 1948 by the forces of Menachem Begin's Irgun, reinforced by a rumour campaign that further Jewish reinforcements would burn all the villages, is what started the mass flight of the Palestinians from their homes. And yet there remained what is known in Zionist parlance as the '*demographic problem*' – 63 per cent of the total population of the Northern District were Arabs. To control this situation there was the military occupation, which was formalised in 1950 and remained in effect until 1966. The military government was based on the British Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945; from 1967 the administration of the Emergency Regulations was transferred



from the military to the police, which was expanded by a Department of Special Duties. The regulations included the designation of Arab settlements as 'closed areas', requiring written permits from the military governor to leave or enter; and provisions for the banishment, administrative detention and house or town arrest of individuals – in short, they affected every aspect of Palestinian life, giving total jurisdiction and discretion to the military government. Israeli population policy, a policy of de-Arabisation and Judaisation, from 1953 onwards, took the form of the 'Project for the Judaisation of Galilee'. The sustained expropriation of Arab lands, effacement and destruction of Arab villages and towns, and forced emigration of Arabs were components of this policy. But the problem would not go away, and a Ministry of Agriculture publication dated 1975 still stated: 'It is necessary to change the existing situation regarding the demographic ratio between the Jewish population and the non-Jewish, by means of implementing a long-term development programme.'<sup>12</sup>

New variations on these themes were developed in relation to the occupied areas of the West Bank and Gaza from 1967. Land expropriations in 1975-6 in Western Galilee and the Nazareth region were met by a general strike in March 1976, and after this the settlement thrust took on more purposeful forms. In a secret memorandum to the Prime Minister, the District Commissioner of the Northern District recommended the following:

Expand and deepen Jewish settlements in areas where the contiguity of the Arab population is prominent and where they number considerably more than the Jewish population; examine the possibility of diluting existing Arab population concentrations.<sup>13</sup>

The policy of 'conquest through settlement' (rather than through land expropriation and military rule) was elaborated, under the auspices of the World Zionist Organisation, in the proposed plan for 'the development of settlement in Judea and Samaria, 1979-1983':

The disposition of the settlements must be carried out not only *around* the settlements of the minorities, but also *in between them*, this in accordance with the settlement policy adopted in Galilee and in other parts of the country (original emphasis).<sup>14</sup>

Hence, as Khalil Nakhleh observes, the 'chequered pattern of settlement', a pattern followed in Israel since the 1950s. This policy can be characterised as environmental planning for domination, informed by racial arithmetic. Also part of this architecture of domination are the *lookouts* (*mitzpim*), tried first in the West Bank and, since then, in Galilee. In an area already confiscated, the military apparatus may designate a spot that overlooks an Arab concentration as a desirable location for a 'lookout': 'This means that without the need

for a large number of settlers (which is beneficial in a state of dwindling “pioneers”) a certain area can be claimed and held by the state. In 1979-80, Galilee was targeted for 29 such “lookouts”.<sup>15</sup> With the redirection of development efforts to the West Bank and Gaza, policy regarding Galilee had to revert to military methods.

There are now some 70,000 workers from the occupied territories working inside Israel, at wages considerably lower than Israeli workers and without social benefit, health care, and so on.<sup>16</sup> Super-exploitation of labour from the occupied territories forms part of the ladder of exploitation which includes Arabs inside Israel and the country’s majority population of Sephardic Jews, who also suffer discrimination and receive substandard wages. The Israeli monopoly of the market in the occupied territories, which constitutes a major share of its foreign trade, is another fruit of occupation.

Under Israeli occupation, existing legislation and economic measures are manipulated and new laws are created to ensure control. The use of development funds for reward and punishment also forms part of the same system. To circumvent popularly elected local leadership, a system of ‘quislings’ has been called into being, utilising kinship ties and clan structures to create agents of the military government among the population. In 1979 the ‘Village Leagues’, equipped with their own ‘security forces’, were created for this purpose in the West Bank: ‘They patrol streets at night; they attack cars and homes of outspoken nationalist Palestinians; and they attack nationalist institutions (as they did recently with Bethlehem University).’<sup>17</sup> From ‘reprisal actions’ to ‘collective punishment’, Israel has demonstrated a growing expertise at ‘frontier justice’. A 1977 *Sunday Times* investigation concluded that torture by Israeli security services was systematic.<sup>18</sup>

In November 1981 the second Begin government instituted a Civil Administration in the West Bank. Installed in the wake of Begin’s campaign rhetoric about *Eretz Israel*, alongside efforts to uproot all expressions of Palestinian national resistance and to move the maximum number of Jews into settlements across the ‘green line’, the Civil Administration was interpreted in the West Bank as a step ‘to pave the way for the annexation of the occupied territories and tie them directly to the various Israeli ministries’.<sup>19</sup> Hence it was greeted with a massive boycott and demonstrations, which unleashed an unprecedented wave of repression in the West Bank. ‘Demonstrations in the first months of 1982 resulted in more Arab casualties than had fallen in all previous fifteen years of occupation.’<sup>20</sup> At the time, settler vigilantes became more actively involved in doing the ‘dirty work’ of the occupation, displaying greater brutality than the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in forcing the Palestinians into submission or departure.

Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Kach party, Gush Emunim and TNT may be dismissed in Israel as a ‘lunatic fringe’, and contrasted to the

rationality and moderation of the Israeli mainstream; yet they echo the same themes that are upheld by the mainstream, and differ only in that they advocate more drastic variations of them. In a poll of September 1981, only 19 per cent opposed continued colonisation of the West Bank.<sup>21</sup> Kahane, in *They Must Go* ('they' meaning Arabs), voices, only more loudly and shrilly, the same *demographic problem* that has been the continuous preoccupation of Israeli administrations: 'Should we allow demography, geography and democracy to push Israel closer to the abyss?'<sup>22</sup> Kahane advocates overtly what at least a part of the Israeli power structure has been practising covertly. As emerged in a recent trial, the bombing attacks on three Arab mayors in 1980 involved Israeli army officers in the West Bank military government, as well as leading rabbis in the settler movement who were connected to the Tehiya party.<sup>23</sup> 'It is quite safe to assume', according to Adam Keller, 'that until mid-1983 a clear government policy of benevolent non-interference with the terrorists was followed.'<sup>24</sup> Prior to the trial, Prime Minister Shamir warned: 'Don't touch our messiahs who are creating historical facts for generations to come.'<sup>25</sup>

An environment where the demographic obsession, founded on the conception of Israel as a Jewish state, looms so large and is constantly harped on by the Likud, an environment where sectarianism is promoted as state religion, is an environment that nourishes extremism. The theme of *race* ('demography') is being replayed so as to avoid dealing with questions of *class*, in particular the slumbering issue of discrimination against the Sephardim (Oriental Jews). The Sephardim are being used as pawns in the game, put to sleep with a cult of Jewishness as a substitute for justice, and lured into thinking that they can obtain, at the expense of the Palestinians, the justice denied them by the Ashkenazim. Thus they are tempted into the West Bank settlements, as it is there that they are offered the better housing that is not available to them in Israel. In opting for the 'strategy of tension' Likud, although the more extremist party, is in fact following in the footsteps of Labour, who pioneered the deliberate creation of a siege mentality in Israeli society. As Moshe Dayan said about the 'reprisal actions' of the 1950s: 'They ... help us maintain a high tension among our population and in the army.'<sup>26</sup> The Likud has been reaping the fruits of the 'high tension' sowed by Labour.

After this brief review of Israel's methods in its domestic environment, we may be in a better position to assess Israel's contribution overseas and look at the situation of some of the recipients of Israel's security assistance in the light of the Israeli experience.

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The struggle in Guatemala is rooted in a similar problem. There, too, it

was the land that was wanted and not the people – the land, to grow coffee and cotton, not the people, because they are Indians. The majority Indian population has been losing land continuously for 450 years – but, until recently, though landless, they were at least part of a cheap labour force. Several years ago, groups of Indians migrated to the jungles of the north – but as soon as oil and nickel and other minerals were discovered in the region, they were thrown off this land as well. And this time they were not even wanted as cheap labour. Thus, Guatemala also had a *demographic problem*, and we encounter a configuration of policies similar to those of Israel, involving land, domination and exploitation, population policy and terror. The military, as part of the oligarchy, looms large in all these spheres, as a landowner in its own right, through military governments, and through methods of population control which involve terror as a strategy, and include the wholesale slaughter of entire villages.

Following the presidential elections that established the power of General Lucas García in 1978, terror was unleashed, notably with the massacre of Panzos of 29 May. Between 1977 and 1981 (the Carter years), Israel was the sole supplier of arms to Guatemala. The presence of Israeli advisers, along with Argentinians, was reported in 1981, at the time of the García government's July offensive.<sup>27</sup> Months later, in Israel, General Benditto García, Lucas' brother, Chief-of-Staff of the Guatemalan army, attributed the government's military success to Israel's assistance. He explained: 'We appreciate Israel; we see the Israeli as the best soldier in the world today, and we look to him as a model and an example to us.'<sup>28</sup> A sturdy compliment, considering that the Guatemalan army itself has displayed considerable skill in dealing with Guatemala's 'demographic problem' – the number of persons, mainly Indians, assassinated or 'disappeared' over the past fifteen years is estimated at 60,000, and that of refugees from Guatemala in Mexico alone at 150,000 (and there are tens of thousands of refugees inside Guatemala and in Honduras).<sup>29</sup> Since 1981, the emphasis has been on 'civic action' to 'pacify the country'; as a *New York Times* report notes: 'Schools and health clinics are built under "civic action" programs. Unfortunately, large numbers of peasants are often killed to deny the guerrillas their support.'<sup>30</sup> A recent development, in conjunction with the 'model villages', is the creation of 'civilian patrols' of villagers coerced into participating in local vigilante groups, a feature reminiscent of the West Bank.

Another country with a 'demographic problem' is South Africa. The congruence between apartheid and Zionism has been conspicuous enough to attract the attention of the UN General Assembly (1975). Both South Africa and Israel have turned questions of land and 'demography' (to abide by the Israeli euphemism) into national obsessions, and have devised elaborate systems of repression and

discrimination around them. Both view themselves as 'outposts of western civilisation'; both are wont to claim biblical justification and enjoy the support of organised religion domestically (though not unanimously); both are national security states with a broad emphasis on counter-insurgency and methods of psychological warfare. The parallels extend to the finer print as well, with South Africa's pass laws and Israel's special IDs for Arabs (stamped with a 'B') and requirements for travel passes in the occupied territories. South Africa's homeland policy exhibits a similar architecture of domination combined with racial arithmetic to that applied by Israel; Transkei, for example, is characterised by 'physical fragmentation of territory, combined with ethnic dispersal'.<sup>31</sup> The extensive military, political and economic cooperation between the two countries has been frequently reported on;<sup>32</sup> of interest at this point are the parallels between their policies vis-à-vis their surrounding frontline confrontation states.

Reciprocating South African assistance in the October 1973 war (South Africa sent a squadron of Mirages), Israel sent two dozen officers as experts on 'anti-terrorist' tactics to South Africa in 1974. In 1975 Israeli officers took part in drawing up South African plans for invading Angola. The invasion of Angola in 1975 conformed to the strategy of the 'pre-emptive strike' – attacking guerrilla forces in their bases across borders – as practised earlier by Rhodesian defence forces in their forays into Zambia and Mozambique.<sup>33</sup> However, the South African invasion was not just aimed against SWAPO bases, but in fact at Luanda, in order to install UNITA in the centre of power; it failed in this objective, due to Cuban intervention. South Africa's efforts to make Angola pay a high price for its support of SWAPO and to remove the ANC from neighbouring countries are similar to Israel's efforts to drive the PLO out of Lebanon. As South Africa sponsors the MNR in Mozambique and, jointly with the CIA, UNITA in Angola, so Israel maintains a presence in Lebanon through the 'Army of South Lebanon' of Major-General Antoine Lahd (the successor of Major Haddad); moreover, since 1976, Israel has been supplying the Phalangists with arms. When Israel went into Lebanon in June 1982, it was also with a dual objective: to destroy the institutional bases of the PLO and to push through to Beirut to see to the US-sponsored 'Phalangisation' of Lebanon. In the latter objective it failed. Encouraged by Israel's advance into Lebanon, the South Africans have invaded Angola anew and are now holding on to their positions in south Angola, just as Israel is maintaining her positions in south Lebanon. In Lebanon, Israel applied the strategy that General Haig, in 1981, was advocating in relation to Central America – 'going to the source'. It was in these terms that Richard Allen, US National Security Adviser, defended Israel's invasion of Lebanon: 'Reaching to the source is generally recognised as hot pursuit of a sort, and therefore

justified.<sup>34</sup> Claiming Nicaragua to be the 'source' of the Salvadoran insurgency, the US has, since December 1981, been practising the same approach in Central America. Israeli assistance on this front consists of military sales to Honduras and of acting as a back-up source to the *contras* in case US aid is cut off by Congress. In a visit to Honduras, former Defence Minister Sharon offered, free of charge except for transportation costs, weapons captured from the PLO. Thus the Middle East, southern Africa and Central America – today's three major 'regions of instability', according to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff<sup>35</sup> – are interconnected in at least as many ways as are Washington-Tel Aviv-Pretoria.

In 1977, Israeli technicians built an electrified 'wall' at the Namibia-Angola border, to keep SWAPO forces from entering Namibia.<sup>36</sup> Since 1982, a similar system of electronic border surveillance (*valla electronica*) has been under construction in Costa Rica on the border with Nicaragua.<sup>37</sup> It was precisely this item that brought a delegation of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Northern Ireland to Israel in January 1984. They believed a solution for the Irish problem could be found by erecting a £14m electric fence on the border with Ireland, touch-sensitive, monitored with computers and with permanently manned security posts every five miles.<sup>38</sup> The DUP is the largest Unionist party in Northern Ireland, led by the Reverend Ian Paisley. Apparently, the world's 'demographic problems' may not be quite confined to the so-called Third World.

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A newcomer to the Israeli sphere of interest is Sri Lanka. The situation of the Tamils in Sri Lanka has been described as a 'classic minority problem'. Discriminatory practices carried out by the majority Sinhala government virtually since independence, efforts at colonisation in Tamil areas and outbreaks of anti-Tamil mob violence in 1956, 1958, 1977 and 1983 have gradually transformed the cry for Tamil autonomy to a cry for Tamil Eelam separation.<sup>39</sup> After years of non-violent resistance, this has transformed the Tamil struggle into an armed struggle. During the 'Black July' of 1983, Sinhala massacres of Tamils and the destruction of Tamil businesses and property went on with soldiers and policemen standing idly by. Under the guise of combating the 'terrorism' of the Tamil Tigers, the military has moved into the predominantly Tamil areas in the north, assuming broad authorities under the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act. Acts of state terrorism in the North, particularly during March and April 1984, have taken on the form of 'collective punishment'.<sup>40</sup> Since early 1984, Israeli security advisers have been called in to train Lankan security personnel. Already, the structural similarities between the Tamils of Sri Lanka

and the Palestinians are notable – again, policies centred on land, control, demography and terror combine in order to consolidate a configuration of Sinhala hegemony. Right-wing Buddhists, who view the Sinhalese as chosen guardians of Buddhism, have already prepared the way – ‘To some extent the Tamils are cast in the role of the Philistines, “good” kings being those who, like Dutthagamani, smote the Tamils hip and thigh, and did so, partly at least, with religious motives.’<sup>41</sup> In order to break up areas of contiguous Tamil habitation, inroads into predominantly Tamil areas in the Eastern and Northern provinces have been made by Sinhalese settlers, supported by government and police, and encouraged by right-wing Buddhist clergy, acting like the local equivalent of Gush Emunim. Over the past year, this scheme to create ‘chequered patterns of settlement’ has been supplemented by the establishment of army camps in the north. The Jaffna peninsula is gradually being turned into a Lankan West Bank. Sinhala chauvinism used as an instrument of state power again calls to mind the psychological climate of Israel. On the basis of an analysis of Israeli policies on the West Bank, one could almost predict the forms Israeli security advice in Sri Lanka is taking.

Situations such as the above – only a sample of Israel’s global security operations – suggest other dimensions beyond Israel’s role as one of the major arms exporters – Israel as an accessory to state-organised terrorism, and holocaust, certainly in the case of Guatemala and South Africa, perhaps in others as well. South African invasions in Angola – planned with Israeli advice – have resulted in cold-blooded massacres, such as the attack on innocent men, women and children in the refugee camp of Cassinga on 4 May 1978. A sinister pattern suggests itself: the export of West Bank expertise. Thus, in the shadows cast by Deir Yassin, Kibye, Beirut, Sabra and Shatila, other silhouettes emerge – Cassinga, Panzos, Chiapas.

### Israel’s strategy

*‘We will say to the Americans: Don’t compete with us in Taiwan; don’t compete with us in South Africa; don’t compete with us in the Caribbean or in other places where you cannot sell arms directly ... Let us do it. You will sell the ammunition and equipment through an intermediary. Israel will be your intermediary.’* (Ya’acov Meridor, *Ha’aretz*, 25 August 1981)

Official or semi-official statements concerning Israel’s involvement in Third World countries usually say that Israel is interested in furthering its arms sales and technological exports as well as improving its diplomatic ties with Third World countries. The arms business helps Israel overcome the diplomatic isolation imposed on it by Arab countries, according to a recent report published by Tel Aviv University’s

Jaffee Institute for Strategic Studies.<sup>42</sup> Israel's involvement in Honduras/Nicaragua and El Salvador is said to be related to reports of links between the PLO and Central American movements.<sup>43</sup> Sometimes the defence of Jewish communities in some of the importing states is also mentioned as a consideration. Underlying these considerations there is a more involved strategic thinking.

Key elements in understanding Israel's strategy in relation to Third World countries are Israel's notion of self-reliance and the relationship between Israel and the US. Israeli self-reliance dates back to the Zionist idea of self-emancipation of the 1880s, reformulated by Ben Gurion, as 'orientation on ourselves', and since become a part of Israel's national security doctrine, at least according to Dan Horowitz.<sup>44</sup> This has taken shape in, among other things, Israel's arms industry. However, the fact that Israel's military industry has been developed with massive US assistance and participation – financial, technical and corporate – is a reminder that Israel's 'self-reliance' has flourished under US tutelage.

Israel's victory in the 1967 war changed the balance of forces in the region, and, in a major development, the US provided Israel with fifty Phantom fighters in 1968. US-Israeli collaboration during the Jordanian crisis of 1970 strengthened mutual relations. But, above all, the onset of the 'Vietnam syndrome' in the US, detente and the Nixon-Kissinger doctrine of 'sub-imperialism' inspired the momentous, almost tenfold, increase in US military assistance to Israel in the 1971-3 period. Moreover, 'In November 1971, the US quietly signed an agreement to provide technical information and assistance that would allow Israel to produce advanced weapons components itself. This had important immediate economic advantages for Israel, allowing it to develop further its military-industrial base and become an important arms manufacturer and exporter in its own right.'<sup>45</sup>

The October war of 1973, followed by the oil embargo initiated by the Saudis, gave another boost to Israeli 'self-reliance' under US sponsorship. On the Israeli side, there was concern 'to prevent a situation that would allow an outside power – namely the United States – to dictate the terms of a future cease-fire by threatening to withhold vital military supplies'; while on the part of the US, 'one can presume the interest of US strategists in avoiding any need to resupply Israel with weapons and munitions during future active hostilities'.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the purchase by Israel of entire production lines from the US, the production of weapons produced under US licence, and of several major Israeli military products (e.g., Kfir-C2, IAI-202 Arava), date from 1973 and after. A major Israeli military export item such as the Kfir jet fighter (a rebuild of Dassault's Mirage V) uses approximately 45 per cent US components, including a General Electric engine. The semblance of Israeli autonomy in arms production helped maintain the pretence of US evenhandedness in the Middle East. It also served to



shield the Washington-Riyadh axis from radical Arab criticism at a time when it had become a crucial avenue to keep OPEC in line.

In 1974, with the Nixon-Kissinger administration, another US-Israeli agreement concerning strategic cooperation was signed. US military sales to Israel had grown from \$140m in 1968-70 to \$1.2 billion in 1971-3 and \$4.5 billion in 1974-6.<sup>47</sup> In 1979 a Memorandum of Agreement was concluded, followed by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Defence Minister Sharon and Secretary of Defence Weinberger on 30 November 1981. It is reported that this included a secret clause regarding a military plan for Latin America, involving 'the participation of Israel in the case of an invasion of Nicaragua or Cuba'.<sup>48</sup>

In late December 1981, Defence Minister Sharon spoke at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv on Israel's military plans:

A source of growing anxiety for us and the Western world which will certainly develop into the most important challenge for the eighties is the Soviet expansionist strategy directed at the Middle East and Africa. It should be perfectly clear that in the new strategic environment, Israeli security interests are influenced by developments and events which occur outside the sphere in which Israel has hitherto concentrated its attention ... Beyond the first, traditional circle of confrontation which surrounds Israel, Israeli strategic interests demand that we expand into two geographic regions, which constitute a security interest for us: the peripheral Arab states and all those peripheral countries, the status and political-strategic orientation of which may have dangerous effects on Israel's national security.<sup>49</sup>

A strategic reorientation for Israel was also outlined in Oded Yinon's *Strategy for Israel in the Eighties*,<sup>50</sup> published in February 1982. Yinon starts from the premise that Arab states in the region, in view of their internal divisions (along political, religious and ethnic lines) and economic problems, constitute a threat to the state of Israel only in the short run, not in the long run. Israel's strategy in the region should be aimed at the break up or dismemberment of Arab states, by means of forming alliances with ethnic and political minorities in the region – the strategy followed in Lebanon. The threat to Israel in the long run, however, is considered to be Soviet influence (specifically, aiming to gain control over the Persian Gulf and southern Africa), in the light of the 'resource war'.

These were echoes of US foreign policy, but with a difference: the orientation of strategy from 'Arab threat' to 'Soviet threat' was combined with an implicit project of regional hegemony and an enlarged definition of Israel's national security interests. After visiting Namibia in 1982, Ariel Sharon defined Israel's strategic concerns to include Africa and much of Asia.<sup>51</sup> In April 1983 statements by Defence

Minister Moshe Arens about a reorganisation of the IDF were accompanied by a map showing Israel's 'Arc of Intervention', stretching from Tunisia to Afghanistan.<sup>52</sup>

In 1981, Ya'acov Meridor, economic coordination minister, told a gathering of Israeli businessmen: 'Israel coveted the job of top Washington proxy in Central America.'<sup>53</sup> Financial assistance to El Salvador, refused by the US Congress, was supplied instead by Israel (\$21m in 1981) through the back door, to be repaid out of the \$2.5 billion of US aid going to Israel annually; in a similar predicament over the *contras* operating against Nicaragua, Israel bailed out the CIA in April 1984 with between \$20m and \$30m<sup>54</sup> – a qualitatively different type of assistance from arms sales and training, which were also provided. Israeli advisers in South Africa in 1981 numbered 200. In sum, Israel volunteered to do the 'dirty work' of the New Cold War. What in 1976 had been a cause of concern in Pentagon circles, that Israel could re-export American technology to other nations, circumventing Congressional restrictions, became an *asset* in 1981 with a New Right administration in the White House that was bent on circumventing Congressional restrictions. A long-term strategic understanding between American and Israeli circles emerged, or reemerged, from the backrooms of policy implementation into the Oval Office.

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The mainstay of Israel's aspirations to power is its military industry. According to Professor Aharon Kleiman of the Tel Aviv University Centre for Strategic Studies:

The arms industry of Israel is based on the interests of a powerful lobby of the heads of the defence and industrial establishment, including the Histadrut [trade union] industry ... They identify their specific interests with the interests of the state. A common military history strengthens their tendency to judge policy according to immediate results; they are pragmatic and tend to be cynical at what seem to them to be false moral norms.<sup>55</sup>

Amongst them is Shimon Peres, leader of Labour, a driving force in building Israel's arms industry, founder of Israel Aircraft Industry and Tadiran, and an architect of Israel's nuclear capability.

Israel's arms exports represent 40 per cent of export revenues (in 1980), and the military industry occupies 14 per cent, and, according to a more recent estimate, 20 per cent of Israel's labour force, i.e., one out of every five workers. So, formidable economic stakes are also tied up with the military business. For the country with by far the world's highest per capita foreign debt – four million people owing \$25 billion abroad – a 400 per cent inflation rate and a stagnant GNP, the

economic dimension is by no means unimportant.

Israel's military-industrial complex is linked, on the one hand, to the US military-industrial complex and, on the other, to South Africa and Taiwan. Decades of dependence on the US has now put Israel in a position where it has a limited degree of autonomy. Israel has also developed a global network of right-wing connections that might give it if not some autonomy, then leverage in case of a shift in US foreign policy. Here, the alliance with South Africa and Taiwan comes in – both countries with considerable industrial capacity, whose elites are covering themselves against the same contingency for reasons of their own. Israel as part of a league of 'pariah nations', vanguard of a transnational ultra-right wing pressure group – with a grip on strategically sensitive areas and with nuclear capabilities – is thus one possible scenario. A related scenario is that of Israel as a 'wild card' (as in Sharon's idea that Israel should behave as an unpredictable, 'crazy country'). Such a 'pariah league' would be vulnerable notably in terms of oil supplies, foreign trade, technology and finance – although South Africa has been known to get by.

With the theme of the 'Soviet threat' coming to the foreground and the 'Arab threat' fading into the background, Israel's strategic planning loses its 'pragmatic' character, even its character of 'national defence', and becomes strongly ideologised instead. This ideological commitment is evident, for instance, in the offer of captured PLO weapons to Central American armies free of charge, a gesture that falls outside the purview of military business as well as national defence. It is also there when Sharon talks about Israel as a middle military power that must play a role in the global conflict between the free capitalist West and the communist world.<sup>56</sup> Israeli military planning has thus entered the twilight zone of superpower ideology.

In the US, the 'Soviet threat' is the royal road towards re-establishing US hegemony through leadership of the collective security system. In Israel, only this can justify the sustained militarisation of the society in the absence of a military threat from the PLO or Arab nations. It is a reorientation of strategy that is the logical sequel to Lebanon. As in the case of the US, it serves as a justification for activities in Third World countries that are repugnant from any other point of view. If the outcomes of all conflicts throughout the world, domestic and regional, are translated into 'loss' or 'gain' from a superpower point of view, then dirty work may pass for noble calling. In such an ideologised comic book version of global relations, simple concerns such as social justice dwindle to insignificance because reality itself is no longer an issue in a perspective that is concerned only with power. Israeli interest in serving as an offshore affiliate of the American New Right is that it diverts attention from the Palestinian question and because, under the umbrella of 'collective security', Israel

can elaborate its own aspirations to power.

Strategies followed in Central America, the Middle East and southern Africa are so many carbon copies of one another that it is difficult to identify the original. US, Israeli and South African strategies resemble each other so closely in objectives, tactics and material, that they may be considered as constituting one pool of imperialist and counter-insurgency expertise and technology. With Israelis active in southern Africa, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and the borders of Nicaragua, South Africans in Israel, Taiwanese in Guatemala, and so forth, it's a small world. One might call the 'portable West Bank' part of this *imperial pool*. If British strategies in Northern Ireland are taken into account, one may include Britain in this pool, as part of the expertise that is percolating within the system. This imperial pool is a dimension of the collective security system led by the US. Hence, it includes western Europe through NATO, Japan and allied South-east Asian countries, ANZUS, and the OAS. In other words, Israel's activities in Third World countries, on the fringes of the US collective security system, are in fact being undertaken as an intermediary on behalf of the 'western world'.

### Questions

*'After all this we wonder, "Why are we not loved?" and blame "anti-semitism" or "Arab money" instead of asking ourselves what we are doing to the world.'* (Israel Shahak)

*'You shall not oppress a stranger, you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in Egypt.'* (Exodus 23:9)

Up to the fifteenth century, Jews, in Spain and Portugal, formed a bridge between Islam and Christianity in a creative confluence of cultures. After all, Judaism is at the root of both. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, Theodor Herzl described the 'Jewish state' to be as 'a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism'.<sup>57</sup> During the *galut* or exile, Jews, an Oriental people by origin, had become a European people, by acculturation. While in the eleventh century nearly 96 per cent of world Jewry was Sephardic, by 1930 the trend had completely reversed and 92 per cent of world Jewry was Ashkenazic.<sup>58</sup> Thus they returned from the diaspora a different people from when they left. They returned to the Orient with European ignorance and contempt, with a Crusader outlook, with European traumas.

Zionism was the reaction of Jewish communities to the oppression perpetrated against Jews throughout the centuries of European history, particularly in contemporary Eastern and Central Europe. In this sense, the movement belongs to the sombre chapters of European history and in no way to the East.<sup>59</sup>

Third World peoples, who had no history or knowledge of a 'Jewish problem', observed how Israel stood with Europe and the US in the widening North-South rift. An instance of European colonisation in the era of decolonisation, Israel is in the Third World but not of the Third World. Located on the fault line between western imperialism and Third World nationalism, Israel behaves as a fifth column of empire.

Erik Hooglund asked: 'Why is it wrong for the United States to provide military assistance to countries which violate human rights, but not so for Israel?'<sup>60</sup> It is wrong for Israel also; but in the US and Europe, Israel continued and still continues to evoke sympathy and support, a support based not least on cultural affinities and affinity with Zionism as the historical counterpart of antisemitism, as the 'solution' to the Jewish problem. While the Holocaust ranks high in European-American historical consciousness, a central part of their own historical drama, the historical traumas of peoples 'on the other side of the river' are not as near.

No longer a bridge between Christianity and Islam, Israelis have become the allies of Christianity. In Africa, Israel finds political niches on the side of Christian groups resisting Islamic inroads, and certain Asian countries call on Israel as a counterweight against Islamic influence. Zionism also finds itself in league with fundamentalist Christianity – Christian Zionists who share Zionist fundamentalism in terms of their claims to Eretz Israel, and who likewise take the word after the letter and not after the spirit. Under the Likud governments these ties became closer – Reverend Jerry Falwell, founder of the 'Moral Majority', was presented Israel's Jabotinsky award by Begin. Ties became closer at a time when fundamentalist Christianity was also being mobilised, in Latin America, Africa and parts of Europe, in the battle for hearts and minds against communism – in effect as an antidote against the spread of liberation theology and the people's church.

In adopting the US foreign policy perspective of a 'resource war', Israel is adopting an instrumentalist attitude to the world, a Realpolitik perspective, according to which only 'resources' matter, disregarding people and social relations. It is precisely from this kind of perspective that the US government has been looking at Israel all along – from the 1949 National Security Council memorandum which noted the strategic location of Israel, to Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger who called Israel an '*unsinkable aircraft carrier*' close to strategic Middle-east oil fields.<sup>61</sup> An '*unsinkable aircraft carrier*' is a peculiar way to describe a country; it evokes the image of a country that does not exist except as the launching pad of some project of power. This appears to be the political reality of what Begin insisted on calling the 'Holy Land'. This military simile follows US influence like a shadow, witness the terminology of Prime Minister Nakasone in 1982: 'I want the

Japanese archipelago to be like an unsinkable aircraft carrier.<sup>62</sup>

There are no 'Soviets' in Guatemala – there are no Soviet-supplied arms, for that matter; nor are there 'Soviets' in Sri Lanka. But there are resources in Guatemala, and Sri Lanka may well be understood to be another of those 'unsinkable aircraft carriers', strategically located off the Indian subcontinent, and on sea lanes between US bases in the Philippines and Guam, and Diego Garcia. And there are Indians in Guatemala, descendants of the Maya culture who, in recognising Christianity and the scriptures as a major inspiration of the Central American revolution, also acknowledge their spiritual debt to Judaism. There is one question, however, that bothers them profoundly: How can it be that a people that inspired us so much to take up the fight against injustice, we now find arraigned against us as the enemies of our people?

In fact, it is not the Jewish people that are assisting Guatemalan juntas in massacring the Indians, but Israeli ruling circles – Israeli ruling circles who have adopted the cheap imperial world view, who are taking sides in a class struggle on a global scale. Israel's global role is paralleled by its domestic class realities, where Sephardim are second-class citizens, Arabs third-class, and people in the occupied territories count only as obstacles to creating 'facts on the ground'. If it should occasion surprise that Israel maintains connections with right-wing and ultra right-wing circles throughout the world, it may help to recall that this is in line with the record of the Zionist movement, which cooperated with imperialists, fascists and Nazis alike.<sup>63</sup> Israel's ties with the Somoza family date back to 1947, with Guatemala to 1948, with South Africa to the role of Jewish capitalists in the South African economy before the turn of the century. This is another reason why Israel's role in the Third World should not be simply reduced to clientship of the US: Zionism has developed in this direction also by virtue of the logic of its own historical path. Several influences have combined to create this logic.

In the first place, there was the influence of an upper stratum of Jews, a financial elite who assisted in the expansion of European imperialism; Rothschild, for example, provided the credit that enabled the British to buy shares in the Suez Canal concession. The political anti-semitism of the late nineteenth century was orchestrated in part to divert anti-capitalist sentiments into ethnic, anti-Jewish channels. Ostensibly aimed at Jewish finance capitalists, in effect it hit the Jewish working class, the majority of whom were socialists themselves. This was the scheme, to redirect energies away from class struggle, to fan the flames of nationalism, chauvinism and racism, and to destroy the socialist movements, in which Jews played an important part. If anti-semitism was one of the orchestrated alternatives to class struggle, Zionism took no interest in social revolution either. A conservative

movement, not only did it not have the support of most Jews in eastern and central Europe, it was actively opposed by the majority, as a betrayal of the universalist commitments of Jewish people, which found expression in their allegiance to the Bund and other socialist organisations. Zionism operated in the orbit of the imperialist and reactionary powers, in no manner a revolutionary movement but rather a diplomatic effort. While ignored and rejected by the majority of Jews, it found support among the upper stratum of Jews who were part and parcel of the imperialist ambience. The option of settlement in Palestine only began to draw majority support when anti-Jewish measures intensified and the Holocaust machine came into operation, at a time when other countries, including the US, closed their borders to Jewish refugees – Israel, as Isaac Deutscher said, was created as ‘an act of despair’.

Since then, another dynamic has come into operation. Paolo Freire warned that the greatest danger for the oppressed is to become like the oppressor. The Holocaust unveiled a malice of such magnitude, an abyss so wide, that normal psychological and political patterns were broken through. An existential perplexity about the human condition permitted a collective role reversal – from victims to perpetrators. It is in this direction that the record of Israel, vis-à-vis both the Palestinian people and Third World countries, points. If Israelis say they ‘did not know’, it is true that Israeli media are censored. What may be underlying this process of role reversal is the logic of fear, and finding protection from fear in conforming with the aggressor. This was the pattern of Zionism, as anti-semitism was not resisted but accommodated to. Israel has not broken with the logic of fear. Rather, the logic of fear has been converted into the logic of power; the essential mechanism of this process is mimicry, for in a world that continues to be dominated by the same type of forces that unleashed the Holocaust, Israel seeks protection in behaving in the same way. The psychological meaning of Zionism is that its adherents have chosen to side with the perpetrators rather than the victims. When Begin says ‘Never Again’, it means in effect ‘Never Again us’; and, consequently, it means others – Palestinians, Guatemalan Indians, and so forth.

Israel's connection with Third World fascism stems from the same root as Zionism's connection with fascism. It is a consequence of the alliance with imperialism – an alliance that came naturally to an upper stratum of Jews, but that came to the majority of Jews only at a time when there practically was no other choice. The alternative was social revolution, the road the majority of Jews did follow, at a time when all the fury of western power structures was unleashed against the forces of socialism, which threatened to overturn their global chessboard. Fascism and Nazism – power unbound – were promoted by western power structures as gambits against socialism and communism. Third

World fascism partakes of the same logic of power – without make-up. It is the face of imperialism as it appears without a mask, nourished and supported by the same type of forces that nourished and supported Hitler.

Revocation of the experience of the Holocaust seems to be fruitless if it is not combined with a commitment to uncover the historical truth of who supported and financed Hitler, and who benefited, and continues to benefit, from fascism, and with compassion for the victims of holocausts that are being perpetrated now. The Jewish people have become an existentially inward looking people, drawn into a closed circle of fear. That Israeli repression stems from a different historical consciousness than that of its imperial patron, a logic of power informed by fear rather than by arrogance and greed, is small comfort to the victims, to whom the net product is identical.

What an irony of history that the words of the prophets, recited but not resonating in the synagogues of Israel, should be taken to heart in the mountains of Central America. Christian liberation theology has been inspired more than anything by the Jewish experience (Exodus, Exile), but there has been no development of a Judaic liberation theology. Zionism is the substitute for Judaic liberation theology; but it is concerned with the liberation of Jews as Jews, not with the liberation of Jews as humanity. Zionism has ethnicised, nationalised Jewishness.

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## Güney, Turkey and the West: an interview

Yilmaz Güney spoke to me, from his exile, at a secret location in Paris on 9 August 1984. One month later, he was dead of cancer. Despite the gravity of his illness, despite the bleakness of his exile, he was desperately concerned to speak out again for the Turkish people whose voices have been stifled at home and ignored abroad. Güney himself came from one of the most oppressed groups within Turkish society, his parents were landless Kurdish peasants. So all-embracing is the official desire to obliterate the Kurds as a people that, as Güney himself said, 'just to tell of the existence of the Kurdish people is a crime. You are punished.'

Güney's career – as revolutionary, film-maker, writer and Turkey's biggest national film star – lasted twenty-six years. It was intricately linked with political events in his country, and interrupted by twelve years in prison. Prison conditions varied dramatically, reflecting the policies of the temporary victors of the power struggles between the right and centre.<sup>1</sup> Güney's third imprisonment, from 1974 until his escape in 1981, included the period of centrist rule by Bulent Ecevit (1978-9), during which he was able to write scripts in a private room and liaise with colleagues who directed his scripts in the outside world. It is in this period that 'The Herd',<sup>2</sup> 'The Enemy',<sup>3</sup> and preparations for 'Yol' were made. But even at that time, Güney was researching law books in readiness for capital charges that could be brought against him as a result of 'associating with Kurds'. Also at this time, CIA-

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trained fascist groups initiated a period of terrorist attacks which snowballed into massacres by groups of both right and left. Güney admitted he was safer in jail than out.

A recent Turkish book<sup>4</sup> contains evidence that preparations for the 1980 military coup began in 1978, at the height of the progressive mass action that precipitated the fascist subversion. Güney was wise to prepare for further harassment. After the military coup had 'restored order', he waited until the filming of 'Yol' was complete, and the rushes smuggled out of the country, before escaping to France. The film was edited in Switzerland, and won the Golden Palm at Cannes in 1983. Güney received the award in front of an ecstatic and visibly moved audience. Turkish exiles had travelled from all over Europe for the occasion. 'Yol' brought Güney into the western limelight at a time when news of Turkey was fading rapidly into the gloom.

In Turkey, where politics is a dangerous preoccupation, Güney was a political film-maker with a mass audience. His films generated noisy audience participation, people would shout and cheer as they identified with characters and events. Their lives were central to his stories, and his films affected their lives. When fascist attacks threatened cinemas that showed progressive films, secret screenings became necessary, and his films would almost be drowned out by the shouting of 'Free Turkey' slogans.

In the West, the relationship between Güney's films and the audience was inevitably different. Roger Scruton, the English right-wing critic and theorist, viewed Güney's escape as part of the strategy of 'the war of subversion' that was being sustained outside Turkey's borders – the principal task being 'to capture informed public opinion which holds sway in the West ... there is no better channel to this opinion than art cinema'.<sup>6</sup> Scruton had no need to worry. Güney's charisma was the focus of the West's attention; his politics were a side issue, as are his country and its sufferings. The centre of our world of film reflects the centre of political power, seen either in the glamorous action of the USA or the arty introspection of the EEC. The netherworld beyond provides the occasional diversion of radical exotica, where our attention is never meant to linger. Roger Scruton's convoluted political critique of 'Yol' included the apparently apolitical aesthetic criticism that 'the film relies too heavily on clichés generated by ... the Asiatic beauties of the landscape'. The Turkish landscape is presumably the centre of no man's life. To dwell on it is a bore.

Despite this, there was more than the usual interest in this film-maker from the edges of the 'real' world. Güney was larger than life, an artist at odds with authority, just the sort of 'lone ranger' that makes good article fodder. He was even involved in a shoot out, and mention of this is obligatory in every introduction to his work. His political statements served as colouring matter to illustrate his

personality. He was variously ‘an orthodox marxist’, an ‘unorthodox marxist’ or, after his death (in the appreciation on the BBC World Service), ‘not a marxist’. He has, recalled one feature writer, sat ‘in an elegant drawing room, talking of radical change’, and doodled on a pad ‘making angry and uncompromising references to fascism and anti-democracy’.<sup>7</sup> Even when, on one occasion, Güney is allowed to speak for himself at length, he is still introduced with ‘there is something slightly chilling about the easy rhetoric of his speech’; although it is allowed that ‘his films are highly sympathetic’.<sup>8</sup>

The denouncement of the brutalisation of human relations by feudal values in ‘Yol’ and ‘The Herd’, was something that western critics could also find comfort in. These oppressions are historically distant, and confirm the progressive nature of western modernity. Even Roger Scruton was able to leap on the topic and fiddle with the issues raised to extract a message of support for the despots that control Turkey today. He interprets ‘Yol’ as dealing with the urgent need to transform ‘the village’ into ‘the polis’ (with multinational investment, no doubt). ‘The rule of honour’ must turn into ‘the rule of law’. He concludes that ‘the tragedy of Turkey is that those, like Güney, who have comprehended the human problem, have so often espoused the inhuman solution of the left [which has] never accomplished the passage from honour to justice’.

Chris Auty, film critic of the London magazine *City Limits*, addresses more liberal readers. ‘Perhaps their main element’, he says of Güney’s films, ‘is an overwhelming sympathy for the position of Turkish women.’<sup>9</sup> Extracting this fashionable single issue from the plethora of social, economic and political issues that Güney described denies the complexity of the oppression in the society that he struggled so hard to change.

In our culture, cinema is a closed world; its function is not to resonate beyond its timespan and the auditorium walls, except in its role as an agent to confirm consensus ideology. The critics, in their role on various levels as advertisers and testers of consumer products, are not free to join in a call to arms. And the audience, used to cinema’s role of diversion, does not know how to respond to a film that comes from a different frame of reference, that is a tool of struggle forged between the film-maker and his people – a film that demands, in short, some sort of action as a response.

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*Alfreda Bengé*: What is mainstream Turkish cinema? What is its ideological message?

*Yılmaz Güney*: From the birth of Turkish cinema, in the same way as it

borrowed its technology from abroad, it mimicked foreign film. It was based on this foreign influence. It didn't have a national traditional character based on indigenous experience. It never possessed this kind of authenticity. For a long time, the main influence was American, Italian, Arabic and even French cinema, and it proceeded by imitating these. Today, still, the essence of what marks its character is this imitation.

Amongst the kinds of films shot in Turkey today, there are cowboy films, westerns, gangster films, 'Tarzan' films, even space stories, and, parallel to these, 'arabesque' films – musicals made round pop stars, unrequited love and pining, etc. Turkey is one of the world's leading countries as far as the size of cinema audiences is concerned. And people are really influenced by the kinds of film I've just mentioned. The 'arabesque' genre, in particular, has great influence now. The main ideology of these films is 'Forget about tomorrow, live for today. Forget about reality, look at dreams. Forget about the world', this kind of ideology. That is, an ideology which wrenches the people away from the hardships they experience, which pushes away the people from their problems rather than encouraging them to solve them. They have the effect of drugs. A narcotic duping the people. A machine for ideological absurdity. These are the functions undertaken by the film industry in Turkey, and it must be said that it has a very important effect on the people.

Apart from the mainstream, there have always been a handful of people in Turkey who have tried to create a different cinema based on national traditions and experience. The first of these films was a documentary shot during the occupation of the allied forces after the First World War. It was a film about a demonstration against the British troops. So that was another tradition, which continued, but always remained a minority form. Such film-makers were against the imitation of foreign forms, and always tried to base their films on national experience. After the 1950s, this second trend became more obvious and stronger.\* In a sense, I can be placed in the continuity of this second tradition that wanted to base cinema on national reality.

*AB:* As a famous star, which tradition were you part of?

*YG:* One should consider my 'life story' in three stages. The first was between 1958 and 1961, when I made my first steps into the cinema as an actor, scriptwriter and assistant. I was part of the minor trend that tried to use our traditions and our reality – to oppose the imported forms with authentic ones. But we didn't have much impact on mass

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\* Directors like Atif Yılmaz and Lüftü Ö Akad introduced social realist subjects, a recent trend of Turkish novelists, into the cinema, which had been dominated by directors who came from the Turkish theatre tradition. Güney began his career with Atif Yılmaz.

audiences. We worked hard to create a new mainstream, but we weren't very effective. From 1961 to 1963 I was jailed, and when I came out decided to try and unite two things – first, this tradition of resistance and second, this popular approach to film-making. I tried a synthesis. So, on the one hand, I addressed myself to the consciousness and expectations of the audience; on the other hand, I tried to communicate to the audience their own reality.

But some of the outcome was so mixed, it would deserve to be described as decadent. When I became well-known, and had created strong links with my audience, I went further. I began to collaborate with young talented people who were longing to innovate, and also old-timers who had been left 'unemployed'. I introduced storylines which had previously been impossible to deal with. But, you have to put all this in the context of prevailing conditions of democracy and censorship. We never worked in an environment of freedom, in an environment which was enabling for artistic creation.

AB: What did you put in your films that was new?

YG: Peasants entered, land-hungry peasants marched into my films, and the migrants that were flowing into the cities in search of work. Particularly, lumpenised people entered my films. People who had become lumpenised and desperate. In other words, people who had become marginalised by our rapidly transforming society. People who had been pushed out became *visible*. People pushed outside the margins of society and the law. The peasants that became smugglers on the border, in mortal danger to earn a living. People who commit murder out of desperation. What these people actually felt, how they personally lived, entered our cinema.

AB: What was different about the function of your heroes?

YG: I rejected the classic concept of the hero, but a new type of hero emerged. This new type was one who opposed injustice, starting out subdued and oppressed, but in the face of oppression begins to resist and becomes a symbol. I chose that type as a starting-point, but these new types were defeated. They were defeated because they remained isolated. The heroic type depicted in my films never wins. He is punished for his resistance and eliminated, because this person is not organised. He remains isolated. This person has been driven to finding individual solutions, and so has no links with the people. This is precisely why one of the things I denounce in my films is the notion of individual revolt/salvation. If I can say it in a slogan, 'There is no individual salvation – the path of individual liberation leads to a dead end.'

AB: How were you limited by censorship? How did you overcome the limitations? Could you have overtly described the Kurdish experience?

*YG:* In all the films I made in Turkey, I've never been able to express a single one of my thoughts in the way I would like to have, let alone a serious matter like the Kurdish question, let alone an important question like that of the working class; even basic questions of justice and injustice which exist in our society could only be dealt with partially and indirectly.

From the first step our film-making took, our main concern was to find new forms of expression, a new language. We had to build on the fact that we had a relationship with our audience – my being a popular actor had created this link. I had to find covert ways of expressing myself, with my face, the expression in my eyes, even by missing out bits of dialogue, by leaving out words. In short, a common language emerged between myself and my audience in a way which, even if I didn't say anything overtly, they would understand what I was getting at. This was my way of self-protection. In my films, I used the language of Aesop. Let me give you an example of how I would communicate. In a film made after our previous fascist military take-over in 1971, this is how I tried to articulate my feelings about the oppression unleashed on our people. A blind man learns how to use a gun; he trains himself to shoot by putting lots of bells around him, and from the sound of those bells he was able to identify his target and shoot – and that's how a blind man learned to resist. Here, my people understood, 'Yilmaz Güney tells us that all our means may be lost, all our weapons may be taken from us, but it is always possible to find new ways to resist. New solutions never run out, there must always be a way.' And the message got through. From the outside, the film is an unassuming piece of work which resembles a western.

*AB:* In your films, capitalism is glimpsed in small filmic brushstrokes. The negative values of feudalism and its legacy are dealt with directly. Was it lack of artistic freedom that prevented you from describing capitalism's negative effects, or was exposing feudalism's negative legacy a more urgent issue?

*YG:* Particularly after the 1950s, the feudal structure in Turkey began to disintegrate. With this disintegration, the human dramas of that society became very explicit. New searches, new orientations, new sufferings became visible. For a film-maker that was something that had to be caught – it was something you couldn't miss. I must add that as the old order disintegrated, the new order which emerged didn't bring any new solutions to these people and didn't resolve the problems created by the disintegration of the previous social structure. It didn't create the conditions for people to progress. Regardless of how advanced capitalism is compared to the feudal order, it didn't create happiness. In our current epoch, capitalism doesn't have the capacity to bring happiness.



In every society, social upheaval has had a profound influence on artistic production. For instance, the developments during the period of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the West in art and literature: take Russian literature just before and after the Russian revolution, or American literature at the time of the Depression. We, too, were swept into such a period because of objective conditions outside our control. Life itself pushed us into it. But we had a serious disadvantage, we weren't able to knit together the elements of our social upheaval in an environment of artistic freedom. That's why our output was always incomplete – unfinished. That's why some problems were touched on in a cursory way. Whether we liked it or not, we were always confronted by the state and censorship. The reason I am here today is due to the respect I have for my profession, and the struggle I've had to accomplish my responsibility towards it. And the fact that I've been confronted by the state.

*AB:* How has being a Kurd affected you?

*YG:* I will start by telling about my origins. My parents are both Kurdish and they moved to the area around Adana from their homeland Kurdistan before I was born. To be more specific, my mother's family moved from Kurdistan to this part of Anatolia during the First World War, because of the Russian occupation of the Eastern territories, and my father's family moved south-west because of a vendetta. So they were migrants – not foreign migrants, but internal migrants; they moved from one territory to another. I was born there, of Kurdish parents, but I didn't speak the language. I didn't know the language because it is forbidden to learn or speak it. It's forbidden to have your own culture. It's even forbidden to have any identity.<sup>10</sup> All these obstacles were put up and I had to discover my identity and origins later on. The official ideology tells me 'You are a Turk' and I have to learn 'I'm a Turk', despite the fact that at home my parents spoke Kurdish. I became aware of it only when I was 15 years old. But then, when I was 15 years old, when I became conscious of my origins, I didn't have a nationalist attitude. I am not a nationalist because I had already discovered socialism – socialist ideas. In this sense of a social class basis, I am for the unity of all people and not for one particular nation. On the other hand, in answer to your question, I feel that being a Kurd has had a great influence and it explains many characteristics and particularities in me.

The Kurds, because they were landless and poor, had to move to regions where they could find jobs. They had to work – it was rather like an interior migration – and, like the migrant workers that you have in Europe, they have the toughest and the meanest jobs and have no consideration because they are at the lowest scale of society. In Istanbul, for example, 90 per cent of porters, who carry extremely heavy

weights, and street-cleaners and the ones who clean public washrooms, all the dirtiest jobs are done by Kurds. They have the toughest jobs, the worst jobs and they get no consideration, just humiliation. Humiliation to such a point that to say 'Kurd' is an insult in the Turkish language. And when they go for military service, which is very long in Turkey, there again they have the worst jobs – they aren't trusted. So, at every opportunity, on the pretence that they'll riot, their guns are taken away and they are sent to cut onions. So this, of course, has an influence on any person who has Kurdish origins. But, to be honest, there are Kurds who also have extremely high positions in society, who are in the highest ranks of the state apparatus – but that is because they never say 'I am Kurdish'. They hide it.

If you don't admit you are Kurdish, you can go very high. You can be a minister, a deputy, a member of parliament. But once you admit it, even if you have such a high rank, you will still go to jail. There are now some deputies in jail just because they once said 'I am Kurdish'. So, one shouldn't say they are Kurdish deputies, because they are not elected as Kurdish deputies. They are elected as Turks living in a country that no one can admit is Kurdish.

There are now twelve million Kurds in Turkey, but the Kurdish population is dispersed all over the country. Not only do they have to move west to hunt for jobs in the cities there, but, after the First World War, there were also enforced migrations. They took whole villages and people from whole areas and they moved them to another part of Turkey. Even on the westernmost border of Turkey, you will find Kurdish settlements. You could call it internal exile. They were sent in exile to other parts of the country. Forced settlements, parallel to the forced migration to find jobs.

*AB:* Now you are in exile, you can say anything you want – but your audience has been taken from you. Who is your audience now?

*YG:* This is my tragedy, and the tragedy of people like me. The dough of my art consisted of the images of my people, the accumulation of my people's experiences and feelings, and the accumulated experience of my land and its soil. Today, I am relatively free, but there is no public to relate to, no characters I want to describe. In other words, you have the weapon of freedom in your hand but no ammunition to communicate. This is where our tragedy begins. I have to find a new path, create a new audience. But this audience can be nothing like the one it took us years to shape in Turkey. This is the contradictory situation we find ourselves in, and it should be emphasised. Today, it's materially impossible to make films about Turkey. You can't re-assemble Turkey from abroad, or make films that explain Turkey from abroad. 'The Wall' was a different matter, that *was* possible. Abroad, I could perhaps describe the life of Turkish emigrants, the foreign

guest workers. I can't take it upon myself to describe French or British society, that would be absurd. Although I would add that, as a foreigner in this society, I have a number of observations which may be met with hostility.

**AB:** You had a complicit relationship with your Turkish audience ... who can you appeal to, to *act* in the West?

**YG:** With my new film, 'The Wall', despite the fact that I described prison life more mildly than the reality, western intellectuals didn't empathise with what was depicted. They distanced themselves from it. Some important western newspapers came out with stupid comments to the effect that this wasn't an important part of Turkish reality. They tried to impose *our* reality on *us* from the outside. The concept of injustice is more transparent to those who have lived through it. For the western audience, it was opaque ... the value judgements on what constitutes right and wrong may be totally different. In films that are produced here, we may have to take into account different criteria ... a different approach. I think people could feel responsible, even guilty, towards their epoch and society. Things can be done to arouse people's feelings of guilt, to affect their indifference and their need to escape reality. If these can be pushed to the surface, I think new forms of dynamic expression can be opened up.

We still haven't learnt our lesson from what fascism did during the Second World War. Today, fascism hangs over the head of the Third World like a sledgehammer, and people are indifferent ... this is my main concern now, because I don't see the near future as particularly bright as far as democracy is concerned. I see the intensification of reactionary forces. I feel the approach of war. Various people have to come to their senses about these imminent dangers. I think that what can be produced now are works to send messages that alter attitudes in this direction. These are the kind of films that I think I could make.

When I look at films made after the Second World War, I see the war interpreted simply in terms of a struggle between the Nazis and the Jewish people. Fascism, however, is not just a question of being against the Jews, it's a phenomenon which is against the whole of humanity – that is, if the whole question is seen in terms of particular concentration camps and as a race war, then the real meaning of the phenomenon is lost. Today, the Israelis behave the same way towards the Palestinian Arabs, there is mass extermination. In the future, there will be worse things to come. Reaction is haunting Europe, in England, in Germany, in France. There are fascist dictators in all corners of the world. We're faced with a situation in which there is an attack on all human values and humanity.

**AB:** What is going on in Turkey?

YG: To understand what's happening, you have first to take into consideration the general contradictions and rivalry between the two superpowers. The actual Turkish administration depends, of course, on the US – on American imperialism and its local collaborators, the bourgeoisie with capital. The ruling coalition is the military and bureaucrats, soldiers and high civil servants. Evren, the President, represents the army, and Ozal, the Prime Minister, represents the technocrats. Their aim is to transform the country into a paradise for plunder – and they have succeeded in this. Also, they reinforce the position of American imperialism, not only within the country, but within the whole region. A handful of people get richer every day, while the condition of everyone else gets worse every day. The opposition – workers, peasants and intellectuals – is muzzled and repressed. All media, artistic creation and expression are completely controlled. There is a complete monopoly on all information, which is totally one-sided. No information is allowed about the political situation, the economic situation and what is happening in Turkish jails, where thousands are imprisoned for political reasons.

In the West you will hear a lot about what goes on in Poland, Afghanistan, East Germany and so on. US imperialism wants to block certain alternatives. The US says it happens in the eastern bloc – so it can happen in Turkey. It happens there ... It happens in Turkey, 'that's normal'. The correct democratic attitude is to oppose any assaults on democracy in any part of the world, wherever they occur. It must be emphasised that western intellectuals, the public and ostensibly democratic states and administrators pretend to be democratic but condone fascist regimes and therefore become accomplices. I'm not afraid to say this. For instance, the Thatcher government talks about democracy in its own country, and abroad it supports Turkey. This just won't do. Whenever, in Poland, the leaders of 'Solidarity' are persecuted, the western world follows the situation and expresses its indignation. In Turkey, hundreds of labour leaders are on trial *on capital charges*. In Turkey, writers, artists, intellectuals and people who have asked for the simplest democratic rights are in prison or in the dock. In Turkey, members of the Peace Association have been sentenced to five to ten years. In Turkey, tens of thousands of Kurds are in jail just for asking for democratic and human rights for the Kurdish people, or just for saying 'I am a Kurd'. In Turkey, thousands are on trial, threatened with the death penalty. Tomorrow, probably mass executions will come on the agenda as a result of these trials because of these capital charges. There are no voices raised, there is silence. We believe that this doesn't correspond with democratic tradition.

Even worse, they say there is democracy in Turkey because a parliament exists. This is a very strange kind of parliament. Most parties were excluded from the elections. Not just the workers' parties, the

socialist party and the communist party – because they were all locked up anyway – but even the centre parties who had the slightest disagreement with the military were banned from participating. Commentators who say there is democracy ignore the fact that this is the basis on which this parliament was founded. The junta decided who could stand and also appointed the person who was to form the official opposition.

*AB:* Who will bring about progressive change in Turkey, and how?

*YG:* Let's come to what we really want. We are demanding a democratic republic. What we understand by a democratic republic will be independent from the US, and from the Soviet Union. It will be independent from any imperialist nation, in no military camp, and will recognise freedom for all political movements within the nation, and will recognise national and democratic rights for all nations within its body. A real democracy. We are fighting for these demands for a democratic republic.

Today, in Turkey, we don't have the conditions for a socialist revolution. The step forward is simply the struggle for a democratic republic, and we should treat the whole question from this basis. There are no genuine social democratic parties in Turkey. The Populist Party in parliament operates within the fascist constitution. SODEP, the Social Democrat Party, which legally exists now, but isn't in parliament, will change nothing. The plight of the Kurdish people won't change, the people's situation won't change, the structure of the state won't change, there will be no change in political or human rights. Perhaps some minor tinkering, but the essence would remain the same. For the creation of a genuine democratic republic, it's going to be necessary to educate the working classes towards these ends. This can't happen overnight.

Today, Turkey is one big prison, and for this prison to be transformed into freedom, to be able to smash these walls and return to genuine democracy, the responsibility belongs to revolutionary democrats. If we can create close links with our people, we can actually succeed in this task. Otherwise, we will end up just singing interminable songs of hope. We have to admit we aren't sufficiently prepared right now. What happens now, in Turkey, is that people have aspirations and expectations and sometimes they fight – but what for? A different jail, a better jail. When there was direct military rule, Evren said he would give the people a new military parliamentary regime. That was another jail. People said, 'Perhaps, perhaps it might be better'. So they voted for it. That was the story of 'The Wall'. The children in the film were in a horrible jail. When they riot, they don't even think about freedom, about liberation, they just dream of a better jail. 'Perhaps', always 'perhaps'. 'Maybe this one will be better', and we see the result. So the Turkish people said, 'Maybe the civilian administration will be better'.

And now they are looking for some other 'perhaps'. 'Perhaps SODEP will be better.' But with this 'perhaps', we will never get anywhere, we will never have freedom.

To the British public, and intellectuals. I appeal to you on behalf of my friends and democrats in Turkey.

To show more sensitivity to what is going on in Turkey.

To show more concern about the torture in its prisons, and the executions.

To support the demand for a general amnesty.

To show more sensitivity to the Turkish intellectuals who are being punished.

To pay special attention to the oppression of the Kurdish people, because they have a double oppression, a national and a class oppression.

The repression in Turkey is not 'just happening in Turkey'. It is happening to democracy in general. We have to shoulder this responsibility jointly.

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But the situation in Turkey today, so poignantly described by Güney, has been largely ignored, if not deliberately obscured, by the western media. David Barchard, who gave up trying to report for the London *Guardian* in 1983, has spoken of the heavy restrictions on foreign journalists. Censorship and martial law ensure total control of information within Turkey, and add to the difficulties of gathering and reporting news that isn't officially sanctioned.<sup>11</sup> But in Barchard's experience, western diplomats clearly collaborate in providing disinformation, and western newspapers have shown a mysterious reluctance to investigate and follow up stories.<sup>12</sup>

The brief survey on the current situation that follows is, simply, an attempt to break through that barrier of silence.

The ruling Motherland Party of Prime Minister Ozal (who was himself recently hailed by the London *Guardian* as the 'people's choice'<sup>13</sup> – even as the regime was gently chided for its 23,000 or so political prisoners – is a coalition of National Salvation Party (NSP – Islamic Fundamentalist), right-wing Conservative Party and Nationalist Action Party (NAP – fascist) supporters.<sup>14</sup> Fascist ideologues control the organisational posts within his party. Fascist ideologues control the broadcasting service and the universities. They are well-established in the state bureaucracy and in local government. Their control over civilian institutions is growing daily, and they have important posts in the Security Forces and as regional police commanders. The phoney elections of 1983, which brought Ozal in as prime minister, were no more than a legitimating exercise for the military coup that had

been engineered by General Evren some four years earlier – a coup that had been carried out even as mass demands for justice and democracy were increasing in volume and strength.<sup>15</sup>

In Turkey today, forty-two out of sixty-seven provinces are under martial law, and a further twenty are under a 'state of emergency'. The 637 prisons are so full that sixty more are to be built. Filling those prisons are the leaders and supporters of all the progressive associations in the country.<sup>16</sup> Legal processes are deliberately complicated and protracted in an attempt to delay judgement, wear down defendants and tire international interest. Beatings and torture are 'widespread and systematic'.<sup>17</sup> The list of accused grows daily. The number of defendants from DISK, the mass trade union, has grown from seventy to 600, and is expected to exceed a thousand. Defendants find themselves charged with membership of a number of associations, involved in a number of trials and, as the atrocities grow, voices raised against them find themselves in the dock also.

Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code, borrowed from Mussolini in the 1930s, are the key instruments that 'legalise' the prosecutions. They have always provided a legal fail-safe for the right, in times of need, of effectively criminalising all activity on behalf of, or opinion that supports, the working class. Organisations or 'propaganda' on behalf of a single class or criticism of government decisions are decreed a threat to national unity and interest. These and other laws also protect 'national unity' from minority rights, such as allowing Kurds to identify themselves, speak their own language, appear in history books or practise their culture.

The constitution gives the President the right to sack any politician or party – as well as virtually to declare war. Part of the western media black-out could be due to the fact that Turkey is vitally important for NATO strategy, and US, NATO and IMF plans could have been seriously challenged by democratic involvement in the decision-making of the country. The loss of Iran and Afghanistan gave a special importance to the 'security' of Turkey, both as a site for US and NATO installations (including a high proportion of US intelligence-monitoring), and as a base for protection of western Middle East oil interests. Turkey and the US have had bilateral military treaties since the 1950s; since the coup, eleven new secret treaties have been signed. All US and NATO bases have been enlarged and re-equipped, new airports have been built. Bases at Mus and Batman in Kurdistan are ready for a new US Rapid Deployment Force. NATO officials at an Istanbul seminar stressed the major role expected from Turkey in 'restoring stability in the event of a power vacuum in Iran'. Turkey has recently done a commercial deal with Saudi Arabia in return for an air base. Lord Carrington, NATO's general-secretary, recently denied rumours that NATO had plans to extend its territory, but thought that support

should be given to the US when it acted in defence of our interests.<sup>18</sup> Turkish planes in the Gulf would presumably come in handy. And Turkey is, according to one German major quoted in *Milliyet*, a more desirable site for the deployment of Cruise and Pershing than the more densely populated countries of Europe – because of the ‘extremely large uninhabited areas in ‘Eastern Anatolia’ [in fact the region where the Kurdish population lives] . . . In the case of a limited nuclear war . . . if the USSR attempts to attack and destroy only the ramp of these missiles, the losses in terms of human lives in European countries would be much greater than in Turkey’.<sup>19</sup> (The Turkish Peace Association, which campaigned vigorously against the siting of the neutron bomb, Cruise and Pershing in Turkey, and for Turkey’s withdrawal from NATO, was banned immediately the coup took place.<sup>20</sup>)

Given Turkey’s major geographic and strategic importance to NATO and the western alliance (it is the easternmost of NATO outposts), it is not fortuitous that the Turkish economy has, since January 1980, been shored up by IMF loans – the stringent conditions of which made it even more necessary to keep working-class militancy completely suppressed.\* Nor is it a coincidence that the former World Bank employee and dedicated monetarist who was put in charge of IMF policy is now Turkey’s elected prime minister. Among measures demanded were the slashing of public sector growth, the cancelling of ninety-four public sector projects and the privatisation of state factories. Today, living standards are back to 1963 levels, unemployment is 20 per cent, inflation is 50 per cent and protein intake is the lowest in Europe. There are record bankruptcies, and the external debt has risen from \$19 billion to \$29 billion. In October 1984, Ozal visited West Germany (Turkey was, after heavy US pressure, readmitted to the Council of Europe in May), fishing for investors, using his plentiful and willing workforce as bait. The death sentences passed on DISK union leaders did not deter potential investors. Multinational investment since the coup amounts to one-third of its previous investment over the last thirty years.

Among the chief beneficiaries of this state of affairs is the military, which combines both political and economic power. For many years, officers have been entitled to invest 10 per cent of their pay into the Armed Forces Mutual Aid Fund (OYAK). By the late 1970s, OYAK’s cement, property, car-manufacturing and petroleum concerns had made it into one of the largest conglomerates in Turkey. Middle-class recruitment to the officer class of the army increased. As beneficiaries of investment, officers were directly affected by the ups and downs of the economy and the status within it of capitalist enterprise. Together

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\* Only two years earlier, the burgeoning workers’ movement had brought half a million people on to the streets in May Day demonstrations.



with other beneficiaries of capital investment in Turkey, who had previously accumulated wealth from internal markets, they are now firmly linked to international capitalism. It is hardly surprising that a vast proportion of investment involves military hardware – which, in turn, strengthens the position of the army. Military control of the country is by shareholders in arms manufacture.

The interests of the army and of international capital are so inextricably linked as to be virtually identical. For example, the largest single economic investment in modern Turkey is the \$4.3 billion F16 project which will supply these jet fighters to the Turkish air force and for sale in the Middle East. This project is under the control of an umbrella organisation set up by the US multinational General Dynamics Corporation, and involving an array of other multinationals. OYAK is crucially involved in the Turkish end of the operation, i.e., socially useless, low technology component assembly. The deal involves trade-offs in exports, agribusiness and mining concessions to foreign companies, which form part of a complex and dramatic mobilisation of the Turkish economy to military ends.<sup>21</sup> This distortion of the economy has ensured a vast amount of aid from the US. That aid subsidises the third of the budget that is spent on the military.

Today – quite apart from the fact that it is their lands that are to harbour Cruise and Pershing missiles – the bulk of the military aggression is against Kurds. Operations to capture Kurdish ‘separatists’ involve an orchestrated attack on the whole population,<sup>22</sup> especially those living in the Eastern territories. Although the repression long preceded the coup, it has intensified markedly since. Thousands of young men have been rounded up, imprisoned and tortured. Villages are plundered and villagers attacked and sadistically degraded. Their houses are searched, not just for arms, but for Kurdish music. When cassettes are found, the whole household is imprisoned. There are reports that all 5,000 prisoners held at Diyarbakir are regularly tortured. There are mass trials. A lawyer who defended 2,000 Kurds at one of these was later arrested and tortured as well. The Kurds are the most intractable of the opposition to Turkish reactionaries and they have suffered accordingly. But armed resistance has increased and, since August 1984, news of Kurdish ambushes and Turkish army deaths suggest the start of a campaign of organised guerrilla warfare.

According to a Turkish academic:

You don't need a crystal ball to prophesy that what the Palestinian problem was for the 1970s the Kurdish problem will be for the late 1980s. There is going to be an explosion, and it's already beginning.<sup>23</sup>

## References

Thanks to *Dayanisma* (available from 32 Ickburgh Road, London E5) for a great deal of information and invaluable translation.

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- 2 Directed by Zeki Ökten.
- 3 Directed by Zeki Ökten.
- 4 M. Ali Birand, *12 September 04.00 Hours* (Istanbul, Karacan, 1984).
- 5 Directed by Serif Gören. Güney made this in response to the coup of 12 September 1980, knowing that it could not be shown in Turkey because it had some dialogue and songs in Kurdish.
- 6 *Times Literary Supplement* (21 January 1983).
- 7 Michael Simmonds in the *Guardian* (17 August 1984).
- 8 *City Limits* (14 January 1983).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 For an account of Kurdish history, see Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *People without a country* (London, 1980).
- 11 BBC2, 'Brass Tacks' (17 October 1984). This was the first major feature on Turkey on British television since 1973, and dealt specifically with torture.
- 12 David Barchard, 'Western silence on Turkey', *Index on Censorship* (Vol. 12, no. 6, December 1983).
- 13 *Guardian* (12 September 1984).
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- 16 Estimates for political prisoners vary between 23,000 and 33,000. Figures given by *Dayanisma* state that, since the coup, 178,586 people have been held, 64,505 detained, 41,727 sentenced, 400 sentenced to death, with a further 30 awaiting ratification of their death sentence. There have been at least 70 deaths from torture, 49 executions, 17 deaths from hunger strike and countless killed in military operations.
- 17 According to Amnesty International. See their report on torture in Turkey, May 1984. David Barchard quotes a British Embassy official in Ankara who dismissed Amnesty with the comment: 'It was perfectly obvious what their political views were', *Index on Censorship*, op. cit.
- 18 'Face the press', 7 October 1984.
- 19 *Milliyet* (20 March 1984), quoted in *Dayanisma* (March 1984).
- 20 For an account of the Peace Association's Trials, see Dr. M.A. Dikerdem, *Turkey Peace trials*, available from *Dayanisma*.
- 21 *Morning Star* (27 October 1983).
- 22 See *The Kurds of Turkey and Human Rights* (Utrecht, Kurdistan Committee, April 1981); Appeal, *Komkar* (Federal Republic of Germany, March 1983).
- 23 Personal conversation.

# Let's fight the organ grinder: an Azanian perspective on the Nkomati Accords\*

Addressing a mass rally in Inhambane in March 1982, President Samora Machel told the crowd that the working people of Mozambique had not only defeated Portuguese colonialism but had had to fight against the Smith regime of Rhodesia. He then continued:

Now we are called to war once more, this time to liquidate the armed bandits who are the agents of the racist and minority regime in Pretoria, the agents of international imperialism ... Let the South Africans come themselves. We don't want the agents, we want the boss. Lets fight against the organ-grinder, not the monkey.

It is now a matter of history that the South Africans did come. They went to a place called Nkomati where they signed the so-called Peace Accords, with President Machel. How are we to explain this sudden somersault, this breathtaking reversal? What are the consequences of the 'non-aggression pact'?

At one level, the answer is terribly simple. There is general agreement on the obvious facts – that drought-ravaged economies, coupled with the economic and military sabotage carried out by Renamo and Unita bandits, backed by South Africa and world imperialism, have brought the social fabric of Mozambique and Angola to the point of disintegration. The 'peace' was, therefore, one signed at gunpoint. This decision inevitably involved scaling down the material support of

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\* A shortened version of a paper presented at the National Forum Summit, Pietermaritzburg, 22 April 1984.

these countries for the armed elements of the liberation movements – ANC in Mozambique and SWAPO in Angola...

The South African and western propaganda media have hailed the Accord. It is justification of the US policy of 'constructive engagement'. It appears to defuse the potentially explosive situation in Southern Africa – a threat to the stability needed for capitalist progress in the area. It also demonstrates the willingness of the South African regime to move closer to the liberal outlook of manipulation politics. For this, P.W. Botha will no doubt receive, during his European trip, the overt western recognition his regime has so ardently sought. He will, no doubt, be demanding an end to South Africa's isolation and pleading for a chance to implement his internal reforms.

### **Southern Africa and the West**

According to the American Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Dr Chester Crocker, 'a wide range of vital western interests, and US interests in particular, are engaged in the Southern African region'.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand this admission, it is perhaps necessary to remind ourselves in Orwell's year of 1984 that, for the strategists in the White House, every country in the world is viewed in terms of the epochal contest between the capitalist and socialist systems. The USA is the undisputed leader of the capitalist segment. The USSR represents the main strength of what Rudolf Bahro called, with a mixture of resignation and criticism, the actually existing socialist countries of the world. To complete the picture, we should mention the People's Republic of China, which to the Soviet leadership represents the leader of the 'revisionist' forces in the world. So, to all intents and purposes, these three superpowers are constantly attempting to bring under their influence or control whatever part of the world they come into contact with.

Of course, this is a highly simplified picture of the world in 1984. Historically, capitalism is on the strategic defensive. Socialism is gaining ground, not least of all because of the devastation wrought by colonial and neocolonial regimes in less industrialised parts of the world. There is no question here of treating the 'superpowers' as though their respective strategies are of equal status and value. For an oppressed people today, whatever criticisms its leadership may have in regard to Soviet policies and practices, there can be no doubt at all that it must support, in general terms, the socialist road. Revolutionary and even reformist movements in the less industrialised parts of the world inevitably come to be seen and even to see themselves as part of the world movement towards socialism. Many, if not most of these claims are doomed to be merely rhetorical in the short term. Those who remember the history of the French Revolution, which inaugurated the

rapid transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe, will recall what desperate and sometimes sinister groups and movements suddenly became 'democrats' or even 'Jacobins'. Historically, the centres of revolutionary development in the world exercise a magnetic attraction on any social movement anywhere in the world.

In the global context, certain parts of the world have been conceded as 'belonging' to one or the other superpower. Thus, the NATO countries are regarded as being within the American sphere of influence, whereas the Warsaw Pact countries and Indo-China fall within the Soviet sphere – although China contests Soviet hegemony in the latter region. Certain regions in the world, because of their strategically vital character, are centres of intense superpower competition and conflict. In these regions, wars and class struggles are carried out mainly by the local states and their populations, armed and supported by the competing world powers. The three most important are, undoubtedly, the Middle East, the Caribbean basin and Southern Africa. In the Middle East, world imperialism backs, in particular, Israel; in the Caribbean, the US itself plays the role of 'regional gendarme', while in Southern Africa, the main counter-revolutionary force is South Africa.

Again, this is a highly simplified outline of a complex picture – but it is a necessary background in order to grasp the significance of events in our part of the world. The stakes are very high indeed. For this reason, political leadership has to weigh carefully every word uttered or written, lest we play, unwittingly, into the hands of enemy forces.

Southern Africa is one of the main treasure houses of the world. Like the oil deposits in the Middle East, this makes of this region an arena of potential superpower conflict. Two conservative authors, Gann and Duignan, give expression to a widely-held view among western strategists and business people: 'As a source of strategic raw materials, South Africa is of vast importance to the Western world ... Whether in peace or in war, such supplies would be hard to replace were they denied to the West, or if they came under Soviet influence.'<sup>2</sup>

Although the US, for instance, is interested in all the mineral wealth of Southern Africa, it is particularly concerned that South Africa's deposits of chromite ore, antimony, vanadium and platinum metals should not fall into Soviet hands or under Soviet influence. One understands the vulnerability of the capitalist world in regard to these strategic minerals when one realises that the USSR and South Africa together produce 99 per cent of the world's platinum, 97 per cent of its vanadium and 84 per cent of its chromite ore (with most of the rest being produced in Zimbabwe)! From the point of view of the cold-war paranoia of the so-called 'Free World', Southern Africa, in respect of those minerals, is one of the 'choke-points' of the West, not unlike the Straits of Hormuz.

Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and Angola are all important

countries on the strategically vital Cape sea route. Much of the capitalist world's commerce passes along here. This is especially true of its vital oil supplies. Since most crude oil is now carried in very large crude carriers of more than 160,000 tonnes – too large to pass through the Suez Canal, the Cape sea route, with the highly developed port and repair facilities of the Republic of South Africa, has regained the strategic value it held before 1869, the year in which the Suez Canal was opened. Gann and Duignan calculate that more than half of western Europe's oil supplies, a quarter of its food and nearly 70 per cent of its strategic minerals come around the Cape. They argue further that the Cape route 'is not likely to lose its present importance in relation to the Suez Canal'.

But an increasing volume of trade from the capitalist world no longer circumnavigates the Cape. Instead, it goes *to* the Cape. South Africa has become one of the top twenty trading countries in the world. Some of the countries of western Europe, such as Britain, are critically dependent on exports to South Africa for the maintenance of high levels of employment in vital sectors of their economy. According to Crocker, speaking in March 1982, 'America's two-way trade with the countries of Southern Africa amounted in 1980 to \$7,200m and US direct investment in the region is estimated at \$2,300m.'<sup>3</sup>

All the larger capitalist countries have invested heavily in Southern Africa. About 60 per cent of US investments in Africa south of the Sahara are concentrated in the ten nations of Southern Africa. Because of the extremely low cost of labour in apartheid South Africa, US investment in the Republic has grown much faster than in the rest of Africa. By 1975, more than 40 per cent of US direct investment in the whole of Africa was placed in the Republic of South Africa. More than 360 US companies have direct operations in South Africa and about 6,000 companies do business with the Republic.

South Africa, in turn, has direct or indirect trading links with nineteen African countries. A significant amount of South African capital is invested in the area. South Africa dominates the economies of Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland. They are dependent upon South Africa for most of their food, they send a large work-force as migrant labour to the mines and all these states belong to the South African customs union. This union allows relatively free trade amongst the states and assures South Africa of a captive market. South Africa is the colonial power in Namibia, holding 47 per cent of its foreign investment, and importing 80 per cent of its goods. South Africa has extensive investments in Zimbabwe, with which it trades, and exerts a strong influence in Zambia's mining sector. It also supplies Zambia with food. Its influence extends to Zaire, the Congo, Mauritius, Tanzania, Reunion and the Central African Republic. In Mozambique, the port of Maputo is run by South African personnel, while the giant Cabora

Bassa Dam exports most of its power to South Africa. Through De Beers, South Africa has considerable influence in Angola, too. The South African communications network extends over most of the sub-continent. Most of these countries are dependent on South Africa for food. For 1980, South African exports to Africa increased by 66.6 per cent, to reach a level of 1,1 billion rand.

The Witwatersrand is not only the industrial and financial capital of the whole of Southern Africa, it is also the centre of the migrant labour system, which weaves the working class of almost all the Southern African countries together in a single web of exploitation and oppression. South Africa is a sub-imperialist metropole and will be used by the West to safeguard capitalism in Southern Africa.

### **'Constructive engagement'**

Chester Crocker is widely regarded as the creator of the term 'constructive engagement', which has come to stand for Reagan's policy in Southern Africa and which is supposed to contrast with the Carter policy of 'disengagement' and hostile criticism of the apartheid state. A clear enunciation of 'constructive engagement' was given by the US Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, Herman W. Nickel on 16 February 1983 in an address to the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa.

Constructive engagement is a regional policy, directed not at South Africa alone, but at all of Southern Africa. Progress towards a more representative government in South Africa and economic progress throughout the rest of Southern Africa are inseparably linked to region-wide stability. This is why we have been working towards a set of interrelated goals. These include:

- (1) an internationally recognised independence for Namibia;
- (2) a negotiated withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola;
- (3) some form of detente between South Africa and the other states in the region, and, since internal conditions in South Africa also contribute to regional conflicts;
- (4) the peaceful evolutionary change in South Africa towards a constitutional order to be defined by South Africans themselves but one firmly rooted in the principle of government by consent of the governed;
- (5) recognition of the need for internationally supported programmes for the economic development of the region.

Here, as in a miniature, we see all the features of the imperialist conspiracy in Southern Africa. Here, in a nutshell, we find stated the reasons for a Yankee imperialist policy of 'peace' in Southern Africa. In a region where the capitalist mode of production is dominant and not yet

seriously threatened, a policy of peaceful adaptation to the new balance of class forces, without any fundamental change in the relations of production, serves the best interests of the capitalist class – both locally and overseas. This is the meaning of the same Ambassador Nickel's assessment of Soviet policy in a very recent address on 'America's role in peaceful settlements in Southern Africa': 'We know that our global adversary, the USSR, can best advance its interests in a climate of conflict and confrontation, fuelled by mistrust, suspicion and political and social injustice.' (14 March 1984).

The same point was made even more significantly by Crocker three years earlier, when he explained that:

We proceed on the basis that the Soviet Union does not have a grand design for Southern Africa, that it is, in fact, taking advantage of targets of opportunity that present themselves to act counter to Western interests. The Soviet Union, alone, has a vested interest in keeping the region in turmoil. It is to no one else's advantage – neither to that of the South Africans, the other Southern Africans, nor certainly to the US and the West.<sup>4</sup>

These basic guidelines of imperialist policy for Southern Africa were laid down after Dr Kissinger's visit to the region in 1976. Crocker's and Reagan's policy is the same as that of Kissinger and, in their essence, as those of Carter and Andy Young. Nathan Shamuyarira, now a cabinet minister in Zimbabwe, in a seminar paper on 'Liberation movements in Southern Africa' held at Indiana University in 1978, outlined the imperialist strategy very clearly:

The imperialist US strategy for Southern Africa encouraged explicit recognition of and support for South Africa ... The US also accepted South African hegemony over the Bantustans and the neighbouring states of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe, even if the last two states fall under *controlled black rule*. Finally, the US supported strengthening the neocolonial ties among the frontline states so as *to weaken the rearbase for liberation movements* (emphasis added).

In terms of this analysis, which we support, the twin aims of imperialist strategy are to install in all the countries of Southern Africa, but not necessarily in the Republic of South Africa, controllable black majority regimes. Where more independent, or less controllable, regimes are in power, as in Mozambique and Angola, its strategy is to 'weaken the rearbase for liberation movements'. This, it should be said, is the real meaning of 'constructive engagement', this is the real purpose of the alleged policy of 'peace and stability' in Southern Africa. Despite episodic and tactical disagreements, all the imperialist powers are agreed on these aims.



The policy of 'constructive engagement' is hedged about with a military shield which is prepared for the worst, should it happen. NATO has been authorised to operate in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans in order to 'protect' the Cape sea route and 'to go to the aid of our potential allies in Southern Africa if the need should arise' (NATO official).

The Nkomati Accords demonstrate that the Botha regime has accepted the US blueprint for Southern Africa. The Afrikaner National Party is going to play the game according to the ground rules designed in Washington. None other than US Secretary of State George Shultz has pointed to where the dog lies buried when, in a recent speech, he explained the role of the US in the peace negotiations:

We have helped foster a dialogue ... between South Africa and Mozambique. Ours is a balanced role whose only tilt is toward the principles of peaceful settlement and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty ... We have made clear to both sides that our goal is to nurture mutual security. In such a climate, we are prepared to do our part to assist in Mozambique's development and to bolster its chances for genuine nonalignment. And we have moved swiftly to respond to cyclones and drought that have repeatedly brought Mozambique to the edge of disaster.<sup>5</sup>

### **Soviet policy in Southern Africa**

The global policy of the USSR consists, theoretically, of propagating and facilitating the world socialist revolution. In practice, this general project can take many different and contradictory forms. This is not the forum in which to analyse or discuss in detail the dynamics of Soviet foreign policy. Suffice it to say that the USSR has, as part of its strategy, supported (since their inception) the nationalist movements for independence from imperialist control – even if these were mostly led by the middle class.

In Southern Africa, in the case of the former Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa itself, the USSR has generally supported those armed movements which, in the estimation of its leadership, were 'authentic' representatives of the oppressed and exploited people. This policy has often reinforced extreme divisions within the liberation movement, but this is not the question we want to consider here. What is more pertinent is the fact that Soviet strategy has, generally, encouraged the 'non-capitalist road' of development for these newly-independent states. Where a socialist intelligentsia has been able to come into being during colonial times, a national democratic struggle, as a first stage towards eventual socialist reconstruction, has generally been advocated. Socialist-oriented

regimes have been given preferential treatment, but most observers have remarked on the reserved character of Soviet policy towards them. Winrich Kühne gives the following explanation of this phenomenon:

The most outstanding characteristic of Soviet policy in Africa has been the imbalance, or disproportion, between its ability to export arms and provide military aid, on the one hand, and its slow performance in trade and economic relations, on the other. This discrepancy not only explains the typical fluctuation between gains and losses in Soviet African policy, but also will almost certainly rule out in the foreseeable future that certain parts of Africa will fall victim to an Eastern European type of Soviet hegemony. The fact that certain African regimes ideologically lean on Moscow and cooperate with it does not guarantee any lasting and comprehensive Soviet control. For these regimes, socialism is primarily a means of pursuing certain goals of national development and of legitimising their own rule and methods of governing. It is for this reason that they have entered into an alliance with the Eastern alliance – not because they want to promote Soviet global policies.<sup>6</sup>

This applies to Angola and Mozambique, who have not been invited to join Comecon, nor have they been beneficiaries of Soviet economic aid on a large scale. One of the results of this situation has been to reinforce the natural tendency of the relevant liberation movements or parties to maintain their independence. Whether or not it is correct, as many western analysts maintain, that the Soviet leadership does not trust these parties, what is clear is that the USSR is not prepared to create 'a second Cuba' in Africa, because it has no vital strategic interests there.

Though the model of superpower competition is undoubtedly valid at a certain level of description, there seems to be little reason to share the reported fear of the Chinese Communist Party leadership that, as a result of the Nkomati Accords and 'in the face of Washington's offensives under the banner of peace, Moscow certainly will not reconcile itself. It will surely adopt some counter-measures to defend its influence. It has already made clear it is not in favour of the moves taken by Angola and Mozambique for improving relations with South Africa.'<sup>7</sup>

### **The Accords and the liberation of South Africa: the Frontline states**

What has emerged as 'Frontline collaboration' in Southern Africa reflects two principal themes in the dynamic interplay which is Southern African politics. In the first place, the alliance between Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana and – since 1980

– Zimbabwe bears testimony to the decisive role that the apartheid regime continues to play in determining socio-economic patterns of development in the subcontinent.

In the second place, the very existence of a 'Frontline coalition' is, in certain respects, an indictment of the OAU and its role, not only in Southern Africa but throughout the continent. Nkrumah's dream of a united all-African government in accordance with the philosophy of panAfricanism, has rapidly faded in the past decade. The OAU has become little more than a miniature UN for African heads of state. To understand why this is so, we need, perhaps, to remind ourselves that the OAU Charter of May 1963 stressed only the need to end colonialism on every inch of African soil – it did not commit the signatories to an anti-capitalist road. The varied methods of capitalist domination in Africa, coupled with the low level of development of the productive forces, have reduced the OAU to observer status in the political and economic development of the continent. Because of its ineffectiveness, a frontline strategy in Southern Africa was given impetus.

#### *Frontline collaboration*

The intensification of the struggle for Zimbabwe led to dramatic changes and shifts in alliances within the nationalist movements. These, in turn, led to changes in attitudes and policies in the surrounding states and governments which provided sanctuaries for the guerrillas. This led to increased diplomatic participation by the four presidents of Angola, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique in the anti-colonial war that was being waged by ZANU and ZAPU.

On the surface, the interventions by the 'Four Presidents' appeared to be directed solely against the Smith settler regime. However, the basis for collaboration became intimately linked to the scale and scope of the conflicts engulfing the subcontinent. It was assumed that an end to white minority rule was indispensable to 'regional security'. Towards the end of the 1970s, this became the principal ideological premise for Frontline collaboration. With the electoral victory of ZANU (PF) in 1980, new contradictions became meshed into the Southern African conflict. The transformation to majority rule in Zimbabwe did not bring about the much-desired land of milk and honey. In actual fact, the very processes and structures which set into motion the Lancaster House option brought into being contradictions of great significance for the liberation movements not only in Zimbabwe, but throughout the African continent. Issues such as the relationship between the national and class struggles, national liberation and the struggle for socialism became major questions in the struggle for Zimbabwe. And clarity on these questions has become vital for those of us engaged in the liberation process.

At this stage, we should remind ourselves of the contents of the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, in particular the sections dealing with the liberation struggles in Africa:

We have always preferred, and we still prefer, to achieve [liberation] without physical violence. We would prefer to negotiate rather than to destroy, to talk rather than to kill ... If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movement to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change...<sup>8</sup>

The 'liberation strategy' of the Frontline states stems directly from this manifesto of 1969. What is more, the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration of 1974 reinforced the approach adopted by these states. Among other things, the armed struggle was endorsed as a tactic in Zimbabwe and Namibia, but not in South Africa. These are controversial conclusions of which the liberation movements must take cognisance.

There can be no doubt that the Frontline states have contributed to the apparent unification of liberation movements in Zimbabwe and, at the level of diplomacy, tried to promote the Geneva and Lancaster House conferences. But, and this is the salient point, to quote Nathan Shamuyarira again, 'As a result of this involvement, the Frontline states have been caught in the imperialist network and face contradictions within their own societies.'<sup>9</sup> Indeed, agreements on words like 'majority rule', 'peaceful settlements' and others conceal wide differences between the regimes comprising the Frontline coalition. Pertinent questions like what does Kaunda represent, what class or combination of class interests does the party in Zambia embody, should be thrashed out. If we are genuinely looking for explanations of the activities and dynamics of the Frontline states, we should not be afraid to confront these kinds of questions. To avoid them means that we cannot evolve an effective strategy for Southern African liberation.

#### *The SADCC: from poverty to economic liberation?*

In almost every commentary on developments in Southern Africa, mention is made of South Africa's dominance. Because of its capitalist ascendancy in the region, South Africa maintains an economic and military stranglehold over the independent states. Against the increase in dependency on South Africa, we have seen, since 1980, among other things, the creation of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC).

Even though South Africa's population of 34 million is only half of that of the nine countries within the SADCC, its gross domestic product (GDP) of \$85 billion is almost four times the GDPs of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho,

Swaziland and Malawi. To exacerbate the problem of underdevelopment, the independent states have been battered by cyclones, floods and droughts.

Perhaps more important for our analysis, the Frontline states have been brought to heel by South Africa's destabilisation campaign. In a leading article of the London *Observer*, reprinted in the *Argus* of 11 September 1981, one aspect of South Africa's role in Southern Africa was put succinctly: 'In brief, it is to create a Lebanon situation in Angola, with Jonas Savimbi's Unita forces playing the role of the Lebanese Christians, and South Africa playing the role of Israel...' We have no reason to doubt these formulations since South Africa's operations have been extended to Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique.

But this shift in South Africa's subcontinental policy towards systematic economic and military intervention in neighbouring countries is a direct consequence of the defeat of its previous strategy of offering economic incentives to the independent regimes, in order to draw them further into the web of the much acclaimed, but still-born, Constellation of Southern African States. Against this possibility, the independent states formed the SADCC. *The Economist* of 11 February 1984 carried an article which expounds clearly the character of the organisation: 'SADCC is united against South Africa and the weather, but divided against itself. Swaziland, Botswana and Malawi have free-wheeling capitalist economies; Angola, Mozambique and, increasingly, Zimbabwe, are socialist. Nearly all produce raw materials which they cannot sell to each other and need to ship to western markets via (you guessed it) South Africa.'

These are some of the dilemmas that the Frontline states and SADCC are forced to contend with. In the short to medium term, the capitalist axis between Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia may well provide the opening for further capitalist exploitation of the black workers in the region. One line of thinking which has gained some ground among the strategists of the 'Free World' is a linking up of South Africa and SADCC in one powerful bastion of capitalist enterprise. Thus, for instance, the view of D.A. Etheridge of Anglo-American Corporation: 'The process of regional co-operation has taken important steps since the independence of Zimbabwe. But for real progress South Africa must participate and the SADCC, which has made a promising start, needs in my view to subjugate its hostility towards South Africa to the crying needs of the states of Southern Africa.'<sup>10</sup>

The imperialist powers have taken a 'soft line' on the organisation. But this soft line is dictated by the iron laws of capitalist accumulation and expansion. The strategists in Washington, Berlin, London and Melbourne are motivated by a long-term perspective of consolidating the Southern African link in the imperialist chain. Against possible

overthrow of the capitalist bastion in Southern Africa, the strategists of finance capital are seeking to expand the regional base for continued domination in the subcontinent. This view is fraught with contradictions, since Southern Africa will continue to be wracked by political instability, and the weak, infrastructural networks that presently exist will not facilitate the expansion of capitalist markets. However, most states prefer to back a strategy to continue large-scale investments in the Republic of South Africa, since the internal cheap labour market and the rate of exploitation still provide the highest returns for international capital, and the South African regime appears powerful enough to maintain the necessary law and order.

As for the socialist-inclined representatives within SADCC, their motives for participation appear to be just as complex as those guiding the capitalist initiative. It is their view that the interdependence of economic life in Southern Africa will persist. This view is premised on the correct belief that the migrant labour system, the 'bedrock of capitalism' in the subcontinent, has linked the working people of the region into a single regional economy. In addition, transport and communications networks have become indispensable to regional growth. Independent initiatives on the part of the neighbouring countries in these fields are necessary conditions to undermine dependence on South Africa. However, it is not very clear whether these initiatives will succeed.

The singularity of the Southern African political economy is the necessary context within which any attempts at economic liberation must be conceived. Consequently, if we want to develop a coherent strategy, we need to trace the development of contradictions within South Africa itself, for here lies the key to the conflicts in Southern Africa. It is here that the intricacies of the opposing social forces at work can be unravelled. It is within the contradictions of South African society that the understanding of the Nkomati Accords can be found, because South Africa's future and that of the rest of Southern Africa are inextricably interwoven. The only real accords are not those with Southern Africa, whose needs are diametrically opposed to those of the South African regime, but with imperialism. Botha has won a brief respite in order to turn his attention to the problems at home.

### **The shifting images of South African politics**

World imperialism, as we have seen, has come to play a more direct and intense role in the political direction of South Africa and in the affairs of sub-Saharan Africa. In the past twenty years, investment in South Africa and expansion of industry through multinational corporations have multiplied ten times over. Direct overseas investment is estimated at 50 billion rand; American shareholders alone hold more

than forty-five out of every 100 goldmining shares; foreign countries are in total control of the electronics industry, and three-quarters of the annual turnover in the car industry is accounted for by foreign firms. These few observations, out of a host of others, serve to underline the important fact that South Africa is an industrialised capitalist country, but heavily dependent on foreign investment and technological assistance. It has already been mentioned that a large proportion of strategic raw materials are concentrated in Southern Africa. Manufacturing industry has overtaken the mining industry in the production of wealth and there has been the recent development of a South African finance capital sector – which does not mean that the country is moving towards bourgeois democracy as a result of the so-called ‘objective needs of capitalism’.

The fact of the matter is that the more wealth is accumulated by the bourgeois camp, the less it is possible to call into question the prison camp conditions imposed on the black population. The evolution of capitalism in South Africa each day further erodes the base of its continued existence.

The changes which have occurred on South Africa’s borders, along with the fall of the Portuguese empire in Africa and the rise to power of socialist-oriented states in Angola and Mozambique, the overthrow of the Smith racist regime in Zimbabwe and the escalating conflict in Namibia, coupled with the rising tide of consciousness of the black people inside South Africa, against the background of the world-wide recession, threw the ruling class into a state of crisis. Change for the ruling class is evidenced in the polarisation of white attitudes. The depth of their crisis is indicated by the fact that P.W. Botha was prepared to split Afrikanerdom in the search for white survival and the continued reproduction of capitalism. The bitter internecine splits in Afrikanerdom are merely a fight about means – there is absolute agreement on maintaining white domination. The ‘verkrampptes’ (hardline nationalists), at one end, will have no dilution of apartheid in its pristine form because they see concessions as the beginning of the end; the slogan ‘adapt or die’ sums up the position of the ‘verligtes’ (moderates). The latter are so close to the position held by the official opposition as to make no difference.

P.W. Botha and his henchmen have come to understand that sheer survival depends upon a change in tactics. They are prepared to jettison whatever aspects of apartheid they may have to – provided that the reforms are within capitalist, economically-centred solutions. Also, any method of power sharing must be one which totally excludes the black majority from exercising democratic rights in an undiluted system of adult franchise. There is also the ‘white backlash’ to contend with. Most whites are not prepared to give up their privileges, euphemistically called the ‘South African way of life’ – a poll indicated

that 74 per cent of them were prepared to fight to maintain it. However, the white electorate gave the present regime a resounding go-ahead in the recent referendum; although, if its initiatives fail, the Herstigte Nasionale Party might be the next government the white electorate will choose.

A new ideology of 'economic growth' is now proposed as the panacea. There is the growing belief in some quarters that unfettered growth will sweep away racial prejudices and obsolete political structures and, at the same time, produce the stratum of middle-class leaders from the oppressed groups who will help to give capitalism a longer lease of life. They will be the representatives of the oppressed who, it is hoped, will have accepted the 'free enterprise system' as one to defend, if necessary, with their lives. These 'leaders' will find it in their interest to negotiate with the ruling class, a political dispensation based upon the structures of economic cooperation which would arise due to capitalist expansion. This ties in well with the US policy of constructive engagement – new legislation has been passed for more defence aid to sustain economic growth and to restructure the economies of African countries, with the emphasis on small and medium US firms pooling expenses and setting up joint operations with their African counterparts. The imperialist organ is being tuned in readiness.

Various changes have, therefore, been made in South Africa towards this end. A new political dispensation has been worked out to co-opt the 'Coloured' and 'Indian' layers of the black people into the white laager – a tricameral parliament is to be implemented, with effective power safely within white hands. A new deal has been worked out for the 'urban Blacks' to buy off a section which they hope eventually to co-opt – with sops like leased land, various 'rights' in the cities, a few schools to absorb those who can pay the exorbitant fees and a few concessions to African traders. Middle-class aspirations will be catered for.

But the contradictions remain. All 'reform' can only be made within the confines of racial segregation – *'ethnicity' is the fundamental organising principle of South Africa's political economy*. The historic implantation of capitalism into this country rests squarely upon the apartheid structure: the migrant labour system, i.e., a controlled, exploited labour force, rigidly under influx control laws – laws which are essential to the very existence of capitalism in this country. Also, if the economy is to expand, so must the numbers of skilled employees. Therefore, some of the educational 'changes' – as proposed by the De Lange Commission – will be put into effect. These are mainly to provide a basic literacy, with the emphasis on making students '*werkgereed*', and with opportunities being created within the educational planning for students to drop out at convenient points for



slotting into the needs of industry. The private sector will then be expected to play its part by footing the bill for black training. The Carlton House and other government-business conferences cemented these agreements – business groups are no longer just pressure groups, but bargaining partners, recognised by government. It is important to note that at the Carlton House conference not a single businessman spoke about black political rights.

To accommodate western pressures for giving blacks some civil rights, and to give substance to ‘reform’, while yet working within the confines of apartheid policy – the Bantustans are to remain. There, ‘Blacks’ will exercise their political rights as separate nationalities outside of the Republic of South Africa – independent but economically integrated. At the same time, mass migration to the cities will be curbed by tightening up the influx control laws via the Koornhof Acts and by decentralisation of industry. The decentralisation strategy is aimed at providing the economic base for the forced removals of black people, needed to retain ethnicity as the fundamental organising principle of the society. The government expects the private sector to assist in ensuring the economic viability of the Homelands so that its constitutional and political goals can be realised. This will play a pivotal role in influx control – it has become essential that control of movement should rest less on coercion and more on where the work is.

So, hand in glove with economic strategy goes political partition. The New Deal can, therefore, never be seen as a move towards an anti-racist constitution, nor even as a point of departure towards such a goal – it represents no less than the entrenchment of ethnicity. The only changes are those to co-opt a *wider* layer of collaborators!

But, for an expanding economy, markets are needed. South Africa’s strategy to create these markets in Africa had, therefore, to incorporate a diplomatic offensive to win acceptance by African states, despite their abhorrence of apartheid. There is a real contradiction between the necessity for the racist regime to play the role of imperialist policeman in Southern Africa, and its need to gain crucial markets. The only solution was to install governments with a more conciliatory attitude to South Africa in these regions.

Destabilisation of the economies of the surrounding states would serve many purposes – by blocking industrial growth in Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, there would be no competitors for South African industrialists; economically stable states on South Africa’s borders, especially if these were hostile to South Africa and particularly if they were socialist-oriented, would not only serve as a source of inspiration to the oppressed and exploited masses inside the country, but would give these countries economic independence to host guerrillas and give assistance to liberatory movements. South Africa could only accomplish this by military intervention, on the one hand, and

economic subjugation on the other – actually two sides of the same coin. South Africa's policy for Southern Africa is, therefore, tailor-made for the Republic, in its role as the imperialist gendarme of Southern Africa.

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## THE POLITICS OF INTERVENTION The United States in Central America Edited by Roger Burbach and Patricia Flynn

Just as the current struggles in Central America and the Caribbean reflect a long history of poverty and oppression, U.S. intervention is also the result of a long history, that of an "informal" empire. The articles in this book not only document that ongoing history, but analyze the many facets of U.S. involvement in the area — political, economic, strategic, and military. In so doing they make clear the growing danger of war in Central America as well as the urgent need to prevent such a war.

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## US military assistance to El Salvador: from indirect to direct intervention\*

The mass of weaponry and supplies, and the training and advisory assistance provided by the United States after the October 1979 coup\*\* accord with a framework of counter-insurgency doctrine little changed from the 1960s, although it had been renamed the doctrine of Internal Defense and Development (IDAD).<sup>1</sup> Over the previous two decades the US assistance programme had been largely responsible for the expansion and technical reinforcement of a security system designed and adapted for counter-insurgency. Despite the novel component of reform promoted by the US and part of the October junta, US military assistance from day one of the new regime was tailored for one purpose: putting down a burgeoning insurgency.

Renewed assistance began with a six-man Mobile Training Team (MTT), flown in on 12 November 1979, their duties officially limited to training in riot control. Until 1981, security assistance provided by the Carter administration was restricted to what was described as 'non-

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\* A shortened version of a chapter from his forthcoming two-volume study, *The American connection* – Volume 1 *State terror and popular resistance in El Salvador*, and Volume 2 *State terror and popular resistance in Guatemala*, to be published by Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1.

\*\* On 15 October 1979, the officer corps of the Salvadorean armed forces overthrew the government of General Romero Luis Garcia. A civil military junta was subsequently created which promised sweeping reforms. Most of the civilian members of the government resigned in January 1980 in protest at rising human rights abuse.

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lethal' items, and excluded weapons or ammunition. But the lethal uses of 'non-lethal' assistance (such as bullet-proof vests or helicopters) became abundantly clear in accounts of counter-terror operations in the subsequent years.

Thirty heavily armed men wearing army combat vests, but masked with hoods lettered 'death squad', came to my village and seized and killed a number of peasants. They went then to the neighbouring village of Santa Helena, seized Romilia Hernandez, aged 21, raped and then decapitated her. Her relatives buried her head: the rest of her body was burned by her murderers. The head had been left in front of her relatives' house. The members of the 'death squad' were evacuated that day by a Salvadorean army helicopter.<sup>2</sup>

In February 1980, reports reached the press of plans to deploy three twelve-man MTTs for specialised training in communications, logistics and intelligence. As the term 'advisers' was reminiscent of Vietnam, the State Department spokesman sought to distinguish the teams as 'trainers', and justified them as crucial to ensure a 'clean anti-subversive war'. Only with massive US training, they said, could El Salvador's military be weaned away from a 'traditional' habit of dealing with dissent by naked violence.<sup>3</sup> Criticism of the MTT plan, in the US, temporarily delayed their departure;<sup>4</sup> at least four MTTs were, however, present for month-long stints in summer and autumn 1980. A crash training programme for Salvadorean officers in the Canal Zone began shortly after the October coup.

The first detailed description of the programme was made in the 'Dissent Paper on El Salvador and Central America', the twenty-nine page document circulated throughout official circles in Washington in 1980, and apparently the work of experts within the US foreign policy establishment who disagreed with US policy on Central America. The 'Dissent Paper' said the Panama programme was 'the largest ever sponsored by the US for any Latin American country in a single year',<sup>5</sup> and that other countries were also training Salvadoreans in cooperation with the US:

The most solid bloc of support for the current government and its counter-insurgency efforts comes from the southern cone military regimes. Among these Argentina, Chile and Uruguay provide training advisors on intelligence, urban and rural counter-insurgency, and logistics. Argentina has become the second largest trainer of Salvadorean officers after the US.<sup>6</sup>

In April 1980, the Carter administration made its first move to provide large quantities of equipment to the Salvadorean military, winning congressional approval to 'reprogramme' \$5.7m of the military assistance budget already allocated to other countries for the provision

of transport, communications equipment and such 'non-lethal' devices as night-vision scopes. The administration also requested \$5m in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits and \$498,000 for the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) grants for 1981. Training was justified as a means to 'expose officers to US military doctrine and practice as well as provide them training in internal security'.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the announcement of a 'hold' on economic and military aid pending clarification of 'reports of the involvement of the Salvadorean security forces' in the murders of the three American nuns and a lay worker on 2 December 1980, there was no significant interruption in aid. Training by advisory teams inside El Salvador continued without a break, as did programmes in the Canal Zone. The only substantive effect of the 'hold' was to delay some shipments of commodities.

On 17 December, the hold on economic aid to El Salvador was lifted, on the grounds that significant progress had been made in investigating the murders (an inquiry had been promised). On 14 January, the full gamut of military aid was reinstated, this time justified by the FMLN's countrywide offensive. A Presidential order of 16 January sped an emergency airlift of arms, equipment and military advisers to El Salvador; in fact, military advisers had been moving into El Salvador since the first days of the month in anticipation of the offensive. Unlike MTT personnel, who were officially limited to training activities, the advisers sent in January were to be closely involved in the planning and implementation of counter-insurgency operations. These advisers were followed shortly afterwards by fourteen trainers and technicians accompanying the six UH-1H helicopter gunships rushed to El Salvador (on lease) on the basis of President Carter's emergency aid order.<sup>8</sup>

The Carter administration's dispatch of operations advisers, gunships and weapons in its last weeks in office set the stage for the larger projection of power to come with President Reagan in the White House. Despite misgivings on human rights, and a gradual progression from training and non-lethal commodities grants to the full panoply of lethal hardware and military advisers, there was an air of inevitability to the build-up of US security assistance to El Salvador after the October 1979 coup. Not until Reagan took office did the US military presence escalate sharply, but Reagan's policy was not essentially different from Carter's in the wake of the Nicaraguan revolution's victory in July 1979.

In November 1980, the 'Dissent Paper' outlined areas of support extended to the Salvadorean regime in the 1979-80 period and described the actions undertaken as reflecting a policy of 'No More Nicaraguas'. The paper gives no classified information on the funds allocated to this policy, although it concludes that the measures undertaken required 'an allocation of bureaucratic and financial resources

exceeding those made to any other hemispheric crisis since 1965 [when the Dominican Republic was invaded]. The 'Dissent Paper' also maintains that such an allocation of resources could have been made only after decisions at the very top:

The Carter administration came to the conclusion that the collapse of the current civilian-military coalition government in El Salvador and its replacement by a left-wing regime would constitute a threat to our strategic interests in the Caribbean basin. Policy-makers also agreed that the US still has a chance of preventing such developments through the provision of overt and covert political, military, economic, technical, diplomatic and public relations assistance to the current regime. However, if this effort failed to stabilize the local situation, the US would let it be known that it is prepared to and will use military force in conjunction with others, or, if necessary, unilaterally.<sup>9</sup>

The 'Dissent Paper' authors emphatically opposed the policy of a military solution in Central America.

The options and recommendations on which policy decisions were made have been based on irresponsibly self-serving evaluations and analyses of intelligence reports available within the agencies. Critiques and dissenting views were systematically ignored. Underlying these apparent bureaucratic maladjustments one finds a fundamental lack of understanding of general conditions and trends in Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>10</sup>

The 'Dissent Paper' presents a picture of a foreign affairs bureaucracy with vision limited by its own institutional interests, prerogatives and political blinkers. The President, whoever he may be, remains insulated from reality by bureaucratic hermeticism, self-interest and inertia. In the long or the short run, the outcome is policy failure. The 'Dissent Paper', of course, is not the first to sketch such a vision of the foreign policy establishment.

In February 1981, the Reagan/Haig media blitz on the 'Cuban/Nicaraguan Threat' prepared the ground for the announcement, on 5 March, that \$20m in emergency military assistance would be provided to El Salvador, under section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act. This authorises the President to provide foreign countries with military material, services and training, in aggregate value not exceeding a total of \$50m in any fiscal year, once he has certified that 'an unforeseen emergency exists which requires immediate military assistance' and that this emergency cannot be dealt with under any other law.<sup>11</sup> In March 1981, a further \$5m was allocated by 'reprogramming' FMS credits, and in June, another \$18m of emergency Economic Support Funds was 'reprogrammed'.<sup>12</sup>

The March 1981 assistance grant provided for quantities of ammunition, weapons, communications equipment and aircraft. A \$66m assistance budget – \$23m for security assistance, \$40m for related economic assistance – approved by Congress for fiscal year 1982, provided for accelerated training and commodity transfers to the expanding Salvadorean military.

In early 1982, the President authorised further grants under section 506, justified as responding to one of the guerrillas' most successful operations in the course of the civil war: the destruction, in a 27 January raid on the Ilopango airport, of six UH-1H helicopters, a jet trainer, five transports and six fighter planes.<sup>13</sup> Within a matter of weeks, \$55m in emergency aid was released, dwarfing the \$23m military assistance approved by Congress through the regular foreign assistance channels. Of the new funds, \$25m were earmarked to compensate for the airport raid, and, in fact, enabled the US radically to upgrade this force:

To replace six 'Huey' helicopters, twelve were provided within a few weeks of the raid. In addition, the package contained eight counter-insurgency jet fighters (Cessna A-37B 'Dragonfly') and four forward aid control spotter planes (Cessna O-2A 'Skymaster') that would significantly add to the government's air assault capability, as well as four transport planes especially suited to counter-insurgency conditions.<sup>14</sup>

The use of section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act to bypass congressional supervision and approval procedures continued in 1983, with congressionally approved funds of \$26.3m in military aid representing only a small proportion of total funds released under executive discretionary powers. In mid-February 1983, the administration went to Congress seeking to double approved funds. Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger inadvertently remarked to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that 'one way or another' the administration intended to get its \$60m in assistance for El Salvador<sup>15</sup> – an extraordinary affront to congressional sensibilities. In March, however, the ante went even higher when the administration advised Congress that its supplementary military aid request to top up 1983 disbursements would be \$110m and not \$60m.

The proposed application of the \$110m illustrated the overall direction of the US aid and advisory effort after 1979. It was largely destined for the same categories of application as security assistance in the 1960s, when the security system was reoriented and restructured to deal with incipient insurgency, but scaled massively upward to deal with the shift to open civil war. Of the \$110m, almost half, \$45.5m, was intended to provide training for between 5,000 and 8,000 soldiers and 1,500 officers and cadets.<sup>16</sup>

In mid-March 1981, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on 'The Situation in El Salvador', Under-Secretary of State Walter Stoessel stressed the 'limited' nature of US involvement there:

El Salvador is not another Vietnam. Our objectives are limited: to help the government with its problems of training, equipment repair and maintenance, mobility, and resupply ... [To do so required] a small number of personnel on temporary duty to help train the Salvadorean army and navy...<sup>17</sup>

Three five-man teams responsible for training rapid response troops turned out to be Special Forces advisers. Brought up from Fort Gulick in the Canal Zone, where some 300 Salvadorean non-commissioned officers and officers were then training, these Special Forces teams were to be 'in closest contact with fighting troops' and to work 'to train a new rapid reaction unit being organized near the town of San Andrés south of the capital ... a force of 1,000 or more men who can use the US helicopters to move quickly and effectively against concentrations of guerrillas'.<sup>18</sup> This was the Atlácatl Rapid Response Battalion. Specialists in counter-insurgency warfare, these five-man teams were responsible for virtually all aspects of basic training for the new Atlácatl Rapid Response Battalion in 'patrolling, air mobile operations, individual soldier skills, and counter-guerrilla operations'.<sup>19</sup> According to another source, training in tactical infantry operations was followed by training in 'patrolling, ambushes, airmobile operations, medical subjects and demolitions'. In 1981, Special Forces units also trained 'Salvadorean cadres to operate a National Training Center'.<sup>20</sup>

Further major training activities continued in 1982, with twenty-five advisers responsible for training of the second 'rapid reaction' battalion, the 'José Ramón Belloso' Battalion. This was the first unit to be sent to receive part of its training in the US. Sixty officers and sergeants received a month's training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in January 1982, and in mid-February were joined by 1,000 troops for another four months' training.<sup>21</sup> By the end of 1982, a third 'rapid reaction' force, the 'Atonal' battalion, had completed its training.<sup>22</sup>

Adverse US public reaction to the Fort Bragg training of the 'José Ramón Belloso' Battalion in 1982 may have led to the abandonment of further plans for training whole battalions in the US, but the creation of major training facilities on Honduran soil soon provided an alternative, lower-profile solution. In July 1983, the newsletter *Latin America* described 'the large training centres set up by the United States 12 km outside the Honduran city of Trujillo, on the coast', and the arrival of the first Salvadorean troops for training.<sup>23</sup>

Doubling the army's combat troops, within one year, with training carried out almost entirely by US advisers, was paralleled by a crash-



training programme for an expanded officer corps. In 1980, some 300 Salvadorean officers were trained in the Panama Canal zone, and although no figures are available on numbers of officers trained by US advisers within El Salvador, the introduction of a large military adviser contingent was followed by in-country training on a large scale.

Training of officer candidates at continental US bases began in 1982, when the entire student body of the Salvadorean military academy received a one-month course in January and February at Fort Benning, Georgia. Completion of the Fort Benning course reportedly topped off the training of 600 officer candidates; when commissioned, they would double the size of the officer corps.

US military and economic assistance was essential to finance the enormous increase in size of the Salvadorean armed forces after October 1979, and to train new officers and soldiers. The army, which stood at some 7,000 men in 1979, rose to 9,000 by July 1981 and, according to Pentagon sources, more than doubled its forces, to 19,000, by June 1982.<sup>24</sup> By March 1983, the army comprised 22,400 men, backed by the 11,000 men of the paramilitary National Guard, Treasury Police, and National Police,<sup>25</sup> and irregular forces estimated to number 50,000 or more armed men within the Civil Defence/ORDEN\* network. Projected army strength for 1984 is in the area of 30,000 men.<sup>26</sup> Expansion of the regular army and civilian irregular forces responded in part to the military convention whereby guerrilla forces can best be vanquished by fielding overwhelmingly larger governmental forces, but also to the battlefield successes of the opposition forces. To some extent, the Salvadorean armed forces were obliged to expand, if only to compensate for an immense casualty and desertion rate.

### **Human rights, internal defence and development**

The death toll of non-combatant civilians increased massively after the US introduced large-scale military assistance programmes in 1980, and mass killings of civilians continued, year after year, as the US progressively trained virtually all Salvadorean officers and, by mid-1983, more than half of the army's regular forces. The training programmes were, however, the object of a consistent public relations effort on the US government's part, claiming that US training would have a 'civilising' influence on the massacre-prone Salvadoreans and teach them to mend their ways. At the same time, proponents of this training stressed

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\* The paramilitary organisation ORDEN, created in the aftermath of the 1961 conservative coup as a 'counter-guerrilla' force, grew to some 30,000 members by 1967. Declassified US government documents cited elsewhere in the study note assistance to ORDEN by US intelligence advisers. Despite formal abolition in October 1979, ORDEN's structure and leadership remained intact.

that it would enable the trainees to crush insurgency rapidly – seemingly unaware of any contradiction between the emphasis on immediate short-term military results and the human rights focus.

A main argument favouring massive US training of Salvadorean troops and officers, largely accepted at face value by the news media, was that the indiscriminate army slaughter of civilians in El Salvador was not a matter of policy, but merely a question of individual excesses by over-zealous officers or by undisciplined officers and men out of the control of their superiors. Professional training by the US, it was maintained, would instil that sense of discipline which – according to this version – the Salvadorean army was lacking. Training, however, was imparted by members of the US Army Special Forces, specialists in organising and training irregular forces for irregular warfare – perhaps not the best teachers to impart either traditional concepts of military discipline, or to excite a great deal of enthusiasm for the rules and restrictions of conventional warfare.

Despite the Special Forces' background, a considerable publicity effort was made to characterise US training programmes for Salvadoreans as heavily human rights oriented. Already, in October 1980, the head of the US Southern Command, General Wallace Nutting, described the training as designed to enhance technical and professional skills and including a course entitled 'Human rights aspects in internal defense and development'. This, he maintained, was intended to teach: 'How to be nice to people while you force them to do what you want them to do. How to assert force without being brutal.'<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the most widely repeated defence of US training as useful to stop the Salvadorean killing of prisoners refers to their intelligence value (as a rationale for not killing them on the spot). In a 1983 interview with the US army commander at Fort Gulick's School of the Americas in the Canal Zone, Colonel Nicholas Andreacchio 'stressed that "some sort of human rights training" was now included in every course even if it was just a question of teaching NCOs that it was more valuable in intelligence terms to keep prisoners alive than to kill them'.<sup>28</sup> The argument does not, however, suggest that all prisoners should be formally remanded in custody, or imply that all prisoners have an equal intelligence value: children killed as a preventive measure, so that they could not grow up into guerrillas, or women making tortillas to feed guerrilla forces have little to offer under interrogation that cannot be wrung from them in the brief period before they are killed in the field. In El Salvador, captive oppositionists have generally been interrogated immediately after capture, in local police posts or in the field, and no premium has been set on the prisoner surviving interrogation or living long after. Very important prisoners may be sent to regional interrogation centres at one of the five regional military command posts for more prolonged interrogation, but, as a

rule, they are not accounted for as acknowledged prisoners and never come out alive. In practice, US advisers' stress on the intelligence value of prisoners may only ensure that field interrogations are more thorough and cruel before summary execution removes once and for all the threat of further resistance by the prisoner.

The training in humanitarian behaviour, supposedly imparted in US courses for Salvadorean troops and officers, is hardly reflected in practice. While the main concern of human rights monitors has been the killings of non-combatant civilians, and statistics on assassinations and massacres by government forces are limited to that type of murder, Salvadorean military and paramilitary forces have also routinely put to death members of the armed opposition who are captured or wounded in combat.

The generalised policy and practice of torturing and murdering prisoners in El Salvador exemplifies an area in which Salvadorean army *discipline* demands that its members contravene and disregard the rules of war; it does not necessarily mean that the officers or other ranks are ignorant of these rules. To resist superior orders would, however, place the recalcitrants themselves at risk; counter-insurgency doctrine instils in the officer corps the conviction that counter-terror's ends justify the means, and that in counter-insurgency situations the rules of war do not apply. There is little evidence that US training in irregular warfare teaches otherwise.

### **Paramilitary expansion**

By mid-1983, US-assisted reorganisation and training of El Salvador's armed forces had achieved a major expansion of the armed forces' total manpower and the setting up of smaller, highly manoeuvrable units, as well as the expansion and training of paramilitary forces, now called 'Civil Defence' forces.

During 1980, the former pariahs of ORDEN underwent a metamorphosis and emerged in 1981 with the new Civil Defence nomenclature. US advisers described the Civil Defence forces as a form of self-defence militia, which, in theory, would be charged with holding territory that had been cleared by the mainforce army units. Rapid response army units would provide support to militia forces when under attack.<sup>29</sup>

The most explicit recognition of the irregular Civil Defence/ORDEN forces' role in the conflict, and of their place in current US counter-insurgency doctrine, was made in February 1983, when US military spokesmen outlined to the press a pilot pacification plan to be launched later that year in the departments of San Vicente and Usulután.

*Operación Bienestar* (Operation Wellbeing), a counter-insurgency

plan openly modelled on the CORDS programme in South Vietnam, was to be the first phase of a 'National Campaign Plan'. Official briefings on Operation Wellbeing included a direct endorsement by US military spokesmen of the organisation of paramilitary networks as part of a US-designed strategy.<sup>30</sup> The military mission was already on record as having praised those regional commanders most noted for having integrated the paramilitary irregulars of the ORDEN/civil patrols network into the counter-insurgency operations of the regular army and security forces, and for making these irregulars the centre of programmes designed 'to win greater civilian involvement in counterinsurgency programs'.<sup>31</sup>

US spokesmen were reticent about the paramilitary networks before Operation Wellbeing was announced, but the civilian irregulars had been a visible partner of the Salvadorean armed forces from the new regime's first day in October 1979. Although ORDEN was formally dissolved by the incoming junta, it was rationalised and rehabilitated in 1980, and its units renamed 'Civil Defence' patrols, committees or groups. The local political organisation centred on ORDEN remained intact, but went on a war footing; where the guerrillas were active, the political trappings transferred from ORDEN to Civil Defence were discarded, leaving it strictly military functions.

It is in the rehabilitation of ORDEN that US influence appears to have been important. ORDEN emerged as 'Civil Defence' just about at the same time as Guatemala's paramilitary network (previously concealed, and never dignified with the name or status of a separate organisation) was transformed into a 'Civil Defence' system. In neighbouring Honduras, which has no tradition of paramilitary organisation, army-sponsored 'Civil Defence' groups were created soon after the US army moved in as if to stay, with 125 advisers in 1981, and some 5,000 ground troops in 1983.<sup>32</sup> The term Civil Defence, suggesting local yeomen defending kith and kin, was introduced in these countries just as the US commitments in the region reached unprecedented levels. In the case of Honduras, it applied to a paramilitary network created from scratch. In El Salvador and Guatemala, Civil Defence was a convenient term for existing paramilitary networks in serious need of a new image.

It is inconceivable that the large military advisory contingent in El Salvador, and the possibly still larger covert advisory contingent, were uninvolved with the Civil Defence forces, but the few official US government references to this network, before Operation Wellbeing, deliberately downplay this relationship. In 1980 and 1981, the US Embassy, using the amorphous status of ORDEN and its successor as a basis, attributed atrocities against civilians to radical right-wingers outside the control of the government.

Some US officials here insist that the violence by the right is committed by lower-level extremists in the security forces or by ORDEN, a right-wing paramilitary force, originally sponsored by the government but officially disbanded 18 months ago. Many peasants insist it still operates throughout the country ... One businessman, who said he had received death threats from the right as well as the left, scoffed at the suggestion that the government could not stop the random killing. 'Are you kidding?' he asked rhetorically, '“ORDEN” is the government.'<sup>33</sup>

Official US recognition of the Civil Defence forces' role in Operation Wellbeing apparently opened the way for direct, overt training of civilian irregular forces for 'paramilitary civil defence', as announced in August 1983. The final change in the status of the ORDEN/Civil Defence forces may be their formal designation as a *militia* within the terms of Salvadorean law, and its formal incorporation as an auxiliary force to the army. In such a case, it could be the recipient of more open and plentiful US assistance otherwise blocked by its present ambiguous status. Here again, there would be a Vietnam precedent: parallel structures, Civilian Irregular Defence Groups (later Regional Defence Forces) and Self-Defence Corps (later Popular Forces) were both part of the army of South Vietnam and under military command and discipline. Although, from the first, ORDEN, and later its successors, were set up by the armed forces of El Salvador and commanded by army officers, these links have not always been formalised. After Operation Wellbeing the situation may change.

### **The mercenary element**

The post-1979 expansion of the Civil Defence/ORDEN network coincided with the recruitment of civilian irregular forces to work directly with the regional and central intelligence and command centres. These forces could, to some extent, be distinguished from others because they were not local people based in their home areas, they had not necessarily been involved in the structure of ORDEN prior to the 1979 coup, and they included gunmen imported from other countries. Though there was a mercenary element in the recruitment of Civil Defence patrol members – including both cash payments and other incentives – the gunmen attached on a long-term basis to the special units of the security services included mercenaries in the more classic sense of the hired killer or 'soldier of fortune'.

The most credible reports on the involvement of foreign forces refer to large numbers of former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen, as well as some Guatemalan security personnel on detached service, under contract to the Salvadorean forces. There was, of course, some

precedent of cross-border cooperation between El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua in the final years of the Somoza regime. Many Nicaraguans identified men in National Guard uniforms in the final year of the revolution as Guatemalan or Salvadorean. Shortly before the fall of Somoza, Guatemalan newspapers ran press statements attributed to the 'Secret Anticommunist Army' – a government 'death squad' – announcing the presence of 'five anti-communist commandos of 20 men each fighting in Nicaragua at the side of the National Guard in defence of the Somoza government'.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, in the first year of the Salvadorean conflict, Guatemalan security personnel were reportedly 'loaned' to their counterparts, and there was frequent cross-border travel of top officers between Guatemala City and San Salvador.

The US appears to have covertly promoted and collaborated in regional cooperation through the interchange of paramilitary forces. The November 1980 'Dissent Paper' identified as a US policy objective the deployment of paramilitary (irregular) forces and cross-border cooperation between Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. ('Strengthening counterinsurgency capabilities of armed forces through<sup>3</sup> establishing and/or improving communication and cooperation among armed forces and paramilitary organizations in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras'.)

The same document refers to irregular forces, including 'mercenaries' (a term left undefined), organised in late 1979 and 1980 to assist Salvadorean security forces. Presumably this force was a project sanctioned by both the US and the Guatemalan military:

A paramilitary strike force made up of former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard, anti-Castro Cubans, Guatemalan military personnel and mercenaries has been formed in the past year. Spokesmen for this contingent have expressed their intention to intervene in El Salvador 'when the situation requires it' ... It should be noted that US intelligence has kept informed of the plans and capabilities of the paramilitary strike force in Guatemala. US intelligence has been in contact with Nicaraguan exile groups in Guatemala and Miami and it is aware of their relationship with Cuban exile terrorist groups operating in the US ... their mobility and their links with the US – it seems reasonable to assume – could not be maintained without the tacit consent (or practical incompetence) of at least four agencies: INS, CIA, FBI and US Customs.<sup>35</sup>

The claims in the 'Dissent Paper' gained some substantiation when, in February and March 1982, the *Washington Post* reported President Reagan's approval, in November 1981, of a plan to raise both local and US irregular or 'paramilitary' forces for 'paramilitary and political

operations and intelligence gathering' in Central America.<sup>36</sup>

There is some evidence of the presence of US mercenaries in El Salvador. Opposition sources claimed that five American 'mercenaries' were killed in combat in August 1980 in the departments of Cabañas and Morazán, and that, on 17 December 1980, a US ex-police sergeant and adviser on investigation techniques was killed.<sup>37</sup> In an extensive article in his home-town newspaper, ex-marine Lawrence Bailey described the involvement of American and European 'mercenaries' in security duties, including killings, in El Salvador:

Bailey says he is part of a team of 40 American mercenaries, a small contingent among hundreds of mercenaries from around the world present in El Salvador ... He is paid \$1,600 a month to smuggle guns into the country, guard plantations against takeover by the rebels, and kill if necessary to protect the interest of El Salvador's land-holding class, he said. His group of mercenaries works for wealthy Salvadorean families living in Miami, he said. The families left El Salvador when the current hostilities began in 1979 but they continue to control events at home, Bailey said ... the Miamians are using the mercenaries to aid the government in crushing support for the guerrillas, Bailey said. 'We're a third force,' he said.<sup>38</sup>

While the role of former or 'on loan' members of US and other armed forces in 'contract' work cannot be discounted as an element of the present Salvadorean security system, more importance should be accorded to training and organisation of paramilitary forces by US Army Special Forces advisers, although little documentary evidence has become available on this. In the Vietnam war, classified documentation on the Special Forces described their primary task as providing 'training, operational advice and assistance to indigenous paramilitary forces' they had previously 'organised, trained and equipped'.<sup>39</sup> Despite the precedents of the Vietnam experience, and the indisputable importance of paramilitary irregulars to the current Salvadorean conflict, further research is required to determine the real extent of US assistance to this sector of the security system.

### **US military advisers and political signals**

The number of military and civilian advisers in El Salvador is, of course, an important indicator of the level of US commitment to a military solution of the current conflict. The acknowledged figure of fifty-four to fifty-six advisers is, moreover, a large show of force for this small country. The Reagan administration's deployment of the large advisory contingent early in 1981 also had an important symbolic impact, coming, as it did, after a year in which some 10,000 non-combatant civilians had been selectively murdered by army and security services.

The official proscription of a combat role for US military advisers in El Salvador is one of the fundamental arguments by which the US government dilutes its own responsibility for the actions of Salvadorean forces. When House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Clement J. Zablocki asked the Department of State in October 1982 whether the Salvadorean military had 'ceased its summary executions of prisoners taken in combat situations, and if so, what evidence exists of this change of practice', he was told that the restrictions on the activities of advisers were such as to keep them even from knowing what was going on in the counter-insurgency war:

The War Powers Act enjoins US military personnel attached to the Embassy from observing, first hand, the activities of the Salvadorean Armed Forces during military operations. Therefore, the Embassy must rely on information provided to us by the armed forces and also press releases that list the numbers of prisoners taken in combat.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the ban, American newsmen have repeatedly found US advisers in the field breaking these rules: on several occasions, advisers appeared on television in the act of doing so. In February 1982, the US Cable News Network filmed three advisers – one a lieutenant-colonel – carrying M-16 rifles and other equipment in a combat zone. In the resulting panic, the Embassy stated that the three had been 'repairing a bridge', and not in combat. A second filmed incident, broadcast on 23 June 1982, raised further public and congressional doubts on the role of the US advisers:

... CBS News that day filmed two US trainers in a combat area some forty miles southeast of San Salvador, and interviewed Salvadorean soldiers who stated that the ten US trainers in the area had participated in combat. According to CBS and the *New York Times*, soldiers reported that the Americans had fired 81-millimeter mortars at nearby guerrilla positions. US officials have denied this allegation.<sup>41</sup>

The combat area referred to was a border area where massacres of civilians and of refugees trying to cross the Lempa River have been reported.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the CBS Lempa River exposé, other evidence has revealed US advisers' close involvement in the organisation of joint Honduran and Salvadorean operations in border areas, and in the interdiction of refugee movements out of El Salvador. A July 1982 Americas Watch/ACLU report noted the progressive militarisation of the Honduran/Salvadorean border between November 1981 and May 1982, coinciding with an increase in US military personnel on the ground there. 'The apparent purpose is the creation of a zone without



international observers and organizations, from which operations may be launched against the insurgents in northern Salvadorean provinces.<sup>43</sup>

The rush of US army advisers to Honduras – from only four in 1981 to at least 100 in 1982 – also led to reports of their direct involvement in the harassment of refugees in camps in southern Honduras, in which refugees and relief workers have been killed outright or ‘disappeared’, or turned over to Salvadorean authorities by Honduran military personnel.<sup>44</sup> Evidence suggests that the exception to the norm are not cases in which US advisers break the rules of combat, but those in which they are caught doing so.

Clearly, the advisory mission is anxious to get the advisers out of the barracks and into the field. In March 1983, *Newsweek* reported the decentralisation of the advisory contingent:

Soon some advisers may be moved out of San Salvador, not to battlefields but to local brigades where they can promote aggressive patrolling and other small-unit tactics. ‘You can’t beat guerrillas by marching battalions up the white lines on the road in the middle of the day,’ insisted an official in Washington. ‘Unless we can get some of our guys out of the capital and into the regional headquarters where the decisions are made, we can’t make any headway.’<sup>45</sup>

In the provincial headquarters, advisers are largely out of range of the press, apparently the principal obstacle to them assuming a larger, operational role, despite the much publicised legal restrictions on their function.

At present, the combat role of US military advisers does not appear to be a major factor in the Salvadorean civil war, although this may change in the near future. The current programme for training aircraft pilots, bombardiers and gunners may already serve to conceal US air-warfare specialists’ direct participation in operations (while accompanying trainees). But it is the potential for an expanded use of airpower in the war that may entail further, large-scale, direct involvement of US personnel. US combat services can most readily be hidden when involving aircraft, particularly when landing facilities in neighbouring Guatemala and Honduras can be used. Michael Klare, at the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies, has written of the potential escalation of the US role in the region, and cited a congressional source as saying that the US would probably take ‘direct military action’ through air rather than ground support if the Salvadorean army appeared near to collapse.<sup>46</sup>

The use of air power to bomb the Salvadoreans into submission might well provoke a final general uprising and the victory of the revolutionaries, just as, arguably, it did in Nicaragua, when President Somoza, in desperation, turned to aerial bombardment and rocket

attacks on Nicaraguan cities in September 1978. Large-scale bombings would, in any case, further prove the moral bankruptcy of the present regime and of US foreign policy.

### **US assistance and intelligence**

Major military advisory resources were committed to the Salvadorean intelligence apparatus from early in 1981, and possibly considerably before. Declassified information confirms the presence of intelligence advisory teams after 2 March 1981, when the Reagan administration acknowledged the need to 'train Salvadorean personnel in communications, intelligence, logistics, and in other professional skills designed to improve their capabilities to interdict infiltration and to respond to terrorist attacks'.<sup>47</sup> By mid-March, this included a contingent of six advisers to augment the Military Group itself, with the collection of military intelligence as part of its responsibilities, and a group of five forming an Operational and Planning Assistance Team (OPAT) to work with the five regional military commands 'in the planning and improvement of intelligence, communications, and logistics, and to serve as a liaison between regional and national commands'.<sup>48</sup>

Intelligence work may also have been part of the task of a second five-man OPAT, based at army general staff headquarters in San Salvador, 'to work with senior Army commanders ... to establish communications links and coordination between army units in the five military districts'.<sup>49</sup> According to press reports, this latter OPAT organised a 'war room' to provide central coordination 'for the Salvadorean army, national guard, national police, and rural police', and instructed the Salvadoreans 'how to gather reports of guerrilla activity, evaluate them and coordinate military responses'.<sup>50</sup>

US military intelligence training was institutionalised in September 1981, when a three-man 'Technical Intelligence Team' was sent 'to establish a tactical intelligence school for the Salvadorean Army, including basic intelligence processing and analysing, interrogation, counter-intelligence, and refugee handling'.<sup>51</sup>

While some information has been declassified regarding the military advisers officially detailed to advise in the intelligence field, information on other advisory and operational intelligence assistance is largely undocumented. Press reports in March 1983 estimated intensive work by the CIA, to develop its Central American resources after the outbreak of full-scale civil war in January 1981, had cost an estimated \$50m, and stated that CIA sources said there are 'at least 150 agents' operating in El Salvador.<sup>52</sup> While US press reports emphasise the CIA's role in acquiring intelligence for US policy-makers, without reference to CIA work in assisting Salvadorean intelligence officers, the latter may well represent the greatest investment in agency resources.

Intelligence assistance by military advisory staff and officials of US intelligence agencies may be complemented by other assistance programmes not overtly security related. In particular, projects related to population control measures, by facilitating registration and census programmes or the implementation of the universal identity card system, have added to the data base and operational capability of the Salvadorean intelligence system.

Information on US assistance to the Salvadorean intelligence apparatus, the nerve centre of the army high command, and the heart of its 'counter-terror' political murder programme, has emerged only gradually since 1979. Most assistance that has come to light breaks down into relatively technical categories: provision of a better population control system, or deployment of US army intelligence or operations advisory teams to impart specific skills. Evidence of a higher level of involvement in, or responsibility for, the formulation of El Salvador's policy of political murder has been more elusive, the major proven link between the US and Salvadorean 'counter-terror' being the substance of US counter-insurgency doctrine itself. Only recently has evidence emerged that the US government may have exercised direct control over the top Salvadorean army officers who controlled the country after October 1979, and who led the armed forces to adopt the option of mass 'counter-terror' as the main thrust of its counter-insurgency programme.

In March 1984, a source, first described only as a former high-ranking Salvadorean officer, revealed to members of the US congress and the press that the US government – through the CIA – paid a retainer to, and effectively employed, top military figures in the post-October 1979 governments. Identified by *Newsweek* as former ANSESAL chief Colonel Roberto Eulalio Santibáñez,<sup>53</sup> the source maintained that top members of the army high command, notably Defence Minister Colonel José Guillermo García (1979-83), Deputy Defence Minister Colonel Nicolas Carranza (later ANTEL chief and head of the Treasury Police), National Guard chief Colonel Eugenio Vides Casanova (1979-83) (now a general and Minister of Defence) and intelligence officer Major Roberto D'Aubuisson had been personally responsible for the development and administration of El Salvador's 'death-squad' assassination programme.<sup>54</sup> In a striking parallel with Guatemala's presidential security agency, where the army high command supervised targeting of subjects for elimination, Colonel Santibáñez described the direct participation of the army's commanders 'in selecting death squad victims', and Vides Casanova's added role in covering up the executions of four American missionaries in 1980:

Defense Minister Eugenio Vides Casanova is personally directing a cover-up in the slayings of four American churchwomen in 1980,

and his cousin, a colonel, ordered the murders. 'National Guardsmen at the airport spotted the women,' he said, 'and they radioed for instructions... The word came down to eliminate them. It came from Colonel Oscar Edgardo Casanova, who was in charge in that zone.'<sup>55</sup>

Details on the precise relationship between the US government and the army's leaders after October 1979 are provided by Colonel Santibáñez only in one case. He maintained that Colonel Nicolas Carranza 'was on the payroll of the Central Intelligence Agency', and had 'received more than \$90,000 a year from the CIA' for the past five to six years.<sup>56</sup>

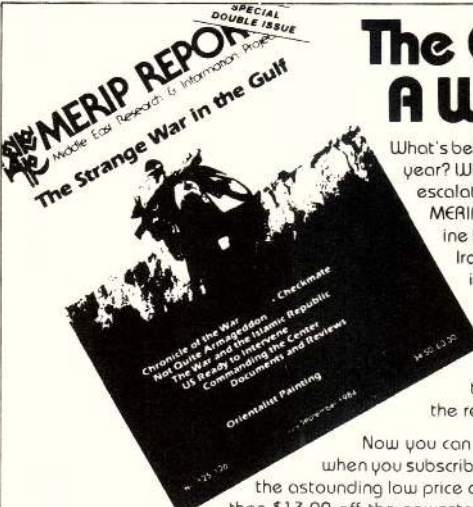
Such revelations by defectors or retired security officials must always be considered with healthy scepticism. Santibáñez was himself deeply involved in the dirty-work of counter-insurgency as chief of ANSESAL, and his motives for revealing his erstwhile colleagues' American connections are questionable. The claims themselves, however, ring true and, if confirmed, would mean a whole new level of involvement and complicity of the US government in El Salvador's agony of state terror.

## References

- 1 The study from which this chapter is taken centres on the American doctrine of counter-insurgency as applied in El Salvador and Guatemala. It outlines its two basic components as the concept of 'counter organisation' — the creation of irregular forces mimicking guerrilla organisation — and 'counter terror' — the legitimization of state terror to combat subversion and insurgency.
- 2 Amnesty International, *Political killings by governments* (1983).
- 3 American Civil Liberties Union/Americas Watch (ACLU/AW), Report on human rights in El Salvador (January 1982), p. 189 and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), *Update on Latin America* (March/April 1980).
- 4 WOLA, *ibid.*
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# Notes and documents

## India: transcending the traditional communist movement

Over the last fifteen years, except for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and the liberation movements in Southern Africa, the history of communist and working-class movements has been one of the formation of new groups, their disintegration and attempts at re-formation.

When these groups were formed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, all traditional communist and socialist parties started branding them as the expression of petty-bourgeois romanticism, individualism and left sectarianism. They were not ready to look at this phenomenon as the outcome of the changing objective situation of world imperialism and working peoples' movements, or why this was happening in the field of the communist movement, simultaneously all over the world.

India is a good example to examine because it combines modern relations of production with the problems of a backward society. It has the most advanced industry of the multinationals and state and private Indian monopolies; it has areas of sophisticated technology and research, and it has a long tradition of bourgeois democracy. And, ironically, all this is combined with the most backward forms of caste oppression, women's confinement in purdah and the home – even atrocities like bride-burning – and the extreme exploitation of unorganised workers in small-scale industry, of adivasis in mines, and of migrant labourers both in urban areas and in the rural areas of the 'green revolution'. This objective situation poses a combination of problems to the Indian working peoples' movements, for which they have to appropriate the experiences of the most advanced workers' movements in western countries, as well as those of revolutionary movements in 'Third World' countries.

The break in India from the orthodox communist mould began in 1966-7 with the 'Naxalbari' and the 'Naxalite movement'. Though the Naxalbari and the Srikakulam uprisings were the most dramatic expressions of the situation, a more complex reality expressed itself in new movements all over India. From the beginning, along with the tendencies which split away from CPI(M) and called themselves 'Marxist-Leninist' and followers of Mao Tse-tung thought, there were many groupings which remained critical of this dominant trend. Even in eastern India, the centre of the Naxalite upsurge, such groupings could be found. In the early 1970s, in industrially advanced Maharashtra state, a new group developed which, while taking its emotional inspiration from Naxalbari, started out with a critical attitude towards the theoretical-political approach of the Marxist-Leninist groups – going as far as to say, 'We will put Marx himself underneath the microscope.' And in Delhi, a new group emerged from within the Trotskyite tendency which was to evolve a critical approach to Trotskyism and marxism as a whole. With only one or two exceptions, these groups were not just petty-bourgeois discussion circles, but were immersed in both rural and urban working peoples' movements from the beginning. Thus, the post-1967 political formations were an eclectic combination which emerged out of the social contradictions in India with its twofold character of modernity and backwardness.

Since this early period, that is 1967 to 1971-2, many changes have taken place in the movement. After the early 1970s, the CPI(M-L) suffered a period of demoralisation and splits, as did, subsequently, the groups in that milieu, and then, by the late 1970s, the groups outside it. Though this period was apparently one of disintegration and frustration, it enabled the whole spectrum of political groups critically to assimilate both their own and other movements' experiences.

In fact, what was emerging can be explained in terms of the upsurge in new forms of peoples' movements from the early 1970s onwards. Because of their interaction with these new forms of popular movement, the communist groups and tendencies began, after a prolonged period of disorganisation and frustration, to have a more advanced consciousness and involvement. Even those groups that still hold fast to their own theories and ideologies have to confront the realities of changing class relations in the backward areas which they usually choose to work in. Unable to make an alliance with 'rich peasants' in the rural areas, unable to evade caste questions and the issue of women's oppression, compelled to confront problems of the forest areas and ecology, they have to attempt to acclimatise themselves to a rapidly changing situation. The time is fast approaching when they will be unable to find a 'backward' area where they can go without confronting these issues and still proceed in a revolutionary manner.

One of the most important new tendencies, which called itself the



Dalit\* Panthers after the US Black Panthers, emerged in the early 1970s in Maharashtra. Just as racism gave rise to the Black Panthers in the US, it was caste oppression, an issue that the working-class movement led by the communists had never been able to come to grips with, which gave rise to the Dalit Panthers in India. Not that this was the first attempt to fight caste oppression – such struggles went back to the late nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, these struggles were most highly organised in states such as Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamilnadu. With independence, the bourgeoisie, for a time, tried to nullify the struggle by absorbing middle-class dalits. But by the early 1970s, dalit working-class youth, already hit brutally by unemployment, caste discrimination and oppression, came to consciousness, in a most advanced way and at a mass level, in a situation when the process of transformation of their sections in the villages into agricultural labourers was culminating.

The dalit movement was one which raised questions not only in the economic sphere, but also in the fields of art, culture and social relationships. It dealt a blow to the cultural and social practices even of communists (Why do they do pujas? Why do they have arranged marriages and take big dowries for their daughters?). The dalits emerged with a new form of poetry which was not mechanically stamped with ideology but arose out of their lives – they were not afraid to use obscenity even regarding the Indian flag. The movement also came forward as a fighting force in Bombay against the fascist organisation called Shiv Sena, which was attacking the working class and communists. Along with the Dalit Panthers, there emerged new socialist trends from within the social democrats, who carried, though unwittingly, the ideology (put forward elsewhere by Marcuse) that students and marginalised sections (in India, dalits and, later, women) were the most revolutionary.

At the same time, new things started happening in the field of art. In Calcutta, a peoples' theatre emerged which had its background in the once-strong tradition of the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association (IPTA). It took the form of street-plays and called itself the 'third theatre' (the 'first' being folk drama and art, the 'second' being the traditional western-style stage). This cultural form, developing in various aspects, spread all over India during the following decade.

The struggles of adivasis (tribal people) have, since colonial times, taken place in isolated pockets all over India. It is a peculiarity of the Indian social formation that there are still many adivasi communities maintaining their cultural milieu to a large extent intact. Following independence, one can see in some of these areas the combination of

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\* 'Dalit', meaning 'downtrodden', is becoming the most popular and militant term by which ex-untouchables refer to themselves.

extreme backwardness with the most technologically advanced industry. Before the late 1960s and early 1970s, adivasi struggles were mainly against the government attacks on their traditional rights to the forests and forest products. Though this remains a major aspect of their struggle, the problems have become more complex as both adivasis and the forests have become more and more drawn into capitalist relations.

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, which was ideologically and organisationally more modern, emerged in the early 1970s and brought to the fore the issue of adivasis as an oppressed nationality, along with issues centred around forests, ecology and class oppression. This organisation was the first to focus on the forest issue, which had never been brought forward by the communist-led adivasi movement. It fought deforestation; it fought the construction of dams, and it fought World Bank-stimulated replacement of the traditional sal tree by commercial teak plantations. The strong alliance between this movement and the Dhanbad mine workers' union meant that the movement acquired a deeper dimension, in that a relationship was built between the working-class movement and movements of oppressed nationalities. Later, in the mid-1970s, the same issues were focused on by a movement in Madhya Pradesh state, called the Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha.

But things went further than this in the mid-1970s. From 1975 onwards, the women's liberation movement started gaining ground, on the basis of the militant participation of women in urban and rural class struggles. Leaving aside the traditional communist parties, even the most celebrated revolutionary movement of that time, the Marxist-Leninist, had a very conservative attitude towards this question. But marxist and socialist groups in Maharashtra and Delhi, and movements like the Dalit Panthers and neo-socialists, along with some traditional splinter communist parties, strongly supported such movements. Almost a decade later, the struggle for women's liberation has become an established fact, and even the traditional parties cannot publicly ignore it or the issues raised by its marxist-feminist tendency.

In the sciences, there was a significant beginning in the mid-1950s with the establishment of the Kerala Shastriya Sahitya Parishad. But this did not acquire nationwide importance or expand until the late 1970s, becoming the 'peoples' science movement'. Recently, it was successful in stopping the building of a dam in Kerala which would have destroyed a forest called Silent Valley. It was successful in raising mass opposition to the dam with a publicity campaign about the disturbance of the ecological balance and the importance of maintaining vegetation and animal life – and fought both a communist-led and bourgeois state governments successively. Today, there are numerous examples in West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra where the peoples' science movement is raising issues related to agriculture, ecology,

dams, pollution, etc., and getting more closely united with the overall working peoples' movement.

The field of health has also been touched by the emergence of new trends in the field of science. This began with the formation of the Medico Friends' Circle, by a small group of doctors from various states, and is now on the verge of becoming a wider movement. Marxist doctors are now developing the concept of alternative health not only in published and theoretical work, but also through some forms of mass work. A recent strike of residential and government doctors in Calcutta raised many issues related to alternative health, such as the malpractices of the multinational pharmaceutical companies, the necessity of viewing health care from the standpoint of preventive and social medicine, and the need to oppose the technocratic-mechanical concept of establishing health centres. The strike was against a CPI(M)-led Left Front government in West Bengal, which had to agree that it had not even thought about the socialist reorganisation of health.

Finally, since the mid-1970s, and particularly after the Emergency, the industrial working class, through its trade union movement, has started to show some new characteristics which have enriched all these developments. Asserting its strength through mass struggle rather than fighting through the courts has become more and more the distinctive feature of this working-class movement. The Calcutta working class had shown this same militancy from 1962 to the late 1960s, but since 1976, such an approach has become widespread all over India. The Bombay working class, which is confronted by the most advanced and shrewd bourgeois policy, made a breakthrough in this period. Because the character of exploitation and repression is much more subtle in Bombay and other Maharashtrian industrial cities than in other states, the existence of such a fighting policy shows the depth of militancy in the working class. Not only do Bombay workers face a highly advanced bourgeoisie, but, in addition, they confront the most modern technology and participate in the most advanced forms of the production process. So here, the working class can forge future strategies for those sections of the working class in more backward industrial areas.

The strength of the new fighting mood was shown in the celebrated strike of the Bombay textile workers, which started in January 1982. By its end, with the struggle continuing even while most workers had returned to the mills, the strike had brought forward much wider problems than those originally raised. These included nationalisation and its effects on the conditions of workers' lives; automation in relation to the reorganisation of agriculture and industry, including the reorganisation of the division of labour in the production process itself; and how to deal with strike-ban acts. Because the workers had gone to their villages during the strike and taken some new forms of

struggle there also, the problem of putting forward a common strategy for the rural poor and the industrial working class came sharply into focus. As experience shows, the old strategy of 'addition' of the struggles of the rural poor on their demands and of urban workers on their own issues has exhausted itself.

Besides this, in the last four or five years, isolated struggles in chemical and engineering industries like Philips, Bajaj Auto, Rashtriya Chemical Fertilizers, etc., have shown that the issue before the trade union movement goes deeper than that of gaining economic benefits and wage rises. It increasingly becomes one of formulating alternatives in reorganising the division of labour and organising the modern production process on alternative lines.

The isolation of the struggle of these workers also raised the issue of how to make their problems more relevant to the broad working masses. At present, none of the communist parties and groups are capable of helping workers to develop a new strategy for solving these problems – but the gains achieved in the people's science, anti-caste and cultural movements, women's liberation, etc., can help in formulating such a strategy.

The last fifteen years have brought about the formation of numerous small groups and tendencies as a part of many new movements. Appropriation of all these experiences would necessarily imply the appropriation of the experiences of the European working class and the working class in post-revolutionary societies. This becomes clear if we enumerate the conceptions which are implicit and explicit in the movements that have developed in the last decade and a half.

1 In the late 1960s and early 1970s, by 'revolution', people meant smashing the state, establishing a new working-class state, taking over the major means of production, reorganising land ownership, going for cooperatives and collectives – and this was all. This whole conception appears so outmoded now as to be laughable to many of those who themselves held it earlier. Now, revolution means not only this, but the beginning of a struggle to implement a new strategy regarding the relationship between men and women and between people of different castes and nationalities. It means alternative ways of organising and managing the production processes, alternative concepts of agriculture, an integrated concept of agriculture/industry/ecology, and alternative health care. The second aspect of the new conception is the constitution of a proletarian state which does not stand over the heads of the working class, getting more and more alienated from it, but which is the process through which working people will gain control over reconstructing their lives. The struggle to establish organisational forms for this proletarian state is an inevitable part of the struggle for alternative strategies of organising social relationships and relationships with nature.

2 The concept of an alliance between different sections was limited ten or fifteen years back to the alliance between workers and peasants. Now, it becomes a question of alliances between various movements – cultural, women’s liberation, anti-caste, etc. – and also of having a single concept of alternative social practices and an alternative production process. Under the previous conception, which saw social change as being mechanically brought about by changing the ownership of the means of production, the immediate programme could have no direct link with the final outcome.

3 Along with this, the formation of the programme of revolution cannot remain the function of a party or party intellectuals, but has to be a process in which the broad masses of the working people, with all their specificities of caste, nationality, sex, etc., will participate.

4 All this is going to have very crucial effects on the conception of the communist party, ‘the vanguard party of the proletariat’. It cannot now be understood as one which trains the working class in its ideology, marxism, that is, scientific socialism. Now it will be an integrated process of learning, both for those who already consider themselves conscious communists and for the totality of the working people – learning from each other and from the overall practice in the movements. So the party can never remain an organisation which is above the masses and specialises in handing down a blueprint for action. This changes both the conception of the party and the relationship between the party and the masses.

All these changes in understanding the revolutionary process are still in an embryonic form. But the objective situation for their continuing development exists in the changes in the structure of imperialism, as well as in the birth of new movements – changes and movements which will go on deepening. The questions which are raised by the Polish working class, very explicitly and recently, or by dissenting marxist theoreticians in post-revolutionary societies can now be related to the language which is evolving in the movement within both the ‘backward’ and ‘advanced’ sections of the capitalist world.

The process, one can note, has started almost all over the world. Not everybody who is involved in it is aware to the same extent of its worldwide character, nor is there any organisational link or dialogue on the basis of all these new concepts. But it is certain that what appears as crisis and disintegration is going to prove a gestation period towards a new working-class and communist movement.

Shramik Mukti Dal

BHARAT PATANKAR

# GLC GRANT-AID FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

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Arts organisations that attract a London-wide audience and cover a large catchment area. The Committee also funds leisure and recreation projects.  
*Closing date for applications 31 January 1985.*

## Community Arts Sub-Committee

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*Closing date for applications 31 January 1985.*

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Groups concerned with high quality training schemes in London. In particular those which demonstrate a demand for the skills in question or represent pilot or innovative projects.  
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*Closing date for applications 31 March 1985.*

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*Closing date for applications 31 January 1985.*
- (iii) Community Groups in Dockland (revenue only this year).  
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- (iv) Groups within designated Community Areas (revenue only this year).  
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N.B. The GLC does not normally fund organisations that are the proper concern of other statutory bodies e.g. the NHS, Borough Council Social Services Departments. Also the GLC through its grant giving committees does not generally support educational projects in London, that should be the responsibility of the ILEA, or in outer London, which should be the responsibility of the Borough Council's Education Committee. The Council's ability to pay grants or the full amount of grants may be curtailed by the Government legislation imposed under the "Paving Act" (Local Government [Interim Provisions] Act 1984, rate capping [Rate Act 1984] etc).

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# Book reviews

## Salman Rushdie: a review article\*

I have never seen a copy of *Grimus*, Salman Rushdie's first printed novel, or heard anything about it. This is not to disparage it, whatever it may be – long or short, complex or simple, who knows? – but to emphasise that Rushdie had previously displayed no public talent, he had no *reputation* as a budding writer, nobody important tipped him as a possible genius or even Big Name until he wrote his second published novel (he wrote three that have not been published), until, that is, *Midnight's Children* burst upon the scene. Athene was born fully armed from the head of Zeus. I always doubted this story until, as if emerging from the prayer bump on the forehead of Islam that he uses to such good effect, Salman Rushdie appeared overnight as an undeniable major writer, armed with the appropriate gifts and ambition united together by a hilarious and sustained capacity for storytelling.

No more praise is needed. But a question rose to mind. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, an obvious influence on Rushdie, has said that writers have only one story in them, which they tell in different ways. Perhaps *Midnight's Children* was it, in Rushdie's case. Its panorama is the entire modern history of the sub-continent. Its device, simple but elastic: a hero-narrator born on the midnight of independence, with the voices of all the children of independence ringing in his head, hence thirty years of a sub-continent could be regaled as auto-biography. It was as if – one thought – a writer frustrated by a lack of recognition, which was multiplied by his own prodigious capacity, had hurled everything he had on to the table and into one book, so as to burst fully armed, etc. Surely what might follow could only be footnotes or elaborations of the same experience, already immense enough for any talent.

Wrong. *Shame* is not so big a book as *Midnight's Children*, but it is better: tauter, harder, cleverer even. Enough praise. But is it a new story – has Rushdie managed to defy Marquez's law? Not completely.

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\**Midnight's Children* (London, Picador, 1981) and *Shame* (London, Picador, 1983).

There are continuities in phrase, theme and in the scathing anger at the monstrosities of partition and the Anglo-fratricide of India and Pakistan. Yet *Shame* is less about this than about the 'shameless' driving violence and greed of so-called 'nation building'. It is about the emotion which clings like a leech to action, the raw side of motive, the festering underside of fine words.

Which sounds rather abstract – and Rushdie isn't – but the point I'm trying to make is that while *Midnight's Children* is a protest at what has become of a nation, *Shame*, although explicitly a condemnation of Pakistan (for being 'insufficiently imagined', a phrase that echoes Benedict Anderson's luminous study of nationalism: *Imagined Communities*, in fact goes beyond the boundaries of state and polity to the migration of souls that is the signature tune of our age. I'll come back to this, but if we take the question of politics, we can say this: For *Midnight's Children*, politics is greater than the scope of the novel, whose narrative takes place within the independence process. *Shame*, on the other hand, unlike *Midnight's Children*, explicitly addresses politics, yet is itself larger, concerns more than, what we call politics today.

To see why, it is necessary to ask, 'From what point of view does Rushdie write?' Today, writers are very jealous of their independence, and Rushdie especially so. This is because political parties are usually bad for the imagination. (OK, so Lenin said that party members ought to dream, but his real complaint was that they did not. Never confuse the party's 'position' on imagination – composite clause 28 'We will ensure that the nation has more imagination than ever before' – with its vitality in the matter.) Parties are usually – not always – bad for the imagination because they have a line which prevents certain things from being said, or even thought. A party line will tend to drive out, to suppress and censor, worst of all auto-censor, what people feel: the vibes, the smell, the unease, the shame that are essential to any truthful rendering of experience.

So when I ask 'from what position does Rushdie write?', I am asking about his point of view, *not* in the everyday political sense which the phrase now means in English, but in its full literal meaning: from what vantage point does Rushdie view the human affairs that he writes about. There are many shades to any full answer which, if it was to be given in proper, scholarly comparative terms, would doubtless demand an entire opus of literary critical exegesis on 'The Novel and Narration', which I am supremely unqualified even to begin. But one comparison will help.

To my knowledge, the first writer to make migration central to his work; the first writer who in so doing explicitly claimed this to be the central experience of our time; the first to see clearly that emigration/immigration, with its torn photographs of memories past and its jump-cut expectations of the future, is not peripheral to our world but rather



is its essential architecture, was John Berger. He left England – his native country – to see it, and for him it includes not only the pulverisation of tradition as capital makes labour ‘free’, but also the entire loss of rural life, unromanticised by him, but still seen as closer to the soul, let’s say, than the motor car.

Now Berger looks at emigration from below. The truth of its deeds is traced most precisely upon the powerless. Rushdie looks at it from above. In neither case is this relationship anthropological, or from outside. I will say no more about Berger’s work here. *Pig Earth*, the first volume of a promised trilogy, ‘Into their Labours’, has already established a bewitching intensity of peasant experience which, once read, can hardly be dismissed as ‘peripheral’. Rushdie, likewise, does not seek to be outside the fray, he wishes simply to incorporate it all. In *Midnight’s Children* the narrator’s claim is explicit: ‘To understand me you’ll have to swallow a world.’ But still Rushdie’s most vivid characters are the despised dogs at the top.

In *Shame* the incorporation registered in *Midnight’s Children* is repeated through extraordinary shifts. This time, the narrator is – quite shamelessly – the author. He tells us without fiction that he too is a *mohajir*, an immigrant, who stripped of his history ‘stands naked amidst the scorn of strangers’; full of hope, a man of flight, and fantasy, but without even the eyebrows of belonging. Meanwhile, at the beginning, one might think that the novel is about Omar Khayyam, who, born of three mothers, is brought up – supposedly – neither to know nor to feel shame. One then thinks that the story is about the rise and struggle to the death of two future presidents, characters who have been likened to Bhutto and Zia. Certainly, the latter’s all too actual existence adds tension to an already exciting story. But *Shame* does not present us with portraits of these ‘historic’ personalities. Rather, the characters in the book have been drawn from their equivalents in real life in the way that one draws water from a well, to provide further animation to aid the characters in the novel to live themselves. At any rate, this is by the way because the rivalry is not after all what the book is about. There is a takeover. A mentally-backward girl who should have been a boy, with her childish mind in an adult body, begins to dominate the story. In the affliction of her peculiar mental state, she absorbs the feelings of those who surround her, especially the unspoken, suppressed, unrealised even, senses of shame. She ceases to be the innocent child and becomes naively so full of all the shame that surrounds her that she transmogrifies into a rage of nothing but shame, pure, violent, unadulterated: an anti-party, a fusion bomb.

One of the pleasures of Rushdie is the way he places layer on idiosyncratic layer, to juxtapose and contrast. In a fine twist, he proposes the flight of women – from girlhood to motherhood – as migration: the transformation from Miss Beauty to Mrs Beast. The hero of *Shame*

begins as the pure Miss Hyder and ends as a horrific Mrs Shakil, the reverse (feminine) pun on Jekyll and Hyde being deliberate. Here, too, in marriage, the immigrant stands naked before the stranger, whose language she must henceforth accept as her own.

Which takes me back to an earlier point. For if Marquez is right, then 'the one story' which Rushdie is going to tell is a big one. *Midnight's Children* can be seen – with anticipation – as its foreword, the introductory cough, and *Shame* the clearing of the throat. Perhaps I could get at it another way. Stories of migration are not new if one associates this with the huge number of American novels about 'the immigrant experience'. These, however, are about becoming American. The United States is a country of immigrants, what is commanding is the nation. Most major novels everywhere, especially the popular ones, are predominantly nation centred. The exceptions are mainly those so strictly focused upon the experience of the individual as to be called 'modernist'.

There is a kinship between country and novel. The novel as a literary form, like the newspaper, was one of the conductors of and remains part of, the essential chorus for the rise of nations and nationalism. Can it now bring us a different multiple experience, one that has no political centre, no unique State that personifies its citizens?

How can I put this contrast most strongly? In his lectures on the philosophy of world history, one of the supreme advocates of nationalism, Hegel, wrote:

No one can escape from the spirit of his nation, any more than he can escape from the earth itself. The earth is the centre of gravity, and if we imagine a body abandoning its own centre, we can only conceive of it as disintegrating in the air.

Compare this to Rushdie in *Shame*:

the resentments we *mahajirs* [we immigrants] engender have something to do with our conquest of the force of gravity ... we have flown. I am comparing gravity with belonging ...

In Rushdie, the major protagonists have no centre, their nations lack legitimacy, their leaders are murderous comics in poor taste. But the movement, the migrations that they engender – not the gravity but the flight – that is a subject of promise. It may defy the novel as form, it will unseat those who want to protect national literatures. One does not regard Marquez as a Colombian novelist, he writes for Latin America. Similarly, if Rushdie and others succeed (a major companion is Angela Carter, whose South London hero in *Nights at the Circus* defies gravity by the exhilarating expedient of growing wings), then they will soon write for the English language as a *world* language, a majority of whose readers are women and most of whose speakers are now in the Third World.

Which raises the question of Rushdie's relationship to England, where, for the moment at least, he resides. He is, to give him his full title, no less than a citizen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: a mouthful for which one should feel proud and in Rushdie's case, because he is black, grateful as well. But here is a problem. Is he a traitor in our midst? Within the country, what 'matters' is generally written for and decided by a male elite. New York is OK, Americans patronise the Brits, and the English in turn think they have the superior measure of Americans. Both are anyway imbued with writing from the vantage point of world power. Will Rushdie accept this – let's call it, as the word sounds suitably posh and polished – this hegemony?

At first it seemed that he knew his place; that he would accept the role he was accorded. For there is a new sensibility around in England today, a new romanticism for India. In a recent Sunday colour supplement, Margaret Drabble reported on her first visit to the sub-continent and captured the attitude wonderfully:

... magical. Simply to gaze from one's bedroom window was excitement enough. The dogs, the frogs, the kites, the goats, the cows lapping up the overflow from the swimming pool, the professor on his motorbike! Exasperating and exhausting it was at all times, but it was also extraordinarily interesting and, at least in retrospect, invigorating.

One could write an essay on this list – what it includes and leaves out. But there is no reason to make fun of Margaret Drabble, for the feeling she expresses is perfectly authentic, down to her invigoration itself which is, oh quintessence of tourism!, 'in retrospect'.

To get a sense of what is happening here, and also therefore to comprehend something of the reception of *Midnight's Children*, a touch of background is necessary – literary background. The liberal historian G.M. Trevelyan once wrote that the English spirit itself, no less, would perish without access to the pleasures of the wild nature of England. For thousands of years such nature was experienced as frightening, however, because full of dangers, diseases and terrible uncertainty. Then, to wrap up history in three sentences – which I will be forgiven for the purposes of a short review – when a class came along secure enough to 'contemplate' wild nature for the good of its spirit, its attention was preoccupied with a different aspect of the countryside. The danger of other men. To produce its bounty and give forth an accumulated surplus, the land had to be worked intensely. Those who have only known machine agriculture have no idea how densely populated and closely kept are fields worked by hand for harvesting. The medieval countryside presented the threat of numbers. Modern agriculture cleared these peasants out of the way. It took a couple of

centuries or so, but no matter. The rule of the land itself by man could begin. Nature was made safe, hence also deeply beautiful; especially when 'wild', so that there was at least a smack of nostalgia and a frisson of danger. We are familiar enough with this romanticism: it celebrates that which is 'lost', yet also falsifies it through the purity and lack of history in the sentiment that it proclaims.

Today, another scenery has become beautiful: the teeming multitudes of India and their animals, their oddness, their magical strangeness, their – now we should perhaps use the word only within the museum frame of inverted commas – their 'humanity'. The romanticism of the dregs, for as that they are still thought of. There is life there, one can see it from one's window, just as one can admire the wildness of the English countryside. Two things must be added immediately to balance such a crude indictment. First, this attitude has always been around, only now it is fashionable. Second, there is something in it, just as there is beauty in wild nature. What I am criticising is the 'appreciation' of the coloured multitudes as spectacle and without risk.

How has it come about? If I may give a crude rendering of the generally unspoken attitude, it goes like this: The dregs now govern themselves. Their weapons present no threat to us. Furthermore, the difference in the living standards of our 'first' and their 'third' world is today overwhelming. During the time of empire, our underdogs and our massed unemployed bore an uncanny resemblance to – say – their urban workers. Now, their over-population has been completed. Their very numbers condemn them, while most of us, even 'our' workers, live like their middle class, except that we have washing machines instead of servants. In short, we are safe, such is the distance between us. Hence we can now enjoy them, or rather enjoy looking at them in their 'wild state', if only for the invigoration of our spirit.

*Midnight's Children* evoked all this romanticism in English readers, despite itself. The exasperation, the enchantment and the safe distance. It contains no defiance of the West, nor apparently any hope for the East. Rather, it is disappointed in the fate of India, bitter at the broken promise, humiliated by the inability to discard the corruption of the Raj. How we can applaud Mr Rushdie for saying so and for the excellence of the way he writes! It is true that there is a threatening note of optimism just at the end. India's children of independence may have failed, but *their* children, Rushdie tells us, are more cautious and when they act, it 'will be impossible to resist'. He even repeats this threat: the second generation will grow up 'far tougher than the first, not looking for their fate in prophecy or in the stars, but forging it in the implacable furnaces of their wills'. This can be put down to the poor man's need to salvage his self-respect. We can allow him to clutch at such straws as his devastating Ganges of a book sweeps on.

All of which is to say that Rushdie is fine so long as he sticks to India and to Pakistan. But the promise of *Shame* is precisely that he will not so 'behave himself'. *Midnight's Children* concluded in resignation: 'sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes'. *Shame* ends in anger, its farewell pointing to our own devastation. Furthermore, it is explicitly written from the West, from over here, and is pointed about the collaboration of sophisticated western diplomacy with the horrific regimes its governments supply and support 'at arms length'. In *Shame* the sub-continent is no longer safely distanced.

To make matters worse, Rushdie then publicly attacked the TV soap opera of the *Jewel in the Crown* in the Cambridge literary magazine *Granta*. A good deal of stick followed, promptly applied to him by various guardians of England's literary order. For the cheekie chappy has had the nerve to turn his gift of language against those who 'gave' it to him. This is unacceptable. The time has come to put him down.

It is unlikely that he and others who are writing along similar or parallel paths will be kept down, however. The centre of English is disintegrating. Rushdie's work gives a very powerful sense of this. Recently, Craig Raine argued that 'All great poetry is written in dialect'. By this he means, I think, that poetry speaks at a hard tangent; like a chisel, it strikes directly but with a skilled and special direction to leave an impression that is open to multiple interpretation. The task for poetry, Raine says, is 'to invent new dialect or even dialects'. I don't doubt it. But a dialect is a local language; its sense, that of a close, specifically lived rhythm. One thinks of the word 'organic'. How far can this be invented? Raine seeks a breakthrough, for 'the mind is a vast country whose borders are closed ... It is teeming with peasants, productive souls who are hard-working but mute'.

If poems need dialect, novels thrive on the demotic, they drink it up and spread it around. Original novels are the ones which give form to those steamy, hazy, not quite yet crystallised thoughts that the moment you read them, or hear them read, you recognise; not necessarily as your own but as current. And the novel gossips and repeats what is already said by those peasants, who are not, after all, completely mute.

This is where Rushdie has a wonderful advantage, not only in his ear but also in the fresh sources from which he can draw without strain. Take swearing. They have so much more of it in India. True, Americans swear, but mostly they curse with the dulling repetition of the machine: junk swearing. The English are even more inhibited.

Once I cycled to the local shops with a Turkish friend who was staying briefly and to whom we lent a bike. From an elite background, she has two small children. We took a short cut down a quiet side road just off the middle-class, utterly English, suburban shopping area. For about a hundred yards it was one way in the wrong direction, against us. There was no traffic or danger. Two people, however, waved and

told us that we were in the wrong. It was all very polite and infuriating. But they 'meant well', it did not occur to me to shout at them. My companion smiled at my look of frustration and said sweetly, 'In Turkey if someone does that we would reply "I shit in your mouth".' I nearly fell off my bike with shock and pleasure.

Although it would certainly have been out of place then and there, it would be silly to suggest that such language 'is not available' in England. It is just that the essential vulgarity of the demotic that can be drawn upon here has been so much diminished, if only by thoughtfulness. Nor would I say that it can't be renewed or that England is necessarily 'finished'. What I am saying is that its linguistic resources are becoming smaller in relation to the living world of English as it is spoken. I'm glad that this is so, because I'd like to see the renewal of language and imaginative energy needed here to be part of – a small part of – something wider, something distinct from the rule and spirit of nation states. Rushdie's writing points in this direction. In *Midnight's Children* there was one hero who was also the narrator. In *Shame* the author himself jostles with the reader and characters. Its location may still be a nation – Pakistan – but the writing has lifted anchor.

Transnational Institute

ANTHONY BARNETT

*A bibliography of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Volumes 4 & 5*

By H.A.I. GOONETILEKE (Zug, Switzerland, Inter Documentation Co. A.G. 1983). (Volumes 1 & 2, 1970; volume 3, 1976). xlv + 562pp, vii + 952pp.

What a huge undertaking Goonetileke's bibliographical record of his country is – and what a massive achievement. So far, five of the projected volumes have been completed. Volumes 4 and 5, under review here, amplify the earlier three, and bring the record up to 1978. Volumes 6 and 7 (in the course of preparation) will bring it up to 1984 – the years that saw the most recent pogroms against the Tamil people – and a starting point from which to measure the nature of Mr Goonetileke's enterprise. For the state racism mounted against the Tamil people ever since independence, accompanied by the steady and systematic erosion of civil rights for all, has led to a steady flow of propaganda, manipulation of the truth and the decline of objective scholarship. The fidelity to the total historical record and commitment to freedom of thought and scholarship that are the hallmark of Goonetileke's work stand in stark contrast. And the bibliography should be seen, not only as a major achievement in its own right, but also as a reminder to all librarians that their calling requires, above all,

a loyalty to truth in the pursuit of knowledge.

In order to preserve his own 'intellectual autonomy' and 'moral choice', Mr Goonetilleke was forced, after twenty-seven years, to 'retire' from his position as librarian at the University of Peradeniya where the bulk of his earlier work had been done, because, as he notes, 'recent trends [had] led to ... increasing alienation, an indifference to social issues and human values, and the silencing of dissent by intimidation'. But given his unflagging zeal for his subject, 'the unending belief that what I am doing is of benefit to the society in which I live', he will not be easily silenced.

The volumes are, of course, of inestimable benefit to anyone concerned with any aspect of Sri Lankan history, culture, art, politics – the list could go on. The annotations are detailed, lucid, helpful, often indeed virtual abstracts of the items under discussion. The range is vast – these two volumes contain the fruits of the author's research in the libraries of Britain, West Germany and the US (as well, of course, as in Sri Lanka itself). He has unearthed unpublished thesis material in Buffalo, New York; reminiscences of the original Twining tea planter in London; a 1930s' German account of labour migration in South Asia (with statistical data).

But besides their obvious value as the record of a country, these two volumes could be profitably studied by librarians and library students whatever their field of interest, because they touch on issues that concern us all, professionally and politically.

First, at the purely technical level they are superbly organised. The clarity and comprehensiveness of the subject arrangement is exemplary just as an exercise in classification based on the Bliss principle – that is, derived from the material itself rather than from some abstract philosophical exercise.

The bibliography is characterised throughout by informed professional judgement, and in that sense returns us to a consideration of librarianship and bibliophily as an intellectual and social concern – and not as subservient to the dictates of computerised information retrieval:

The greater precision, critical selectivity, and personal dimension of manual searching, scanning, recording and compilation are to be preferred to bland, inanimate and indiscriminate machine compilation.

This allows Mr Goonetilleke's annotations to be unashamedly critical – and all the more valuable for it. Would-be librarians, in Britain at least, have been increasingly force-fed with the notion that the 'information explosion' (always presented as a neutral phenomenon, rather like a tidal flood) demands more and more sophisticated machinery to process it and less and less intelligence and skill to sort the

wheat from the chaff. Goonetilleke, by standing outside that trend, is able firstly to show what can be achieved by returning to the fundamentals of librarianship, and secondly, from his vantage point as a practitioner of librarianship in a Third World country, is able to offer an enlightening and critical perspective on the actual nature of the 'information explosion'.

In any transfer of information as a vital supporting service, the following considerations are important: the information should be appropriate or relevant; the demands and problems of the user should be a guiding factor; the needs of the economically and socially less developed sections of the population must receive priority; and the total quality of life should be the ultimate goal of transformation. In the prevailing state of the knowledge industry, increasingly dependent on the West ... the products of research ... are too often exploited for the benefit of the creator of such specialized knowledge and the interests of his ... class alone ... the fall out from the 'information explosion' benefits mainly those gorged with knowledge and the power to exploit it already.

Both his own country and the profession of librarianship are well served by this masterly work, which, by its very nature, subject matter and method of achievement, gives us much to reflect upon. In Britain a few librarians have begun to discuss anti-racism in the profession — H.A.I. Goonetilleke's work points us to an anti-imperialist librarianship.

Institute of Race Relations Library

HAZEL WATERS

*Words Unchained: language and revolution in Grenada*

By CHRIS SEARLE (London, Zed Press, 1984). 260pp. £6.95

Even in the slightest manifestation of any intellectual activity whatever, in 'language', there is contained a specific conception of the world. (Antonio Gramsci)

In class society, the language available to the dominated classes to comprehend and express their experience is not their own; it is that of the dominating class. In so far as the oppressed create their own language in opposition, it remains to some extent inevitably a 'dialect', undeveloped for many contexts and itself infiltrated by the dominant language through the mass media and education. Thus the mass of the people are alienated from their own experience, subject, at least in part, to the words and, therefore, the concepts and consciousness of their rulers. Only through revolutionary practice can language,



concepts and consciousness genuinely consonant with their experience be realised by the people as a whole, and only through this work of realisation can a revolution begin to succeed.

In *Words Unchained*, Chris Searle has traced the process of the revolution in language and consciousness as it took place among the people of Grenada after their revolution in March 1979. In doing so, he has used the words of Grenadians themselves, quoting extensively from scholars, linguists and politicians and from poets and calypsonians. This extensive quotation makes the book rather longer and more repetitious than it need be for Searle's thesis about the role of language in revolution; but for the reader to experience what their revolution meant to the Grenadian people, such a wealth of example is more than justified.

Beginning with a brief historical account of language in colonial Grenada, Searle demonstrates the alienating effects of the dominant colonial language on a people whom it systematically subjected and humiliated through racist usage and education. But he shows, too, some of the earlier revolutionary appropriations of colonial language by leaders such as Marrayshow and Butler, drawing especially on the prose of the King James version of the Bible to forge a rhetoric of opposition.

Bilingualism, common to all colonial societies, and a source of class and racial division within them, was turned to good account in revolutionary Grenada. Rather than attempt to suppress either Standard English or Creole, the revolutionary society aimed to develop everyone's competence in both, allowing each its own place, and each the opportunity to enrich the other. Here a prime task was the 'upgrading' of Creole, to remove the stigma it derived from colonial and neocolonial ideology and to affirm the self-respect of the people who used it. Thus, in the literacy programme and in the schools, Creole was taught along with Standard English, as a language of equal, but different, value.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating chapters concerns the people's linguistic inventiveness once the revolutionary society was getting established. Subject to three decades of Gairyism, with its verbose and obscurantist language (e.g., 'the meaningful contribution and the impactful and efficacious thrust we make in matters of regional and international proportions' – Gairy speaking in 1978), the Grenadian people responded to the revolution by using language creatively in their everyday, revolutionary, life to interpret and express their new experiences, adapting new words like 'revo' (for revolution) and old terms from cricket or calypso, learning the vocabulary of politics and economics, writing slogans everywhere: Education is Production too! A big Revolution in a small country! The manoeuvre will never over!

This creativity is nowhere more evident than in the poetry and

calypso of the revolution. Half the book is devoted to these: the people's poets, says Searle, 'are the conductors through which this new spirit and vibrancy of words pass', while 'calypso is in the very essence of the Grenadian's life and culture'. The poetry of the revolution was an oral poetry, performed at rallies and other public events, written by people working for the revolution in such places as government departments and schools who aimed to be the 'people's messengers'. Its subject was the revolution: work on the land, for instance, or the need for discipline, the strength of internationalism, the new role of women ('The caterpillar dead/The butterfly born' – Merle Collins) or the dangers of counter-revolution. If this poetry was a new art form, calypso was traditional, but it changed under the impact of the revolutionary society. Deserting many of its traditional subjects, which were often themselves evidence of the contaminating influence of a dominant culture on a people's art form, it spoke instead of politics – celebrating the revolution, castigating unpunctuality, pleading for world peace or affirming the equality of women: 'Less and less calypsoes were written to humiliate and attack women, and brand them as butts of sexual activity ... Women themselves felt more confidence to come forward and sing calypso, and sing of serious topics that were vital to their future ... The traditional form was overturning its own traditional material, and becoming a platform for a section of the society it had always victimised.'

This is an important and inspiring book. It brings the revolutionary process to life in a way rarely experienced in political analysis, showing, whatever the problems of material social progress, how swift and how radical a process can be the transformation of a people's consciousness and hopes in undertaking the material struggle. But it was written before the American invasion of October 1983: where Chris Searle writes always in the present tense, I have had to write in the past tense. This casts a shadow of anger over one's reading that I will allow the Grenadian poet, Chris 'Kujo' de Riggs, to express: in his poem 'Mercenaries', written at the time of the mock invasion of Grenada, he writes ominously:

They come, an army of the bewitched  
 The haunted, the depraved souls  
 Servants of the President Neutron  
 The most wicked and evil vampire  
 The world has ever known  
 No. 1 hater of humanity  
 And eater of little babies  
 They are here, they come to do battle  
 To take our land and make a hell  
 out of it ...

*Before Color Prejudice: the ancient view of blacks*

By FRANK M. SNOWDEN (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1983). 164 pp, £14.80

Frank M. Snowden has, with the thoroughness of a classical scholar, documented contacts between the Africans of Kush and the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks and Romans from the third millennium BC. His thesis is a straightforward one: black people were regarded in a favourable light in the ancient Mediterranean world. 'The first and continuing image of blacks was that of a respected ally or an enemy, often a formidable foe.'

The great stretch of northern Africa which appears in Egyptian sources and the Old Testament as Kush was subsequently termed Aethiopia or Nubia by the Greeks and Romans. Kush had a long and intimate association with pharaonic Egypt. For millennia Kushites and Egyptians shared gods, culture and children. Kushite warriors fought against and sometimes alongside Egyptian soldiers. In 1085BC, part of Kush was conquered by the Egyptians who occupied it for 500 years. But the tables were finally turned when the Napatan kingdom of Kush rose against the Egyptian overlords and captured the monarchy in about 760BC, establishing the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Kushites ruled Egypt until they were defeated by Assyrian invaders in 663BC. By 300BC, they had built a strong kingdom around the new capital of Meroe, halfway between the fifth cataract and today's Khartoum. Meroitic Kush impressed contemporaries with its military prowess, its trade networks, and its extensive deposits of ivory, gold, silver and ebony. As ancient art and literature reveal, Nubians migrated to all parts of the Mediterranean world. To Homer, they were the 'blameless Ethiopians', beloved of the gods. A daughter of Kush married the Old Testament Moses, and later, there were several Nubians among early converts to Christianity.

Snowden's patient gathering of early evidence about Nubian accomplishments and contacts between black and white in the ancient Mediterranean world should give considerable pause to any diehards of the 'Africa had no history before the Europeans came' school. The book is also notable for the more than sixty plates illustrating the text, which show how black people were portrayed in ancient art, ranging from Egyptian sculpture of 2600BC to mosaics and terracotta dating from the seventh century AD.

But, at the level of analysis, the book is regrettably weak. In its culminating chapter – 'Toward an understanding of the ancient view' – Snowden sets out to see why 'nothing comparable to the virulent colour prejudice of modern times existed in the ancient world'. Here, as throughout, his emphasis is on individual attitudes: on personal expressions of colour prejudice (racialism) and not on the systematic use

of racial ideology for purposes of social dominance and economic exploitation (racism). Snowden's 'virulent colour prejudice' is only in the mind, and has nothing to do with economic forces. In his view, western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was simply not prepared to encounter Africa. Its mental map had nothing on it which could satisfactorily explain the colour, and behaviour, of the Africans. Black people were, therefore, written off by Europeans as a people 'without a God, laws, religion, and common wealth' – a people waiting to be enslaved. Snowden implies that relations between Africans and Europeans could have been different if whites in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had obtained the kind of favourable 'first impressions' about blacks that the ancient world had formed of the people of Kush.

Snowden theorises about the growth of colour prejudice without a single reference to the way mercantile capitalism transformed the economic base of Europe, harnessing religion and pseudo-science to justify both the slave trade and later colonial adventures as part of some divine plan. He seems to view the western equation of black with inferior as some kind of misunderstanding, or unfortunate mistake, which could be cleared up if whites conscientiously examined their attitudes, and blacks took care to create positive initial impressions. And so the volume remains an interesting assemblage of examples of ancient art and literary references, but does little to increase our understanding of racism in modern society, and its absence in the ancient world.

London

NANCY MURRAY

*Fellow Travellers of the Right: British enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9*

By RICHARD GRIFFITHS (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983). 406 pp. £3.95

In 1934, Lloyd George warned the House of Commons that, within a short time, many Conservatives would be hailing Germany as the great bulwark against communism. By 1936, Lloyd George himself was praising Hitler in the columns of the *Daily Express*. He was not alone. Many eminently respectable people saw in both Mussolini and Hitler hope for the defence of western Christian civilisation in face of the socialist peril. It was to the decent and the respectable that fascism made its principal appeal, and, as Sir Harold Nicholson warned in a letter to Mosley in 1932 after leaving the British Union of Fascists, 'If we ever have fascism in this country, it will creep in disguised in the red, white and blue of patriotism and the young Conservatives.'

Recent studies of respectable support for fascism and Nazism in the

1930s have shown that the numbers of those who were sympathetic towards Hitler in countries such as Britain were much higher than has often been believed. But the theme of Professor Griffiths' book is 'enthusiasts', not simply those who were vaguely sympathetic. Nor is he concerned simply with such well-researched (and ill-researched) figures as Mosley. The Mosley papers, which are still being released at the Public Record Office, are throwing more light on his role and the degree of support for his movement and ideas. Griffiths, however, covers a much wider field, and his carefully researched book, first published by Constable in 1980, deserves to be widely studied. Its relevance to the present is clear and disturbing.

Griffiths identifies a number of groups and individuals as 'enthusiasts' for the Nazi movement. First, he shows how numbers of right-wing intellectual and literary figures were involved, such as Francis Yeats-Brown, assistant editor of the *Spectator*, and individuals linked with the *Saturday Review*, which praised Hitler in 1936, the *Anglo-German Review* and the *English Review*. There is a lengthy discussion of a wide range of such groups. 1936 was the key year in which 'pro-Nazism became heavily involved with the British Right'.

Then there were churchpeople. After 1935, many German pastors were imprisoned. In 1937, the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, spoke of 'unchecked warfare against the Christian faith' in Germany. But A.C. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, was still supporting Hitler, whom he saw as a 'moderating influence'. Headlam had been taking up pro-Hitler positions since 1933. Then there was the well-known Anglican, the Revd A.J. MacDonald, who wrote on 'Why I believe in Hitler'. There is more research to be done on the degree of support among Anglicans. Griffiths does not give enough attention to this aspect, or to the undoubted over-representation of Roman Catholics both in Mosley's movement and in support for fascism in general. It was, after all, Pope Pius XI who described Mussolini as 'the man sent by Providence'.

Griffiths then looks at Mosley himself and the support which he attracted, much of it from younger Conservatives. Mosley was influenced by Mussolini in terms of policy, and by Hitler in terms of organisation. The Nazi link did not become very important until 1934. Mosley received support from Lord Rothermere and the *Daily Mail*, which praised Hitler's regime and achievements. Rothermere later split from Mosley, having previously hoped that Mosley would be of help to him in combating socialism. The *Daily Mail* took a consistently pro-Nazi line up to 1938 and was in fact an instrument of Nazi propaganda. In the recently released transcript of his interrogation by Sir Norman Birkett on 2 July 1940, Mosley pointed out that both Rothermere and Nuffield were 'at colossal pains to hide their connexion with the movement'. After 1934, the use of the term 'fascist' declined among

the Mosleyites and was replaced by 'National Socialist'. Griffiths adds little to earlier work on the Mosley movement, but it is valuable to have it in the wider context of pro-Nazism, and he rejects the view that anti-semitism was in every case a later addition.

And then, of course, there was the Duke of Windsor, later to become Edward VIII. He was praising the British Legion's links with Nazi Germany in 1935, and, though rebuked by the King, did not retract. It is alleged that he gave the Nazi salute twice on his visit to Hitler in 1937. The British Legion, too, had met with Hitler and Himmler, and Legion members tended to oppose war with Germany.

Many other figures appear throughout this very detailed study: Colonel Thomas Moore, the only major pro-Hitler MP, who saw him as a bulwark against the 'antiChrist of communism'; T.E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia'), who saw him as the corner-stone of a new Europe; D.H. Lawrence, who eulogised the German youth for their passion and physical vitality; Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for Coordination of Defence, who was much impressed with Von Ribbentrop's talk of a 'new Reformation'; Sir Arnold Wilson, who was moved by the Nuremberg rally of 1936; and Beverley Nichols, who wrote a eulogy for the New Germany in the *Sunday Chronicle*.

There are some gaps. Griffiths says little about Quakers and pacifists. A section on 'the peace lovers' deals with Lord Allen and Lord Lothian, and does not touch the oft-repeated attack on the Peace Pledge Union and pacifist support for Munich, though the PPU is mentioned in passing. But what is the point of all this? Not simply to muckrake and point accusing fingers. I think there are two abiding lessons for us from Griffiths' study. First, he shows the dangers of dismissing fascism as a movement which is intellectually disreputable, which appeals only to thugs and rogues, and the evil of which will be apparent to good men and women immediately. On the contrary, many intelligent and cultured and religious people believed that the fascist and Nazi ideologies offered a coherent and emotionally attractive and inspiring movement. Second, there are features which drew people to support Hitler which are present now in British society – high unemployment, economic decline, moral and spiritual confusion, fear of communism, an extreme right-wing press, an authoritarian government. And, at a time when there are movements to rehabilitate Hitler and to deny the reality of the holocaust, we need to learn from our own past. The danger is that we respond, with Richard Cobb in the *Guardian* (21 September 1980): 'What an awful lot of silly misguided people!' But to undermine the basis on which their enthusiasm for Hitler grew calls for careful thought and hard work. Professor Griffiths' book should help to remind us that simple dismissal is of no value.

*Black and White Britain: the third PSI survey*

By COLIN BROWN (London, Heinemann, 1984). 410 pp. £22.50 cloth, £8.96 paper

As indicated in the title, this is the third in a series of reports on national surveys of racial disadvantage in Britain, the previous two having been published under the auspices of Political and Economic Planning, in 1966 and 1974. Those surveys both acted as harbingers of government legislation, being followed by the 1968 and 1976 Race Relations Acts, but it would be a brave person who predicted the same outcome for the current report.

Yet, the optimism of the liberal reformer springs eternal. Indeed, in a remark that constitutes either a piece of conscious window-dressing or a sign of hopeless naivety, the author actually suggests that, as a result of the 1976 Act and other 'public policy initiatives' in this field over recent years, the present survey began with the 'expectation ... that we would find a substantial reduction in the levels of inequality'. It is almost as if the massive de-industrialisation of Britain over the past decade had not occurred, with its most devastating effects falling upon just those traditional industries and areas where black immigrant labour was recruited in the 1950s and 1960s, or that recent governments had not adopted anti-welfare policies directed at cutting expenditure in the very public services where blacks are heavily employed or on which they have become increasingly dependent for minimum standards of life. It does not take a survey involving over 7,000 interviews, covering both the black and white populations, to discover these things – a brief visit to any inner-city area in what was formerly industrial Britain, with its shut-down factories and derelict land and idle black workers on the streets, would be sufficient.

Needless to say, the findings of this survey, presented here in over 150 statistical tables accompanied by brief commentaries covering such subjects as household structure and areas of residence, housing, employment, education and language, and support and care, show precisely that while the contours of racial disadvantage may have altered, its depressing reality remains unchanged and has, in many respects, deepened. Thus, to take one or two examples, West Indians have moved substantially into council housing, but have been allocated to the most undesirable areas and types of properties in this sector. Black workers have suffered disproportionately from growing unemployment, and where they have remained in work, especially in private industry, they have been confined to just those low-status sectors and low-waged jobs where they were first recruited. And in a subject untouched by its predecessors, this survey confirms the alarming incidence of racial attacks on Asians *and* West Indians and the massive distrust of both communities of the willingness of the police to offer them any protection.

In seeking to maintain some sort of balance in the face of these findings, the report tends to explain the persistence of racial inequality in terms of a combination of structural factors, continued discrimination and cultural variables. Among the latter are the continued lack of English proficiency – as judged by interviewers – of many Asians, and the development of the ‘lone-parent’ household headed by women as a distinct family-type among young West Indians. No doubt, these ‘cultural’ variables will be seized upon by many who wish to avoid the deeper implications of the survey’s findings, in terms of institutional racism, and to confine their response to such ethnically-oriented measures as language programmes for Asians and improved social welfare intervention in young West Indian families, both of which feature among the report’s recommendations.

This report, therefore, contains something to please all of its diverse sponsors, who range from the Home Office and various other central government departments to the Greater London Council and numerous foundations. Indeed, another way of viewing this report is not as the latest in a series, but rather as the third prop upon which the Policy Studies Institute has erected itself into the pre-eminent liberal think-tank on all matters pertaining to race relations in Britain. The report comes within a year of the PSI’s massive survey of police-black relations in London, which was similarly damning in its empirical findings of massive institutional racism and tame in its policy recommendations. The PSI has also been at the forefront of efforts to form a Local Authority Race Relations Information Exchange (LARRIE) to serve as a liaison body for the public sector race relations industry and, no doubt, as a means by which the Home Office will be able to keep an eye on the activities of the burgeoning army of race professionals in local authorities throughout the country.

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