

RACE & CLASS

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THIRD WORLD
LIBERATION

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NUMBER 2



TONI CADE BAMBARA **What's happening in Atlanta?**

Naipaul: the mimic man
Moscow and the Third World
Marx and the Fenians
Jamaica's electoral coup

W.E.B. Du Bois

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TONI CADE BAMBARA

What's happening in Atlanta?

Since Summer 1979 the working-class black community of Atlanta (a 'convention' city, which aims to project an image of middle-class prosperity and comfort) has suffered a continuing series of murders and abductions of its children. One year after the first bodies were discovered, due to increasing public protest and criticism of police ineptitude, an official Task Force was set up to investigate the killings. In February 1982 this was disbanded. Official figures claim that twenty-nine young people (mostly boys aged 9-14) were murdered in the period July 1979-June 1981 – until, that is, a black photographer, Wayne Williams, was arrested, charged with two of the murders and in February 1982 convicted.

After the trial the media reported that the authorities were satisfied that Williams was guilty of at least twenty-six cases. The verdict is being appealed and it is expected that information about the multiple series of murders that have taken place throughout the three-year period, particularly those that occurred while Williams was in jail, will come up in the defence case. Before, during and after the trial, a number of community forums focused on the stark discrepancy between 'official' and 'actual' versions and protested the arrest, trial and verdict.

Community estimates of the death toll – the black parents of Atlanta had from the first organised their own increasingly dynamic campaign

*Toni Cade Bambara is a black writer and activist, whose most recent book is *The Salt Eaters* (New York, Random House, and London, The Women's Press, 1982).*

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to stop the murders – had put the numbers far higher. Many girls, young women and young men have also been murdered, but excluded from the official death toll as not fitting the ‘pattern’ (an arbitrary characterisation of the killings produced under media pressure). What the community records demonstrate is that the killings did not cease with the arrest and imprisonment of Wayne Williams – they are even now going on. Since this article was written a number of families have petitioned the Attorney-General for an investigation into the murders, and the present chief of police has, in response to intense community pressure, invited a citizen’s Task Force to assist in investigating the murder of seven women. Community forces hope to use this opportunity to pry open the whole case.

This article is taken from Toni Cade Bambara’s forthcoming book on the Atlanta killings (to be published by Random House). Cast partly in fictional form, it is based on the experiences, records and ongoing work of the STOP campaign against the murders, of which she was, and is, an active member.

You’re on the porch with the broom sweeping the same spot, getting the same sound – dry straw against dry leaf caught in the loose-dirt crevice of the cement tiles. No phone, no footfalls, no welcome variation. It’s 3.15. Your ears strain, stretching down the block searching through school child chatter for that one voice that will give you ease. Your eyes sting with the effort to see over bushes, look through buildings, cut through everything that separates you from your child’s starting point – the junior high school.

The little kids you keep telling not to cut through your yard are cutting through your yard again. Not boisterous-bold and loose-limbed as they used to in first and second grades. But not huddled and spooked as they did last year when those low hanging branches swayed and creaked, throwing shadows of alarm on the walkway. You had to saw off the dogwood limbs then and dig a trench to upend the lawnleaf bags into. They looked, those heaps of leaves, like bagged bodies. You hum now and get noisy with the broom as you come down the steps so no child taking the short cut from the elementary school should get hysterical coming upon your own self in your own back yard. No need. Like adults, the children are acting as though everything is fine now, the terror over, the horror past.

One suspect charged with two murders. Case hanging literally by a thread – dog hairs and carpet fibres. But the terror is over.

It’s 3.18. The group across the street that sometimes walks home with your child waves to you. You holler over, trying not to sound batty. They say they waited, shrug, then move on. A bus chuffs by, masking the view and drowning you out. You lean the broom against the hedges and play magic. If the next three cars that stream by sport

one, just one, bumper sticker saying, 'Help Keep Our Children Safe', then all is well, you figure irrationally. You wait out five cars, a mail truck and a moving van before you spy a tattered sticker on an out-of-state camper saying 'Help ... Chil' in a weather-worn way. You run to the curb to hail a cab, though that makes no sense. A cab can't travel the route your child takes from school, can't cut through the projects or jump the ditch back of the fish joint. Plus, you're in your slippers and your hair looks like a rat's nest.

You run inside to phone the school. The woman tells you that there is no one in the building. You point out the illogic of that, an edge to your voice, and ask her to please please check, it's an absolute emergency. You can tell by the way she sucks her teeth that your name is known in that office. You've been up there often with your mouth on fire about certain incidents they call 'discipline', you call 'battering'. You stalked the coach around the gym one sunny afternoon, a basketball in one hand, a frying pan in the other – visual aids for your clenched-teeth recitation: See now, Coach, this ball is what you're supposed to be about and this kitchen pan is supposedly what I'm about, and if you don't quit beating up on these children ... He backed off in that sickening way that told you why his colleagues appointed him the Beast-in-Residence and why he went for it. Things weren't bad enough in Atlanta – the children, the community, the city in a panic – teachers were setting up hit lists, or 'lick lists', as the Beast kept saying, backing into the ping-pong table asking, since it wasn't your child sent to him for paddling, what the hell is the matter with you?

What's your problem, the principal wanted to know when you broke up PTA last Fall to demand some security measures. Not enough books to go around, the children stay after school to play catch-up in the library or lend-me on the stairwells vulnerable to a kidnap-attack. The men elected to organise defence squads. But the principal said, 'There will be no vigilante groups in my school!' City under siege. Bullhorns bellowing, 'Stay inside!' Armed helicopters beating overhead. Young curfew defiers rounded up and hauled down to the Task Force office and badgered to confess to murder. Atlanta a magnet for every amateur sleuth, bounty hunter, right-wing provocateur, left-wing adventurer, do-gooder, soothsayer, porno film maker, crack-shot supercop, crackpot social analyst, scoop journalist, paramilitary thug and free-lance fool. But there will be no bats and sticks in his school. So you went right off to nut city, 'cause the children have a right to some safety, good dreams. They've a right to childhood. They've a right to their lives. 'Unladylike', the librarian whispered to the hygiene teacher. But how do you conduct a polite discussion about murder?

The woman, back on the phone and surly, tells you once more that no one is in the building. You tell her your name again, say you're

calling from home, mention the time, insist she write it down. You hang up and interrogate yourself: Why did you do all that? Establishing an alibi in case something is dreadfully wrong?

The families of the missing and murdered children were subjected to interrogation, lie-detector tests, to media's sly innuendo at first, then blatant and libellous accusation. In December 1980 parents were called in again to face the polygraph. Mr Bell, father of Yusef, and a male friend of Latonya Wilson's family were suspects for more than a year. Vera Carter, mother of Anthony Bernard Carter, was arrested, then released but grilled for two months. A young, poor Black woman with only one child, one child? Highly suspect. And every so often the authorities leak little poison-pen messages – the parents are not above suspicion. Usually the FBI. Usually about the more outspoken critics of the investigation. You've noticed the pattern. You've kept journals for over two years. Whenever members of the Committee to Stop Children's Murders (STOP) speak around the country, marshalling support from groups ready to launch a mass movement for children's rights, the FBI goes into the parents-did-it number. Murderous parents, street-hustling hoodlums, and the gentle killer – the official version of things. In Spring 1980, just weeks before STOP's 25 May rally in DC, FBI agent Twidwell said to a civic group in Macon, Georgia, that in several cases the parents offed their kids because 'they were such little nuisances'.

You'd hoped that the parents would follow through with the defamation suit. You'd hope that the DC rally would lay the groundwork for a National Black Anti-Defamation League with muscle. That the idea of a National Black Commission of Inquiry, discussed after King's assassination, would be put into effect. Were sure a National Children's Rights Movement would be mounted. You've been searching since for meaningful signs.

So. You're standing there with one hand on the phone, trying not to squander precious energy thinking about all those speeches, pep talks, booths, buttons, green ribbons, posters, bumper stickers, profiling, missed opportunities. You need that energy to figure out what to do, who to call. Where the hell is your child?

It's 3.27 on your Mother's Day watch, and you can't go on standing there feeling helpless, scattered, enraged and crazy. Because next thing you know, you too will be longing for 'normalcy'. And you trust 'crazy' way before that. So you snatch up the runner from the dining-room table and wrap up your head, kick off your scuffs by the door and step into your clogs, dump your bag on the floor and scramble for keyring and change purse, and take off, running down the avenue like a crazy woman. You are a crazy woman. But you'd rather embrace madness than amnesia. A six million dollar investigation, and after one year – one man is arrested. And all over the city the sermons urge, 'Let

the Community Heal Itself'. Amnesia rolls in like fog to blanket the city. Down come the reward signs. Off the stickers. Eight hundred police withdrawn from the neighbourhoods. One hundred state patrolmen returned to highway duty. Road blocks discontinued. Community Watch Networks disbanded. Task Force personnel reduced from one hundred and seventy to six. The State Consumer Affairs Office goes after the STOP committee to muzzle and disperse them. Judge Clarence Cooper puts a 'gag' order on the suspect, the defence team, his family, witnesses, then literally goes out to lunch with DA Slaton.

One man charged with two murders. Two out of twenty-eight on the Task Force list. Two out of the seventy-two on the community's list. Let the community breathe again and return to normal.

You swing around the corner looking for someone to bite. It's 3.34 in the afternoon and a mad mother is running down the streets of south-west Atlanta, and no one is paying her any mind. Less than five months ago, in May, before Wayne Williams drove across the Jackson Bridge and a stake-out officer thought he heard a splash in the Chattahoochee, you would not have been running alone. Your alarm would have sounded throughout the neighbourhood. One phone call would have triggered the block-to-block relay. Neighbours, bus drivers, store owners, on-the-corner hardheads would have sprung into action to find your child, a child, our child – even at the risk of being detained or arrested as many had, foiling abductions – but would have dropped all to risk anything – 'cause when death's been replaced by murder, it's no longer a family affair.

You race past the taxi shed, noisy in your clogs. An old timer taps on the window and salutes you with a bottle of coke. You flash him your face, a mask of distress, and point to the clock. It's 3.40. You've no time to see what he makes of this. That you don't hear him coming up behind you is the telling thing. So, he too is asleep on his feet. The infection has spread. Med fly in California. A Tsetse fly epidemic raging in Atlanta. But you understand his craving for closure, resolution. He's a cabbie.

In Spring 1981, when Roy Innis of or not of CORE held a press conference on the steps of City Hall, Innis claimed he had a witness who positively knew someone involved in the murders. A cab driver, a member of a sex-drug cult of devil worshippers involving some Blacks and whites of prominent Atlanta families; a crazed cult engaged in narcotic-running and ritual murder. Once again the police canvassed the neighbourhoods. Timothy Hill's folks met with the authorities; they recognised the picture: a cabbie seen around their way on occasion. So cabbies, like karate adepts, Vietnam vets, owners of vans with carpeting, photographers who hang around playgrounds, little old ladies who maunder about in school yards, weirdos dressed like clergy and clergy, blind people tapping along the pavement signalling need,

odd religious types, and cops – anybody who can lure or snatch a child to her or his death – start shrinking in size, playing invisible, until the Task Force issue an all-clear bulletin – Innis not credible, witness not reliable, information unrelated, cabbie not a suspect. But several ‘independent’ investigators persist in exploring that lead. But the monster’s been seized says the media. Cabbies relax.

You jump the ditch back of the fish joint, squinching up your nose against re-fried lard, squinching up your toes to keep your clogs on. And you’re wondering, just to keep your mind off the stitch in your side, what effect the pressure to get back to normal had on the families who identified the bodies. ‘It didn’t look like Angel’, Ms Venus Taylor had said. ‘So old, like she’d aged a hundred years in those six days.’ But the experts said the strangled, mutilated body was Angel Lanier, 12-year-old daughter of Venus Taylor.

‘Experts my foot!’ said the barber on Gordon Street, one of the customers arguing that anthropologists with just one stray bone can reconstruct a whole dinosaur, reconstruct a whole culture, tell you whether the women of that time wore drawers made of fur, or drawers out of hide. But no one else in the barber shop that day was convinced that there are experts of that ilk down at the county medical examiners. They get a body or some bones, a few teeth, a dental chart or medical record, some ground covering if they’re lucky – that is if they arrive on the scene before the APD (Atlanta Police Department), GBI (Georgia Bureau of Investigation), FBI have trampled the site and tampered with the findings – and what do they do these experts? They talk, drink coffee, jiggle the teeth around in the jaw, take photos, eat tuna on white, watch the clock, look over the Task Force list and take a vote.

‘So old’, moaned Ms Venus Taylor in March 1980. ‘It’s not my Alfred’, said Ms Lois Evans when the body found in July 1979 was identified fifteen months later as ‘Alfred Evans’, described as having no pierced ear as her son had. ‘Can’t be Timothy’, said Ms Annie Hill in March 1981 when a body was fished from the Chattahoochie River, for Timothy had been spotted less than twenty-four hours ago. Mayor Jackson had echoed the report on TV, just hours before Police Chief Napper, head bowed, had to knock on the door with the terrible news. The experts had tagged the water-logged, decomposed body ‘Timothy Hill’, the 13-year-old who’d not been put on the Missing and Murdered list until nineteen days after his disappearance. He’d been dead, the examiners said, for at least two weeks.

Some bodies were so severely decomposed, the parents did not view them. They were given pouch burials: embalming powder sprinkled over the remains in a plastic bag. Other parents, on hearing that dogs in the woods had gotten to the bodies, could not bring themselves to make the trip downtown. A skull, a bone – Ms Willie Mae Mathis sent her

eldest son in her stead. Many in the community felt that the discouragement of body-viewing was calculated and had less to do with decay and dog-mauling and more to do with mutilation. A rumoured LEAAF memo, dated 8 March 1981, described castration in several cases, ritual carvings in others. A mortician's assistant reported in late 1980 odd needle marks on the genitalia of several. In the absence of any sense of public accountability on the part of the authorities, the community grapevine sizzled with possibilities. After Dick Gregory came to town, presenting his theory of interferon-collecting as a paramount motive, Venus Taylor made a point of yanking the sheets back and mincing no words: the head of the penis cut off in several cases, hypodermic needle marks on the penis of others. 'No mutilation', the authorities insisted.

You veer around a dog lying on the sidewalk, asleep or dead you've no time to find out. You dare not look at your watch in your haste. Several boys from the high school are already shooting baskets in the projects. You wish you could hang around for a dunk or two. Wish you could think about something other than what grips you.

'Those bones are not my child.' You feel for that mother shivering in the cold basement room of the county morgue, a bundle of bones in a steel drawer, a tag on the toe bearing a name that used to resonate in the park, soar over rooftops on summer nights of kickball, a name that used to ring out staccato-like to bam bam accompaniment on the bathroom door for hogging all the hot water. The family urging Mother in hushed tones, teeth chattering, to stop holding out for a miracle now squashed. The social worker back at the house explaining that Mother is practising denial, one stage in a heart-rending process from fear to shock to rage, guilt, denial, grief, release and healing. A friend of Mother's folding the laundry argues knowingly that the silent phone caller can't be the boy, just some crank getting his jollies. The mayor, commissioner, police chief come by to offer condolences, assuring Mother that the city will pay for the burial. The minister says no matter how Mother feels, it's somebody's child down there on a slab and there must be a funeral. The media with lenses and pencils and tapes hold a light meter up to Mother's face and ask what she'll wear to the event. Friends and kin come by to drop money in the plate and no one asks to see the books or the accountant or the licence from the Georgia Consumer Affairs Office permitting the family to accept the offering. Neighbours set dishes of food on the table and pay their respects. All have lived through the horror with Mother, but now they want relief, release, a return to routine. So claim the bones, Mother. Have the funeral, Mother. Close the lid, Mother. Let the community breathe again.

One suspect, jailed. Two counts of murder, denied. Cameras barred from the courtroom, there've been enough skeletons on view. Let the community sleep again.

You're stepping through the high grass in the vacant lot one block from the school. You're on the look-out for dog shit, rats, snakes and broken glass. You are systematically ignoring the pain in your side, the hysteria swarming like nausea, not to mention the bags of junket jiggling in your upper arms and thighs. You're out of condition. You miss yoga sessions, dance class, bike rides, walks. For more than a year, your child would not go out after school, even with you, even with you armed to the teeth with pistol, mace and the Swiss Army knife she bought for camp last summer. You certainly could not leave her home alone where even the TV waged war – Be Careful! Watch Out! Trust No One! Killer on the Loose! Mental hygienists lamenting loudly – 'A whole generation will grow up distrustful, withdrawn, permanently damaged.' The media having a field day with reports on Black pathology – past, present, future, imagined. 'It's ten o'clock!' blares the TV, 'Do you know where your children are?' Hell, it's been nineteen months, do they know where the murderers are?

Nineteen months. Scores of boys, girls, young men and women slaughtered. The Task Force office, the Mayor's office and the media saying over and over the terror is past, the murders have stopped now that Wayne Williams has been jailed. But the word on the block is that at least four boys have been killed since the arrest, the STOP committee's estimate higher. Killed, found and quietly buried. Down at the morgue, one worker recites policy for inquirers – 'We hold an unidentified body for thirty days. If it's not claimed in that time, the city buries the body and that's it.' Another worker says only three bodies of youngsters are known to her, then five minutes later, after a huddle with co-workers, disclaims any knowledge of anything, including her own name. You've seen sketches of white women in the papers with the query 'If anyone knows this woman, please call this number?' But the media's been suspiciously silent about Black children found lately. And neither the in-charge-for-the-day worker at the morgue or the officer down at Homocide will acknowledge the case of 9-year-old Amy Willis, strangled to death weeks ago. 'There've been no killings that fit the pattern', is the official word. But pattern, connection, links was the very thing denied by the authorities for so long.

You turn the corner, falling out of one clog and twisting your ankle. No sound comes out of your mouth though you pain, for there's a crowd in the street by the schoolyard, a blood puddle, and a book bag you know asprawl by the sewer. It stops your heart. Your lungs squeeze shut. Between you and the crowd of children is a woman you recognise from a Block Parent meeting last Spring. She's escorting two cops from their car on the curb to an old Pontiac further on where three very loud, very angry Bloods – cords bursting from neck and temples, gums fiery red – bend a man in a suit back over the hood of the Pontiac. You look. He could be Latin, Middle Eastern, you don't really give a damn.

You're busy trying to work the bellows in your lungs.

'Don't touch me', the man is saying, weaving this way and that to keep clear of the fists.

'You didn't even stop to see what you hit', one of the angry men hollers. His voice shoots up into falsetto, then breaks.

Down on the ground, one knee against concrete, your daughter is crouched, just now looking through a fence of legs. The school kids give way and you're rapidly there. She's bloody. You scream. All turn to support you, to assure you she's fine. She's cradling a cat who squirms in her arms. It tries hard to lick loose a make-shift bandage. So. All this time you've been frantic, they've been gathering twigs for a splint, cutting gauze from a Kotex, winding sticky, black electrical tape around a tabby's paw.

'Can't you see it's a school zone, chump?'

'This ain't the Atlanta 500.' A punch is thrown.

'Take it easy', one cop says in no hurry.

'Calm down. Calm down.'

You're calm. That is, you're on your feet, though your ankle throbs and you're ready to collapse. You rearrange your face and try to act like a grown-up while your daughter, talking in gasps, tells it all hurriedly. Hit and run, poor kitty cat, brothers stop mean man at the light, force car back in reverse, Block Parent calls Humane Society, they don't do vet service, mean man fusses at her for diving into street to save a damn cat, children gather and fuss back, angry brothers jump mean man, friends help mend cat, cops finally come, and how come Mommy you forgot to meet me for swim class? The Block Parent jingles keys in her pocket to get your attention, then raises eyebrows at you. Some mother, she mutters, leaving your child alone on the corner waiting to go to the pool. This is Atlanta, woman, where've you been? She talks out of the side of her mouth, her eyebrows doing most of the scolding. You drop your head. The cops write a ticket. One of the Bloods takes the cat. Another reaches round the cops to swipe at the driver.

It catches you in the back of the knees. November 16th, Monday, first swim session, free too, parent's signature required and your child's a fish. The Block Parent is right, where've you been? Your daughter hands you her book bag and helps you up the steps to the pool, teasing you for being so absentminded, cracking on the table runner wrapped round your head, laughing at your overall tacky appearance. Has a grand time laughing at you. You let her, you help her. She's 11 years old and entitled. You are a mess.

For longer than you want to think about, stumbling to the desk to register, it's been hard to laugh freely. Though at your house there've been no nightmares, bedwetting, fits of rage, uncontrollable tears, anxiety attacks, onset of asthma, depression, withdrawal or any other

symptoms mental health workers keep discussing in the media, there's been a definite decrease in the kind of clowning around that used to rock your household. At community meetings, child psychologists have been cautioning parents, teachers, youngsters alike to stay alert to changes in behaviour, for the Atlanta holocaust has taken its toll. You've observed and you've marvelled at the resiliency of the young, their ability to maintain a firm but not clenched-fist grip on their senses. Your nephew one night let his macho mask slip to show you a scared little boy trying hard to be brave for the sake of his parents. Life is hard enough for grown-ups, he said, with all of their problems without worrying them further with a scarified him. In relating his feelings to your daughter, however, he camouflaged it all in the language of brag.

You jog around the pool as your daughter comes from the locker area, stuffing braids under her swim cap. It's time, you're telling yourself, to resume body work and get back to. You can't finish the thought. You're wasted. You drop yourself down on the bench, greet parents, joke with older kids you know come to watch younger brothers and sisters splash about in the pool. You rummage around in your daughter's book satchel and smile. Once again she's mistaken your journal for her math notebook, same colour. You wonder how she fared in 5th period with your Missing and Murdered notes.

You began the journal in September 1979 when a few folks began asking, 'What is going on?' The entries got lengthy in June 1980 when the outraged parents, having organised STOP, camped out at media and law enforcement offices demanding a special investigation of the 'epidemic of child murders' that had gone on unchecked for a year. The journal ends in Fall of 1980 after the explosion at the Gate City-Bowen Homes Day Nursery on 13 October that brought the case to national attention and provoked widespread speculation about the killers and their motives:

- white cops taking licence in Black neighbourhoods again?
- the Klan and other nazi thugs on the rampage again?
- diabolical scientists experimenting on Third World people again?
- white avengers of Dewey Baugus, a white child beaten to death in Spring 1979 by, allegedly, Black youths (DA Slaton's theory at the time) going berserk?
- demonic cultists using human sacrifices?
- a child prodigy grown mediocre adult killing her/his childhood over and over?
- a crazed Vietnam vet who couldn't make the transition?
- UFO aliens doing exploratory surgery?
- parents of a raped girl running amok with 'justice'?
- porno film makers producing 'snuff flicks' for export?
- a band of child molesters covering their tracks?

new drug forces wiping out the young, unwitting couriers of the old forces in a bid for territorial rights?

unreconstructed peckerwoods trying to topple the Black administration?

plantation kidnappers of slave labour issuing the ultimate pink slip?

Journal No. 2 you selected carefully from an arts supply store, a perfect-bound sketch book totally unlike your daughter's spiral notebook. The focus shifts from *What's Going On?* to *Why Is So Little Being Done?* The parents charged that the authorities dragged their feet and kept the lid on the case tight to soothe the nerves of the Chamber of Commerce and other business interests in Atlanta, the nation's third busiest convention city. Others, who shouted 'Ineptitude' one day, later argued collusion, cover-up, conspiracy – particularly after a look-alike of a sketched suspect observed at the site of a dumping, one of the few white suspects given media play, was found dead in a car with rope in the trunk signifying 'fibres' and 'strangulation' and was promptly labelled a suicide; particularly after authorities refused to air a phone call that accurately predicted the site of the next dumping – surely someone could have identified the caller; particularly after medical examiners charged that investigators had tampered with evidence; particularly after citizen search team members accused the investigators with failure to follow-through on leads they unearthed; particularly after the hasty discrediting of the overwhelming body of evidence pointing to the cult. No investigation team, folks argued, augmented by numbers of flown-in supercops, assisted by so much souped-up technology and state and federal expertise, could be that incompetent except by design.

Chet Detlinger, ex-APD cop and current police academy instructor, offered the Rumpelstiltskin Complex as an explanation of the morass. Like the medieval dwarf with alchemist leanings who would transmute flax into gold, we all are under the spell of Hollywood/TV scenarists and academic criminologists who spin theories miles away from the beat, who convince us that police work is scientific, sophisticated, technological. The LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), for example, has impressive paraphernalia – helicopters, sleek weaponry, computers, well-equipped crime labs, James Bond-type gadgetry. Yearly they produce a great deal of flax. The APD, in comparison, to paraphrase Detlinger, is a bunch of double amputees fiddling about with junk from the pre-wheel era, producing yearly very little flax. But neither, the point is, produces any gold.

In the latter half of Journal No. 2, you try to capture the Dodge City face-offs as gleaned from the media versions, as reported by the players, as interpreted on the block: jurisdictional disputes between officers and agencies of the various counties, between city and state and federal bureaus; bad-mouthing between the police and the community,

between the Task Force, private investigators and community workers, between STOP and organisations fund raising, between the parents and city officials, between the media and the community. The cast of characters growing daily – psychics, suspects, bat squads, witnesses, hypnotists, dog trainers, forensic experts, cult specialists, supersleuths, visiting celebrities. Funds being raised for reward, for tracking-dogs, for burials, for computers, for armed helicopters. A lot of flax is woven. But no one produces any gold.

By the time you cracked the spine on Journal No. 3, mail, money, camera crews, and letters of support and solidarity were pouring into Atlanta from all over the country, from all over the world. Reports came in too of escalated attacks on Blacks that prompted you to shift emphasis from Whodunnit to What Does It Mean In Light Of What Is Happening To Us? The missing and murdered children of Atlanta, the butchered cabbies of Buffalo, their hearts hacked out. The slashed of New York, the stomped of Boston, the children of Trenton, disappeared. Black joggers felled by snipers in Utah, Oklahoma, Cincinnati, Indianapolis. White hunters in Springfield with no deer in sight shoot Black men instead. In Chatanooga Klansmen pick off five Black women and flee. Michael Donald lynched in Mobile, a decomposed body found in Tuscaloosa, in South Carolina a 5-year-old Black boy on trial for his life, in San Francisco a white woman explains that she lured a 9-year-old Black boy to her car and choked him, then stabbed him and cannibalised him too because it was her duty as a white mother. Armed training camps of Klan-type groups reported all over the country. The Algiers-Fisher projects under siege in New Orleans after cops break into the wrong apartment to execute drug dealers, the community charges double-crossed them. Brutal cops being acquitted with regularity by all-white juries, civilian review boards systematically dismantled. Voter Rights Act under attack, the Freedom of Information Act being eroded, an executive order to give CIA licence for domestic spying signed, community-based action groups and their sponsors harassed by the IRS (Inland Revenue Service) and FBI. The Pickens County 2, the Chatanooga 5, the Greensboro 5, the Tchula 7, the Wrightsville 2. And while diplomats of the Klan visit fascists in the Pyrenees, break bread with forces in Italy, France, West Germany, Britain, rallying the psychopaths to annex the whole globe – and while fightback troops taking a courageous stand against imperialism/racism/etc are being burnt out – Black students on Atlanta campuses debate whether to invite the Grand Dragon to speak for an \$800 fee. The Reverend Abernathy breaks the deadlock by offering his church as venue and an ex-SNCC veteran sets up the lights to film the event. Madness.

Your new journal sits open at home ready for notes on the Williams trial and the trials of the Techwood Bat Squad, definitely not the final chapters, says that segment of the community that will not go to sleep.

'Scapegoat', says one grandmother, regarding Wayne Williams, 'an excuse to close down the Task Force and scam.' One father maintains, 'Whatever the verdict, it won't close the books for me. I'm not that stupid.' Camille Bell of STOP will work on the defence team. An odd mix of citizens are making common cause to raise funds for the Williams defence. 'If we allow them to get away with this legal lynching', say community workers, 'they'll clamp the lid down so tight, there'll never be a resolution.'

Since June all official investigative energies have converged on Wayne Williams. The authorities and the media encourage the spread of the sleeping-sickness epidemic. It is quiet in Atlanta. Just an exhale, you're hoping, folks taking time out for a recharge is all. Too many questions are still unanswered. Too many stories not yet told. Too many cases never got to the Task Force. And there's too huge a discrepancy between the official version of things and the community's.

Official: Between Summer 1979 and Summer 1981, twenty-nine cases loosely linked by race, geography and/or fibres include: 1 still missing boy, 2 kidnapped and murdered girls, 6 abducted and murdered young men, 20 kidnapped and murdered boys. Abductions ceased in June 1981 with the arrest of Wayne Williams.

Community: Between Spring 1979 and Fall 1981, more than double the official count of cases are linked by race, class, geography and five apparent motive-method patterns: 1 missing boy, 8 girls kidnapped and murdered, more than 8 young men abducted and murdered, at least 24 boys between 9 and 18 kidnapped and murdered, and at least 35 women abducted and murdered. Four of the boys, 1 of the girls and 5 of the women were killed while Wayne Williams was under arrest.

The grapevine report is that both Police Chief Napper and No-Rap Brown, as folks have tagged the Commissioner of Public Safety, have been responsive to out-of-town job offers. What then will happen to the Task Force, the investigation, if they pull out? And where are our armies and navies, now that war has once again been declared? Where are our soldiers on twenty-four, red alert combat duty – mobilising, organising, building coalitions with other downpressed communities, investigating, documenting, analysing, defending, remembering, daring to see and understand?

Last summer, the Senate subcommittee on terrorism and security held its hearings to which we, who experience every brand of terror daily and experience no security of any kind at any time, were cordially not invited to give testimony about the war. The war waged on the highways and local streets of upper New York State as the FBI & Co. unleashed a reign of terror on the populace in an all-out attack on the BLA, the RNA, the Weather Underground and other 'outlaws' who raise critical questions about the state's right to declare war against the people physically, politically, economically, socially, culturally. Legal

lawlessness intensifying as the hunt for Assata Shankur and any other disturbers of the bogus peace, the insane order, moves south along the Eastern seaboard. A rural district in Mississippi is terrorised by helicopters thick in formation, crowding the sky, roads jammed for miles with tanks, patrol cars, vans of overkill-outfitted troops: an army of occupation come to arrest an RNA officer not on the scene. They shackle instead another RNA officer, the wife, Cynthia Boston, on evidence that would make an earnest law student drop out of school. They handcuff her knee-high infants called 'desperadoes' by those who wage war.

FBI Director William Webster moves centre stage to croon his theme song 'Not Racially Motivated', the lyric composed when Vernon Jordan got hit, the song making the charts during the Atlanta holocaust – 'Not Racially Motivated' – definitely no connection between acts of violence in one place and acts of violence in another, goes the refrain. Black leadership not born of the fires of struggle are trotted out downstage left to doo-wop the cool-out chorus, becool bequiet, eight to the bar. From the wings come a punk rock group who call themselves white radical feminists, from the orchestra pit rise instrumentalists in tails who claim to be radical Black sociologists; their routine the same, designed to inform us of the increasing insignificance of race in the current scheme of things. They go on the road with the Race Has Nothing To Do With It Show. We've heard it before from the apologists of the Tuskegee Study when, from 1932 to 1972, 600 guinea pigs, all of whom happened to be Black men, uh huh, were studied by government-funded scientists, but not treated for syphilis that ravaged them and their families. The doctors took notes while their subjects chancered, festered, bled, passed on the disease, went blind, went nuts, then died. Six hundred Black men chosen by government-funded scientists.

'It could just as well be a preference for blacks as a prejudice against them', said FBI Webster, speaking of the Atlanta children snatched, murdered, dumped. You're thinking about that mother in that cold basement room, the sheet being pulled back, the tag on the toe. You roll your daughter's notebook into a bat, eyes closed, telling yourself it's the chlorine fumes from the pool getting to you.

A cheer goes up from the back benches. A youngster is making his debut in the 9-foot depths, diving from the rim of the pool, coached by the life-guard who now makes the most of this moment – sucks in, flexes his biceps, eight separate segments of abdominal muscles gleam in bas relief. You're appreciative. From the other end of the pool, the kiddies splash chasing a big red ball. You tune in again to the talk around you, grateful it's not about murder and not about normalcy. Your daughter calls you from the pool. You stash the notebook. You rise and look. She's doing an arm-spread, face-down float. As if practising being dead. Should you applaud?

Naipaul: the mimic man

The secure colonial background

'A thorough colonial' when he came to England from Trinidad in 1950 — that was how Naipaul described himself in an interview with Ian Hamilton.¹ He explained further that 'to be a colonial is, in a way, to know a total security. It is to have all decisions about major issues taken out of one's hands. It is to feel that one's political status has been settled so finally that there is very little one can do in the world'.² This is of course a subjective view quite unrelated to any historical focus on colonialism or the colonial experience. However, this concept of the 'secure' colonial background does provide us with a basis for understanding Naipaul's political orientation well to the right of the Caribbean norm.

Whereas Frantz Fanon, the classical interpreter of the collective mind of the hungry black countries vis-à-vis their colonial oppressors, in analysing the colonial experience arrives at a rationale of confrontation between the settler and the 'native' in a Manichean dichotomy that can only be resolved through violence, Naipaul's background points the way to a very basic conservatism founded on an acceptance of the status quo, a position so unnatural that one critic H. B. Singh in a burst of anger dubbed him 'a despicable lackey of neo-colonialism and imperialism'.³ The settler's cosmopolitan world and the Hindu world of Mohun Biswas or of the Pundit Ganesh Ramsurnair are in Naipaul's

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view juxtaposed and therefore mutually exclusive. They do not confront each other. Not surprisingly, therefore, the early novels set in Trinidad take their inspiration in Hinduism as an insular religious culture outside of the mainstream of West Indian life and any political significance that is claimed for them has to be only peripheral and symbolic. It might be said, for instance, that *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) reflects the novelist's awakening interest in the machinery of politics in the West, with its corruption and graft; and, at the symbolic level, Karl Miller sees Mr Biswas' struggle for self-sufficiency away from the trap of the Tulsis and their closed Hindu world dominated by ritual as an experience parallel to the struggle of a colony for political autonomy.⁴ The latter, however, is an imposed value judgement and there is no good reason to suppose that any such idea ever entered Naipaul's head when he was writing *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961).

We will examine the consequences for Naipaul of this early cultural isolationism in Trinidad. It meant, first, that he was not exposed in any dramatic way to the legacy of radical Caribbean politics of the 1930s and 1940s associated with charismatic figures such as Uriah Butler in Trinidad, Alexander Bustamante in Jamaica and Hubert Critchlow in Guyana. It meant, secondly, that Naipaul was never close to the spirit of the labour movement in the West Indies, which, though thwarted on every front by vested interests, yet contrived from time to time to wrest concessions from the governing élites comprising – in every colony it was the same – a biased legislature and a constitutional structure that favoured an expatriate governor acting through an executive council which he personally appointed. A third consequence of this cultural isolationism, that has far-reaching implications for the dominant psychological focus whenever Naipaul attempts to get to grips with West Indian politics, is the absence of any genuine empathy with Afro-Caribbeans, who form the dominant ethnic group in the Caribbean.

I shall stay with this third isolationist factor a while because, in my view, too little attention has been paid by Naipaul's critics to an aspect of his temperament which is fundamental to his political outlook as a writer. In the same Ian Hamilton interview there is a vapid reference to the American Black Power movement as 'a bogus sort of television revolution'⁵ in a context of total alienation in respect of the speaker's point of view. When Sivanandan (who was born in Sri Lanka) talks about the struggle for black liberation, the term black in its political context is understood to mean West Indians, Africans and Afro-Americans as well as Asians.⁶ This is not the Naipaulian view, which persistently equates Indian with Aryan. Black to Naipaul plainly means negroid, more often than not in a pejorative sense. In the context of race it is an important demarcation issue.

It explains why here and elsewhere Naipaul is unable to see Black Power, a movement with repercussions in the feminist movement and

the human rights struggle, in any sort of ideological context or to see the obvious British and American link. Not only is Naipaul not prepared to allow blacks the dignity of an authentic revolution with a purpose, but he seeks to invalidate the end product of their revolutionary struggle in the colonial setting. The ghost of the 'thorough colonial' is always in the background and we might wonder if, in representing a kind of post-colonial failure in *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul were not projecting residual aspects of a personal dependency complex and wishing them on to the despised blacks.

The politics of *The Mimic Men*

The central character of this novel, Ralph Singh, is living the life of an exile in London after failing as a politician in the newly independent state of Isabella. Singh's reflections on his mistakes in the past give the novelist an opportunity to broaden a particular set of circumstances into a generalisation – 'It has happened in twenty places, twenty countries, colonies, territories – these words with which we play, thinking they are interchangeable and that the use of a particular one alters the truth.'⁷ We are told that Isabella lacked order, lacked power and an understanding of its philosophy, filling this vacuum *with words*. Did he have Guyana in mind? In *The Middle Passage*, a non-fictional work, Naipaul reflects that Burnham is a fine speaker and with the fictional Isabella in mind, the context could be ironic. Besides, the Singh-Browne axis in *The Mimic Men* has certain parallels to the Jagan-Burnham axis in the personal struggle between the two men before independence in Guyana and after.

Naipaul, using Isabella as the prototype of all newly-independent countries, implies in *The Mimic Men* that in all Third World countries the former white colonial superstructure is merely replaced by a black élite that is incapable of any kind of constructive thinking, let alone executive management. At best the blacks become poor imitators of their white colonial masters and are unable, amongst other typical inadequacies such as those noted in *The Mimic Men*, even to renegotiate a bauxite contract or to formulate and to implement plans for industrialisation. It is Ralph Singh who says that, 'Industrialisation, in territories like ours, seems to be a process of filling imported tubes and tins with various imported substances',⁸ a harsh overview even allowing for the deliberate hyperbole in the satire.

Naipaul is not alone in having made out a case for psychological dependency as a way of life, cultural and political, in a colonial situation. But the numerous rebellions and uprisings by the Caribbean peoples, led by famous revolutionaries such as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Cuffie, Cudjoe, Bolivar, Marti and Fidel Castro, belie such a judgement. The tendency to psychological dependency – or to mimic, to use

Naipaul's idiom – is rather the characteristic of assimilated middle-class elements among the local bourgeoisie. As Amílcar Cabral notes, it is the masses who 'in keeping their *culture* and *identity* ... keep intact the sense of their individual and collective dignity, despite the worries, humiliation and brutalities to which they are often subject'.⁹ 'Mimicry', in other words, is directly related to class orientation.

It is unlikely that the radical mood of the unions – and this is a common factor throughout the West Indies – which gave birth to various political organisations after any number of upheavals in St Kitts, St Vincent, St Lucia, Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica, would want to compromise in 'mimicry' after independence had been achieved. In the period of decolonisation there would of necessity follow a phase of limited imitation while the colonial institutions were being phased out to make way for new economic and political strategies, subject always to economic and political pressures – especially in the West Indies with their proximity to the United States. But Naipaul clearly did not have in mind any such reservations to local national sovereignty imposed on countries hosting the big multinationals. In respect of the charge of 'mimicry', he was making a value judgement that was absolute, in spite, it seems, of the groundswell of mass opinion which looks to Cuba and socialism as the model of the future. The political heirs of Frantz Fanon refuse to flatter the settler by imitation.

In a work of fiction the author is able to present his ideas vicariously, ghosting his own views, as in *The Mimic Men*, from behind a façade that is allowed to shift and to change to accommodate a wide range of perspectives. This is less possible in a travel book where the point of view stems from the central focus of the author's own character. The abstract ideas that hover about in the fictional works, ironic, allusive or elliptical, become concrete evaluations in the non-fictional books, as witness *The Middle Passage*, which continues to be a popular success, to judge by the number of editions since it first appeared in 1962.

The Middle Passage

This book, too, it would appear, is also related to the syndrome of the 'secure' colonial background. To realise its full impact as a political allegory and weapon, we need first of all to look at the source material and to understand its genesis. For *The Middle Passage* was apparently based on another travel book, one by the Oxford historian James Anthony Froude, who in 1887, after a voyage in the Caribbean undertaken for this purpose, published *The English in the West Indies*, a very biased and unscholarly work, the chief aim of which, it seems, was the vilification of the 'Negro' character. C.L.R. James, in an introduction to John Jacob Thomas' book *Froudacity* (the word play is on Froude and mendacity), first published in 1889, links Froude with

the negrophobist Thomas Carlyle, author of the pamphlet, *Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question* (1849), with the title emended in an 1853 edition to read *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*. The two historians were close friends. Carlyle, C.L.R. James suggests, like Froude after him, had a vested interest in forestalling any progress West Indian blacks might hope to make towards some form of government that gave them the vote, since this would be a threat to the planters' monopoly of goods and services. When Froude visited the West Indies, the colonies had shifted from a system of informal management by the planters to crown colony government under the Colonial Office in London. Further constitutional changes might seriously undermine the power of the settler population over *their* blacks. So to Froude was entrusted the task of unequivocally revealing to the British public how backward the blacks were in the West Indies. The sub-title of Froude's book, *The Bow of Ulysses*, was a jingoistic reference, arrogant in the circumstances, to the bow in classical mythology that the rivals for the hand of Penelope in Ulysses' absence couldn't bend – the inference being that any sort of political advancement on the part of West Indian blacks would be a task too onerous for an 'inferior' race to accomplish.¹⁰

This then was the model for Naipaul's book, the original source he went to, not as the Trinidadian schoolmaster John Jacob Thomas did, to refute Froude's arguments, but to cajole and to flatter traditional prejudice. The general plan of *The Middle Passage*, the outward voyage in Chapter 1, followed by other chapters, each devoted to a new island or place visited and observed, is very close to Froude's. The Oxford historian, at the start of his book, is anxious to establish his class affiliation to the gentlemen, regimental officers, planters and rifle-shooting young sportsmen on board. Not only does Naipaul quote this passage from Froude's book as an adornment to launch the opening chapter of his own, but he is keen to establish *his* class affiliation in the very opening sentence: 'There was such a crowd of immigrant-type West Indians on the boat-train platform at Waterloo that I was glad I was travelling first class to the West Indies.'¹¹ Froude is also conjured up on the fly-leaf in a passage containing this very unflattering reference to the West Indian black: 'There has been no saint in the West Indies since Las Casas, no hero unless philnegro enthusiasm can make one out of Toussaint. There are no people there in the true sense of the word, with a character and purpose of their own.'¹² There are many parallels between Froude and Naipaul, down to the style and presentation of the 'inferior' black West Indian stereotype. Froude's portrait of a small black boy on the voyage out who 'had little more sense than a monkey, perhaps less',¹³ is matched by Naipaul's portrait on his voyage out of 'a very tall and ill-made Negro'.¹⁴ Just as Froude expatiates upon the simian character of the young monkey 'grinning

behind gratings and perching out his long thin arms',¹⁵ in the same way, V.S. Naipaul, referring to 'the disproportionate length of his thighs',¹⁶ in describing this West Indian, whose 'thick lips had bunched into a circular swollen protuberance',¹⁷ has confirmed the white stereotype of the 'Negro' as being closer to an ape than to the angels.

And yet there are critics who refuse to associate Naipaul's work with any political purpose. David Ormerod, for instance, before he is far into an article where a discussion of *The Middle Passage* is featured prominently, quotes from *The Black Jacobins* by C.L.R. James in respect of 'the non-political writer devoted to the analysis and expression of West Indian society'.¹⁸ Naipaul, we are told, is this kind of writer. From Ormerod's point of view, the book, although containing any number of vital political clues, is discussed outside of any political context, purely, it seems because we are supposed to give credence to this writer's claim that Naipaul is a 'non-political writer'. Emotive phrases or words like 'colonial society', 'slavery', and 'indenture' are used as descriptive terms to identify the Middle Passage, without any reference to the socio-political motivation in the system of colonial capitalism that fostered slavery and indenture. In other words, Ormerod is looking at *The Middle Passage* from within a colonial focus.

In the early 1960s, even as Naipaul was preparing *The Middle Passage* for publication, he could hardly fail to be aware of the increasing resentment focused against black settlers in Britain, the growing mythology of race motivated, as in South Africa, by the pathological need of whites to dominate blacks. *The Middle Passage* was published in 1962, four years after the riots of Notting Hill and Nottingham. The same year saw the passage of the first of a series of Acts aimed at curtailing the entry of black people into Britain – the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Neo-fascist groups (such as the National Front, the British League, the National Socialist Movement, the Newcastle Democratic Movement, the Birmingham Immigration Control Association and the New Liberals) began to flower. Two years later politicians were campaigning round the slogan, 'If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour'.

A writer of Naipaul's growing prestige, might, in these years of crisis, have seen here an opportunity to interpret the ways and manners, customs and history of the new arrivals to the host nation, to redress in some small way the racialist culture that was being constructed with such frightening speed.

What we have in *The Middle Passage*, however, is not even the kind of latter day paternalism of Sheila Patterson's *Dark Strangers* (1963), but a book in the tradition of Carlyle and Froude, full of anti-Negro bias. The political angle is contrived with such subtlety that many of Naipaul's critics, however well-intentioned, have been taken in. The oblique approach is similar to that of his more recent publication,

Among the Believers: an Islamic Journey, of which Edward Said has observed that 'Despite its veneer of personal impressionism, this is a political book in intention.'¹⁹

When Naipaul, in the opening sentence of *The Middle Passage*, tells the reader that he was glad he was travelling first class out of physical range of 'immigrant-type West Indians', only a fool would fail to notice that this is an ideological stand. And the same racist theme recurs everywhere in his writings. In the essay, 'What's Wrong with being a Snob?', Naipaul could allow himself to say, 'To civilise Africa (if that must be attempted – the issue is debatable) you recognise the primitive and try to eradicate it.'²⁰ And in *The Mimic Men*, there is more than a hint that the writer, in contrasting the respective childhoods of Browne and Singh, is making out a case for Aryan supremacy.

We have to take a closer look at the prevailing racial mood in Britain today to understand the climate of opinion that fostered the creation not only of a travel book like *The Middle Passage*, but also the novel *Guerrillas*, to which it is closely linked by political intention.

Toryism, Naipaul and the politics of race

We have already referred to legislation of the 1960s and 1970s that sought to control the entry of blacks into Britain or to hamper, curtail and restrict their freedom when inside Britain. The imposition of controls is the application of a pass-law mentality on a par with South Africa. The aggression, the duplicity, the double-dealing of the British state and its minions has created shock-waves from which no one is safe, not even those bastions of law and order, the learned judges and the police, who in enforcing the system become allies of the skinheads. The latter in a more dramatic form are carrying out those same racist precepts learnt from their elders and betters who, in the hierarchy of racial oppression and discrimination, the more sophisticated they are, the more accomplished they appear to be at disguising their innermost feelings.

Take this extract from a speech by Margaret Thatcher, the present Tory Prime Minister of Britain, who in 1979 led her Party to an electoral victory by one of the widest margins seen in recent times:

If we went on as we are, then by the end of the century there would be four million people of the New Commonwealth or Pakistan here. Now that is an awful lot and I think it means that people are really afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture. And, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is a fear that it might be swamped, people are

going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in.²¹

It is an incredible speech. In the same breath the British character is being praised for its contribution to democracy in a context of the most blatant negation of that very democracy. The metropolitan whites with their superior 'democratic' culture dare not let the wogs in from 'the New Commonwealth or Pakistan'. Note that the highly articulate and positive Margaret Thatcher says 'the New Commonwealth or Pakistan'. She means people with black skins, not 'kith and kin' – Sir Alec Douglas-Home's phrase – from the former state of Rhodesia, that in declaring UDI committed treason against the Crown, or from Australia, New Zealand or Canada. This is the official line.

The skinheads and other Britons of their ilk, less practised in the subtleties of diplomacy, chalk up slogans on sidewalks or in the underground saying, 'Keep Britain White', or 'Wogs, go home'. The black-white separatist syndrome, the inferior-superior image fundamental to Afrikaaner psychology, becomes the psychology of the average Briton wanting to make a racial kill to vindicate his allegiance to the white tribe. So the skinheads, taking the bit between their teeth, their minds as empty as their hedgehog coiffures, set out in their wolfish packs on their urban safaris known as 'Paki-bashing'. The young white hunter, reverting to the era of the savage, assuages his blood lust with the sight of Pakistani blood. Only slightly higher up the evolutionary scale is the immigration officer whose hunting instincts find an outlet in searching for 'illegal' immigrants. And where they do not manifestly exist, Tory ingenuity, in loyal pursuit of the Party's democratic ideal, will create these 'untouchables'.²²

So now we return to V.S. Naipaul, the Tory 'slaver' doing his own trafficking on the side on a modern slave ship of his own making. For if the Hindu milord turned Englishman is doing the run of the Middle Passage, commemorating and celebrating Froude's infamous voyage, then the ship, the *Francisco Bobadilla*, in which he was sailing has to sustain the image of a slave ship. And so it does – by Naipaul's reckoning. 'There were now only two classes: travellers and emigrants',²³ he tells us, subscribing to a Tory conceptualisation of black people that has remained largely unchanged from Carlyle's time to this day. The British, true to white tribal instinct inherited from feudal times, think and act class in *all* situations. It is like a law of social primogeniture. There are any number of sub-classes in the white focus that govern choices, minute by minute, within the social spectrum, black being an instinctive symbol for social relegation. Black, not only in South Africa, but also in Britain and America, is the universal symbol for social ostracism and the definition of a sub-class.

The Tories talk about defending their way of life from the black hordes. We might wonder then at the failure of British colonial policy

that it has not produced more men of the calibre of V.S. Naipaul, who is apparently so very welcome. Karl Miller, in a statement not intentionally comic, observes of this writer that, 'his translation from the Caribbean to the metropolis is among the posthumous benefits conferred by the old principle of Imperial Preference'.²⁴ Edward Said puts it differently. 'It is not just that Naipaul carries with him a kind of half-stated but finally unexamined reverence for the colonial order. That attitude has it that the old days were better, when Europe ruled the coloureds and allowed them few pretensions about purity, independence, and new ways ... He is a kind of belated Kipling ... his East/West dichotomy covers a deep emptiness in Naipaul the writer.'²⁵ What Said sees as a colonial hangover, an attitude of mind consistent with Naipaul's own verdict on himself as a 'secure' colonial when he arrived in Britain in 1950, is a matter of the utmost importance in any attempt to form a comprehensive picture of his political views. A strong case could be made out, as I suggested earlier, that in distorting the political scene in the West Indies – and this might equally apply to his criticism of Islamic politics – he, in fact, is the prototype of the mimic man, a Don Quixote at the head of a visionary League of Empire Loyalists, seeking to imitate and to preserve colonial models from the past rather than to lend support to new horizons of freedom.

I said that there was a link between *The Middle Passage* and *Guerrillas*. The one book, within the Froudean format, negates any kind of new direction for the Caribbean peoples, the other makes even a symbolic revolutionary struggle to provide the impetus for change seem futile. And underpinning both books is a disquieting nihilism based on a failure to see history as a revitalising process that is continuous.

From *The Middle Passage* to *Guerrillas*

A writer who felt himself equal to tackling political themes like those attempted in *The Mimic Men*, *The Middle Passage* or *Guerrillas*, should be capable of seeing Caribbean politics in terms of a wider power struggle. This unfortunately is not the case. We saw how Naipaul in assessing the Black Power movement dismissed it as 'a bogus sort of television revolution'. This is typical of this writer's proneness to a narrowing of focus. Where theorists, such as Carmichael and Hamilton, thinking laterally, balance Black Power against its counterpart, White Power, in the context of 'the colonial situation' in America, no different essentially from the situation in Africa, Asia, the West Indies and elsewhere where racism, whether private or institutional, may be endemic to society, Naipaul can only particularise.

This restricted focus is apparent in *The Middle Passage*, for instance, when we are told that, 'The involvement of the Negro with the white world is one of the limitations of West Indian writing, as it is the

destruction of American Negro writing. The American Negro's subject is his blackness. This cannot be the basis of any serious literature.²⁶ Not only is this a shallow judgement lacking a basic understanding of the psychology of creative motivation in the artist, but there is more than a suspicion of a fundamental prejudice against the black writer. To the black West Indian or American, *his blackness is his history*. Where else does this faceless person belong but to the white world, if only on the fringe, where he has been led by virtue of the dependence of the white power structure on his black labour?

The paradox is that when the 'native' – a predicament common to black labour the world over – has been manoeuvred into this position, he may be relegated from the centre or banished altogether, according to the white man's pleasure. Such social or economic ostracism in the form of unemployment or various other forms of segregation is common enough. It is a double-bind situation, humiliating enough for those who are its victims, and, oppressed by a whole complex of social and political pressures, such persons might justifiably resort to armed struggle.

Such a broad humanitarian basis for revolution is, however, unrelated to the politics of Naipaul's *Guerrillas*. Nor is the theme of this novel linked in any way to the guerrilla fighting of organisations such as FRELIMO in Mozambique, the MPLA in Angola, SWAPO in Namibia, the FLN in Algeria, or Fidel Castro's bearded men from the Sierra Maestra. In this century in so many countries where decolonisation was slow to come to fruition, peoples' armies have had to instigate underground movements to try to subvert authority in the 'free' world where freedom is something in which non-white peoples need not necessarily participate. *Guerrillas* is not a novel about a struggle for decolonisation. Naipaul has talked about 'the negative colonial politics of protest',²⁷ an extraordinary phrase in view of the genesis of the Third World as a striking testimony to the efficacy of the politics of protest on many fronts.

What attracted Naipaul rather was the opportunity the subject and setting gave him to deflate Black Power – the old enemy and bugbear – at a time of growing interest in the movement within the Caribbean. An article in two parts that he was commissioned to write for the *Sunday Times Magazine*, on 'The Life and Trials of Michael X', served as a clearing-house for his ideas. Here he could set out and test his political views before a wider audience. Naipaul did get to work, making the most of Michael X's association with Black Power, broadening his attack to include many a salvo against the 'Negro' character in general. There were many gems, including the pontifical statement that, 'Where the dream of redemption lasts Negroes will continue to exist only that someone will be their leader.'²⁸ He, Naipaul, aloof and paternalistic, a font of wisdom, has the answer to all problems. 'Racial redemption' is

the key phrase used by the guru to interpret the mood of the crusade of Michael X (also known as Malik) in Trinidad, and, in case we couldn't guess, we are advised that Black Power was calculated to get in the way of the country's need to put its economy right.

But Naipaul had other ambitions, other aims. From this base, it was but an easy step to denounce 'the *black* government of Eric Williams' (my emphasis),²⁹ as lacking the support of Asian and other minority groups, and too long in power. In 1969, claims Naipaul, the Williams government was in jeopardy and the country 'moving towards revolution ... something like the racial enthusiasm which had taken him to power seemed about to sweep him away ... and American Black Power, drifting down to Trinidad, was giving a new twist to popular discontent'.³⁰ It is an opportunity Michael X might possibly have exploited, we are told with sinister Machiavellian logic, and the inference is clear. The real target is the *black* government of Dr Eric Williams, which Naipaul wished so desperately out of the way that he could even envisage Michael X as a political 'accomplice' to help achieve this aim.

The *Sunday Times Magazine* article became the peg on which to hang the full trappings of the novel that would prove from the example of Michael X's career 'how much of Black Power – away from its United States source – is jargon, how much a sentimental hoax'.³¹ The urban self-help village that Nigel Samuel, the son of a British millionaire, had provided Michael X with funds to create in England, a project that failed, becomes the commune at Thurcross Grange in Trinidad where lived James Ahmed (Michael X), Jane (Gale Benson), Stephens (Joseph Skerritt), Roche (Jamal) and others. The Trinidad to which James Ahmed returns after his stay in England is 'a place that had produced no great men and its possibilities were now exhausted',³² and we recall that one of the things Naipaul says against Trinidad in *The Middle Passage* was its failure to venerate its heroes. He is indignant that London has done so much for Michael X, made *him* into a hero. 'He was everybody's Negro, and not too negroid',³³ recorded Naipaul. However, the fictional X, alias James Ahmed, is made to pay dearly for Michael's London popularity. Out of his own mouth he condemns himself and sets the seal to his limitations *qua* 'Negro' – 'I was born in a back room of a Chinese grocery. I'm a *hakwai* Chinese. You know what a *hakwai* is? It's the Chinese for nigger.'³⁴ The commune that Ahmed founded goes under and the guerrillas fail because, as Meredith, one of their number declares, 'We're a dependent people ... We need other people's approval.'³⁵ It is the now familiar idea of 'mimicry' exploited yet again. It is a repetition with a studied purpose: to consolidate further an idea that had become firmly established in Naipaul's mind as a basic 'truth' of post-colonial government, the answer to the question posed in *The Overcrowded Barracoon* – 'How, without empire, do such societies govern themselves?'³⁶ Naipaul's

answer is that they simply do not.

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FRED HALLIDAY

Moscow and the Third World: the evolution of Soviet policy*

It is evident that we are now living in a new cold war: that is, a period in which the United States is once again focusing its foreign policy on confrontation with the Soviet Union.¹ Reagan has made this the prime issue in world politics, in contrast to the somewhat less belligerent policies pursued under Carter. As in the first cold war, the emphasis of US policy now is on the aggressive and militarily expansionist nature of the Soviet Union. The US new cold war argument rests in particular upon two claims, one concerning the arms race, the other concerning the Third World. The first claim is that there has been a fundamental shift in the military balance between the East and the West over the past decade, i.e., that the nuclear and conventional weaponry available to the Soviet Union and its allies is now, in overall terms, stronger than that of the West. The argument of those advocating a new cold war is that the West must redress that military balance. The second argument is that the Soviet Union is misbehaving, carrying out expansionist, aggressive or risk-taking policies in the Third World. It is up to the West to counter this Soviet expansionism by reasserting its influence, and superiority, there.

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The military balance: Soviet superiority

Much of the work of the Transnational Institute, and especially of the Militarism and Disarmament Project, has been concerned with opposing, and demystifying, this first claim. This work has shown that the Soviet Union does not have superiority in strategic or conventional weapons and that, as with claims in the early 1960s of a Soviet missile superiority, this Soviet superiority is fabricated by American government ministries, by newspapers in the West and by compliant academics.² But a coherent reply requires more than just saying that the Russians are not so strong as is claimed. We have to show what Soviet strength is and what the recent changes in Soviet capabilities have been. The most cogent answer for people concerned with nuclear disarmament is to come up with a *positive* and *informed* analysis of wherein Soviet strength lies, not merely a denial of western allegations.

This involves recognising that certain changes *have* occurred. In military balance terms the Soviet Union has lessened its inferiority. But the US still has an overall lead. The military balance is still in favour of the West, even on straight NATO-Warsaw Pact comparisons. The Soviet Union is certainly superior in conventional forces to the West in Europe; but in other areas – Third World, strategic and tactical nuclear forces – the West is superior to the Soviet Union. If you add in the fact that twenty-five Soviet divisions are stationed on the frontier of China and that the Soviet Union has very different geo-political concerns vis-à-vis the West which make it more vulnerable, then the US advantage becomes even clearer.³

The statements of Reagan, Weinberger and so forth on this matter of the military balance illustrate something that is also very important for understanding the second argument, the claim that the Soviet Union is carrying out aggressive policies in the Third World. With both arguments they always elide two claims: one is that the Soviet Union has achieved parity, the other is that the Soviet Union has achieved superiority. These are two quite different things. What American leaders have said many times is that for the US parity is unacceptable; the US must have superiority. To put it in the American vernacular, 'We are number one'. This is the central political and ideological claim of successive US administrations. When you listen to them saying that the Soviet Union has *overtaken* the US, they are really talking about the fact that the Soviet Union has achieved some parity or near parity in the military balance.

Now this clarification can be applied to the second theme, namely the theme of the Soviet Union in the Third World. Our argument is that the Soviet Union has to some extent narrowed the gap between itself and the US in terms of Third World military capability and political influence. The threat to the US in the Third World, the

so-called Soviet military threat, is not a threat of Soviet superiority. It is not that the Russians are doing things that are violations of the rules of detente, i.e. rules America respects, but that the Russians are now doing to some extent what the Americans have always been able to do and that the Soviet Union has narrowed the gap in military power in the Third world. This is the root of the problem. Therefore, a measured analysis of the Soviet Union's military capability in the Third World and of its military aid programme is not just important for understanding the Third World, for understanding the situation in Afghanistan, in Ethiopia or in Central America; it is important for demystifying the cold war as a whole. As people concerned with peace and with opposing the new cold war, our instinct may be to reject the alarmist analysis of the press, to say that what journalists write about the Russians is not true or that the Russians are not as influential as their enemies say. But there is another side we have to recognise, namely, that there has been a change in Soviet influence. If Brezhnev were sitting here and we told him, 'You are as weak now as you were twenty years ago in the Third World', he would be very insulted. So would Admiral Gorshkov, the head of the Soviet navy. They are not as weak as they were twenty years ago and we must recognise that fact. While they are not stronger than the US, they have certainly lessened the gap to some degree.

The Third World: Soviet concerns

The eastern bloc's concern with the Third World evolved from the mid-1950s, particularly from the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, which laid down a new analysis of the Third World that was more favourable to nationalism. In the ensuing period, from the mid-1950s to the present, the Soviet Union has found a very wide variety of allies in the Third World and has, in so doing, attempted to increase its influence. Throughout this period there have been two levels of influence which it is important to separate. The first is strategic rivalry with the US, in which the Third World is seen as a dimension for future conflict with the US. The second is what one can call support for progressive governments in the Third World, or for supposedly progressive governments. Taking the strategic issue first, it can be seen now that just as outer space is becoming an area where a new world war would be fought, so the oceans and continents of the Third World are increasingly areas which the third world war would include. Hence, a lot of the Soviet concern with the Third World is not just with political developments on land, but with military developments in the air and on the sea. Of these, the most important is the US's acquisition of submarine-based nuclear missiles.⁴ The fundamental reason why the US has military superiority over the Soviet

Union is because the Soviet Union has not, and will probably not have for at least ten years, any effective answer to the submarine-based nuclear missiles which the US has deployed. This is the open secret of American superiority, and it is one involving the Third World.

As for the second, the political dimension, one can see that in the period of Khrushchev (1955-64), the Russians took quite a number of military and economic initiatives in Third World states, of which Egypt and India were the prime examples. Neither of them were socialist states. The Russians rarely claimed that India was even in transition to socialism; when they once did so even the Indian Communist Party protested that this was an exaggeration. Egypt was never a socialist state, but was a capitalist country with a large state sector and a minority of socialists within the regime.

Lessons of the Khrushchev period

A number of lessons were learnt from this Khrushchev period. To understand the Soviet military presence in the Third World today and to understand why Soviet military expenditure has grown from the early 1960s till now, it is helpful to examine the mistakes of the Khrushchev period. Of these the most spectacular was the Russian defeat over Cuba in October 1962 when it was forced to withdraw its missiles. This is generally seen as having been a case where world war was avoided – and this is true. But as far as the Soviet military was concerned, the fact that it put the missiles into Cuba and then was forced publicly in the eyes of the world to pull them out again was a very clear defeat. It outlined the rashness of Khrushchev and what *Pravda* later called his ‘hare-brained schemes’. But is also underlined what Admiral Gorshkov had been saying, namely that the Soviet Union must have a global military capability; the navy must not just defend the Soviet Union itself or sail only near the Soviet ports, but the USSR must have a fleet and an air force capable of acting throughout the oceans of the world. This lesson of Cuba was repeated in certain other cases, such as the defeat of the revolutionary movement in the Congo – the inability to help Lumumba in 1961 and the inability to prevent the French and Belgians from destroying the left-wing forces in the east of the Congo in 1964.

The lesson drawn was, therefore, a military lesson of the need for a naval and air capability to support the Third World liberation movements and Third World states under realistic conditions. This did not involve an adventurist policy, but aid, within certain conditions. The result was that between 1965 and 1978 the air-lift capacity of the Soviet air force increased by 130 per cent. I was in South Yemen in late 1977 when the air-lift to Ethiopia began. Huge Antonov-22 planes began to arrive at Aden airport to refuel on the way to Ethiopia and I

remember very well one day being on the tarmac with a foreign press delegation when one of these enormous planes arrived. They are not quite as big as the American C-130 and they do not have quite the range, but they can fly over 3,000 miles and are the largest transport planes within the Soviet air force. When this Antonov-22 arrived, I said to a TASS correspondent in our group: 'What's this?' 'This is proletarian internationalism,' he said, 'we have eight tanks in there and they are going to help the Ethiopian revolution fight off the Somali aggressors.'

A similar argument applies to the build-up of the navy. Admiral Gorshkov is quite open about it in his writings on sea power.⁵ They are, of course, partly designed to convince people in the Soviet army and air force that the navy has a role, because traditionally the navy in the Soviet Union has been the poor cousin of the armed forces. Gorshkov stresses that the navy is a way of projecting influence; the very presence of the navy protects allied states, and it can provide assistance to revolutionary states in times of need. By being there, it may discourage the western states from doing things. Naval expansion is also, on the first level I mentioned, a way of building up the Soviet presence in the waters of the Third World in the context of strategic competition with the US. So the first overall lesson of the early 1960s, of the Khrushchev period, is that you have got to have the air and naval capability to project Soviet power in the Third World. Without that, there would have been no Soviet support for Angola, or Vietnam. It was the build-up from that early period that made Soviet aid for these advances by local forces possible.

The second lesson of the Khrushchev period was born of disappointments with the theory of the non-capitalist road, i.e., in countries where state power was held not by communist parties but by left-wing nationalist groups.⁶ The concept of the non-capitalist road has many problems. But there are a few states which did persist on the non-capitalist road and which, for a combination of internal and external reasons, did later transfer to what the Russians regard as the socialist path. The clearest case of this is Cuba; Mongolia is another. Hence, while one should be critical of the theory of the non-capitalist road, of its theoretical and practical problems, one should not exclude it completely as a possibility. It is possible, under certain circumstances, that these countries will not simply follow a capitalist path, and certain other countries could follow suit — Angola, South Yemen and Nicaragua, for example.

Yet many of the states which were supposedly on the non-capitalist road have gone to the right. This involves not only instances of coup d'état — Ghana, Indonesia — but also states where the government remained the same but changed its orientation. The latter are not cases of counter-revolution but of the same people overtly taking the capitalist

road: Egypt, Iraq and Somalia are examples of this. We may in the future see the same occur in such states as Burma, Benin and Madagascar, where pressures to move rightwards are increasing. The outcome depends on the combination of internal and external conditions, the domestic base of the regime and the degree of international backing it receives.

The lesson that the Russians drew from these setbacks – from Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana and so on – was first of all the need for a much clearer specification for what was involved in the movement from the ‘non-capitalist’ to the ‘socialist’ path. As a result, they developed a new theory, of the ‘states of socialist orientation’.⁷ It is a much more precise theory than that of the non-capitalist road. There are at the moment nineteen states in the world which are on the Soviet list of states of socialist orientation.⁸ The theory now evolved is much more precise about what is, and what is not, involved in the transition to socialism than was the case before. It is much more sceptical and is not as optimistic as the writing of the Khrushchevite period. A second change marked by this theory is a much greater recognition of the role of the military in the Third World countries, and in the case of one important state in particular, namely Ethiopia, Soviet writing is quite explicit: in the Soviet view the military was the substitute for the revolutionary party, not in making socialism, but in overthrowing the old regime. While this certainly is a theory you can find in American political science as well, there is in this Soviet material a new emphasis on the potentially progressive role of the military. This expectation raises its own problems, but it nevertheless reflects a lesson drawn from that period.

Revolutions of the 1970s

So far, changes in Soviet policy and theory have been considered. But this is only part of the picture. The most important change between Khrushchev’s time and the present has nothing to do with Soviet policy, but has to do with the real world. This is something the Americans cannot appreciate. From the defeat of the revolution in the Congo and the retreat from Cuba in the early 1960s until the mid-1970s, the US was able to do more or less what it wanted to do in the Third World. There was no case of a successful revolution anywhere in the Third World. Certainly, there was the war in Vietnam, but up to its last but one year, 1974, the Americans thought that they could control that situation. However, from the mid-1970s onwards no less than fourteen countries have experienced successful revolutionary upheavals. The first of these was Ethiopia in 1974. As a result of the Portuguese revolution in 1974, there was the independence of the five Portuguese countries in Africa – Angola, Mozambique, Guinea

Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tomé. All of these were born of guerrilla movements. After they decolonised, all acquired governments which were socialist in orientation. In 1975 there was the triumph of the revolutionary movements in the three Indochinese countries – Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In 1978 there was a left-wing coup in Afghanistan, not a mass revolution but an attempted revolution from above. At the beginning of 1979 there was the Iranian revolution; this was not a socialist revolution, but it was certainly a mass upheaval. In 1979 there was Grenada and Nicaragua; and in 1980 Zimbabwe. There are many problems with these revolutions, and much that socialists may question and criticise. But the bottom line of this 1974-80 trend is that a new phase of Third World revolutions has occurred. Adding all these movements up, there has been a net decrease, a net challenge of a substantial kind, to the pre-existing pattern of imperialist domination in the Third World.

It has been in this situation that the Soviet Union and its allies have come to play a new role in other worlds. These revolutions are not the result of actions by the Central Threat Office in the Kremlin, as Mr Reagan would have us believe; but they involve a response by the Soviet Union to new situations in the Third World in none of which the Soviet Union played an instigatory role. None of these fourteen revolutions was one where the Soviet Union said, as it were, 'We're going to have a revolution', or 'We're going to attack the Americans here'. In each of those cases where the Soviet Union gave support, greater or less, this was to a process based on the internal dynamics within these states, processes that were very often ones the West had itself stimulated. It is these internal changes that mark a different era, not new Soviet policies.

The West's alarm, evident in the new cold war, is therefore not simply a fantasy of Reagan's; it is a partly rational response by US imperialism to a surge of revolutionary movements in the Third World in the period since 1974. But this surge is combined with, as we have seen, a higher level of Soviet military strength. Moreover, in a development relevant to the Third World, there is the fact that the Soviet Union now has near parity in strategic nuclear weapons, which gives it greater freedom of manoeuvre. The Soviet Union would not have been able to aid Angola or Ethiopia if it had been as weak in strategic nuclear terms as it was in the 1950s or early 1960s. Neither side *uses* its nuclear weapons, but both act with a knowledge of what the overall nuclear balance is. The precondition for using the Soviet navy or the Antonov-22s to assist allies in the Third World was the acquisition of a strategic capability in the nuclear dimension, such that the Americans could not simply counter-attack, using their own nuclear weapons or by threatening to use them. The Soviet Union now has a protective shield. Without the change in the strategic balance, the particular

improvements in Third World military capability and in Soviet theory would not have been so implementable. One could even put it in psychological terms: the Soviet leadership today is more confident strategically, and that is why it has been able in some cases to provide what it sees as internationalist assistance.

The Afghan intervention

One can sum this up by listing the different factors affecting Soviet policy in the Third World: firstly, the Soviet Union has learned some military lessons; second, it has learned certain political lessons; third, there has been a dramatic shift in the Third World – the fourteen revolutionary upsurges with all their problems; and fourth, there is a new strategic confidence in the USSR. The most striking case of Soviet initiative in the Third World is obviously the military support for the government of Afghanistan. The main reason why the Soviet Union went into Afghanistan was not a military one. The major reason it went in was because there was a communist government under threat from an uprising, an anti-communist movement supported by large sections of the population. It went in there to sustain this government which was likely to be overthrown and to install a party leadership more capable of reversing the collapse. In so far as there were international aspects, they were negative rather than positive ones. The Soviet Union had already calculated, by the end of 1979 and in particular by the Central Committee meeting at the end of November 1979, that detente was not paying off. The Salt II treaty was not going through the US Congress, the Americans were courting China, Brezhnev's offer to negotiate in Europe in his Berlin speech had been rejected and there was the NATO decision on cruise missiles in early December. The argument against intervention seems to have been: 'If we go into Afghanistan, we will pay an international price.' But the answer was: 'We've already paid the price. So why lose Afghanistan to save something – detente – which the Americans have already denied us?' This appears to have been the context in which the decision was made.⁹ The main consideration was the Afghan situation itself; there were no international causes, but nor were there international constraints.

There have, nonetheless, been military advantages from going into Afghanistan. One is that the Soviet army is receiving its first combat experience since the Second World War. Soviet officers often say that the Americans are two wars in advance, Korea and Vietnam. Officers of the level of colonel and up, people like General Haig, and anybody aged between 35 and 55 in the American army will be likely to have had such military experience. None of the comparable people in the Soviet army, with a few small exceptions for those who have been in Angola or Ethiopia, will have had combat experience. The second military

advantage is that, although Afghanistan is a long way from the Persian Gulf and has nothing to do with the Persian Gulf geographically or politically, the Soviet air force now has bases somewhat nearer the Indian Ocean than would have previously been the case, by a couple of hundred miles. It is a small advantage, but not a negligible one. There may be people in the Soviet military who want to keep a Soviet force in Afghanistan because there is a strategic military advantage to being there.

Afghanistan is not, however, an index of the Soviet ability to intervene in the Third World, because it was just a question of going from one state to the other, of a conventional military intervention. Afghanistan also had special ties to the USSR. It was the only non-socialist and non-communist country in the Third World that was almost completely reliant on the Soviet Union for weapons from the 1950s onward. So the Soviet military and Afghan military have been linked since 1955. There's no way the Russians could repeat this venture in Iran; for, if they did so, there *would* be a high risk of world war. Afghanistan is therefore an interesting case, but an exceptional one.¹⁰

Arms sales and credits

Beyond direct intervention, there is the more general question of Soviet arms sales to the Third World. The data on Soviet military sales are in dispute and the Russians do not give figures. The CIA figure is that in 1954-78, of a total of \$125m arms sales to the Third World, about 20 per cent of sales and about 25 per cent of deliveries were accounted for by the USSR.¹¹ About 45 per cent of sales were accounted for by the US alone, and about 65 per cent by the US plus its allies. The number of Third World countries to which the Soviet Union has provided arms is about three dozen. About 50,000 Third World people have been trained in the Soviet Union on military programmes and there are now about 12,000 Warsaw Pact personnel, not including Cubans, on various military assignments in the Third World as advisers and trainers. It is reckoned that 6-9 per cent of total Soviet arms output is for export to the Third World.

Soviet arms sales have certain advantages over those of the US. The terms under which Soviet arms were normally provided until recently were rather favourable to the Third World countries. First of all, they were cheaper, gun for gun and tank for tank; even the list prices were often cheaper than American weapons, and favoured countries often got discounts of up to 40 per cent. Second, they were delivered quickly, unlike American weapons which were generally phased over a number of years. The Soviet Union has tended to sell weapons it has already produced, ones which it has in stores, whereas the Americans have tended to sell weapons they have not yet produced. Third, favourable

credit terms have been offered by the Soviet Union. The normal credit terms were repayment over ten years, beginning only two years after delivery; for the first two years nothing was repaid, then, for ten years there was a 2 per cent rate of interest on top of repayment.

There has recently been a change in the form of arms provision in the Third World, as there has been on the American side, namely a change from military credits to straight military sales for cash. This is one of the reasons for the increase in Soviet military sales to the Third World. There are two reasons for this change from credit to cash. One is the oil boom, which means that some Soviet allies can now pay for weapons. Libya has been a substantial purchaser since 1975 and pays in cash. Iraq, from the early 1970s onwards a substantial purchaser, also pays in cash. Syria has no oil of its own, but it has money from Saudi Arabia and can pay in cash. Ethiopia which has no oil, but is provided with some by Libya, is paying to some extent in cash but also through loans.

The other reason for this substantial increase in Soviet military sales is a shift in the nature of Third World conflicts. In the 1950s and 1960s the pattern tended to be one of conflict between a colonial state or an oppressive state on the one side and a national liberation movement on the other. Now, conflicts tend more to be *between* two Third World states than was previously the case. As a result, the level of military technology and of military supplies required by the Soviet Union's allies is much greater. They are no longer mainly small states or liberation movements, but substantial states involved in conflicts with other states. So that in cases like Ethiopia versus Somalia, or Iraq versus Iran, or the Arab states versus Israel, there is demand for a much higher level of military sales than with the old support for liberation movements. For these two reasons, therefore – the fact of cash sales replacing credit, and of inter-state conflict replacing insurrection – the provision of military equipment has greatly increased. In 1978, for example, the Soviet Union provided by loan or by straight sale nearly \$4 billion worth of arms to the Third World, as against \$11 billion in the whole 1956-73 period.

If one looks at where these arms go, there is a very clear focus on the Middle East, and in particular on two or three countries. Over two-thirds of Soviet arms sales from the mid-1950s onwards have gone to the Middle Eastern area, including Ethiopia. Between 1971 and 1976, for example, 60 per cent of all sales went to three countries: Iraq, Syria and Egypt. Although Egypt has dropped out, there is now Libya and Ethiopia. Hence, whereas the American arms sales are distributed very widely across the world, Russian arms sales are much more focused. Though there are three dozen countries which have received Soviet arms, 80 per cent have gone to only nine countries, which include the Arab states, Afghanistan and India. This clear focus on the Middle Eastern states has been – for both the reasons indicated – not just

because they can pay cash but also because the level of conflict, of inter-state conflict, has been much higher there than has been the case in other areas.

The Russians have faced quite a number of problems in these arms sales. One is that some of these countries just do not pay. Egypt is the spectacular case, defaulting on an estimated US\$7 billion worth of military and economic aid in the middle 1970s. Indonesia was another case. Somalia also defaulted on its loans from the Soviet Union after 1977. This brings out one of the differences between the capitalist and communist systems; if a Third World country defaults on money owed to the US, then it is punished financially, because the world banking system – in particular, through the IMF and the World Bank – will penalise it. If you are a Third World country, you can't default on money owed to the US. You can default on money to the Soviet Union because the Soviet Union does not control the world banking system and the main aid agencies.

A second problem is one that also arises from the difference between the capitalist and non-capitalist worlds. Whereas aid from the capitalist countries, both economic and military, serves to reproduce and internationalise the capitalist system, aid from the Soviet Union and its allies does not reproduce the post-capitalist system in a comparable manner. In other words, Soviet military aid can serve the purposes of capitalist states in the Third World, can be disbursed without in any substantive way encouraging a shift in that country towards socialism or revolution. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the Soviet post-war aid programme has been the manner in which countries have become militarily quite reliant on the USSR whilst not transforming their internal socio-economic arrangements to any extent. Put another way, not only is the volume of Soviet arms supplies smaller, but the degree of influence and control which the USSR derives from military sales to Third World states is, for additional reasons, far less than that which accrues to the US. Whilst this may have something to do with the particular choices of Soviet policy-makers, it is more fundamentally a product of the structural difference between the two systems.

A third problem in the Soviet arms sales programme is one internal to the USSR itself. This is the fact that arms sales are not seen within Soviet society as beneficial to domestic economic prosperity; rather, it would appear from much that is known about Soviet popular attitudes, that the foreign aid programmes, military and economic, are blamed for consumer shortages in the USSR and for the confrontation with the US. Whereas in the US there is a widespread and often chauvinistic sentiment in favour of arming US allies in the Third World, no such sentiment exists at the popular level in the USSR. This popular resentment is beyond the institutional secrecy of the Soviet system, a reason

why the Soviet government does not lay great public stress upon such transactions. Amidst all the clamour in the West about the rising tide of Soviet influence in the Third World, it is worth stressing that because of its much weaker economy the USSR's ability to provide aid to its Third World allies, economic or military, is far less than that of the advanced capitalist states.

Conclusion

The Soviet ability to play a role in the Third World, and to exert military influence, is conditioned by three objective factors, ones that lie beyond the short-term control of Soviet leaders. The first is the incidence of revolutionary upheaval in the Third World itself – it is this, above all, which determines whether and where the USSR will find movements and states with which to ally. The second factor is the policy and strength of the US and the other NATO allies – the USSR is more capable and confident now than it was in the 1950s, but it is not any more willing to risk world war in the cause of supporting Third World allies. The third factor is the strength of the Soviet economy at any given time – the contest between East and West in the Third World is still a very unequal one. The resources at the USSR's disposal, as well as the attractiveness of the Soviet model, are less than those of the West. Each of these three factors is changing, but not as rapidly as the US government would have us believe, or as much as the Soviet leadership might hope.

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‘A great blow must be struck in Ireland’: Karl Marx and the Fenians

Fenianism and the Irish Question occupied an important place in the political thinking of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels during the late 1860s and early 1870s. The eruption of the Irish Question into the forefront of British working-class politics confronted them with the necessity of developing their ideas on the national question and on the right of nations to self-determination. They did this not from the point of view of abstract principles of morality or justice, but from what they regarded as the exigencies of the class struggle. To understand the way in which they developed their ideas, the influences that affected them and the problems that they grappled with, it is essential that their intellectual efforts are placed in the context of developments in British radical and Irish republican politics. Such an exercise throws into sharp relief aspects of their approach to political questions that are still not given great enough consideration. Their ideas were developed in an intellectual engagement with events and accordingly can best be understood by an attempt to recover that engagement.

Frederick Engels first came to grips with the Irish Question in the 1840s. He very largely adopted the attitudes of the Chartist movement, supporting Repeal of the Union, opposing the influence of Daniel O’Connell and trying to win Irish immigrant workers to the Chartist cause. Throughout the 1840s the Chartists made strenuous efforts to recruit Irish workers. The second National Petition, with over three million signatures, that was presented to parliament in May 1842, included among its demands the Repeal of the Union. The Chartists

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argued that Repeal together with the Six Points of the Charter would mean a lot more to the Irish people than Repeal by itself. This proposition was argued from Chartist platforms in virtually every major town in the north of England.¹ However, while individual Irishmen were prominent in the Chartist movement, up until O'Connell's death, in May 1847, the mass of the Irish in Britain remained loyal to him. Indeed, O'Connell fought back against this attempt to undermine his influence, and bands of his supporters broke up Chartist meetings and helped defend the meetings of the Anti-Corn Law League from Chartist interruptions. Nevertheless, the Chartists persevered in their efforts. In December 1847 Feargus O'Connor, the Chartist leader, proclaimed:

'Ireland for the Irish!' and 'England for the English!' is the mutual cry. Let it be shouted, side by side ... it will be the knell of oppression – it will be the birth-peal of freedom – for the solitary fortresses of tyranny must sink before the confluence of our two nations.²

March 1848 saw an alliance established between the Chartists and the more militant wing of the Irish Confederation. In the north of England members of the two organisations drilled together in preparation for the day of insurrection. Nothing would come from this alliance, however, except arrests, imprisonment and transportation, although at the time it seemed to bring victory near.

* * *

How did Engels and later Marx respond to these events? In a recent discussion, Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson argue that the first comments that Marx and Engels made on the question of Irish independence were negative, that they believed that the Irish working class would gain more from association with England than it would lose, and that they only came to support Irish self-determination in the 1860s.³ They cite in support of their argument a letter from the Association Démocratique in Brussels, of which Marx was one of the signatories, to the Fraternal Democrats in London. The letter is dated 13 February 1848. In it the Association Démocratique notes with great pleasure the steps that the Chartists are taking to effect an alliance with the Irish people. This offers the best opportunity for breaking down 'that prejudice which prompted the Irish people to confound in one common hatred the oppressed classes of England with the oppressors of both countries'. They look forward to seeing the oppressed classes of both countries united under the leadership of Feargus O'Connor and under the banner of democracy.⁴ This really does not amount to much. It does not oppose or condemn the demand for the Repeal of the Union; it doesn't mention it at all! More to the point is the fact that the

banner under which O'Connor was at this time trying to unite Irish and English workers was the banner of democracy – and Repeal. The most that can be said is that Marx appears to have had little enthusiasm for the cause of Irish independence at this time, and this can be ascribed to his lack of familiarity with British working-class politics, particularly in the north of England. With Engels, it was different.

Engels first printed discussion of O'Connell's Repeal campaign is in an article that appeared in *Der Schweizerische Republikaner* in June 1843. Here he refers to Repeal as 'stale obsolete rubbish', 'old fermenting junk', 'the wretched Repeal of the Union', and writes of O'Connell's 'miserable, petty middle-class objectives which are at bottom of all the shouting and the agitation for Repeal'. Interestingly, these are phrases that Bew et al. cite in support of their argument. Engels' objection to Repeal, however, was that it did not go far enough, that the Repeal movement, with its 'millions of militant and desperate Irishmen' whom O'Connell had mobilised, could accomplish anything it chose, but that under his 'two-faced Whig' leadership, it would not even achieve the limited objective of Repeal. If O'Connell were 'an upright consistent democrat, the last English soldier would have left Ireland long since and there would no longer be any idle Protestant pastor in purely Catholic areas or any Norman baron in an Irish castle.' This certainly does not seem a negative response to Irish independence! The whole article is an enthusiastic celebration of the Irish masses: 'Men who have nothing to lose, two-thirds of them not having a shirt to their backs, they are real proletarians and sanculottes ... Give me two hundred thousand Irishmen and I could overthrow the entire British monarchy.'⁵

Later, in his masterpiece *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels returned to the discussion of the Irish proletariat and its virtues. On the one hand, Irish immigration into England has 'degraded the English workers, removed them from civilisation, and aggravated the hardship of their lot; but on the other hand, it has thereby deepened the chasm between workers and bourgeoisie, hastening the approaching crisis.' 'Irish immigration', he continues:

further contributes by reason of the passionate mercurial Irish temperament, which it imports into England and into the English working class. The Irish and English are to each other much as the French and the Germans; and the mixing of the more facile, excitable, fiery Irish temperament with the stable, reasoning, persevering English must, in the long run, be productive only of good for both. The rough egotism of the English bourgeoisie would have kept its hold upon the working class much more firmly if the Irish nature, generous to a fault, and ruled primarily by sentiment, had not intervened, and softened the cold, rational English character in part

by a mixture of the races, and in part by the ordinary contact of life.

Leaving aside the little homily on national character, Engels felt that Irish immigrant workers represented a considerable injection of militancy into the English working class. He accepted the argument that Irish immigration, by increasing competition for jobs, lowered wages, but he saw this as widening the divide between workers and bourgeoisie, rather than creating a division within the working class. Marx was to argue quite differently in the late 1860s, but we shall come to that in due course.

Engels makes some further remarks on the question of the Repeal of the Union. The Irish believe, he observes, that Repeal will end their oppression and improve their conditions of existence. Such a belief is mistaken because 'the cause of Irish misery, which now seems to come from abroad, is really to be found at home'. Repeal, he concedes, might be necessary 'to make this clear to the Irish'. This is 'an open question'. At any rate, neither Chartism nor Socialism has so far made any headway in Ireland.⁶ This represents a considerable cooling of his attitude, and reflects both the failure of O'Connell's 1843 Repeal campaign and the failure of the Chartist cause to gain a foothold in Ireland. Perhaps petty middle-class Repeal would have to precede the rise of Chartism in Ireland, rather than be overtaken by it.

The situation looked much more promising at the beginning of 1848. O'Connor had been elected member of parliament for Nottingham the previous July, and, with O'Connell dead, appeared in a position to claim the leadership of the Irish people. Somewhat prematurely, in early January 1848, Engels wrote that O'Connor had 'put himself at the head of the Irish party in a single bound'. His opposition to the government's Irish Coercion Bill in the Commons 'succeeded in rallying all the opposition behind him; it was he who opposed each clause, who held up the voting whenever possible; it was he who in his speeches summed up all the arguments of the opposition against the Bill; and finally, it was he who for the first time since 1835 reintroduced the motion for Repeal of the Union'. Engels looked forward to O'Connor touring Ireland in the summer, 'to revive the agitation for repeal and to found an Irish Chartist party'.⁷ Soon afterwards, in another article, he wrote that O'Connor was showing the Irish people that they 'must fight with all their might and in close association with the English working classes and the Chartists in order to win the six points of the People's Charter ... Only after these six points are won will the achievement of the Repeal have any advantages for Ireland.' He looked forward to 'the victory of the English democrats, and hence the liberation of Ireland'.⁸

There is no mistaking Engels' enthusiasm here, at a time when the

movement was rekindled. Soon afterwards, he left England to take part in the revolutionary movement on the Continent that was to overthrow governments and crowns in Italy, France and Germany. In Britain and Ireland, however, the alliance that was established in March 1848 between the Chartists and the Irish Confederation, 'the new national party ... reforming and democratic', as Marx described it,⁹ fizzled out in an abortive insurrection in Ireland in August 1848, and, after the failure of the 10 April Chartist demonstration in London, in a few local disturbances in Britain.

* * *

After the defeat of 1848, the cause of Irish independence was left in abeyance for more than a decade. At first, Marx, by now an exile in Britain, saw the Tenant League, that had been established in the summer of 1850 to campaign for land reform, as 'the Irish Revolutionary party'. Whereas the Repeal agitation had been 'a mere political movement', the Tenant Right agitation was 'a deep-rooted social movement'.¹⁰ His expectations were soon disappointed. The League collapsed as agricultural prices improved from the end of 1853 onwards. The attempt to maintain an Independent Irish party at Westminster, the so-called Irish Brigade, foundered at the same time, with a number of its supposed stalwarts accepting office under the Whigs. To some extent Marx seems to have seen this as the veritable collapse of Irish nationalism.¹¹

Elsewhere, he began to develop an account of this collapse. In an article that appeared in the *Neue Oder-Zeitung* in March 1855, he argued that Irish society was being radically transformed by an Anglo-Saxon revolution, a transformation which the Irish themselves seemed completely unaware of. The pre-Famine Irish agricultural system of small tenures was being replaced by the English system of big tenures, and the old landlord was being replaced by the modern capitalist. The way for this transformation was prepared by the Famine with its decimation through starvation and emigration of the small tenant farmers, cottiers and landless labourers, by 'the unsuccessful insurrection of 1848, which *finally destroyed Ireland's faith in herself*'¹² (emphasis added), and by the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 which sold off the estates of many bankrupted landlords.

Marx was to explore this process more fully in Volume 1 of *Capital*. The details of his argument need not concern us here, but we should note his conclusions. He believed that the economic transformation that Ireland was undergoing would result in a continuing stream of emigration as the consolidation of landholdings and the shift from arable farming to pasture threw people off the land. Farms of fifteen acres or less were certainly doomed, which would leave over a million

people without means of subsistence. And if, as he believed, farms of less than 100 acres were 'too small for capitalist cultivation', then another three-quarters of a million people would have to go. 'Therefore her depopulation must go yet further, that thus she may fulfil her true destiny, that of an English sheep-walk and cattle pasture.' Of course, this had its drawbacks, because the Irishman 'banished by sheep and ox, re-appears on the other side of the ocean as a Fenian, and face to face with the old queen of the seas rises, threatening and more threatening, the young giant Republic'.¹³

Marx, it appears, thought that Irish nationalism was being fatally undermined by the socio-economic developments that were taking place in the aftermath of the Famine. The continuing depopulation of the country, together with its relation to the British economy were such that political independence was not within the realms of possibility. The Irish in America were a bigger threat to the British Empire than was Ireland. Superficially, this may well have appeared so. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s there was not a coherent constitutional nationalist party in Ireland; the beginnings of such a party, the Home Government Association, was not founded until May 1870. Moreover, the first stirrings of revolutionary separatism, the Phoenix Society, Marx dismissed as 'a very small affair'. Similarly, the persistence of agrarian secret societies among the small farmers and labourers was merely 'a feeble resistance ... powerless for effecting anything beyond demonstrations of individual vengeance'.¹⁴ With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that he was, of course, wrong.

First of all, in the 1860s revolutionary separatism in the shape of Fenianism became a mass movement of the lower class, attracting the support of thousands of small farmers and agricultural labourers in the country, artisans, tradesmen and clerks in the towns, and enlisted men in the British army. It also had considerable influence among Irish factory workers in both Britain and the United States. Then, after the defeat of Fenianism, the urban middle class and the large tenant farmers, those with holdings of thirty acres or more, were to mount their own challenge to the British state in the form of the Home Rule Movement and later the Land League, rallying behind them the remnants of Fenianism as the extreme wing of the agitation. The Land War and the Plan of Campaign of the 1880s were to break landlordism in Ireland and establish the alliance between the urban middle class and the large tenant farmers as the dominant social and political force in the country. Clearly, Marx's reading of economic developments was telescoped and did not allow room for the full range of political possibilities that existed. What we must look at now is how Marx actually responded to the rise of Fenianism.

The secret underground Fenian organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), was founded in Dublin in March 1858 by James

Stephens and a handful of sympathisers. Although the organisation only really got off the ground in 1861 with the McManus funeral, by 1865 it was the dominant force in Irish politics. This success was achieved in the face not only of British repression, but also of the bitter hostility of the urban middle class and large tenant farmers – hostility that was expressed, in the absence of a constitutional nationalist party, by the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁵ During 1865 the IRB began to go in-to decline, weakened by arrests and victimisations, although it was still able to muster some thousands of supporters at the time of the abortive 1867 rising.

It is well-known that the IRB, despite being rooted in the Irish lower classes, never adopted a social programme. What is less well-known is that among its leaders were men with an internationalist perspective on their struggle, including James Stephens himself. From the beginning, he was determined to ally the IRB with working-class radicalism in Britain, and went out of his way to recruit into its ranks Continental revolutionaries such as Gustave Cluseret and Cesare Orsini. In May 1866 he actually joined the International Working Men's Association in New York – Marx described him to Engels as 'the most doubtful of our acquisitions'.¹⁶ Stephens, moreover, was not alone in his radical sympathies. Indeed, the attempt to ally with the British radicals came nearest to fruition at the beginning of 1867, after Stephens had been removed from the leadership and replaced by Colonel Thomas Kelly.

As part of the preparations for the proposed 1867 insurrection, a secret Provisional Government of the Irish Republic was established in London, off the Tottenham Court Road. This body, acting through Cluseret, approached the Executive of the Reform League, which was in the midst of its suffrage campaign, and offered to form an alliance with it. Whether Marx knew of these discussions is impossible to say, although the Reform League Executive included members of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), who might possibly have kept him informed. At any event, the offer was refused, although contacts were not altogether broken off. When the Provisional Government drafted its Declaration of the Republic, it was taken to Charles Bradlaugh for his comments on how British workers would respond to it. What emerged was a document that is arguably more radical than that of 1916. The rising itself that was staged in Ireland in March 1867 was a fiasco. Some thousands assembled in Dublin and Cork in appalling weather, without weapons and with their leaders under arrest or in hiding, and were dispersed by police and troops. Certainly nothing took place that would have compelled Marx to revise his opinions on Ireland.¹⁷

* * *

The incident that was to launch the train of events that decisively changed Marx's attitude took place on 18 September 1867. A band of about thirty Fenians ambushed a police van in broad daylight in Manchester and freed two prisoners, Colonel Thomas Kelly and Captain Timothy Deasy, both leading Fenians. In the course of the rescue a policeman was shot dead, and a number of other people were wounded. The rescue itself was a considerable propaganda victory for the Fenian organisation in Britain, but was to be completely overshadowed by the events that followed. After a wave of arrests in the Manchester area, five men were eventually singled out to stand trial for the rescue. It was in the campaign to save these men from the rope that Marx revised his opinions on the Irish Question.

The analysis that Marx had developed in *Capital* appeared to preclude the establishment of an independent Irish state, and consequently excluded the Fenian movement in Ireland from consideration as a force for change. He thought Fenianism in America a bigger threat to the British Empire. The development of working-class politics in Britain overthrew this interpretation: real class forces invalidated theory. The campaign for working-class solidarity with the Fenian prisoners, a campaign that was not initiated by Marx, but by radicals such as James Finlen, Charles Bradlaugh, George Odger, Ernest Jones and Benjamin Lucraft, forced him to reassess his attitude. From being only a peripheral concern, now that the Irish Question appeared at the centre of British working-class politics, it became central, and he desperately struggled to understand it.

The question of solidarity with the Fenian prisoners was carried into the Executive of the Reform League where there was a split over the issue. On 23 October an attempt was made by moderates on the Executive to disassociate the League from the Fenians. This was hotly contested by a militant faction, who were in the main also members of the International, and argued in support of the Fenians. George Odger, a member of the General Council, declared that if he were Irish then he too would be a Fenian; Benjamin Lucraft forcefully defended their right to use force in their struggle. Eventually a compromise was reached whereby a call was issued for clemency for the Fenian prisoners, but the League disassociated itself from the methods of secret societies.¹⁸ On 2 November 1867 Marx wrote to Engels about this affair: 'You will have seen what a row "our people" kicked up in the Reform League. I have sought in every way to provoke this manifestation of the English workers in support of Fenianism.' As a postscript, he added: 'Previously I thought Ireland's separation from England impossible. Now I think it inevitable, although after separation there may come federation.'¹⁹ This was a remarkable admission. Engels, one suspects, was a supporter of Irish independence of considerably longer standing, not least because his common law wife, Lizzie Burns, was a fervent

Fenian sympathiser and was familiar with Fenian circles in Manchester.²⁰

On 7 November Marx again wrote to Engels and described to him two Reform League branch meetings held on 31 October and 5 November:

At the meeting at which Colonel Dickson presided and Bradlaugh made a speech about Ireland, our old Weston, seconded by Fox and Cremer, tabled a resolution for the Fenians which was passed unanimously. Last Tuesday, too, there was a stormy demonstration for the Fenians during Acland's lecture on the Reform Bill in Cleveland Hall (above our heads, we had our meeting down in the coffee room, which is in the basement). This business stirs the feelings of the intelligent part of the working class here.²¹

The climax of the campaign in solidarity with the Fenian prisoners occurred in Clerkenwell. On 17 November a large meeting was held on Clerkenwell Green and elected a delegation to petition the Home Secretary on behalf of the prisoners. The following day some seventy working men arrived in Whitehall at the Home Office, only to be told that Gathorne Hardy, the Home Secretary, refused to meet them. They promptly occupied the building and held an impromptu meeting where they decided to call another demonstration on Clerkenwell Green. On 21 November between 20,000 and 25,000 people assembled on the Green to hear speeches condemning the executions that were due on the coming Saturday. The Sunday immediately afterwards a large demonstration marched from Clerkenwell Green to Hyde Park in honour of the dead men.²²

While working-class feeling in London appears to have been widely sympathetic to the Fenians, this was not true everywhere. In the Midlands and the north of England, there was often bitter hostility between Irish and English workers. That summer of 1867 had seen sectarian riots in Birmingham which had overwhelmed the police and required the intervention of 400 troops. Similarly, in Lancashire there was considerable bitterness that was to break out into sectarian rioting in the summer of the following year, 1868. The most violent incidents were at Ashton-Under-Lyne, where English working-class mobs rampaged through the Irish ghetto district, killing one Irishman, and wrecking homes and shops. One account described how 'Frontages of streets had disappeared and the pitiful remnants of the tenants' belongings were strewn about ... [the] church had been saved by the Fenians of Manchester, who guarded it with revolvers, day and night, until the police got the mob in hand.'²³ These events made a considerable impact upon Marx. He was to come to see in the divisions between British and Irish workers the secret of bourgeois domination in Britain.

On 23 November 1867, three men, William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien, were publicly hanged in Manchester for their part in the Manchester rescue. None of them had actually fired the fatal shot and one of them was in all probability not even there. The executions had a tremendous effect. The Irish people rallied behind the Fenian cause as never before. The day after, Engels wrote to Marx:

So yesterday morning the Tories ... accomplished the final act of separation between England and Ireland. The only thing that the Fenians still lacked were martyrs. They have been provided with these ... Only the execution of the three has made the liberation of Kelly and Deasy the heroic deed as which it will now be sung to every Irish babe in the cradle in Ireland, England and America ... To my knowledge, the only time that anybody has been executed for a similar matter in a civilised country was the case of John Brown at Harpers Ferry. The Fenians could not have wished for a better precedent.²⁴

Before the executions, on 19 November, the General Council of the IWMA had held an inconclusive discussion of Fenianism. This was resumed a week later, on 26 November. Marx prepared a speech for this meeting in which he intended to outline the economic effects of British rule in Ireland in some detail and then attempt a characterisation of Fenianism. It was a 'Socialist, lower-class movement', 'not Catholic', influenced by European nationalist movements 'and English phraseology' and Republican. The leadership of the movement was provided by the Irish in America. The Fenian cause was not just one of 'humanity and right, but above all a specific English question'. He intended to criticise the stand taken by the Reform League Executive and end by arguing for 'Repeal as one of the articles of the English Democratic Party.'²⁵

This speech was never delivered. He later wrote to Engels that his health was not too good, and that in the aftermath of the executions 'I would have been forced to hurl revolutionary thunderbolts instead of soberly analysing the state of affairs and the movement as I intended.' Instead, Peter Fox opened the discussion with a good speech, according to Marx, 'for one thing because it was delivered by an Englishman, but proposed an "absurd" and "inane" resolution'. What is most interesting about Marx's account of this meeting is that towards the end of the letter he reveals the extent to which he was still unsure of his ground: 'The question now is what shall we advise the English workers?' Remember, this was written on 30 November 1867, at a time when the Irish Republican Brotherhood had been a political force in Ireland for nearly seven years and nearly nine months after their abortive insurrection! He answered himself:

In my opinion they must make the Repeal of the Union (in short the affair of 1783, only democratised and adapted to the conditions of the time) an article of their pronunciamento. This is the only legal and therefore only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be admitted in the programme of an English party.

While this was all that an English party could advocate, Marx considered that the Irish themselves should fight for independence, an agrarian revolution and protective tariffs against British industry. He ended: 'Before I present my views to the General Council ... I would like you to give me your opinion in a few lines.'²⁶

What can be taken as his finished opinions at this time were embodied in a speech that he delivered to the Communist Educational Association of German Workers on 16 December 1867. Here, he emphasised the transformation that had been underway in Ireland since the Famine, making the point that many English radicals failed to see that while the regime in Ireland might now be 'less barbarian in form' than before 1846, it was in many ways more destructive, 'leaving no alternative but Ireland's voluntary emancipation by England or life-and-death struggle'. Once again the Fenians were characterised as being rooted 'in the mass of the people, the lower orders'. He ended: 'Ruin or revolution is the watchword; all the Irish are convinced that if anything is to happen at all it must happen quickly ... If that does not happen soon the Irish emigration will lead to a war with America.' Then, after independence, the Irish would have to settle the question of landownership.²⁷

Three days earlier an attempt had been made to rescue a Fenian leader, Ricard O'Sullivan Burke, from Clerkenwell Prison. A barrel of gunpowder was exploded against the wall with disastrous effect. Not only was a great section of the wall demolished, but a row of houses opposite was brought down, killing twelve people. It has to be said that this was an accident and that if the rescue had been successful it would have been celebrated as a triumph. In the event, all the efforts that were being made to develop working-class solidarity with the Irish were nullified, for a while at least. The advanced radicals who were arguing in favour of Irish independence were isolated. Marx wrote to Engels that this

last exploit of the Fenians in Clerkenwell was a very stupid thing. The London masses, who have shown great sympathy for Ireland, will be made wild by it, and driven into the arms of the government party. One cannot expect the London proletarians to allow themselves to be blown up in honour of the Fenian emissaries. There is always a kind of fatality about such a secret melodramatic sort of conspiracy.²⁸

One consequence of the explosion was that it helped deliver the Reform League into the hands of the Liberal Party. Support for Irish independence among members of the Reform League Executive had been, as Marx was undoubtedly aware, one of the obstacles in the way of those of its members intent on making the organisation the tail of the Liberals. It is worth remembering that Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule was still nearly twenty years away. The tide of feeling against the Fenians, together with Gladstone's promises of reform in Ireland, swept this obstacle away.

This was a serious blow to Marx, who had hoped for the emergence of an independent revolutionary workers' movement in Britain at this time. All was not lost, however, and he increasingly came to see the Irish Question as the issue upon which such a movement would stand or fall, as the central question of British politics. He threw himself wholeheartedly into the amnesty campaign that was launched to secure the release of convicted Fenians rotting away in prison. On 24 October 1869 the English Amnesty Committee called a demonstration in Hyde Park that was attended by over 100,000 people. This, Marx believed, showed 'that at least a part of the English working class had lost their prejudice against the Irish'.²⁹ This was now his great concern: to combat anti-Irish prejudice and win working-class support for Irish independence. On 29 November Marx wrote in this vein to Ludwig Kugelmann:

I have become more and more convinced – and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class – that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England herself is crippled by the strife with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England.³⁰

This point was developed further in a Confidential Communication that Marx sent to the Executive of the German Social Democratic Workers' Party towards the end of March 1870. He was concerned here to defend the continued residence of the General Council of the IWMA in London. While the initiative for the revolutionary struggle would probably have to come from France, he argued, only Britain could serve as the lever for a serious economic revolution. Britain was

the only country where the capitalist form embraced virtually the whole of production. It was the only country where the majority of the population were wage-earners, and where the class struggle and trade union organisation had acquired a degree of maturity and universality. Moreover, the General Council had its hand directly on this great lever of proletarian revolution. The material prerequisites for social revolution were all present in Britain, all that was lacking was the spirit of generalisation and revolutionary fervour on the part of the working class. Only the General Council could supply this and thereby accelerate the revolutionary movement, not only in Britain, but everywhere. Britain, he emphasised, was the metropolis of capital.

From here he went on to argue that if England was the bulwark of landlordism and of European capitalism, then the point to strike at England was in Ireland. If landlordism fell in Ireland, then it would inevitably fall in England. Moreover, there was more chance of overthrowing landlordism in Ireland because the struggle for land was the exclusive form of the economic struggle there, and because the Irish people were more revolutionary than the English. Landlordism in Ireland survived solely because of the British army, so that the moment the two countries separated a social revolution would break out. This revolution would not only deprive English landlordism of a great source of wealth, but also of its moral justification, that is, of representing the domination of England over Ireland. There was also the question of the way in which the bourgeoisie had used Irish immigration into England to keep down the working class, successfully dividing the proletariat into two hostile camps. The average English worker regarded the Irish worker in much the same way as the poor whites in the southern states of America regarded the black slaves. This antagonism, artificially nourished, was the true secret of how the bourgeoisie maintained its power. England was proof that any nation that oppressed another forged its own chains. The position of the IWMA was clear: it encouraged the social revolution in Britain and to this end 'a great blow must be struck in Ireland'.³¹

In a letter to the Lafargues that same month, he made the same point:

You understand at once that I am not only acted upon by feelings of humanity. There is something besides. To accelerate the social development in Europe, you must push on the catastrophe of official England. To do so, you must attack her in Ireland. That's her weakest point. Ireland lost, the British 'Empire' is gone, and the class war in England, till now somnolent and chronic, will assume acute forms.³²

For Marx, the Irish Question had become the central question of British politics. This was not because he thought solidarity with the

Fenians was an overriding moral duty, or because he regarded national liberation as in itself of central importance. What was crucial was what he believed to be the strategic importance of the Irish Question for the class struggle in Britain. This was the perspective from which he approached the Irish Question: what were its implications in terms of the consciousness and independence of the English working class? He concluded, mistakenly I believe, that it held the key to transforming the British working class into a revolutionary class, to detaching it from the bourgeois order. In reality, it was only part of the problem. At any rate, for Marx, the task of the General Council of the IWMA was to convince British workers that the emancipation of Ireland was the first condition of their own emancipation. Engels was to have made the main theoretical contribution to this work and was to prepare a book on the Irish Question, 'from our standpoint'. Much of late 1869 and early 1870 was devoted to this task. He finished the first chapter, and compiled voluminous notes for the rest of the book, but the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune intervened before he could finish it.³³

* * *

The 1871 Revolution in France failed to stir the British working class as Marx had hoped, and precipitated the decline of the IWMA. Confronted with the reality of revolutionary struggle, many of the International's erstwhile supporters, Odger and Lucraft among them, far from being infected with greater militancy, retreated into greater moderation. This was a demoralising experience from which Marx never really recovered.³⁴

The collapse of Marx's efforts at building a revolutionary workers' movement in England coincided with the failure of the IWMA's attempt to establish itself in Ireland. In July 1871 the organiser of the English Amnesty Committee, Joseph Patrick McDonnell, a leading Fenian, was elected on to the General Council and appointed Secretary for Ireland. Branches were established in Cork, Dublin and Belfast in Ireland itself and in London and Bradford in England. From the very beginning, they were exposed to the reactionary backlash that followed the Commune. The Cork branch was denounced in the press and from the pulpit and, despite considerable initial success, was driven out of existence. A number of its members were blacklisted so effectively that they were driven from the city. By the end of 1872, the organisation in Ireland had foundered, broken by middle-class hostility and clerical intimidation.³⁵

By now, Marx's whole Irish strategy was in ruins, and he never again referred to it. Similarly, Engels never bothered to finish his book on Ireland. It was no longer relevant. Was Marx's assessment of the

strategic importance of the Irish Question then incorrect? In essence, he explained the failure of the British working class to develop as a revolutionary class through the ability of the bourgeoisie to divide British and Irish immigrant workers. This was his starting point. The way to overcome this division was to win British workers to support Irish independence. Once independence was achieved, there would be an inevitable social revolution in Ireland that would sweep away landlordism. The destruction of Irish landlordism would, in turn, severely damage English landlordism of which it was an extension, and undermine the English establishment's moral claim to exercise power.

There are two serious objections that can be made to this schema. First of all, that Marx considerably overstated the likely impact of the overthrow of landlordism in Ireland. He exaggerated the extent to which British landlordism was dependent on its Irish connection. The very success of the Land War and the Plan of Campaign of the 1880s was to demonstrate that the destruction of Irish landlordism was a secondary consideration for the British state.

The second objection is that Marx seriously underestimated the strength of reformism and nationalism within the British working class. He thought they were relatively superficial phenomena that could be explained away by the presence of Irish immigrant workers in Britain or by the continued subjugation of Ireland across the water. Undoubtedly, these two factors produced much of the chauvinism and racism that gripped large sections of the working class, but this can best be seen as a symptom of the containment of the working class within bourgeois society rather than the cause. Working-class reformism and nationalism had their origins in the complex development of class relations in Britain since the early 1840s and even before. The Irish Question was a factor in this development, but by no means the decisive factor. Anti-Irish prejudice was too weak an explanation to carry the massive weight of the reformism and nationalism that permeated the British working class. Clearly, then, the importance that Marx assigned to the 'Irish' strategy that he had formulated in 1869-70 was mistaken, and, moreover, was shown to be mistaken by the end of 1872. But while mistaken as a strategy, the fight that he conducted within the British working class in support of the Fenian prisoners and the cause of Irish independence was still of considerable importance and had a degree of success. What it was not, however, was the means to transform the British working class into a revolutionary class. That was a problem of a different order.

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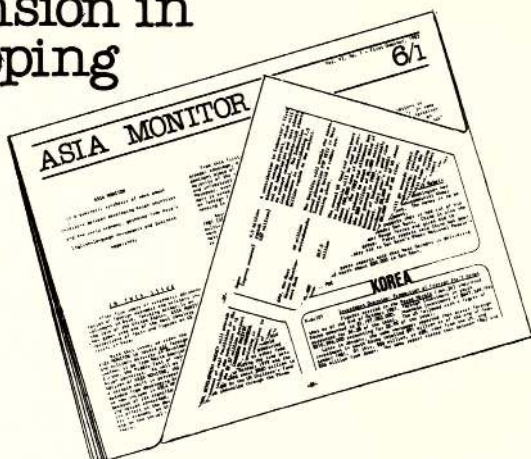
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Notes and documents

Jamaica and the electoral coup of 1980

In the early morning of October 14, 1980, Roy McGann held his hands in the air and said: 'I am Roy McGann, Member of Parliament, Minister of Security.' Cpl. Errol Whyte, his police bodyguard, also raised his hands in the air and shouted, 'Whyte, Whyte, Police, Police!' The only answer which Roy McGann and Errol Whyte got was a barrage of bullets and death from police rifles.

McGann and Whyte were not even seeking to exercise any constitutional rights; they were identifying themselves as members of the government and of law enforcement agencies. They were cut down by reactionary terrorists (in Gordon Town, Jamaica).¹

Why was a member of the elected government murdered for the first time in Jamaican history? How was the democratic socialist Peoples' National Party (PNP) administration, which was overwhelmingly returned to office in 1976 in this black Caribbean nation, replaced by a right-wing regime led by a white man born in Boston? What was the role of the US in all of this? Finally, what has befallen the Jamaican people since the transfer of state power in 1980?

The election of the PNP government, led by Prime Minister Michael Manley, in 1972 was 'a result of widespread social protest against inequality, unemployment and foreign domination brought about by the rapid economic expansion'² under the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) (1962-72), and, in order to respond to this protest, the PNP government instituted programmes and policies 'aimed at the redistribution of income and economic power and securing greater national control over the economy'.³ These programmes and policies included the land

reform programme, rent and price controls, the bauxite levy which asserted national control over the industry, free universal education, school uniform subsidies, legislation to ensure the rights of labour, of women and of children, the expansion of public services into rural parts of the country, and the adult literacy programme, all tremendous accomplishments.

The 1980 election, like the elections of 1972 and 1976, was not a Tweedle-dum/Tweedle-dee affair, as could be said of earlier contests between Michael Manley's father, Norman Manley, and his cousin, the JLP's Alexander Bustamante. The younger Manley and Edward Seaga may have both come from 'privileged backgrounds', though not from the twenty-one leading families of the domestic ruling class, but what they and their parties represented were very different indeed.

Internationally speaking, Seaga openly courted Reagan and Southern racist US congressmen prior to the election and, since October 1980, has 'made friends' with the Chilean and Salvadorean juntas, the Marcos dictatorship and so on, whereas Michael Manley and his administration related to Africa, to African liberation movements and to progressive governments in Europe and in the Caribbean Basin – such as Grenada, Nicaragua and Cuba. Seaga is not only aligned with the multinationals and reactionary, repressive governments, but at home with the domestic ruling class, the twenty-one families mentioned, most of whom are 'socially white'. The PNP, on the other hand, relates to the Jamaican working masses, who are of African origin. This was documented as recently as six months after the election in a poll by *Gleaner* columnist and JLP supporter Carl Stone.

Michael Manley himself has become a world-respected figure – a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement, in the Socialist International – and has retained that respect since leaving office. There is nothing comparable to say about Mr Seaga so far.

So why did the PNP lose the election of 1980? Part of the answer lies in what Norman Girvan* and Richard Bernal (1982) described as the IMF dependency syndrome. Whenever the PNP felt compelled to seek external financial assistance, the terms imposed by the IMF brought more and more economic grief on the people, causing the social programmes to be abruptly cut back or eliminated. Jamaica became so burdened by debt, that this, in conjunction with worsening world economic conditions (which, of course, affect a developing country much more profoundly), almost 'destroyed [the PNP's] credibility and made it difficult after the 1980 break [with the IMF] to convince the public it had a feasible economic alternative'.⁴ Nonetheless, in spite of

*Norman Girvan, the former Technical Director of the National Institute of Planning under the PNP administration, was one of the two government negotiators with the IMF and other financial lending institutions during 1979 and 1980.

the hardships that the Jamaican masses endured, they continued to give the PNP their support, though by a smaller margin than in 1976, according to independent polls conducted by the *Jamaica Daily News*.

The deciding factor, then, was the well-orchestrated, well-financed destabilisation campaign waged by the CIA and certain interests in the US, in conjunction with the local reactionary element of the JLP, which led to the deaths of more than 750 innocent women, men and children.

Historically, the Jamaican people have a tradition of rebellion and resistance to oppression dating back to the Maroons in the 1600s who refused to be enslaved by, first, the Spanish, and, later, the British. However, by the 1960s a new phenomenon had emerged, a pattern of internal violence which stemmed from a number of conditions. Economic and social frustrations had developed in the 1950s as a result of the 'lag between the development of the structure of labour division and economic structure as a whole ... which produced increasing unemployment and underemployment'.⁵

Thus, we find in Kingston in the mid-1960s the development of open political warfare between lumpen elements in the hire of rival party groups. The 'Jamaican style' system of political rewards fuelled the violence, though up until 1966 the number of Jamaicans killed was less than seventy per year.⁶ State violence, encouraged by the then Prime Minister Shearer, characterised the post-1968 period as he attempted to 'woo' the support of the Jamaica Constabulary Force away from the PNP and to contain the rising black power movement. The 'unfettered' police then 'directed their wrath against the lumpen, the criminal class that had been mobilised for political warfare'.⁷

But while hand-gun violence around elections existed in the 1960s, it was nothing compared to what occurred in 1976 and, to a greater extent, in 1980, with M-16s and M-1s wielded by terrorists in military precision and directed to a large degree at helpless old women and children. As *Covert Action Information Bulletin's* Ellen Ray and Bill Schaap stated:

The violence preceding the December 1976 vote was indiscriminate: arson, food poisonings, shootings, seeming to have little focus or pattern – sheer terrorism. The hand of the CIA from a large and active station in Kingston was evident. Following Henry Kissinger's threats to Michael Manley over his support for the MPLA in Angola, violence escalated dramatically. Jamaicans were shocked as a wave of shootings and arson swept the island, terrorising the population and leaving hundreds dead or maimed. The terror culminated in the horrible Orange Lane fire in which a band of 50 armed paramilitary gunmen burned a block of tenements to the ground, forcing those attempting to flee back into the flames. At the

same time, documents and weapons discovered in the possession of JLP leaders outlined a plan for a military coup with US help before the elections ... But the campaign was unsuccessful, and after Manley's landslide victory, economic penetration and destabilisation were given a chance.⁸

The local capitalists' efforts during the 1974-6 period had left the Manley government with a serious foreign exchange shortage and the continuing world economic crisis aggravated the situation for Jamaica. As negotiations with the IMF halted in early 1980 and the final break came, and that major weapon of economic interference was out of the picture, then the reactionaries came on stronger, better financed and more sophisticated.

Striking parallels between the situation in Chile during the months before the September 1973 fascist coup and the situation in Jamaica have been drawn out by Dr F. Landis in the evidence he gave to the Public Citizens' Enquiry into the Media, 17 May. The focus of the *Gleaner's* 1980 campaign, just like *El Mercurio's*, became the security forces, not the masses as they supported the PNP.

Dr Landis showed the *Gleaner's* use of headlines which did not match stories but which were put there to carry forward pre-planned CIA psychological warfare themes. The character assassination of the people's leaders, the creation of violence, so it could be reported on and blamed on the government, the left forces and on Cuba, continual themes of economic chaos, articles linked up with columns, editorial and political, advertisements designed to stir up discontent in the security forces.⁹

Manley, like Allende, in his commitment to an unfettered press, refused to shut down the paper even though it was obviously contributing to undermining the PNP government. And the US press did its best to portray Jamaica in the most negative light, which virtually destroyed the tourist industry, a major source of foreign exchange. (In fact, it did such a good job that the new JLP government had difficulty in 1981 in stimulating Americans to return in any numbers in spite of a slick, expensive publicity campaign.)

In the summer of 1980, after an abortive coup attempt in Jamaica, two editors of *Covert Action Information Bulletin* visited the island to investigate charges of CIA intervention. They 'named names' of CIA agents in the large Kingston station and wrote an extensive article detailing evidence to support the charges, listing a number of incidents which were similar to the 1976 campaign to topple Manley. These included the burning down in May of a home for destitute old women, in which 150 were killed; systematic gun attacks on Kingston Public Hospital, which caters to the poor; threats against foreign doctors

working in Jamaica warning them to leave; unexplained and unannounced power cuts, particularly when the Prime Minister was scheduled to make a major speech; an attack on homes in the impoverished Greenwich town area by at least five gunmen, in which seven people were killed. Reports reached Jamaica in late May describing a black mercenary army being trained in Florida to fight for the ‘“liberation”’ of an unnamed Caribbean island. Only blacks were being recruited, with Vietnam war veterans given a preference.’

On his trip to the US, Seaga ‘predicted’ more violence in store for Jamaica. Upon his return, his prediction was mirrored in further gunfighting, most of it coordinated and focused. Gangs of youths who were known to have little money and no resources suddenly had vague ‘jobs’ getting \$100 a week, motor-scooters, and a gun. Killings continued, with PNP cadre and election workers most frequently the targets. Some of the gang members, killed in shootouts, were discovered to be in possession of large amounts of cocaine. Indeed, eyewitnesses had often described the assailants as drug-crazed or ‘zombie-like’. By late July, more than 350 people had been killed in Jamaica since fall elections were announced in February.¹⁰

A group of Americans had formed the ‘Concerned Citizens Committee on Jamaica’ in early 1980 and visited Jamaica several times in the six months prior to the 1980 election to investigate charges of external intervention. In their 80-page *Report on the Destabilisation of Jamaica*, released on 23 October 1980, they offered evidence which indicated a pattern of US intervention in Jamaica. They showed that US government officials had been directly involved in placing stories in the press aimed at undermining the Jamaican government. The size of the CIA station in Kingston had increased, from nine (in 1976) to fifteen – making it one of the largest in Latin America. (The figures have never been disputed.) US-made semi-automatic weapons like the M-1 and the M-16 began to appear in 1980, as violence assumed a paramilitary character. ‘Armed attacks are mounted by as many as 20 men in an organised group, using modern arms and paramilitary formation ... One source in the Ministry of National Security estimates that some 6,000 weapons have been imported into the country in the last year.’¹¹ The report demonstrated that frequent meetings were held in the March-June period, before the attempted coup of 22 June 1980, between the US military attaché in Kingston, Colonel Lindgren, and senior members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF). Such meetings are not common practice and many were held without prior clearance from the Ministry of National Security. ‘It was also revealed that Lindgren met with Defence Force Officers who were detained later by the authorities on suspicion of attempting to overthrow the government.’¹² And, in July, the Jamaican government requested that flights

by the Evergreen International Airline be suspended, on suspicion that the airline might be engaged in clandestine operations; it is reliably believed to be connected with the CIA. At the end of the report, the Committee recommended that the situation was sufficiently alarming to warrant a congressional investigation of the matter, which was never acted upon.

In early October the then Acting Minister of Security Dunkley received the following evidence from the Marxist-Leninist Workers' Party of Jamaica of another US-backed coup being plotted. The indications included:

1. Preparation to release political prisoners.
2. Knowledge of broadcast transmitting facilities.
3. Contacts with sympathetic foreign armed forces (Argentina).
4. Stockpiling of food and ammunition.¹³

The hospitals and major airport were staked out for 'an emergency' prior to the election by the JDF.¹⁴ Terrorists moved around the entire island, shooting up in tiny rural communities as well as urban Kingston. Faked tapes of the voice of Workers' Party of Jamaica (WPJ) General-Secretary Dr Trevor Munroe appeared and were played privately for soldiers and security forces, which mentioned a death list of military and their families similar to the CIA's 'Plan Z' in Chile.¹⁵ Soldiers harassed youths with PNP and WPJ buttons, forcing youths to eat them or pinning them on their foreheads.¹⁶

During the few weeks preceding the election, a new stage of the reactionaries' efforts to seize power was reached.

On Oct. 7th Prime Minister Manley and National Security Minister Dudley Thompson were shot at by terrorist snipers. On Oct. 12th Eric Hudson, adopted son and driver of PNP MP O.D. Ramtallie, was beaten to death by JLP terrorists. On Oct. 14th Ira Taylor, driver of PNP's Deputy General Secretary and candidate Clive Dobson, was shot and killed in St. James as were Deputy Minister of Security Roy McGann and his bodyguard Errol Whyte. On Oct. 15th Deputy Prime Minister P.J. Patterson was shot at. The next day Minister of Finance Hugh Small was shot at ... after a conversation was picked up on the police radio between two policemen about a plan to kill D.K. Duncan, Hugh Small and Dudley Thompson. On the same day, Perry Stultz, PNP candidate chosen to take the slain Roy McGann's place, was shot at. On Oct. 17th a group being led by PNP candidate John Junior was shot at.¹⁷

So, by election day, security had become a major concern of the Jamaican people, and elements of the Progressive Movement* were

*Consisting of the 'left wing' of the PNP, the WPJ, the PAJ (Press Association of Jamaica), CWP (Committee of Women for Progress), NUDT (National Union of Democratic Teachers) and student organisations.

warning of a coup to overthrow the PNP, as indicated by many police, military and terrorist actions during September and October and by some of Seaga's pronouncements.¹⁸ In fact, security committees were organised in some communities for self-defence.

The hoarding of food by JLP merchants, the deliberate sabotaging of government programmes by disloyal civil servants, combined with the terrorism, made many Jamaicans feel that the PNP administration had lost control of the country and that voting for the JLP was the only way to end the suffering. On election day some 250,000 registered voters out of 990,000 never went to the polls. Many of those in PNP areas who did were shot at. Some ballot boxes were stolen and burned and the rest were collected by the security forces, 80 per cent of whom overtly supported Seaga.

When the WPJ, which had canvassed for the PNP, did a survey of some of those voters, they found that some districts which polled PNP one month before the election, PNP one day before the election, PNP one day after the election, polled JLP in the election. Said Munroe: 'No way could the JLP have won with so many seats ... something is definitely wrong.'¹⁹

And so, the 1980 election in Jamaica was not such a free and fair model; rather, as a former PNP Youth Organisation activist said, 'It was a victory of the CIA at its highest level of consumption!'

Manley's mistakes were in allowing the security forces and other military forces, many of whom were trained by US-AID, to get out of control, to be infiltrated to such an extent; and then, when it was known, not to strengthen the Home Guard, the Jamaican equivalent of a people's militia, something stressed by the WPJ and by progressive elements in his own party.

The PNP leadership made a similar mistake over combating economic sabotage, after the 1980 break with the IMF, in its vacillating attitude toward the Voluntary Price Inspectorate (VPI) programme. This government programme was set up in April 1980 to deal with hoarding on the part of managers or owners who preferred to forgo some of their profits in the short run to achieve what they envisioned as higher profits in the long run under a JLP government.

In one documented case, consumers at John R. Wong, a large super-market in Kingston, were told on 4 October, 1980 that there was no rice, flour or cooking oil. When three VPIs ordered the manager to open the storeroom, they found over 200 5lb packs of flour, some 200 qts of cooking oil, 360 packs of Colgate toothpaste, 720 boxes of Sudsil (detergent), margarine and tin mackerel. Then the VPIs searched the main warehouse and further uncovered over 20,000 lbs of counter flour which management had refused to package, over 1,000 lbs of rice and some salt beef and mackerel.²⁰

Shiploads of food would arrive on the docks in Kingston, but would not reach supermarket shelves for the consumers. Instead, they ended up in storage rooms or warehouses, or, in some cases, employee bathrooms in supermarkets, left to rot while the masses went without. The 26 September 1980 issue of *Struggle* documented several incidents, such as the dumping of 600 lbs of fresh fish, eleven truck-loads of pumpkin, three truck-loads of yams and 600 dozen eggs. At the same time JLP supporters would give away rice and other items while electioneering in some rural areas.²¹ Immediately after Seaga's 'electoral coup', toothpaste, soap powder and lots of imported food suddenly 'appeared' on supermarket shelves, a JLP 'miracle'.

The PNP leadership made an error in not upgrading and expanding the VPI programme to prosecute violaters severely or, better still, to take over the entire food distribution process itself and create people's food co-ops.

Munroe aptly analysed the shortcomings of the PNP.

The problem with the PNP was not that it is in alliance with different classes, but within that alliance, those with the most stake in the existing undemocratic society – the capitalist sector – had too much say over the government, those with the least stake in the existing system – (the working people and their representatives) – had too little power in the party and in the government.²²

Since the election the repressive tendencies of the JLP regime have been shown in, first of all, the virtual take-over of the public media – the firing of 'people-oriented' journalists and their replacement by those who promote the interests of the domestic and foreign ruling classes. In addition, financial pressure was put on the remaining progressive newspaper, *Struggle*, organ of the WPJ, by a 200 per cent increase in printing costs and a new requirement for a \$50,000 bond to be put up in early 1981 before more copies would be printed.

Trade union rights have been under attack, by management's use of the courts to overturn rulings in favour of workers, by harassment of workers seeking to form or join a union, and by JLP thugs or security forces attacking workers on picket lines for the first time since the 1930s. Although terrorism has decreased since the election, it still occurs selectively towards progressive communities and individuals. Needless to say, attacks against workers and their organisations are either not reported in the media or distorted – striking workers are 'subversives', 'communist-inspired', etc.

In spite of the continued police repression, expanded since the election with the infusion of US military aid, and now officially done by a special police force within the police force, called 'The Eradication

Squad' by the Jamaican masses, which has introduced *torture* to the Jamaican people, nevertheless the 'left' is alive and well in Jamaica. And the largest and strongest component, the WPJ, which had a successful Second Congress in December, is gaining support. In local elections in 1981 the WPJ 'tested the waters' and fielded a few candidates for the first time. They managed to garner 16 per cent of the votes cast in their districts, an impressive first showing for a very young party, only three years old.

Historically, there have been cycles of struggle in Jamaica whereby the people have attacked the existing ruling structure, but have not been able to bring such struggles to a successful conclusion, as in 1832, in the 1860s, in 1910 with Marcus Garvey, in 1938, and the recent efforts which began in 1968. Given the history of the country and the stimulation given by progressive movements in the Caribbean and the rest of the world over the past twenty-five years, there is no doubt that the movement will resume: the important question is whether there will be the leadership which will sustain it in the face of more attacks from US imperialism and its allies in Jamaica's small, domestic ruling class. The Workers' Party of Jamaica as well as some very progressive elements in the Peoples' National Party of Jamaica display evidence of the capability to provide that leadership.

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W.E.B. Du Bois: the last years*

Men raised a mountain in your path,
 Steep, perilous with slime,
 Then smouldered in their own hot wrath
 To see you climb and climb.

Countee Cullen

An increasing number of examinations, appraisals and appreciations of the life and works of Dr W.E.B. Du Bois more often than not ignore or write off the last two decades of his vast and singular contribution. This is a dangerous practice. If allowed to continue unchallenged, the full value of that prophetic and immense contribution, much of which remains today as relevant to the cause of black and oppressed peoples as when it was made, will be lost. This would be a disaster. That is, a disaster for black and oppressed peoples. It would be a thing most welcomed by those centres of power in the US who during the last two decades of Dr Du Bois' life were determined to prevent his message and his example from reaching the American people, particularly black people, and who throughout his career despised and feared him.

The first of those two decades – 1944-53 – was dominated by an ever-increasing threat of atomic war with the Soviet Union, accompanied by a frenzied, domestic anti-communist hysteria. This hysteria reached its peak for Dr Du Bois – and for black dissidents – with his indictment and trial in 1951, for advocating and working for peace, friendship with the Soviet Union and democracy at home. The second decade – 1954 to his death in 1963 – was dominated by a vindictive campaign waged by the centres of power in the US to destroy his image as scholar, activist and leader of black Americans in the pursuit of our civil and human rights.

Through it all, Dr Du Bois was steadfast and uncompromising in his commitment to black people. He saw that war would set back for decades the cause for which he had fought for more than fifty years. He knew that war would stop and hold back the forward march of the peoples of Africa who were nearing victory in their long struggles to

*We are pleased to publish this article which was rejected by *Crisis*, the journal that Du Bois founded.

throw off the shackles of colonialism. He also feared that war would threaten the most noble experiment of our time in the social organisation of human relationships, exemplified by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: the attempt to create a classless society in which production for use rather than for profit would guarantee the greatest good for the greatest number. These beliefs, together with the widely held conviction in the US that old age is a valid reason to discard a human being, determined the course of Dr Du Bois' life in his last two decades.

Those last two decades began ominously for Dr Du Bois. His retirement in 1944, from Atlanta University, where he had for ten years headed the Department of Sociology, was without warning or prior consultation, thus unprepared for. It was essentially the result of petty academic jealousies and fears of loss of financial support from white sources opposed to Dr Du Bois' uncompromising commitment to black protest. It came when he was hard at work setting up a vast programme of cooperative social studies at Atlanta for the development and expansion of black Land Grant colleges throughout the US south. This programme had won the support and cooperation of twenty presidents of Land Grant colleges, as well as the presidents of Atlanta, Fisk and Howard universities. Important federal agencies and officials supported the programme. Scholars and scholarly journals from across the country hailed it. Atlanta University, as home of the programme, gained wide notice and prestige, and Dr Du Bois' personal status eclipsed that of any other Atlanta University figure. Consequently, his sudden retirement was an earth-shaking blow to him. He has written:

without a word of warning I found myself at the age of 76 without employment and with less than \$5000 of savings. Not only was a great plan of scientific work killed at birth, but my own life was thrown into confusion. I felt the world tottering beneath my feet.¹

The plan died a year or two later, despite a valiant attempt to carry it on by historian Dr E. Franklin Frazier at Howard University.

It was against this background that Dr Du Bois came to New York City in 1944, as Director of Special Research for the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), and into a continuing association with my mother, Shirley Graham; an association that was to last until his death nineteen years later.

Up to this point in his long and turbulent career, Dr Du Bois had severely limited his professional and social contacts with white Americans. He had done so because he was easily and deeply injured by insult or slight, exceedingly proud and naturally shy. His work had put him into contact with white colleagues with whom he was always civil. But few, very few became trusted friends. Now, at 76 and still

vigorous in health, most of his close black friends and associates were either dead or incapacitated. He had been abruptly severed from his Atlanta University link to his long work for and devotion to the development and expansion of higher education for black youth. His move to New York City and the NAACP, under the shrewd, money-wise, dictatorial control of Walter White, dismayed him. There were immediate and serious problems over his role within the NAACP and his freedom outside it which were never resolved. This led to his dismissal in 1948.

Meanwhile, eager to maximise her effectiveness as a writer, Shirley Graham had joined a writers' group which, under marxist influence, believed writing and all art should serve the cause of the liberation of oppressed peoples. Through this group she was drawn into active political work during the 1944 US presidential campaign for the re-election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and into working and social contact with many of the country's leading, white, liberal and progressive writers, artists, film and stage personalities, scientists and other professionals.

Inspired by these associations and determined to prove to Dr Du Bois that, despite his advanced age, his rejection by Atlanta University and his increasing difficulties at the NAACP, there were those in America of influence and status who admired and respected him for his great works and were eager to benefit from his wisdom, understanding and experience in any way he chose to make it possible, my mother gradually drew Dr Du Bois into contact with leading figures of this new, progressive movement. They all knew of this towering giant, but none had met him, or expected they would. In his presence, even in their own eminence, they behaved like disciples at the feet of the prophet.

Slowly Dr Du Bois found these white Americans to be of a different breed from those who early in his career had discouraged him from seeking out or desiring white company. In the main, they were young in spirit, intelligent, enthusiastic and committed to helping create a better world. In the face of the cold war, anti-communist hysteria of the period, many were exceedingly courageous.

In the autumn of 1948, the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions – an outgrowth of the 1944 Roosevelt campaign – decided to sponsor a Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. Dr Du Bois was asked and consented to be one of the sponsors and a keynote speaker. The Council invited leading world figures in the arts, sciences and professions from east and west Europe, the Soviet Union and Central and South America. The media attacked the Conference and its organisers with cries of 'treason' and 'go back to Russia', in the spirit of the anti-Soviet, anti-communist hysteria of the period. Pickets attempted to prevent participants from entering the

venues of the Conference. Entry visas were denied to many invitees, travel restrictions were placed on those who were permitted entry and local participants were threatened and intimidated.

Nevertheless, Madison Square Gardens was packed to the rafters for the final public rally. And, when Dr Du Bois was introduced and rose to speak, to a person the audience rose to its feet greeting the startled and unbelieving W.E.B. with sustained, thunderous applause, recognition and love. At a time when he had been made to feel his usefulness as a participant in the great events of the day was at an end, a new dimension had been added to Dr Du Bois' role and to his work.

With a passion and a vengeance Dr Du Bois threw himself into the struggle to prevent war. He travelled widely, organised at home and abroad, wrote vociferously and spoke boldly and eloquently of the roots of war in capitalist greed at home and imperialist plunder abroad. He joined the World Congress of Defenders of Peace and attended peace conferences in New York, Paris, Prague and Moscow.

Thus it came to pass that on 9 February 1951, Dr Du Bois and the four other principal officers of the Peace Information Centre – a body set up to inform the American people of peace activities around the world and of which Dr Du Bois was chairman – were indicted. They were charged with 'failure to register as agents of a foreign principle'. Dr Du Bois has told the story of this McCarthyite era indictment, trial and acquittal in detail in his *In Battle for Peace: the story of my 83rd birthday*.

The most devastating blow Dr Du Bois suffered in his last two decades was the refusal of many of his former black colleagues, associates and friends, now prominently and securely established among that 'talented tenth' on whom he had placed so much hope for the future leadership of the race, to stand by him publicly at this time of tribulation. There were exceptions. But, an attempt to secure a dozen signatures of nationally prominent black leaders to a statement in support of Dr Du Bois failed so utterly that it had to be abandoned. Of the thirty or more chapters of his graduate fraternity, which he helped found and of which he had been a member for forty-five years, only one feebly voiced its confidence in him and none aided in his defence. Despite pressure from local NAACP chapters from across the country and his twenty-eight years service to that organisation, the national leadership refused to join in his legal defence and issued a statement which implied his guilt.

On the other hand, Dr Du Bois was heartened and greatly moved by the grassroots black support he received on two national speaking tours undertaken with my mother, now his wife, to explain the case and raise funds for legal fees. Everywhere across the nation, despite repeated attempts at intimidation, threats of violence and almost total white press blackout of the case, blacks in local trade union

organisations, black community groups, including NAACP branches, black churches, youth and social clubs joined local white progressive groups in receiving him, providing sizeable and sympathetic audiences for his lectures and contributing to the defence fund. The local black newspapers, following the lead of the black press nationally, reported the case and urged readers to support Dr Du Bois. He wrote later:

While, then, most of my educated and well-to-do Negro friends – although by no means all – were scared by the war propaganda and went quickly to cover, an increasing mass of the Negro working class, especially the members of the so-called left-wing unions, rallied to my side with faith and money ... My faith hitherto had been in what I once denominated the ‘talented tenth’. I now realize that the ability within a people does not automatically work for its highest salvation ... Naturally, out of the mass of the working classes who know life and its bitter struggle, will continually rise the real, unselfish and clear-sighted leadership. This will not be automatic or continuous, but the hope of the future of the Negro race in America and the world lies far more among its workers than among its college graduates ... ²

The vindictiveness inflicted upon black dissidents by the centres of power in the US is ruthless and unrelenting. Dr Du Bois’ refusal to be silenced, even after the indictment, trial and acquittal, ‘made my enemies and the Federal government take a determined stand to insure my destruction’. ³ Secret police swarmed in the neighbourhood of their Brooklyn Heights home, asking whom he and my mother received. Their manuscripts were refused by commercial publishers. Their mail was tampered with or withheld. Black newspapers were warned not to carry his writings nor mention prominently his name. Colleges ceased to invite his lectures.

It was a bitter experience, and I bowed before the storm. But I did not break. I continued to speak and write when and where I could. I faced my lowered income and lived within it. I found new friends and lived in a wider world than ever before – a world with no color line. I lost my leadership of my race ... The colored children ceased to hear my name. ⁴

During this period Dr Du Bois wrote *In Battle for Peace*, and completed the manuscripts for his three-volume novel *The Black Flame*, ⁵ and his last autobiography *A soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*.

Late in 1958, following a long legal battle, their passports were returned to them. So, early in 1959, in response to countless invitations from around the world, Dr Du Bois and my mother set out to carry his message to eager audiences on three continents. A nine-month voyage

took them to England, France, Holland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. In July 1960, they were guests at Dr Kwame Nkrumah's inauguration as President of the new Republic of Ghana (during which President Nkrumah asked Dr Du Bois to move to Accra and head a secretariat for an Encyclopedia Africana). In November the same year they were guests at Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's inauguration as Governor-General of the new Federal Republic of Nigeria in Lagos.

Forewarned of the expected adverse Supreme Court ruling against the US Communist Party, Dr Du Bois, in a final act of defiance and commitment, publicly joined the CPUSA, and he and my mother pushed forward by six months their planned move to Accra. They arrived in Ghana on 6 October 1961. Here, for more than a year, Dr Du Bois directed the Secretariat of the Encyclopedia Africana. He was kept in comfort and engulfed in a veneration and love only an African society bestows upon its treasured aged. A visit to the renowned geriatrics clinic in Bucharest, Rumania, and a prostate gland operation in London with recuperation in Switzerland and China, interrupted his work on the Encyclopedia, but did not stop it. Only a peaceful death on the eve of the great 1963 March on Washington on 27 August, could do that.

The legacy Dr W.E.B. Du Bois has left us could contribute profoundly to making this world a better place for all who inhabit it, and particularly to the liberation of those millions of the human family still suffering under racist rule and economic enslavement. It is a legacy of devotion to truth; of disciplined work the world needs done; of service to humankind; of pride in self and ancestry and of struggle against colonialism, old and new, monopoly-capitalist exploitation and racism. It is a legacy of unrelenting struggle for the realisation of the democratic ideal propounded by the Founding Fathers of the 'American dream'. It is a legacy of belief in and work for the ultimate triumph of communism. No aspect of that legacy can be ignored or eliminated without distorting and misrepresenting the life and works of Dr Du Bois.

As we live in and experience the world around us, the wise and honest among us grow in wisdom and understanding. The longer that life and the wider that experience, the greater the wisdom and understanding. That's why the last two decades of Dr Du Bois' life cannot be ignored or written off. They contain, both in his actions and in his writings, the most valuable lessons of his long life, the peaks of his wisdom and understanding. Those decades are the closest to our own time and condition. Answers to many of the most basic questions plaguing us today are to be found there. The enemies of Dr Du Bois and black freedom understand this.

Cairo

David G. Du Bois

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Colour persecution on Tyneside: a historical note*

We reprint an edited version of this article not only for its historical interest, but for the parallels it throws up with present-day harassment of black clubs, cafes and meeting places.

In recent times we have heard a good deal of the colour prejudice which exists in the Southern States of America, in South Africa, and in other parts of the world, where a dark coloured skin is held to indicate a black heart. But it is not generally known that this virulently diseased outlook on life is seriously spreading in Britain itself.

The most dangerous spread of the infection is to be found in the day-to-day increased persecution by local authorities and officials in various areas. For some fifty years there has been a constant migration of coloured people to South Shields. Indians, Arabs, Somalis, Malayans and Africans have come to the port constantly as seamen and many have settled down here and established homes. Some of these families have now lived in the town from forty to fifty years. At certain times, usually in a period of social crisis, there have been outbursts of prejudice against them. This was so particularly during the period of economic depression between 1928 and 1934, and has flared up to a new heat since the end of the Second World War.

For a long time before the war it appears to have been considered that the coloured population should live separately from the white, and there are many instances of coloured people being refused improved housing conditions simply because they would thus be penetrating into the closed and sacrosanct white districts. But it was not until September of 1945 that the open campaign of discrimination against the coloured people really began.

On September 24th, 1945, the Chief Constable of South Shields, Mr T.B. Humphrey, made a statement to the local evening paper, the

Shields Gazette, in which he said: 'I am determined to clean up certain cafes in the town. There has been a mushroom growth of them, and ... I can tell you I have been responsible for special investigations in these places for the past eight weeks.' At the same time the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee decided that seventeen cafes should be closed by revoking their food licences.

Now it is a common occurrence for a coloured seaman on retiring from the sea to make his living by opening a cafe. Having settled a home in a port and being no longer able to maintain his family by serving on board ship, he continues to serve the community by supplying food. There is a constant demand for such cafes because many of the coloured people prefer their own forms of food. In South Shields there are a considerable number of such cafes run by coloured people, mainly Arabs, Indians, Somalis and Malaysians. *It was these cafes which the Chief Constable threatened with closure.* With some reason, the coloured people of South Shields took this announcement of the Chief Constable's as a declaration of war by the police on the whole coloured population and as an indication that the police were determined to end the livelihood which they had been gaining from their cafe businesses, and possibly to expel the whole coloured population from the town.

Unfortunately the coloured people did not realise at the time that the only means of combating this police war was to unite together in common defence. Separated by their own prejudices of nationality and creed, most of them considered that the other cafes might be closed but that theirs would remain untouched. Thus, it was not until considerable damage had been done to the coloured people's interests that they learnt from experience and created an organisation for their self-defence.

But the police did not wait until the coloured people had created their organisation. They did not succeed in persuading the Food Control Committee to revoke the seventeen licences. Indeed, it would appear that, afraid of the publicity which would ensue from an interview with the Food Control Committee, they decided to ignore it and to use their own methods to close the cafes.

They immediately set a watch upon these cafes, which bore a striking resemblance in its methods to the activities of the Gestapo. Policemen stood outside the cafe doors and windows, peering in to detect anything which could be used as evidence of the slightest form of improper behaviour. Customers were questioned, identity cards were examined, and the police would frequently stand in the cafes simply staring at the customers in order to embarrass them. On one occasion a hole was even bored in a door to facilitate observation. The cafe proprietors and even other members of the coloured population had their premises searched and were subjected to repeated and offensive questions. As Mr Frank Lambert, a local solicitor, said later, the coloured

population felt itself 'victimised and hounded out'.

If the police wanted to find evidence of food irregularities or of 'immoral' behaviour, they were disappointed. But it would have been perfectly natural if the coloured people had been engaged in the irregular market in food, for many of them were denied the right to obtain many essential commodities to carry on their cafe business. At that time a catering establishment could be licensed to obtain sixty-two different commodities. The leading white establishments were able to obtain the full quota, yet some of the coloured proprietors were able to obtain no more than fourteen. Such essentials as bread, butter, cakes, coffee, fish, tea, potatoes, flour and jam were denied them. Obviously such discrimination was a direct incentive to obtain food illegally in order to continue in business.

But even with the use of these methods the police did not succeed in collecting the evidence necessary to drive the coloured people out. In December of 1945 they tried their hand by prosecuting two Indians in the South Shields local court. The Indians were prosecuted on the grounds that they had permitted 'prostitutes' to assemble in their cafe. When the case was heard before a local magistrate, they were convicted and fined £5 each. They appealed against their conviction, and during the course of the appeal the Judge stopped the hearing and allowed the appeal with costs against the police.

The police were therefore taught a sharp lesson about attempting to persecute coloured people by the normal processes of law. They succeeded, however, in revenging themselves upon these Indians, for by constant interference in their cafe they eventually drove one of them in hopelessness back to India, and the other gave up his business in disgust.

But the South Shields police force were not daunted. They continued their searching of premises and their attempts to drive custom away from the coloured peoples' cafes. But they now realised that the kind of evidence that they were able to collect would not convince a Judge that the coloured people were breaking the law. So they decided to use other methods. On April 15th, 1946, the Chief Constable issued two closing orders under the Defence Regulations, and on May 25th, 1946, a third closing order was issued. The Defence Regulations were a war-time measure to give the police and Home Office certain powers in case of emergency. They violate every principle of British justice, making it possible for a person to be imprisoned without trial, in defiance of Habeas Corpus, and reversing the fundamental British principle that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty.

In the case of the Regulation which was used here, 42e, the police have power, with the consent of the Home Office, to close any cafe or business without any prosecution and simply on suspicion. If they have 'reasonable cause to believe' that certain happenings take place in a

cafe, even if such happenings involve no breach of the law, they can issue a closing order. Once the closing order has been served, the cafe is immediately closed. Simply on the suspicion or dislike of the police, and without breaking any law, the cafe proprietor thus loses his entire business and livelihood. He cannot sell his business, and in effect the entire concern, with all the money he had put into it, is lost for good. The police are placed in the position of being able to make their own laws for the conduct of such businesses, and to be the judges as to whether such laws are carried out. And at the same time those who are supposed to obey such police laws do not even know what they are.

There is, of course, a possible resort to appeal. When the appeal is heard, it is heard by the local magistrates, who are likely to be prejudiced by their local environment. Furthermore, in these appeals it is the cafe owners who are placed in the position of plaintiffs, although they are the accused persons. The police are the defendants and it is the cafe owners who have to prove their innocence. The police do not even need to establish a case against them.

There has only been one appeal so far heard in these cases, that of Ali Hassan Cassim, whose cafe was one of the first to be closed. The police alleged in his case that prostitutes and their associates were served on his premises. Prostitution is illegal in this country but it is no offence to allow a prostitute to eat and drink. In Cassim's case the whole police evidence was torn to pieces by his barrister, who on two occasions tripped the chief police witness into contradicting himself. The police were unable to prove that any single one of Cassim's customers was a prostitute and had to admit frankly that no law had been broken in his cafe. Yet the local magistrate dismissed Cassim's appeal.

It was this action of the police which eventually taught the local coloured people that they must either stand and fight together or leave the country. It was hardly coincidence which led the police to choose one Arab, one Indian, and one Somali cafe for closure. But this selection has taught the coloured people that national prejudices must be overcome, that the attack is upon all and that they must unite. With the backing of the Pan-African Federation the coloured people got together to begin the task of forming a coloured peoples' organisation.

The organisation, now known as the Tyneside Inter-Racial League, has discovered that the coloured population has many more difficulties than the question of cafes alone. It is the persecution of the cafe owners which has been the most spectacular example of colour prejudice, but a whole multifarious selection of seamen's problems and social questions have come within the orbit of the League's work. It is encouraging to note that since the League was formed persecution has decreased and the rest of the seventeen cafes remain open. It is the aim of the League to destroy this colour prejudice entirely and to build up a firm friendship based on equality and respect between the white and

coloured peoples of this district. Hard and difficult times are coming for the sea-going population and their families. A determined effort has already begun to destroy the evils of British imperialism. A new world is being built. All these factors make it imperative that the common people of all colours shall know, understand and respect each other. We hope that our League in South Shields will spread its work throughout the area, will co-operate with similar organisations throughout the world, and will prove an important influence in the realisation of this aim.

Tyneside Inter-Racial League

Mary Winters (Secretary)

J. Hatch (Chairman)

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Book reviews

Capitalism, the highest stage of imperialism? Warren and the Third World

Imperialism: pioneer of capitalism

By BILL WARREN (London, New Left Books, 1980). 274pp. £3.95

Imperialism, says Warren, is good for us – us denizens of the Third World, that is – because it is the vehicle, the agent, the harbinger of capitalism. And capitalism, we have on Marx's authority, raises the level of our productive forces and raises us from misery and tyranny and the dark night of our souls.* More, it creates a real proletariat who can make a real revolution, not the sort of half-arsed working class you get in the Third World these days, a working class sold on bourgeois nationalism and electing to fight 'external alleged enemies' instead of their own ruling class – thereby inveigling western marxists into confusing 'the socialist working-class movement in the industrialized capitalist countries' with 'the intrinsically bourgeois' nationalist anti-imperialist movement of the Third World.

And if there is any lingering doubt that imperialism is good for us, Warren is quick to assure us that it is nevertheless temporary – for,

*Marx also warned against 'transforming my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the general path of development prescribed by fate to all nations ...'

whatever Lenin may think, imperialism declines as capitalism advances. Once, that is, imperialism has delivered itself of capital and set it on its way, it goes away and dies, letting a thousand capitalisms bloom – inter-dependently – ever after. Imperialism's task in fact is almost over, for we are already in 'an era of declining imperialism and advancing capitalism'. Capitalism, quite clearly, is the highest stage of imperialism.

Imperialism, in other words, creates its own contradiction in creating Third World capitalism, and capitalism creates its own contradiction in creating the working class that is destined to overthrow it. The result: socialism.

Without imperialism, then, there is no capitalism (for the Third World); without capitalism, no socialism. So if we want socialism, we had better embrace imperialism.

That in essence is what Warren says to me – shorn of his marxist pretensions, his self-selective statistics, his calling to witness of reactionary writers (from Ram Mohan Roy and Ahluwalia to Gann and Duignan) and his much-vaunted iconoclasm (as though to break icons is in itself a revolutionary act). Perhaps there are other things he says which are significant, such as the cock-up that Lenin made about imperialism to give imperialism a bad name and the moralism of the 'development of under-development' theorists that led them to throw away the capitalist baby with the imperialist bath-water. But these discoveries, momentous though they may be for the marxist playboys of the western world, have no bearing on the lives of Third World peoples for whom imperialism is, first and last, the palpable experience of foreign domination.

It is there in the rice they do not grow (let them eat wheat, says Warren – on PL 480?), in the land they no longer own (but that transforms agriculture and makes for wage-labour), in the shanties they live in (capitalism's 'informal sector'), in the wages they cannot live on (poverty for some now means prosperity for all later: no exploitation, no capitalism), in the jobs they do not have (exaggerated), in the fuel and clothing beyond their reach (they have access to 'durable consumer goods' instead – 'such as bicycles, sewing machines, motorbikes, radios and even television sets and refrigerators' – which 'significantly enhance the quality of life of poor households'). It erodes their culture and humiliates them into political subjugation. And their hatred of it is a visceral hatred, individual and collective, transgressing class and invoking popular national resistance.

It is the racial arrogance of western 'marxists' like Warren that interprets nationalism as the continuing ploy of a venal bourgeoisie and not the resistance of a people to unceasing oppression. The bourgeoisie did not create nationalism; imperialism did that. What the bourgeoisie did

was to put it to its own uses, often under the rubric of socialism. But such uses have proved to be short-lived – for imperialism, in its Warrenite mission of advancing capitalism, was quick to cast the bourgeoisie in a collaborationist role and alienate it from the people – to install its own polities and regimes. So that, even as Warren was writing, nationalism in the Third World was increasingly taking the form of mass movements directed against its own ruling class and its imperial masters.

Warren's failure to understand the dynamics of Third World nationalism is further compounded by his inability to distinguish between reactionary (bourgeois) nationalism and the revolutionary nationalism that combusted the revolutions of Ho and Fidel and Cabral and Mao.

It may be that such revolutions do not achieve for their societies the level of the productive forces that Warren's capitalism could have assured them and therein provide 'a bridge to socialism'. But what imperialism brings into question is not the level of the productive forces but the ownership of the means of production – and what socialism offers is that such ownership shall accrue to the benefit of all the people and wipe out poverty, inequality and injustice. Socialism, for 'the damned of the earth', is not just an economic project coming after capitalism, but an ideology of human worth whose time has come. And they at least – the workers and peasants of the Third World – are having a bash at socialism while Warren's appointed agents of revolution lie in Rip-van-Winkle sleep in the snug arms of Capital.

Equally spurious is Warren's claim that capitalism in the Third World is economically, politically and culturally progressive in the way that western capitalism is. That capitalism is an advance on pre-capitalist modes is not in dispute – any more than that the feudal mode is more progressive than the slave. But Warren's measurements of capitalist progress in the Third World are not just platitudinous; they are also unilinear and one-dimensional – comparing not whole modes but the individual dimensions of each mode: the economic with the economic (unequal exchange is better than no exchange at all), the political with the political (bourgeois democracy is better than pre-capitalist tyranny), the cultural with the cultural (individuality and rationality are better than the herd instinct and superstition). Why not compare instead the economic, political and cultural to each other at once? Where in colonial capitalism, for instance, was there even a suggestion of political democracy except at its end? When did the colonies ever enjoy 'the moral and cultural standards' of capitalism: 'equality, justice, generosity, independence of spirit and mind, the spirit of inquiry and adventure, opposition to cruelty, not to mention political democracy'? And in the neo-colonial (or post-independent if Warren prefers it) era, why has all the GNP that, on Warren's showing, the

Third World has amassed led not to greater political freedom for the masses but less, not to a culture of equality, justice, generosity, etc. but to inequality, injustice, covetousness? And most so in those 'newly industrialising' countries – South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Brazil – where GNP is at its highest?

Quite clearly capitalism's economic project in the Third World has not generated the political freedom and 'the moral and cultural standards' that it did in the West.* The economic, political and cultural dimensions of capital have not kept pace with each other, do not have the symbiotic relationship that reinforces the capitalist mode and allows it to regenerate itself despite periodical crises (not least, by benefit of imperialism). On the contrary, they are in contradiction – precisely because Third World capitalism did not grow out of its own momentum, was not organic to its societies. Imperialism may have pioneered peripheral capitalism, but it neither declines nor allows capitalism to take indigenous root, as Warren suggests. If it did either of these, it would not be necessary to harness economic progress/exploitation to political authoritarianism sustained by imperialist intervention.

To put it differently. The holistic view that Warren has of capitalism is applicable, if at all, to the West, where capitalism had its roots, evolved out of its own internal dynamic and was able to ameliorate the excesses of economic exploitation with political placebos and cultural anodynes. The political system mediated the economic system and culture legitimated it, keeping class struggle within manageable proportions. Force, if used at all, was a last resort. In the periphery, on the other hand, force in all its guises has been the first resort, the *sine qua non* of capitalist exploitation – requiring the political system to be placed outside and above the economic, to act as a cohesive (and coercive) force maintaining the economic order of things. So that the resistance to economic exploitation has also become a resistance to political hegemony, initially expressed in nationalist and cultural terms. Hence the revolutions in these countries are not necessarily class, socialist, revolutions – they do not begin as such anyway. They are not even nationalist revolutions as we know them. They are mass movements with national and revolutionary components – sometimes religious, sometimes secular, often both, but always against the repressive political state and its imperial backers.²

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*Or it could be argued that all that a stunted economy would allow was a stunted political system and a stunted culture. But this is to go over ground that Warren has rejected.

References

- 1 Marx to the Editorial Board of Otechestvenniye Zapiski in *Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1975).
- 2 See A. Sivanandan, 'Imperialism and disorganised development in the silicon age', *Race & Class* (Vol. XXI, no. 2, Autumn 1979).

Blackwater: historical studies in race, class consciousness and revolution

By MANNING MARABLE (Dayton, Ohio, Black Praxis Press, 1981). 208pp. \$19.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper.

The title of this collection of essays by Manning Marable evokes *Darkwater*, a similar collection of historical writings, political journalism, autobiographic sketches and poems published by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1920. But though sixty years divide them, the themes, too, are similar: slavery, capitalism, Christianity, racism, rebellion and resistance. Even in style Marable reiterates Du Bois, consciously drawing from European philosophy and thought the instruments through which the odyssey of African peoples in America is to be measured and judged – each a declaration of the private and public hurts which had driven their authors to a militant black nationalism. History, however, has taken its toll, and though the ideological and intellectual kinship between Du Bois and Marable is undeniable, a vast sea of events and experiences separate their times and their works. Du Bois was then still a decade away from the study of Marx which would lift his historical thought above the romantic tragedies and anguish which characterised his earlier efforts. For Marable, the most acute theoretical moment is Marx descending: 'nothing', he writes, 'in socialist or liberal political theory or practice to date indicates that white radicals and liberals have abandoned their respective infantile economic determinism and unrealistic belief in moral suasion'. In the absence of '“revolutionary laws” of economic development that strictly dictate social and cultural conditions' the liberation of black people rests with the black working class. The progression of his thinking as revealed in these essays suggests how tortuous was his journey to these conclusions.

The essays in *Blackwater* resemble tracings of the mounting rage which in the five or six years which span their writing transform Marable from a dilettante academician to a conscious 'left nationalist' scholar and writer. The first three, historical studies of slave resistance, rebellion and consciousness, reveal the congress of theoretical and ideological contradictions by which he was plagued. Apparently unaffected by the mastery of European radical and critical thought achieved by black American and West Indian radical intellectuals – Du Bois, Richard Wright, Oliver C. Cox, C.L.R. James, George Streater – as

early as the 1930s and 1940s, here we find Marable attempting to capture the significance and meaning of the slaves' movements for liberation in the terms of philosophical traditions which had surrendered historical movement to fantasy. Marable toys with Nat Turner, situating him in the tragedy of Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*, traducing the rebellion into 'a statement of being-for-oneself rather than for the Other's brutal economic purposes'. No hint is given of the terrible physical and psychological strains on the slaves, the collective anger of their community or their historical consciousness. In their stead, Marable posits the coin of the literature of despair founded in Europe upon the rise of fascism, stalinism and the Mannheimian 'decay of history'. It is the same when Marable comes to a consideration of the religion(s) of the slaves. His critique of Genovese's pseudo-Gramscian construction in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is aborted by the interventions of a Sartrean existentialism and an ill-considered Hegelian dialectic. The consciousness of the slaves, he insists, issues from the contradictions of Christian slavery, resulting in simultaneous impulses for conformity and resistance. The first impulse eventually produces a Martin Luther King Jr, the second, Nat Turners and Black Power. Here, historical processes are being bent to philosophical prattle and to add to the paradox it is the philosophic expression of a consciousness of twentieth-century western decadence which is being applied to an alien (African) people who through the nineteenth century were further removed from the moral dilemmas and culture of their masters than would be their children or their children's children. We are to be reminded that between King junior and Genovese's nineteenth-century subjects lay a long season of annihilation of black radical movements, not just the Word. However, this Marable is not inured to history but to abstractions and excess: 'By the middle of the [nineteenth] century, most white Americans no longer hated the black man in a conventional sense; the white culture chose to love the state of passion which hatred inspires.' Inevitably, his attempt to pencil in the appearance of 'blackwater' – an emancipatory consciousness – is unpersuasive. There was no reason for black radical consciousness to await the introduction of Christianity to the slaves. The eruptions of slave rebellions from the sixteenth century in what are now Latin America and the Caribbean and in north America from the seventeenth century make that abundantly clear.

Marable is much more formidable in the later (from 1979) pieces. Though he remains capable of an occasional slip ('Most black people chose freely to live and work in the South after slavery.'), his grasp is surer when he turns to the political and intellectual currents of his time. Here, indeed, he excels as both a political journalist reconstructing the systemic violations of human dignity which precipitate such black rebellions as occurred in Miami and Tampa in May 1980 and in the far

more difficult role of a political analyst recounting both the politics of black nationalism since the Black Power movement, and the byzantine thread of ideologies woven by his comrades in their increasing isolation from mass politics. Anyone concerned with understanding the materials of radical black thought in America will find these essays, and especially 'Through the Prism of Race and Class: black nationalism since the civil rights movement', compelling. There is, though, one other element in these essays to which attention must be paid.

The essays mark a time during which Marable has been deeply involved in the attempt by black progressives to create a national black political instrument. Like most others in the movement, he has been compelled into a consideration of the other social and political forces in that nation with which such a movement might align: feminists, Hispanics, Native Americans, environmentalists, homosexuals, the peace movement, the white left. But as a measure of his political commitment, Marable has seen the necessity of putting forward a common programme of tactics and strategies which would propel these social elements towards the joint realisation of a socialist America. However, a socialist America, Marable maintains, would still be a racist America. It would require, then, the creation of a black socialist state with the capacity of eventually achieving political autonomy. Drawing on the experiences of the Russian Revolution, the Italian workers' councils of the post-First World War period and the First (1860-80) and Second (1960s) Reconstructions, Marable suggests the structures and institutions which would constitute this period of 'dual authority' in America: the Third Reconstruction. In these pages he wrestles with some of the most important weaknesses in socialist theory and practice, both in the critique of capitalist society and the attempt to form socialist societies. Finally, his conclusions proceed from the significance of his realisation 'that white racism predates capitalism'. They are a stunning achievement, lifting this collection far above its prosaic beginnings, and making it one of the more significant examples of Afro-American thought today.

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CEDRIC J. ROBINSON

Aliens and Alienists: ethnic minorities and psychiatry

By ROLAND LITTLEWOOD and MAURICE LIPSEGE (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1982). 278pp. £3.95.

The history of racism is also, at least in part, the history of science. Politics and economics held the black to be inferior to the white; science 'proved' it. In this scientific legitimization and justification of

racism, psychiatry too played its part. The idea that black people could not become insane was popularised by Rousseau and used to argue that people could only be truly happy in a state of primitive simplicity. For the sake of their own happiness, black people were not to be burdened with responsibility. This would be borne by the white Europeans. Later, psychiatry held that slaves were prone to mental illnesses such as *drapetomania*, characterised by an irresistible urge to run away from the plantations(!), while emancipation was opposed on the grounds that enlarged freedom only ended in insanity.

In the twentieth century psychiatry continued to lend its weight to racism. In the 1950s psychiatrists suggested that mental illness among black people was due to an interest in politics, while an American neuro-surgeon who claimed that a large proportion of urban disturbances were caused by brain disease was offered half a million dollars for his research. Scientific racism had obviously reached its peak under the Nazis, but Littlewood and Lipsedge remind us that:

they were only carrying to a logical conclusion racist opinions commonly held throughout Europe and America before the Second World War ... Engels had described the Irish as an incompetent race and Marx wrote of a colleague, 'it is now quite clear to me that as shown by the shape of his head ... he is descended from the Negro ... the importunity of the fellow is also negroid.'

Gradually, the notion of physical and mental illness gave way to social 'disadvantage', more often than not located in the 'disadvantaged' themselves, particularly in pathologies of the black family. But at the same time, racialism itself came to be seen as a mental illness: 'While previously racism had been supported by medicine, it was now explained as the disease of certain pathological white individuals.' The social and political structure was therefore exculpated. The cause was located in a few deviant individuals. 'Racism' may indeed be alienating, but, as the authors note, it offers a 'highly adaptive social mechanism' for the majority of society and, like all successful social mechanisms, is maintained not just by being located in consciousness but by its location in institutions.

Such institutions include psychiatry itself, where black patients receive inferior treatment compared to whites, being less likely to receive psychotherapy and more likely to be given drugs, seeing less senior medical staff and being more likely to be detained compulsorily in mental hospitals. Racism is also reflected in the actual structure of the profession: 'white consultants, Asian junior doctors, black nurses and domestics'. The authors are not so naive as to explain all this in terms of individual prejudice (although their failure to distinguish 'racism' from 'racialism' is at times confusing). Indeed, the thrust of their argument is that psychiatry, having supported racism actively in

the past, either continues to do so now or, at best, fails to locate patients from minority groups in a context which might make their behaviour comprehensible. Operating from a white, Eurocentric perspective, it not only excludes from the process of diagnosis any consideration of the different manifestation of symptoms in different cultures, but uses culture-determined categories which may be of little relevance to those with a different history. In addition, it fails to take into account the patient's experience of migration and his or her encounters with racism. In short, an understanding of the dynamics of racism might lead to a diagnosis and treatment which was radically different. For example, the fact that paranoid reactions are frequently found in migrant populations, including those in Britain, is not only not coincidental but may readily be understood in terms of the migrant experience in a hostile environment, rather than as indicative of the personal shortcomings of the 'paranoid'.

A great part of the book is taken up with questions of diagnosis, and the authors' argument is well-illustrated by actual case examples. What is needed, Littlewood and Lipsedge conclude, is the development of:

a psychotherapy which takes into account the past and present relationship between European and non-European and which, while being sensitive to modes of expression such as religion, nevertheless does not regard minority mental illness as solely a 'cultural problem'.

The scope of this book is considerable and Littlewood and Lipsedge, with commendable clarity, have brought to a lay audience matters of considerable importance which, until now, have been the province of 'experts' and the academic journals.

To this (lay) reviewer, however, there is one major shortcoming. The emphasis of this book, as with all the British literature on the subject, is on immigrants and migrants. Clearly, a transcultural approach in psychiatry can benefit them. But how does it relate to the increasing proportion of the black population which is born in this country and which knows of no other home? What is their experience of psychiatry? How does psychiatric racism manifest itself in relation to them? And how can it be combated? The urgent task of answering these questions and of moving from a transcultural psychiatry to an explicitly anti-racist psychiatry remains to be undertaken.

London

PAUL GORDON

Working for Boroko: the origins of a coercive labour system in South Africa

By MARIAN LACEY (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, and Birmingham, Third World Publications, 1981). 422pp. Paper £7.50.

Much radical writing on South Africa treats racism in functionalist or conspiratorial terms: racism serves *only* the interests of the exploiting classes, is designed to prevent the solidarity of the dominated classes and create a stratum of super-exploitable workers of one colour. As a consequence, the racism of the white workers in South Africa, if not overlooked, is simply ascribed to their manipulation by the capitalists.

It is generally posited, on the other hand, that racism is not an invention of capitalism; racism was there at the inception of capitalism. In a way suggestive of Marx's treatment of the subsumption of the labour process under capital, capitalism found racism at hand and fashioned it to serve its interests. But what receives scant attention is that racism, as a condition prevailing at the beginning of capitalism in South Africa, was carried over into the capitalist era by sections of the dominated classes, the white workers, to defend their own interests against capital.

In her book *Working for Boroko* ('boroko' meaning literally a place to sleep, a pittance), Marian Lacey affirms that racism preceded capitalism and that, in the era of capitalist development in South Africa, 'economic exigencies led the state to foster it and then institutionalise it in law'. She affirms, too, the instrumentalist and conspiratorial theories as when she writes:

As a force in law race became one of the chief instruments for dividing and isolating the working class into two segregated groups. The whites were to be upgraded so that the 80 per cent of the working class who were African could be maintained at an inferior, untrained and ill-paid level. The state's 'white labour' policy was therefore designed in the interests of capital and not the white worker. Even the few concessions that were made to the white worker – at the expense of his African counterpart – were a victory for capital. They destroyed the threat of working-class solidarity by isolating white interests from African ones and dividing the entire dominated group along racial lines. The concessions did still more: they bought off white workers to collaborate with employers in the downgrading of Africans so that their labour would stay ultra-cheap, theoretically for ever.

Racism, to be sure, does serve the interests of capital. What is in dispute, however, is that it does so exclusively. The working class lived yesterday as some other class in another mode of production. In South Africa, large sections of white workers descended from a mode in

which the nineteenth-century Wars of Land Dispossession, various Masters and Servants Acts, as well as a plethora of other social, political and economic practices, had already created a place for them, on account of their colour and conquest, as masters and 'aristocrats' of labour, and had thereby engendered racist ideologies among them. Their insertion as a proletariat, even when they were unemployed or *lumpen*, into capitalism did not lead to the shedding of attitudes of racial superiority over their African counterparts. They, as products of the class struggles of their time believed as strongly as did the employers, that certain forms of labour were only fit for 'kaffirs at kaffir rates of pay' – a phrase which appears several times in Lacey's book, but in which she sees only the manipulative hand of the employers.

It is not as if Lacey is blind to the racism of the South African white workers. For instance, referring to the evidence of Dr Seme, principal founder of the Native (now African) National Congress and its president from 1930 to 1937, to the Native Economic Commission, she states that it 'shows how deeply entrenched was the "kaffir work" myth, an outgrowth of the master-servant tradition of the country'. She finds, too, that what she correctly describes as a traditional relationship was confirmed in evidence submitted to the Carnegie Commission of the Investigation of the Poor Whites in South Africa. This described how poor whites

almost begging for work (like planting trees, trimming a hedge, white-washing walls) ... when given a job, subsequently appeared accompanied by a kaffir whom they in their turn had hired to do the work. Perhaps, they felt themselves to be, in a way, contractors who had to execute the job with their workmen.

Unfortunately, evidence such as this is simply stated by Lacey. Capable only of seeing racism as a capitalist ploy, she does not use the evidence to develop an analysis of the racism of the white workers in South Africa.

What is not in dispute is that, by virtue of their common position as non-owners of the means of production, the black and white sections of the working class have common interests – but only in the last instance, that lonely hour which may never arrive this side of the Azanian revolution! For the present and in the foreseeable future, the working class remains divided, as it has always been, along racial lines, not only vertically but horizontally as well, so that in the hierarchy of labour the black workers occupy the bottom rungs. The white workers are 'bought off', but that is only half the truth; they themselves exploited their advantages to earn and maintain their present status. The concessions which capital made to them are not 'few', as Lacey believes; the massive evidence, transparently obvious but also so meticulously

collected from primary sources by Lacey herself, demonstrates it. As for the class solidarity between black and white workers, which Lacey perceives to have been a threat to capital at various times, she provides no evidence to enable us to share this understanding with her. On the contrary, the book presents much evidence, in spite of Lacey's lack of interest in this aspect of the reality, that it is as a divided class that black and white workers were incorporated into capitalism.

The above criticism of Lacey should not distract from the many merits of the book. Written in more empirical detail than any comparable work hitherto, and covering the inter-war period, it is carefully researched to show how segregationist land policies linked to the disenfranchisement of the blacks laid the basis of a coercive labour system in South Africa. Not excluded from her account is the response in the form of resistance by the blacks to all these measures. And in these respects at least, the book is a valuable addition to the growing corpus of a South African marxist historiography.

London

ROSEINNES PHAHLE

The Long War: dictatorship and revolution in El Salvador

By JAMES DUNKERLEY (London, Junction Books, 1982). 264pp. £12.50 cloth, £5.95 paper.

Speaking as someone who has followed events in El Salvador over recent years closely on a journalistic level, I was afraid that once the subject was turned over to the realms of weightier analysis it would lose much of its human impact. James Dunkerley's book *The Long War*, however, retains this impact and succeeds in two crucial areas which all too often can be mutually exclusive: it is both comprehensively analytical (and manages to maintain a good level of analysis for events even as recent as last March), and it is highly readable.

The author never allows himself or the reader to forget that what he has seen and read of El Salvador quite simply makes him angry – fills him with a deep 'sense of outrage' at 'the butcherous colonels and bankrupt politicians' who have together ruled the roost for the past half century; at the role of the Reagan administration (qualitatively little different from previous Washington regimes, just more up-front about it), whose 'conception of what constitutes a human right approximates more closely to the right of Guardsmen to be given weapons by the US and employ them as they see fit than the right of Salvadorean children to life'.

The pace of the book rarely drops (it is accompanied by the photographs of Mike Goldwater of Network), even when it wades into the complex history of Salvadorean trade unionism. This is an

important section, analysing as it does the development of one of the most sophisticated and powerful workers' movements in Latin America – a movement which, as the stage became clearly set for the onset of civil war early in 1980, was able to mobilise the disciplined ranks of hundreds of thousands of members in demonstrations on the streets of San Salvador. Sniped at by marksmen from buildings nearby, buzzed by the crop-dusters of the landed oligarchy, they provided some of the most impressive displays of worker strength yet seen on the continent.

It is a movement, too, just one small part of which showed how, at the throw of a switch and occupation of the plant, it could shut down the system. From my own experience in March 1979, when the electricity workers stopped work, so did virtually everything: the lights, the water supply system, the petrol pumps, the transport, the bourgeois delights of cooled beer and refrigerated air. Those who needed the latter were left to sweat it out in the heavy humidity of the capital; as the union understood full well, it's not the mass of rural and urban slum dwellers who notice it when the air-conditioning goes off.

As the war has moved into top gear, many union leaders have been killed. But many have gone underground, together with the other members of El Salvador's formerly visible popular organisations of rural and urban workers, now opting for the wiser course of merging forces with the Farabundo Martí guerrillas.

This, however, is to leap over a large chunk of history depicted and analysed so well in Dunkerley's book: the rise of the oligarchy (the 'Fourteen Families') following the concentration of land under private ownership a little over 100 years ago when coffee, and international demand for it, gained sway over Salvadorean society; the crash of the world economy in the 1930s, and with it the mounting unrest in the Salvadorean countryside as coffee bushes were left to waste and meagre wages were halved; the mobilisation of government forces to smash the peasants – the 'white terror' in Sonsonate, the all too familiar discovery by the authorities that 'communists' were creating all the problems. As even a right-wing newspaper noted in 1930: 'Communist' is today a facile expression that is used to condemn any act that is approved by persons who fear the laws of God and man. It is customary in the Republic to call communist any demand for justice.'

The demand for justice blew up into the 1932 rebellion – the toll, 30,000 dead as the military and the 'Families' wreaked revenge on the rebels. As the author notes, all '*indios con machetes*' (i.e., much of the rural workforce) were deemed guilty and slaughtered. Here, perhaps, the author could have said more of 1932 and its racial aftermath. It was the Indians who took the brunt of the carnage as *ladino* (mixed race) racism was allowed, as so often in Latin American history, full vent against people of indigenous stock. Their language, culture and

customs were crushed; today, unlike, say, in Guatemala, the traveller often has to venture into the depths of the Salvadorean countryside to find any authentic semblance of El Salvador's Indian history.

It is the memory of 1932 which inspires today's guerrilla movement. The Farabundo Marti take their name from a leader of that revolt – a man who, as Dunkerley notes, sat arguing with the priest at his last confession, the night before he was executed.

The struggle, however, has since been fuelled by the industrialisation and growth in numbers of the urban poor in the 1960s, the growth of the landless poor (from 12 per cent of the rural population in 1961 to 41 per cent in 1975) and the succession of ballot-box frauds which have turned more and more Salvadoreans from the electoral path to the guerrillas. The colonel who stood for office at the 1962 presidential election had no opponents except for a donkey nominated by the students as 'the only candidate worthy of competing with officialism'.

Learning its lessons from the fate of Guevara, the Farabundo Marti has largely departed from gearing its activities towards a 'dazzling awakening' of the people. It has opted instead for the slower, more patient war of attrition, 'winning space, wearing down the enemy's forces', all part of the strategy of *The Long War*. And there are other struggles; the men and women in the ranks of the guerrillas have to battle their way through the barrier of a *machista* society. 'A real revolutionary is a man who does not beat his wife', says one of the Farabundo Marti's slogans.

The author brings the story up to the present year: the intensification of US military involvement, the folly of the US-promoted elections in March, the farce of the British electoral observers sent by the Thatcher government in support of the Reagan line.

As the author indicates, El Salvador's 'long war' is but a 'moment' within Central America's regional upsurge. It follows on from the battle of the Nicaraguan people to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship three years ago, and it has earned the apparently undying enmity of Washington for daring to challenge the big-stick-inspired status quo. Dunkerley quotes from a US Under-Secretary of State in 1927, but the words could have been spoken today: 'Until now Central America has always understood that governments which we recognise and support stay in power, while those which we do not recognise and support fall.' Bravely, El Salvador's 'long war' seeks to change that axiom of Latin American history.

London

PETER CHAPMAN

Triumph of the People

By GEORGE BLACK (London, Zed Press, 1982). 384pp. £5.95

On 19 July, the Sandinista revolution celebrated its third anniversary. Considering present conditions in Central America, it is an extraordinary achievement of survival. The Sandinistas have incurred the wrath of the Reagan administration, now actively seeking to end the revolution with the CIA, economic destabilisation and a campaign of mis-information in US newspapers. As the US accuses the Soviet Union of intervention in Central America, so Washington pours military and economic aid into the coffers of its military and right-wing friends in Central America. Inside Nicaragua, the problems of setting up a revolutionary state have combined with economic difficulties as the country is forced to organise its defences against outside attack.

So, in the midst of all this, the mis-information and the rhetoric, George Black's book becomes essential reading for anyone who is concerned for the Nicaraguan revolution. 'My primary aim is to break the silence, to give a factual report of what is happening in the new Nicaragua.' He succeeds ably, not just in this but in providing the reader with a wealth of revolutionary history. In three sections, the book charts 'Somocismo and Sandinismo', 'The Overthrow of the Dictatorship' and 'The People in Power'.

The book is meticulous in its presentation of factual information, the writer's knowledge coming not from years of cold research but from involvement as an activist in the international solidarity campaign in support of the revolution. History comes alive as he recounts Cecil B. De Mille's approach to the US State Department for permission to make a film about Sandino, which was promptly denied while the administration looked for a way to defuse public opposition to the war of the 1920s and set up the National Guard in Nicaragua. But the author's evident commitment to the revolution has not revealed itself in an over-rosy view, but rather in the sensitivity with which he relates the errors and failures of the revolution as well as noting the successes.

While putting his extraordinary knowledge to paper, Black has avoided the obsessive labelling of social processes to package them ready for easy consumption by the politico-intellectual. The anti-imperialist, class-based struggle that took place in Nicaragua provided a unique combination of class alliance, political-military leadership from the Sandinistas and mass involvement in the insurrection which finally put paid to the US's favourite son in Central America. Although fluently and energetically written, and well structured through its 360 pages, it requires a good deal of effort and participation by the reader to think through the theoretical implications for the nature of present-day revolution.

The inspiration and importance of the Nicaraguan revolution has

been clearly shown, not just in the increased unity and action of political-military organisations in El Salvador and Guatemala, but in the voracious attack made on it from the Reagan administration. This excellent book provides the means to understand the revolution and the forces that make it. The lessons being learnt in Nicaragua clearly go way beyond the two and a half million people who live there.

London

JANE McINTOSH

The Pursuit of Inequality

By PHILIP GREEN (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981). 320pp.

Hereditarian arguments about the biological inevitability of inequality surfaced in 1969 with Arthur Jensen's 'rediscovery' of the thesis of the genetic basis of differences in intelligence between individuals and groups. Jensen's work was but the first storm cloud of the tempest of inegalitarian writing that was to follow. Zoologists, geneticists, ethologists, psychologists all rushed to put pen to paper to prove that the divisions in status, wealth and power in western industrial societies along class, race and gender lines were inevitable, because they merely reflected underlying biological necessities. What Jensen, Herrnstein, Eysenck, Goldberg and Wilson and their host of sycophantic popularisers set out to show, along with Dr Pangloss, was that whilst we may not live in the best of all *imaginable* worlds, we do live in the best of all *possible* ones; our genes permit us nothing better.

But the biological inegalitarians were soon to find themselves brothers-beneath-the-skin to a group of political theorists of the New Right: monetarist economists like Friedman, grand old gurus like Hayek, right-wing moralist philosophers like Nozick and neo-conservative political scientists like Kristol, to name only those significant in the US. For this group, the inequalities of a racist and patriarchal capitalist state are not *merely* the best of all possible worlds, but the best of all *imaginable* worlds too.

The writings of this group have created quite a stir in what Philip Green would call the knowledge-producing and consuming classes in the US, where they take their cultural battles seriously, despite the fact that it has been in Britain that a government elected on a monetarist ticket came to power first, and where the ideology of biological inequality found its way most quickly on to the streets and into the hands of the thugs of the National Front in England.

One result of the American cultural struggle has been to generate a host of cultural counter-attacks on the New Right, from a variety of positions ranging from liberal to libertarian. Philip Green's book is a sturdily constructed assault on a range of inegalitarian positions from

the position of a social democratic (in the better sense of the term) East Coast political scientist. Where radicals have attacked New Right ideology, and the assumed 'neutrality' of the scientific knowledge that they lay claim to, Green is untouched by the critique of science. For him, Jensen's, Herrnstein's, Goldberg's and others' work is simply shoddy ... bad science, fiddled figures, meretricious arguments ... 'the corrupt use of science'. His method is to take each of the inegalitarians in turn and to devote a chapter to criticising their methods, arguments and logic. He begins with Jensen and Banfield (on race), Herrnstein (class and meritocracy) and Goldberg (sex differences), before proceeding to the political and economic theories of Nozick, Friedman and Kristol. In each case, he is strongest when he argues as a philosopher or logician. When he attempts to get into the internal scientific arguments, he is at the limit of his range, and is often reduced to simply asserting that, for instance, Jensen's table so and so is erroneous, without being able to give either the supporting data, or, often, even a reference in explanation. He lumps the biological inegalitarians together as sociobiologists, but avoids any critique of the central sociobiological figures, such as Wilson (or Dawkins), who he tacitly – and mistakenly – absolves from the sins of those he singles out for attention. And he is on unsure ground in places: Cyril Burt was not a geneticist, Hans Eysenck is not Belgian.

The truth is that whilst this assault on New Right political theory and its assumed biological bases is well intended and, within its limits, well made, it suffers from the disadvantages of running over some very familiar territory. There have been many substantive critiques of Jensen since his *Harvard Educational Review* article of 1969 and *Educability and Group Differences* which followed it in 1973 – notably Kamin's, on which Green draws extensively, or recently (in Britain) Evans and Waites *IQ and Mental Testing*. There is a feeling of staleness about some of the debate. The 'knowledge-producing' class knows all this, and the 'knowledge-consuming class' has other things to consume.

Green's critique of the New Right political theorists is perhaps more relevant to present needs, and on safer ground, as he is no longer treading the dangerous quagmire of the science/ideology distinction. But confronting fascist, sexist and racist ideology on the ground needs more than just logic-chopping, even if in a very real sense the logic-chopping is on our side. Green believes that even without an analysis of the reductionist ideology of IQ, or of genetic 'causation', he can prove Jensen and Herrnstein wrong, and that in the absence of an analysis of patriarchy he can dismiss Goldberg's claims to the inevitability of male domination. Sadly for the social democratic thesis, he is mistaken. We need louder trumpets if the walls of Jericho are to fall.

Open University, Milton Keynes

STEVEN ROSE

African Socialism or Socialist Africa?

By A.M. BABU (London, Zed Press, 1981). 174pp. £4.95.

Post-colonial Africa, which has been in existence for twenty-five years, is in need of a systematic examination of its economic and political record in order that a future might be charted that is free from the unhappy experiences of the past. The struggle against colonialism and imperialism on the continent has continued throughout the post-war era. From Ghana's independence to the victory of anti-colonial forces in Zimbabwe, Africa has continued to be a vastly important theatre in which the major world contradiction between imperialism and national liberation has been working itself out. And there is still the anti-racist, anti-imperialist struggle in South Africa to be brought to a head.

The main characteristic of post-colonial African politics is the struggle between the forces of justice, equality, and self-reliant development (in short, socialism) on the one hand; and, on the other, the forces of neo-colonialism, comprador tyranny, arbitrary military-civilian dictatorship, class aggrandisement of social and economic resources, and oppression of the people in the name of national progress and development. The political consciousness of the African masses has developed, by and large, in a social and political environment characterised by an uneven development of the forces of anti-imperialism. In recent years, anti-imperialist forces have scored notable successes in re-orientating the political future of African countries (e.g., Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Angola), though these efforts are countered by international counter-revolution and domestic resistance by the aspiring petit-bourgeoisie (successfully, for example, in Uganda since 1971, Zaire, Kenya, etc.).

Yet, we are living in an epoch in which capitalism is on the defensive, and the forces of anti-imperialism and national liberation are on the whole on the offensive. It is an epoch in which the proletariat and the peasantry are rapidly developing their political and economic consciousness, and the younger generation has seen through the failures and mistakes of the first crop of African leaders. The African people are increasingly aware that there is nothing special to Africa about a situation in which governments get implicated in international entanglements with imperialism by accepting aid. Conscious of their rights, aware of the rise of proletarian political consciousness throughout the world, and the many critical defeats in recent times that imperialism has suffered in such areas of the world as South-east Asia, Central America and, not least, in Africa itself, they are ready to challenge the present-day leaders in a number of African countries and to prepare the conditions under which the contradictions within Africa, which have rendered it susceptible to the blandishments of imperialism and neo-colonialism, can be removed by socialist policies fashioned

with the active democratic participation of all people through political organisations representing the interests of workers and peasants.

Babu's work addresses itself to these questions with great energy, commitment and a deep understanding of African politics in the developing international context. Of its nine chapters, the first three are devoted to an examination of the international contradictions of capitalism and socialism, imperialism/neo-colonialism and national liberation, and their impact on freedom movements in colonised society. He focuses on the inter-relationships between political and economic factors underlying the perpetuation of the dependence of newly independent countries on metropolitan powers; he explodes the concept of 'national interest' as a myth to safeguard the interests of bourgeois countries at the expense of underdeveloped countries.

Chapters 4-6 deal with Africa's post-colonial experience to date. The author analyses the basically petit-bourgeois character of the world outlook of African nationalist leaders educated in colonial values and schools, the backward looking nationalism which mindlessly glorifies past traditions for their own sake and the hollow character of inter-*between* ideologies such as consciencism and humanism. Most importantly, he points to the total failure of African countries to embark upon '*African capitalism*' (emphasis added), as opposed to 'capitalism extended to Africa', for 'the basic contradiction still remains that between us and Western capitalism, i.e. imperialism'.

Babu demonstrates convincingly that the responsibility for Africa's underdevelopment should be located not merely in the international division of economic labour into which African countries have been drawn, but also in the inability and unwillingness of African leaders to change the pattern of relations between imperialism and African economies. As he shows, a number of African leaders simply use the rhetoric of Third World interests, North versus South conflict, the New International Economic Order and similar slogans as a cover for their deep-seated opposition to socialism.

Babu is at his best in his chapter on 'Africa and the world', where he provides an excellent analysis of the difficulties faced by African marxists during the period of African freedom struggles, and the ideological confusions to which they were heir due to their inexperience in mobilising grassroots political consciousness. He offers a convincing explanation of the factors underlying the failure of earlier efforts of African countries to unite, which originated mainly in their European and American connections, and, interestingly, in more recent years, in the divergent interests of North America and Europe in destabilising Africa.

The last three chapters are about socialism in the specific context of Africa. In these, the author makes the point that the African unity now being forged is from below. His analysis of the internal contradictions

of African societies facing the tasks of a socialist future is understandably schematic. He ends, though, with a rallying call to the people of Africa to struggle against internal oppression.

The book thus concludes with the internal scene as it begins with the domestic context in which new classes are emerging in Africa. Its value lies in its original insights and uncompromising analysis of the African condition. But, in marked contrast to the writings of such apologists of the continued enslavement of post-colonial Africa as Ali Mazrui (see his Reith Lectures, given in London in 1980 and entitled *The African Condition*), Babu is prepared to draw lessons for a socialist future for Africa, from his own experience as a political leader directly involved in the African revolution. I have no doubt that this important contribution to our understanding of contemporary Africa will endure for a long time and stimulate further thought and action. The polemical style in which it is written is in the best Leninist tradition of moving from an analysis of the concrete situation to a consideration of what is to be done in order to change it.

University of York

T.V. SATHYAMURTHY

Myths of Male Dominance

By ELEANOR BURKE LEACOCK (London and New York, Monthly Review, 1981). 344pp. £9.45.

This collection of articles by the American anthropologist Eleanor Burke Leacock is aimed, as its title implies, at refuting myths of male dominance and female servitude. Leacock presents her argument in a section on social evolution, tracing women's trajectory through history 'from egalitarianism to oppression'. She develops it through her analysis of the position of native Canadian Montagnais-Naskapi women, among whom she worked for several years, and deploys a whole range of arguments in a series of critical articles, written over the last thirty years, contributing to the debates around the nature of women's oppression. This contribution by and large takes the valuable form of an attack upon the characterisation of male dominance and female subordination as natural, universal and thus, by implication, inevitable. In her critiques of Margaret Mead's *Male and Female*, Steven Goldberg's *Inevitability of Patriarchy* and Edward O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*, Leacock does a splendid demolition job upon the naturalised representations of women's subordination which, she claims, characterise western theoretical discourse.

The attack upon myths of male dominance arises out of a broader concern with the construction of stereotypes of oppressed peoples in general, whether 'colonised peoples ("primitives")', people of colour,

working-class people, or women', a concern which informs much of the work Leacock did in the 1960s on urban schooling and community organisation. Leacock claims that western theorists consistently characterise these people as, in each case, illogical, irrational, passive and dependent. Within psychology, the feminine psyche is represented in this way; within development studies and anthropology the 'traditionalism' of colonised peoples is seen to operate in precisely these terms, and so on. For Leacock, 'Their social message is clear: ignore the course of history that proves otherwise, and know that people who suffer oppression do so because they have neither the ability, the intention, nor the desire to rebel.' Her aim in this book is not to deny the extent of women's oppression, which she acknowledges to be 'virtually worldwide', but to attack the ideological function of naturalised images of oppressed peoples in reproducing the structures of oppression.

Leacock's strategy in relation to women is to develop a theory of evolution and a cultural history grounded upon the 'autonomy' of women in past 'egalitarian' society, broadly along the lines of Engels' *Origins of the family, private property and the state*, for which she wrote an influential introduction in 1972.

For Leacock, all 'indications' of male dominance are due either to the effects of colonisation and/or involvement in market relations in a previously egalitarian society; or they are the concomitants of the specialisation of labour and of production for exchange, or, finally, they may arise from problems in the interpretation of data in terms of western concepts and assumptions.

The task of those involved in struggles for women's liberation then, is to bear witness to this – largely unperiodised – egalitarian history, when 'women, acting as women in their own interests, were at the same time acting in the interest of the group', and to document survivals from this era before the disruption of the 'collective economy'. Indeed, Leacock insists that anthropologists must choose either to 'document the autonomous roles women played in egalitarian society ... or spin out ever more elegant rationales for exploitation'.

The emphasis upon the 'origins' of women's oppression and its roots in the development of the class system is a familiar one. It results in the reduction of patriarchal relations to the effects of class relations. Although Leacock insists upon the centrality of women in struggles for race, class and national liberation, since 'the very totality of [women's] oppression means that when they move to change their situation they move against the entire structure of exploitation', she can provide no way of thinking about this 'entire structure' except as a structure of economic effects. She is not in a position to address the complex relations between class, race and gender in contemporary capitalist societies where sexism – and racism – are both institutionally founded and immanent in the most routine activities of everyday life. What,

sadly, is absent from this collection is a specifically feminist perspective from which we could engage with these issues. Leacock's appeals to a bygone golden age of egalitarianism – however well documented – cannot provide a basis for either theoretical or political practice in relation to the specific forms of women's oppression today.

Middlesex Polytechnic

LON FLEMING

Philippines: repression and resistance

(London, KSP, BM Box 758, London WC1 3XX, 1981). 298pp. £2.95

The Philippines suffered the dubious privilege of being a direct colony both of Spain (1521-1896) and the US (1896-1946). The Americans used the period of their colonial administration to establish the country as their base of operations in the Far East. US investment in the Philippines accounts for more than half of all their investment in South-east Asia, and the twenty-two military bases housing nuclear weapons, much of the 7th fleet, 13th airforce and 16,000 troops are vital to sustain US military domination in the Far East and Indian Ocean. When, therefore, in 1972 Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines and seized dictatorial powers, cracked down on all opposition, arresting and torturing tens of thousands, he received support and encouragement from the Americans. Military aid from the US doubled, as did World Bank investment. The suppression of the rights of Filipino peasants and workers was used to depress wages and living standards and so act as an incentive to encourage investment for foreign-based transnational corporations.

Repression and resistance documents the crimes committed against the Filipino people by US imperialism, particularly through the brutal repression of the Marcos regime. The book is an account of the proceedings of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal (an international people's court in the tradition of the Nuremberg and Russell war crimes tribunals) that sat in judgement on cases presented to a panel of internationally respected jurors by the National Democratic Front (NDF) of the Filipino people and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) of the Muslim peoples of the southern Philippine islands.

The material included is a mixture of considered exposures of economic repression (Joel Rocamora) and political repression (Walden Bello), personal testimonies by victims of repression and statements by representatives of the main revolutionary groups opposed to the Marcos regime. In one volume, it contains a concise account of the present Philippine situation.

The testimonies by Rocamora and Bello, two Filipino academics exiled in the US, are substantiated by a wealth of official figures and

the names of profiteering companies. From the declaration of martial law in 1972 up to 1978, the real value of workers' wages fell by 39 per cent and 60 per cent live below the poverty line. 71.3 per cent of rural families have incomes insufficient to cover the costs of even their basic food needs. Meanwhile, direct foreign investment in the 1970-72 period was only \$16.3m and profit remittances \$87.8m, but in the 1973-5 period foreign investment jumped to \$362.1m. But while martial law clearly provided a favourable climate for private investment and profit, it did not solve the country's economic ills. The foreign debt has soared from \$2.2bn in 1972 to \$11.04bn in 1980.

The tribunal and the book are particularly significant, however, for their representation of the revolutionary forces opposed to Marcos. The NDF, illegal and wholly underground inside the Philippines, made in the tribunal its first open international appearance.

The MNLF, better known internationally, particularly within the Islamic world, also made the significant step of cooperating with the NDF in this international action. In keeping with their aspiration to self-determination and secession, their case was heard separately; however, cooperation and dual presentation are indicative of the growing cohesion of anti-Marcos and anti-imperialist forces in the Philippines.

Throughout the 1970s rebellion in the Philippines has grown steadily and the level of resistance described by the NDF and MNLF spokespersons indicates that the Philippines will almost certainly become a focus of international attention during the next few years. This book fills an important gap in the literature and, in the recognition given by the Tribunal to the NDF and MNLF, is a politically significant document.

London

GEOFF NETTLETON

Devil on the Cross

By NGUGI WA THIONG'O (London, Heinemann, 1982). 254pp. £2.25

Let me tell you, I'm sure that the system of theft and robbery will never end in this country as long as people are scared of guns and clubs. We must struggle and fight against the culture of fear.

That unequivocal theme is the heart and purpose of Ngugi's exhilarating novel. Fashioned of sayings and folktales, biblical echoes and inverted parables, of allegories and stories within-stories, of precise and unforgettable images, it seethes with excitement and life. Round and round the narration circles, creating and re-creating an ever-intensifying, ever-broadening picture of the corruption and deathliness of Kenya's neo-colonial society – but always holding out

the bold promise, too, of the future that can be striven for. For *Devil on the Cross* is addressed deliberately in the first instance to a local audience, whose language and ways of thought are Kikuyu. But even from the English translation, it is clear how rich a tradition that is, and how richly – and dynamically – Ngugi has drawn from it. Though the imagery he uses, the proverbs, the tales, may be intimately familiar to his audience, he draws from them new meanings, uses them as the starting point from which to show up in its true colours that other culture, of fear and foreign domination.

Not the least of Ngugi's achievements is the way in which he is able to infuse the language of revolution and struggle with a zest and enthusiasm that is only possible when intellectual commitment comes out of a deeply felt conviction. It is as spontaneous and direct as the sayings that scatter the book. 'A rich man's fart has no smell', but 'the voice of the people is the voice of God'.

The central character of the novel is Jacinta Wariinga, a young woman who, as the novel opens, has been thrown out of her job (for rejecting Boss Kihara's advances) and out of her flat (for objecting to a rent increase demanded by her landlord's thugs). Convinced that her own personal shortcomings are the reason for her predicament, despair drives her to leave Nairobi and return to her home town of Ilmorog. Before she leaves, a strange encounter with a young man sets in train the 'events' that follow. The young man gives her an invitation to attend an internationally-sponsored contest in theft and robbery which has been organised by the Devil's angels, and is being held in Ilmorog. Her travelling companions, who through the course of the journey reveal their personalities, are Muturi, a workman who has been sacked for his activities in organising his fellows; Gatuiria, a lecturer in music at the university, who is uneasily transfixed between the values and mores of his colonial education and academic status, and his hesitant fearful desire to create some musical work that will express his country; Wangari, a woman who, as befits one who fought against the imperialists at the time of Mau Mau, is now a penniless vagrant; and Mwirere wa Mukirai who, with his dark glasses and clutching a briefcase, is a small businessman attending the competition in the hopes of winning a prize, and is only travelling with the others in a *matatu* (a kind of taxi) because his own Peugeot 504 (injection model) has broken down. Over their journey presides their driver, the sinister joking Mwaura, a money-grabber who will perform any treachery for a small gain.

The system of theft and robbery is, of course, the system of imperialist and neo-colonial domination. Robbers and devils are one and the same; and it is the Arch fiend himself who, though he may be crucified by the people is, after three days brought down from the cross and resurrected by his acolytes. The Biblical parable of the Talents is

an allegory for capitalism and imperialism that threads through the novel, subverting the Christian 'message' from within and exposing its true function in the colonial set-up. At times, though, the very richness of the novel's texture, and the tendency to belabour an argument over much detracts from its sense of urgency.

Once at Ilmorog, the companions each react in their different ways to the scenes of hell that are played out before them. Wangari attempts to summon police and magistrates to arrest the robbers – and is herself thrown into jail, while Muturi leads a ragged army of the townsfolk to drive the robbers out of their den.

Come one and all
And behold the wonderful sight
Of us chasing away the Devil
And all his disciples
Come one and all.

Wariinga and Gatuiria are forced to choose which side they are on. Gatuiria equivocates, but follows Wariinga, while for her the experience of her whole life shifts into a new focus. Entrusted by Muturi with a weapon with which to fight on the side of the workers, she at last begins to achieve her own fearless humanity:

Today's Wariinga has decided that she'll never again allow herself to be a mere flower, whose purpose is to decorate the doors and windows and tables of other peoples lives, waiting to be thrown on a rubbish heap the moment the splendour of her body withers ... cleanliness is bathing. A hero is known only on the battlefield, a good dancer is known only in the dance arena. Wariinga, heroine of toil, the heroism of life can be discovered only in the battle of life ...

Yet this is no easy, facile resolution, and in a brilliant denouement which binds themes and characters from both her past and present life, she steps out into an unknown future, while her lover, Gatuiria, is in the last resort, unable to commit himself to action:

Gatuiria did not know what to do: to deal with his father's body, to comfort his mother or to follow Wariinga. So he just stood in the courtyard, hearing in his mind music that led him nowhere ... Wariinga walked on, without once looking back. But she knew with all her heart that the hardest struggles of her life's journey lay ahead ...

But such a summary conveys little of the essence of this remarkable book – so powerful and direct a rallying call it is to the struggle for justice and freedom, so evocative and gripping the image of Kenya it presents. It achieves its intensity of vision by combining vividly realistic detail and incident and imagery with a nightmare world of such distorted horror that the reader is held both spellbound and aghast. We

are forced to look with new eyes – eyes that will no longer accept compromise and evasions – at the men of power and wealth, the servants of foreign control, with their shining silk suits, their Mercedes Benzes, their ‘sugar girls’ and status symbol wives, their mountainous appetites for meat and liquor, their church-going, the obscenity of their existence:

Nditika wa Nguunji was very fat. His head was huge like a mountain. His belly hung over his belt, big and arrogant. His eyes were the size of two large red electric bulbs. His hair was parted in the middle, so that the hair on either side of the parting looked like two ridges facing each other on either side of a tarmac road. He had on a black suit. The jacket had tails cut in the shape of the wings of the big green and blue flies that are normally found in pit latrines or among rotting rubbish.

It might be argued that the allegory is too clear, the characters too subservient to a central purpose – yet it is this very clarity and vigour of intention that, as that purpose unfolds and reveals itself, stimulates and excites the reader. Recognisable ‘types’ though the characters are, they are nonetheless flesh and blood. This duality adds to the book, while the wealth of imagery and allusion, and sheer mastery of storytelling deepens and enriches the experience of reading it.

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HAZEL WATERS

‘Is freedom we making’: the new democracy in Grenada

By MERLE HODGE and CHRIS SEARLE (Grenada, Government Information Service, 1982). 92pp.

‘Grenada is in the process of establishing a kind of society of which the British government disapproves, irrespective of whether the people of Grenada want it or not.’ This comment by a Tory secretary of state at the Foreign Office is quoted in Hodge and Searle’s excellent short study of the Grenadan revolution, which mentions some of the more disgraceful British interventions in the ex-colonial Caribbean. Similarly alluded to, although not explored, is ‘all that Reagan business’, as one militant great-grandmother puts it. Picking out Grenada, with its 110,000 inhabitants on a map of the Americas, it seems laughable that this tiny island should pose a ‘threat’ to the vast mass of the US. Yet Reagan recently staged a simulated island invasion in nearby waters and, together with Britain, is refusing economic aid.

It is the system of popular democracy, aided by Cuba in default of other local allies, that provokes the charge of ‘communist expansion’, and on which the booklet concentrates. The organisation of popular

power has its roots in the pre-revolutionary struggle against Gairy's dictatorship by the New Jewel Movement – the Joint Endeavour for the Welfare, Education and Liberation of the People. After the 1979 coup by the New Jewel leader, Maurice Bishop, there developed organisations for every sector of the community – youth, students, farmers, workers, women, party supporters. There are cooperatives, community work brigades, popular education programmes, militia, religious and cultural groups; one in five of Grenadians belongs to an organisation. Apart from having their own national structures, these bodies participate in local Parish Councils, which are represented at central state and party levels.

We witness a Parish Council meeting, typical of occasions where leaders, and Brother Bishop himself, talk directly with the people, explaining national policy and hearing their opinions. Although accurately reflecting unleashed energies, the account is over-enthusiastic. There are serious economic and organisations problems in the revolution, and we need to understand the contradictions too. But the vivid personal testimonies that follow convincingly convey popular identification with the 'Revo'.

London

HERMIONE HARRIS

US Strategy in the Gulf: intervention against liberation

Edited by LEILA MEO (Belmont, Massachusetts, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1981). 130pp. \$6.00 paper.

When the US pulled its forces out of Vietnam in 1973, official policy became one of avoiding further direct military involvement on the Asian mainland. In the Far East this role was allotted to the Saigon army, and to allies such as South Korea, Indochina and Thailand. But it was in the Persian Gulf region, in particular, that this policy of military delegation was most clearly implemented, in the building up of Iran as a regional power capable of playing a policing role.

The US reversal of this doctrine is above all a result of the Iranian revolution, of the removal of the US's Gulf ally and the dangers which that revolution has opened up in the Arab states of the region, particularly Saudi Arabia. Today, US strategic planners are stressing the need for possible intervention in the Gulf, and some even argue that this region is more important for US strategy than Europe.

Leila Meo's collection of essays provides a timely insight on current US policy in the Gulf and on its historical background. Thomas Ricks shows that the US strategic concern with Iran goes back to the Second World War: it is worth recalling that the cold war between Russia and the US began over Iran in 1946. Through the US military and police

assistance provided during the war, an apparatus of collaboration was built up which enabled the Shah to defeat his communist, Kurdish and nationalist opponents in the post-war period. This alliance then blossomed in the 1970s, when the Shah's purchases, backed by Nixon and Kissinger, brought thousands of US military personnel to Iran.

As the defeat of the US intervention in Vietnam showed, the physical presence of US troops abroad presupposes a domestic support at home, the dominance of a supportive ideology. Michael Parenti documents how the US public is persuaded to accept such foreign wars in the name of national security, an analysis with considerable relevance to Thatcher's appeals to her domestic supporters during the Falklands war. Michael Klare traces how the US planned intervention in the Gulf in the late 1970s and shows, as do James Petras and Robert Korzeniewicz, in a overview of US policy in the Middle East, that such plans predated the events later used to justify them, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Iranian hostage crisis of late 1979.

What is rather lacking from this survey is a proportionate account of the forces working against US intervention – the strength of local resistance potentials, popular or official, and the difficulties which US strategists still face in winning support at home. The Saudi Arabians do not have a credible army – most of its soldiers are absent without leave – and this severely limits their capacity to exert regional influence. And the Iranian army is now far less tied to US influence than Ricks would have us believe. In the wake of the US military intervention in Iran in an attempt to rescue the hostages, it is far-fetched to argue, as Ricks does, that the Iranian armed forces somehow still remain under strong US influence. This may become true in the future, but only by the rebuilding of links that were quite radically broken by the Iranian revolution itself.

Transnational Institute

FRED HALLIDAY

The New Fascists

By PAUL WILKINSON (London, Grant McIntyre, 1981). 179pp. £7.95.

In the last decade or so, terrorism by the fascist right in Europe has increased. The last two years have seen more and more racist attacks in Britain, bombings in Italy, West Germany and France, and an attempted coup in Spain. These have awakened concern about the threat of fascism, even amongst established politicians.

Paul Wilkinson shows that this threat is in part due to the failure to eradicate fascist thinking within European societies after its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, fascist groupings who claim allegiance to

the ideas of Hitler and Mussolini have existed in some shape or form in all the major western European democracies since the Second World War. From time to time, these groups have felt strong enough to show themselves, either through election-orientated propaganda or terrorism – the traditional two-pronged strategy of fascism. With the emphasis now on the terrorist option, it is not surprising that a writer on ‘terrorism’ like Wilkinson has turned his attention to the right – particularly as he believes that western Europe ‘has been blind in the right eye’ to political violence.

However, the result is a very limited work prefaced by the obligatory chapter on definition, followed by a chapter on the 1930s and 1940s. The last section of this six-chapter book ‘is a highly personal statement proposing some of the means by which the liberal democracies can defend themselves against this disease of fascism, while remaining true to themselves’. That leaves half the book to describe the re-emergence of fascism. The description, while not new, is useful – if only because many of the relevant events, scattered over three decades in Turkey, Japan, US, Holland and elsewhere, are here brought together. However, there is a lack of analysis of the role and significance of the new fascism within its current context. Thus, Wilkinson successfully isolates fascism today from the mainstream politics of the modern western states with their racist policies, corporatism and drift towards repression. So he can justify the adoption of (tough) immigration policies by the Labour and Conservative parties in Britain in the face of growing electoral support for the fascist National Front, because it removes ‘an important NF plank’. The racism and repression of the measures themselves are dismissed.

Wilkinson is basically an anti-fascist and a bit of a democrat. But even his anti-fascism is limited to a concern about the re-emergence of the old fascists. Hence, on all levels he overlooks the sustenance that the policies of the ‘democratic state’ offer the fascists. And that is where an analysis of the new fascists should begin.

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Anatomy of a lynching: the killing of Claude Neal. By James R. McGovern. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982. Cloth £12.25.

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