



**RACE &  
CLASS**

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This is America!”*

India's green movements

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RACE & CLASS is published quarterly (in July, October, January and April) and subscriptions are payable in advance to any bookseller or to the Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leeke Street, King's Cross Road, London, WC1X 9HS. Subscriptions can be entered at any point in the volume. Current subscription rate £14/US\$34 to institutions, £10/US\$18 to individuals. Payment can be made in US or Canadian dollars drawn on US or Canadian banks respectively, or by international money order or sterling cheques drawn on a British bank. Special rates for booksellers are available on request. Back copies of Volumes 1-23 can be obtained from Wm Dawson and Sons Limited, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent. Volumes 1-4 available in reprint at £4 per issue; Volumes 5-23 available in the original at £4 per single copy (Volumes 24-6 available at the IRR). UK bookshop distribution: Turnaround, 27 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL.

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# RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL FOR BLACK AND THIRD WORLD LIBERATION

Volume XXVIII

Spring 1987

Number 4

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ISSN 0306 3965

Cover photos courtesy of Associated Press  
Cover design by Hilary Arnott  
Typeset by Lithoprint (TU), 26-28 Shacklewell Lane, London E8  
Printed by the Russell Press, Gamble Street, Nottingham



# Thomas Hodgkin: an appreciation\*

Thomas Hodgkin died five years ago this March of 1987, but it is certainly still too soon to measure or set forth the range and power of his influence for good: above all, of his influence on the thinking of our time, in Britain, about the end of imperialism and the consequences of colonialism. I myself, in any case, was too much his friend and companion to attempt any such measure or setting forth. But for the same reason I am glad to be able to offer some words about this fragment of biographical value.

As readers of this journal will know, the range and power of Hodgkin's influence were both diverse and constant over many years, now and then contracting as Thomas withdrew into studies which carried him away to distant places, whether geographical or thematical, only to flourish and expand again as he returned to those who were waiting for him: family, friends, students, colleagues, aspiring writers, poets and historians and innumerable cousins: to all of whom, and many more besides, Thomas gave unstinted welcome, pleasure and conversation, or, if anyone should ask for it, instruction.

So I believe that he is one of the somewhat rare persons in our country for whom full-scale biography is justified by the inherent value of his life and thought and work, and not by any meretricious fashion or careerist purpose. Any such enterprise in biography will be commensurately difficult, as must be obvious. He or she who undertakes it will have to sail on all the winds and storms of half a British century, and navigate with quite unusual attention to the temperamental and political weather. Yet the difficulty will be greater still. For Hodgkin was the inheritor – one might even say the presenter – of two traditions which have generally stood against each other. One of these traditions is that of what his brother Edward (to whose devotion and sound judgement we owe this present volume), borrowing from one of its expositors,

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\*On the occasion of the publication of his *Letters from Palestine 1932-36*, edited by E.C. Hodgkin (London, Quartet Books, 1987).

## 2 *Race & Class*

calls the 'intellectual aristocracy': that, above all, of the University of Oxford and, more exactly, of the Oxford college named Balliol. In this tradition, Thomas descended from generations of intellectually formidable ancestors.

That kind of descent, in our own time, might signal no more than the addition of one more respectable ornament to the English academic galaxy (English rather than British, for the Scots and Welsh have seen and done these things differently): another paladin of the Right and Proper, or one more proof of the Biblical maxim that 'to him that hath shall be given . . .'. There would be nothing wrong with that, but also nothing very interesting. As it is, his brother in introducing these letters from Palestine reminds us of a second aspect, justly recalling that 'the privilege Thomas could count on was one of puritan tradition'. Now this is the tradition of principled dissent from orthodoxies judged morally unacceptable: the tradition of those in our islands (or elsewhere, of course, in other contexts) who have taken it as their duty to deny and defy the mighty in their seats: in short, the tradition of social revolution sprung from a moral imperative.

It was characteristic and appropriate that Thomas should never have seen any problem about reconciling these opposed traditions of thought and action. Their being opposites, they could not be reconciled. One should draw from both and live in the presence of each, considering moreover that one can be much the gainer from the clash and heave they bring against each other. In a lesser person, perhaps, the wish to have one's death remembered in the capacious chapel of Balliol College might indicate some kind of recantation from a revolutionary stance, some kind of 'hedge' to which the Almighty, if admittedly rather late in the day, might be expected to give a moment's tolerant attention. With Thomas, nothing of the sort. He loved the intellectual wealth of both his traditions. In this admirable sense he remained a romantic and a realist to the end of his days: a romantic, that is, in the use of his creative imagination. I would argue that this was the quality which greatly helped to make him an outstanding historian of peoples – notably of African peoples – whose re-entry on the world's stage after the long colonial interval was what he particularly watched and welcomed and explained. In that preoccupation he was among those, in a definition of the late E.H. Carr's, for whom the study of history is 'a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends'.

This rare ability to enshrine the future, as it were, in an analysis of the past is what especially runs through all of Thomas Hodgkin's work, it has seemed to me, and gives it vivid life and formulation. To hard-headed scholarship he added intuitive perception; and this habit of seeing the past as 'the arena of the future' was fructified by his mode of thought, which was dialectical but almost never (in my experience) dogmatic. Writing of his Vietnamese studies in an article for this



journal<sup>1</sup> (the copy which he gave to me, I now see with a jolt, was signed on 25 March 1975, or seven years to the day before his death), he says that he had found the Vietnamese 'admirably dialectical'. For 'Opposites are both true. As profound patriotism is entirely compatible with internationalism, so great toughness on issues of principle is combined [in Vietnamese practice] with a willingness to compromise; the utmost vigilance with openness towards all kinds of allies; puritanism in personal life with passionate romanticism ...', and, not least, 'devotion to theory with hatred of pedantry and jargon'. I don't know that he hated anything quite so much as pedantry and jargon.

He arrived quite early on, as these letters from Palestine somewhat vaguely help us to understand, at positions derived from Marx and the corpus of thought evolved in the wake of Marx. He stayed with them. Writing in 1976 in an African context, he remarked that, for him, 'the most important universal truths' could be 'crudely stated' as being that 'colonial systems depend for their continuing existence on inter-communal conflict, which they at the same time create, stimulate and deplore; that such conflicts can only be overcome within the context of a revolutionary movement that is based upon a Marxist-Leninist ideology ...; that imperialism, while it oppresses and exploits the colonised, also corrupts the colonisers, generating in the minds of the alien ruling class a set of racist myths with which they seek to justify their domination ...'<sup>2</sup> But I doubt if he was ever, in any familiar sense, a Marxist. His dialectical mode of thought was too much at odds with the linear mode of thought to which *Marxism*, anyway for most of his adult life, was generally reduced by the dogmatism of its adherents or the ignorance of its opponents.

The eventual biographer of Thomas Hodgkin will have to take all this into account, and a lot more besides. The youthful family letters from the Palestine of 1932-36 (with a few added after his return to England) are nothing like as interesting, I would guess, as later letters that he wrote from post-war travels and meditations in Africa – one greatly hopes that his brother will also publish the Africa correspondence – but these Palestine letters are still well worth having. They cover the formative pre-war years served by Thomas as a junior official of the colonial administration in Palestine, and show why he turned his back on that career and opted for revolt.

BASIL DAVIDSON

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## 'Attention MOVE! This is America!'

It is Monday, 13 May 1985. At approximately 5.25pm, a Pennsylvania state police helicopter hovers sixty feet over 6221 Osage Avenue. Harnessed securely to the inside of the chopper's cabin, Lieutenant Frank Powell, commander of the Philadelphia Bomb Disposal Unit, the 'bomb squad', leans outside and hurls a green canvas bag towards the roof below. Extending from the bag is a lit 45-second fuse attached to a bomb. As the bag hurtles downwards, the helicopter rears quickly up.

Inside the house are thirteen MOVE people, seven adults, six children. On impact, the bomb throws off a fierce wave of heat of 7,200 degrees fahrenheit, melting tar roof materials into flammable liquid and turning wooden debris into flying kindle. The whole of MOVE's roof convulses, the entire area shakes. Glass windows half a block away completely shatter.

White puffs of smoke shortly rise from MOVE's roof, followed a few minutes later by black plumes of smoke and flames. In a while the flaming front bunker on the roof collapses into the second floor of the house, and the fire soon begins its race down the evacuated sixteen other rowhomes on the same side of Osage as 6221. So intense is the radiant heat that houses on the other side of Osage, about thirty feet away, and

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\*Edited extracts from '*Attention MOVE! This is America!*', forthcoming from Banner Press, PO Box 6469, Chicago, IL 60680, USA.

*Race & Class*, XXVIII, 4(1987)

the ones on the south side of Pine Street, about twenty feet away, also burst into flames. The fire, initially allowed to burn, is not declared under control until midnight.

Of the thirteen people who were inside 6221 Osage, eleven are dead, six adults, five children. Mangled, burned, carried away in zippered nylon bags – mostly in pieces. Only 30-year-old Ramona Africa and 13-year-old Birdie Africa manage to survive. As for the once attractive and stable neighbourhood, both sides of Osage Avenue, the south side of Pine Street, and a section of 62nd Street are destroyed. The only things left are the smouldering brick walls, standing in rows like giant grave markers. Altogether, sixty-one rowhomes have been totally destroyed or gutted. 250 people are without homes.

\* \* \*

For nearly half a century the neighbourhood of Cobbs Creek was predominantly Jewish, with people either commuting to their jobs or establishing small neighbourhood businesses. But starting in the mid-1950s – reflecting a ‘white flight’ pattern occurring on a massive scale in many of the older eastern cities – the residents pulled up stakes and piled into the nearby, newly created suburbs.

As the whites left, Blacks began moving in to replace them. Today, the neighbourhood is 95 per cent Black, comprised of people who viewed moving to the Cobbs Creek area as a major step up and away from Philadelphia’s vast and festering ghettos. A stable, quiet and proud neighbourhood, its residents include teachers, postal workers, keypunch operators, civil servants, small businessmen and retirees. Most of the houses are owned rather than rented, and it’s the kind of neighbourhood where people work two or even three jobs to pay off the mortgage and send their kids to college.<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia historians refer to the style of these rowhomes as ‘colonial revival’ – three-bedroom, two-storey houses of brick with colonnaded front porches, second-floor bay windows, gabled flat roofs, and tiny backyards in which neighbours can plant small gardens and gather for outdoor barbecues. Many of the Cobbs Creek residents have added aluminium siding, carpeted their porches, or remodelled their homes’ interiors. As one resident describes the neighbourhood:

I grew up in South Philadelphia. And you know how when you grow up you think about how things should be? Well, I always wanted to live in a place with a few trees and a yard. And when we moved in here, it was like everything I had always dreamed of. It was so beautiful and everybody worked on their houses. We worked to make the whole neighbourhood better – and we did. It was a wonderful place to live. You couldn’t ask for more.<sup>2</sup>



But one house on the 6200 block of Osage was different. Not at first, not in the early 1960s when Louise James and her young son Frank moved into 6221 Osage, nor for two decades after that. Louise worked for the telephone company and kept pretty much to herself, and the neighbours liked Frank, whom they found shy but smart and friendly. But, by 1981, some things were going on that made the neighbours curious and a little concerned. For one, Louise James started referring to herself as Louise Africa, and her now adult son called himself Frank Africa. For another, Louise Africa started to care for about a dozen children. Who and where are the parents, neighbours wondered. Then, in 1982-3, several other adults, all dressed simply in T-shirts and blue jeans and wearing long dreadlocks, began to live at 6221. They were members of MOVE.

MOVE is an organisation of predominantly Black radical utopians. Formed in 1972, their numbers have been estimated to be between 50 and 150, and most of them and their supporters are believed to live in or near Philadelphia. Practically since its inception, MOVE has been attacked by various authorities and the mass media. Members have been described as filthy, their homes as vermin-infested, and they have been consistently portrayed as a violent back-to-nature cult led by a supposedly messianic madman known as John Africa. In more recent times, they have also been described, among others by W. Wilson Goode, Philadelphia's first Black mayor, as 'urban terrorists'.

But such terms fail to explain why MOVE so vexes and appals the authorities. MOVE refuses to respect present-day America and its prevailing values. Its members openly defy official power and tirelessly preach against a system they consider utterly corrupt and destructive of life on this planet, particularly through the use of modern technology. And when threatened and confronted by the authorities, as they have been throughout their short and stormy history, they do not back down. MOVE members have explained the purpose of their organisation this way:

MOVE's work, John Africa's revolution, is to stop man's system from imposing on life, MOVE's work is to stop industry from poisoning the air, the water, the soil and to put an end to the enslavement of life – people, animals, *any* form of life. The purpose of *John Africa's* revolution, MOVE's work is to show people how corrupt, rotten, criminally enslaving this system *is*, show people thru *John Africa's* teaching the truth, that this system is the *cause* of all their problems (alcoholism, drug addiction, unemployment, wife abuse, child abuse, child pornography, every problem in the world) and to set the example of revolution for people to follow when they realize how they've been oppressed, repressed, duped, tricked by this system, this government and see the need to rid themselves of this cancerous

system as MOVE does. MOVE is revolutionaries, we are the vanguard, the spearhead of *John Africa's* revolution. Our work is to confront this system up front to show people not only that they *can* fight this system and win, but to show them the urgent *need* to fight.<sup>3</sup>

A major confrontation between MOVE and the authorities had already occurred in 1977-8, when Philadelphia police blockaded the group's Powelton Village compound for nearly a year. This included a fifty-day siege in which no one was allowed in or out of the house and food and water were cut off in an effort to starve them out. This confrontation eventually climaxed in August 1978 with a massive police assault that included high pressure water hoses, a battering ram, bulldozers and automatic weapons. In the subsequent trial, nine MOVE members were each sentenced to 90-100 years in prison, charged with murdering a policeman, who almost certainly died in his fellow officers' crossfire.

Because of the siege at Powelton Village, as well as numerous other incidents with the authorities and police over the years, the MOVE members who came to live at 6221 Osage Avenue in 1982-3 soon began to fortify the house in preparation for expected other confrontations. Neighbours watched uneasily as MOVE hauled tree trunks from Cobbs Creek Park into the house, and listened as they hammered, sometimes late into the night. They also observed MOVE members carrying out large baskets of dirt, leading some to speculate that the group might be digging underground tunnels. The neighbours also took note as wooden boards were nailed across the second-storey bay windows, and then as two wooden bunkers, reinforced with railroad ties and metal sheeting, were constructed on the flat roof, the larger one in the front covering over the distinctive cornices and pediments.

In addition to these major and, in their eyes, rather unusual and seemingly unnecessary house alterations, some of MOVE's more conservative neighbours also found the group's lifestyle difficult to tolerate. They complained about MOVE's practice of taking in stray dogs and cats, and of leaving raw food on the ground which they said created obnoxious odours and drew hordes of flies – some even claimed rats. They also were angry about a pen constructed to house animals at the back of MOVE's house, which they said blocked access to a common driveway and created a fire hazard.

Some of the neighbours also disapproved of how the MOVE adults were taking care of the children, whose parents were imprisoned MOVE members, including those who had been found guilty of killing a police officer during the Powelton Village confrontation in 1978. According to some of the neighbours, the children were ill-clothed and poorly fed. They said they sometimes saw the children eating out of garbage cans and would call them into their own homes to feed them. MOVE countered that the children had sufficient clothing, were well-fed



through a diet consisting of nourishing natural foods, and were sick much less frequently than most other neighbourhood kids. There also were reports of residents and MOVE members getting into a couple of physical scraps, and that one of MOVE's next-door neighbours moved out shortly after one such incident.

But what some of the residents seemed to find most intolerable was the frequent use of a bullhorn and loudspeaker system that MOVE had rigged up. According to some of the neighbours, MOVE members would get on the system for hours on end, sometimes late into the night, castigating the US government and local officials, demanding the release of their nine comrades jailed for the 1978 Powelton Village incident and frequently criticising the neighbours themselves for trying to buy into the American mainstream rather than helping MOVE to get their railroaded, imprisoned members out. For instance, when neighbours held a Fourth of July barbecue in 1984, MOVE got on the sound system to denounce 'all those motherfuckers out there celebrating a white man's holiday'.<sup>4</sup>

On Mother's Day 1984, a contingent of neighbours, along with leaders from a city-sponsored group known as the Crisis Intervention Network, met with several MOVE members, at MOVE's behest, in front of 6221 Osage to discuss and attempt to deal with some of the problems. MOVE was particularly interested, it appeared, in trying to explain why the neighbours should assist in the battle to get imprisoned MOVE members released. But the meeting, the neighbours felt, achieved nothing. According to one neighbour, 'They told us that John Africa taught this and John Africa taught that, and that we were living all wrong. We came away believing that they didn't care what we thought, one way or the other.'<sup>5</sup> MOVE, however, saw things in a different light. They felt the meeting ended badly because of a small group of neighbours within the larger contingent who seemed more intent on attacking MOVE and disrupting the discussion than trying to talk things out.

Some of the residents were also upset with the response of city and state officials to whom they had been going for more than two years with their grievances. This included meetings over the summer of 1984 with Mayor Wilson Goode, someone the respectable and law-abiding Black citizens of Osage Avenue felt would surely help them. Said one of the residents who met with him, 'He told us to have patience and everything would be taken care of.'<sup>6</sup>

\* \* \*

The 13 May assault and its horrifying results immediately became known across the US and around the world, as banner headlines and page one news stories described the death and destruction. Many

people were shocked. Yes, they said, perhaps such a thing can and does occur in other places, but in the US, in Philadelphia, the city of the Liberty Bell and with its first Black mayor in charge? Uncomfortably stuck in this glaring and ugly light, and with the US facing an internationally embarrassing situation of grave proportions, local and national officials and others attempted to justify what had happened.

Philadelphia was depicted as a beleaguered city confronted by a cult of zealots who had terrorised a conservative Black community for years, and who had stockpiled explosives and automatic weapons for a violent confrontation with the authorities they intended to provoke. The fire itself was blamed on MOVE, as officials claimed that, shortly before the assault, MOVE members poured gasoline on their own and adjoining roofs. Officials also insisted that since some of the neighbourhood residents had been asking for help for years, the city administration, reluctant but out of other options, finally had to go in with heavy fire-power and a bomb. In this manner, an 'in your own backyard' version of a policy carried out many times in Vietnam was developed: 'We had to destroy the village in order to save it.'

Edward Rendell, Philadelphia district-attorney at the time of the police operation and subsequently a candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, remarked: 'These are people who essentially committed suicide and murdered their own children.'

Mayor Wilson Goode stood at City Hall on Tuesday, 14 May, and said the prior day's assault, bomb and all, was a political necessity.

If I had to make the decision all over again, knowing what I know now, I would make the same decision because I think we cannot permit any terrorist group, any revolutionary group in this city, to hold a whole neighbourhood or a whole city hostage. And we have to send that message out loud and clear, over and over again ...<sup>8</sup>

On 14 May alone he delivered this message several times.

Other mayors rushed to defend Goode's decision. The mayor of Milwaukee sent 'hats off praise to Goode', and Miami's mayor described Goode as 'a very considerate and thoughtful man'.<sup>9</sup> Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates called Goode 'an inspiration to the nation. I think he has provided some of the finest leadership that I've ever seen from any politician. And I hope he runs for national office. He's jumped onto my heroes list, and by golly, that's not a long list.'<sup>10</sup>

National officials also moved quickly to praise the operation. US Attorney-General Edwin Meese III stated before a police convention in California: 'I think that Mayor Goode ... in the very rational and reasonable way that he's handled a very difficult situation ... is a good example for us all to take note of.'<sup>11</sup>

Approval also came from groups like the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity, who assembled before the rubble on Osage



Avenue to state their 'unanimous support for Mayor W. Wilson Goode and his handling of the MOVE confrontation'.<sup>12</sup> The organisation of Black policemen of Philadelphia commended the police commissioner for 'the planning that went into that operation, the manner in which he carried out the operation without the unnecessary loss of lives'.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, to them, the deaths of eleven MOVE members were necessary

...

Clifford Bond, head of the Osage Avenue block association and another of MOVE's major adversaries, said of the deaths of the MOVE children:

If you study biblical times there were children killed at the drop of a hat. In Beirut they're killing children by the boatloads. Who cries for them? The Lord's given those [MOVE] children peace. He'll bring them back with a different mind and a different body ... It might sound morbid, but I'm kind of glad God took those children.<sup>14</sup>

But, in sharp counterpoint to these various declarations of support and efforts to justify the assault, there was widespread and deep-seated rage. Exclaimed one man moments after he watched the bomb drop, 'Do you know what they've just done? They've dropped a bomb on babies! You think we can sit down and let them drop bombs on houses? Do you know what they've started here?'<sup>15</sup>

In street-corner conversations over the next several days, comparisons tumbled out. A Black student from South Africa compared the actions of the police to what happens to Black people in his country. Others compared the bombing to Hiroshima, Dresden, Grenada, El Salvador, Vietnam. 'They think they're in Vietnam dropping bombs', commented one Black youth. 'It makes me feel like I'm living in one of those countries where they just go and bomb you out', one woman told reporters. Mayor Goode came under heavy criticism, as people debated the value of electing Blacks to political office. Exclaimed one Black youth, 'We were all excited when we got a Black mayor, and now look what he's doing to us!'

Nor did many of the residents of Osage Avenue and Pine Street agree with the comments of neighbours like Milton Williams and Clifford Bond. As they surveyed their destroyed homes and neighbourhood, many expressed shock and anger. 'I wanted action but I wanted it done in a peaceful way', said one Pine Street resident. 'I didn't want it done with this kind of violence'. Said one Osage Avenue neighbour, 'We never expected them to burn the whole block down.'

On the day after the assault, in the shade of the trees of Cobbs Creek Park, a Black man gazed at the ruins and spoke of the neighbours who had complained about MOVE:

The people on that block were ignorant to the facts of what the American government is capable of doing, what they will do. They

didn't think these people were gonna drop a bomb on all their houses. They didn't know what they were dealing with, and I don't feel sorry for them.<sup>16</sup>

Confronted with a rapidly deteriorating situation and also growing criticism of his own role, Mayor Goode issued an executive order within days of the 13 May operation for the formation of an 'impartial commission' to investigate the events leading up to 13 May and what happened on the day itself. After months of closed interviews with nearly 900 people, and after several weeks of televised testimony from ninety witnesses in the fall of 1985, the Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission (PSIC) issued its final report on 6 March 1986.

The commission found that the operation against MOVE suffered from poor planning, inadequate intelligence, lack of proper training of police personnel and poor supervision. Mayor Goode was singled out and criticised for 'abdication of leadership'. Specifically in regard to the aerial bombing of the MOVE house, the commission concluded that it was 'reckless, ill-conceived and hastily approved. Dropping a bomb on an occupied row house was unconscionable and should have been rejected out-of-hand by the mayor, the managing director, the police commissioner and the fire commissioner.'<sup>17</sup> The commission also concluded that the deaths of the five MOVE children were 'unjustifiable homicides', although it left open the possibility that the MOVE adults, who were roundly criticised and attacked throughout the public hearings and in the commission's report, were themselves perhaps partially to blame.<sup>18</sup>

To many people who expected nothing more from the commission than a crudely thrown together whitewash, these seemingly frank and hard-hitting conclusions came as something of a surprise. Perhaps here at last was a fact-finding commission that really did call things out for what they were, and no matter who got hurt. But there is more than one way to conduct a whitewash, and while Mayor Goode's commission was forced by the very severity of what occurred on 13 May 1985 to give the strong appearance of impartiality and letting the chips fall where they may, at bottom its final report and findings are nothing but a cover-up for the horrible crime committed that day. For what happened on Osage Avenue was not the result of bureaucratic bungling, inadequate intelligence, improper training of police or poor planning. Simply and truthfully put, it was a carefully planned, premeditated massacre.

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For two years prior to 13 May 1985, the Philadelphia Police Department's (PPD) Civil Affairs Unit and Major Investigations Division (MID), the department's major intelligence-gathering unit, had the MOVE house on 6221 Osage Avenue under constant surveillance.<sup>19</sup>



Other MOVE houses in Philadelphia and elsewhere were also regularly surveilled. For example, when the police in Chester, Pa., raided a MOVE house there on 13 May 1985, at the same time that the assault had started on Osage Avenue, Vice-Captain Richard Conway revealed that, 'We had been waiting to do this for well over a year so it would not become a safe house in the event anybody fled from Philadelphia.'<sup>20</sup> Officers George Draper and John Cresci of the Civil Affairs Unit testified before the commission that they carefully monitored MOVE's activities on Osage Avenue. This included meetings between Draper and some of MOVE's neighbours, at which they would inform him of MOVE members' daily movements and habits.<sup>21</sup>

In the course of presenting their comprehensive report to the commission, Draper and Cresci revealed their intimate knowledge of how many meetings MOVE had in every year since 1973 (in other words, essentially since MOVE's inception); how many and where MOVE held demonstrations and what took place at them, and how active the police considered MOVE to be at any given time.<sup>22</sup>

The commission also called a host of officials from various city and state agencies to testify, including the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) and the Department of Water. In the fall of 1983, the Department of Licenses and Inspections and detectives of the PPD's Major Investigations Division began to carry on a discreet affair. MID Detective Nate Benner met with Rudolf Paliaga, chief of the district operations for L&I, and shared with Paliaga files on six MOVE properties in Philadelphia which the PPD had under surveillance; surveillance photos of 6221 Osage Avenue, and police-drawn sketches of possible escape routes from Osage Avenue. At MID's request, L&I provided police with information about the MOVE house – for example, the thickness of the walls of 6221 Osage. L&I inspectors also started a regular practice of conducting drive-by inspections of Osage Avenue. These inspections were an integral part of the extensive covert surveillance operation that was going on in preparation to 'solve the MOVE problem' – even down to the point of making sure that the people inside 6221 Osage would not be able to escape what the authorities had in mind for them.<sup>23</sup>

The newly elected Mayor Wilson Goode also began paying immediate attention to this problem and its ultimate solution. In March 1984, Managing Director Leo A. Brooks, Police Commissioner Gregore J. Sambor and head of Civil Affairs James Shanahan were called in by Goode to give him a detailed briefing on MOVE and what had been happening on Osage Avenue.<sup>24</sup> This briefing included field reports from the officers who had been surveilling MOVE and who also were gathering information from Osage Avenue residents.

What Goode and his associates had in mind can readily be seen from key developments in May of 1984. In late May, Police Commissioner

Sambor summoned to his office Sergeant Herbert Kirk. Kirk was a 27-year veteran of the Philadelphia Police Department. His expertise included training and certification by the FBI and state of Pennsylvania in special weapons use for 'non-normal' tactical situations. The FBI, other federal agencies and the military also trained him in SWAT\* tactics, and he spent four years in the Navy as a weapons specialist.<sup>25</sup>

Sambor asked Kirk to formulate a plan, the object of which was to remove MOVE people from their Osage Avenue home. According to Kirk's testimony before the commission, the plan was supposed to be designed to extricate MOVE 'with the least amount of force possible'.<sup>26</sup> Kirk pored over aerial surveillance photos of MOVE's house. According to Kirk, the photos showed a three-foot by three-foot trap door cut into the roof, with three-foot high wooden pallets around it in a barricade fashion.

Kirk also asked the Fire Department to bring one of their trucks, armed with a high-pressure line known as a 'Squirt' gun, to the Fire Academy. There a mock-up of the MOVE house was constructed to see if the Squirt gun would move and drive the pallets off the roof. It did.<sup>27</sup>

The idea, said Kirk, was to drive the pallets away from the trap door in order to send an assault team on to the roof to throw tear-gas into the house and force the MOVE members out. Kirk contacted the Department of Water and asked them to check if the water pressure of hydrants on Pine Street, where the Squirt guns would be located, would be sufficient for the assault. The pressure was fine.<sup>28</sup> Kirk's next visit was with Lieutenant Frank Powell, commanding officer of the PPD's bomb squad, or Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU). Powell had already been studying for more than six months photographic blow-ups of the MOVE roof supplied by aerial reconnaissance.

Powell and his experts then went on to work on designing an 'entry device' that would blow a hole in the roof to enable the assault team to deliver the tear-gas. According to Kirk, the experts blew up seven or eight charges on a facsimile of the MOVE roof until they found one 'that would work every time, and then we tried that three or four times to make sure that it did work and that the size of the hole that it made was constant'.<sup>29</sup> No poor planning here.

Kirk then provided an outline of the entire plan, the contents of which certainly throw into question what he meant by saying the idea was to get MOVE members out of the house 'with the least amount of force possible:

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\*The first SWAT team (special weapons and tactics) was formed in Los Angeles in 1966-7 and took part in such forays as the full-scale assault on the Black Panther headquarters in 1969 and, in 1974, the fierce attack on the Symbionese Liberation Army.



The plan was for one assault team to scale to the rooftop after the Squirt guns had done the job of knocking the barricades away from the trap door.

When the rooftop team secured the roof, the water would then be turned off, the entrance device placed on the roof, detonated, and the tear-gas generator would start to deliver tear gas into the property. The tear-gas generator delivers a high volume of gas in a very short time. It would have filled the house in a matter of minutes. Thus driving anyone inside outside, unless they had breathing equipment. And the longer the gas generator ran, the more oxygen would be displaced. So even if they had gas masks, sooner or later they would have failed.

[Police would have] two outer and inner perimeters. These were manned by stakeout personnel. The containment teams' responsibility was to place under arrest anyone in the property driven out. The second team *to give them fire cover should a fire-fight develop once these people were driven outside the property*. That is the basic plan (emphasis added).<sup>30</sup>

In other words, if MOVE members were to be forced out of their house, they stood an excellent chance of being shot. As a back-up, Kirk had in place plans for a lateral entry into the MOVE house by using explosive charges on the adjoining walls of the houses on either side of MOVE's. In this case, too, the object was to drive the MOVE members into the open.<sup>31</sup>

During the same two-month period during which Kirk was working on a military plan, authorities also attempted to establish the legal and political basis for an assault on MOVE members on Osage Avenue. On Memorial Day, 28 May 1984, Mayor Goode met with a delegation of Osage Avenue neighbours who complained bitterly about MOVE and demanded that something be done. Over the 4 July holiday, neighbours were back at City Hall to meet with the mayor. This time they brought Goode a tape-recording they had made of MOVE's speeches. They told him MOVE was threatening over the loudspeakers to provoke some kind of confrontation with the police on 8 August, the sixth anniversary of the siege at Powelton Village.

These reports, coupled with the claim that MOVE members were bringing explosives into their house, were critical components in establishing the political basis for a police assault. MOVE was portrayed as armed and dangerous.

At his meetings with the neighbours, Goode expressed sympathy and determination to do something, but also his concern that he did not yet have a strong enough legal case against MOVE. He wanted felonies rather than misdemeanours. According to one of the residents at the meeting, he told them 'he wouldn't make a move until he could do a

*complete* job because it was more harmful to us if he locked them up on minor charges'.<sup>32</sup>

In an eighteen-page analysis of all the possible criminal charges that could be brought against MOVE members, the District Attorney's office expressed the same concern:

there is probably cause to support arrests, searches, and prosecutions against MOVE. Unfortunately the most sustainable charges are misdemeanors. MOVE members arrested for misdemeanors will likely remain free on bail pending trial . . . and thus be given a public forum for venting their doctrine at length . . . If convicted of misdemeanors most MOVE members would not be given substantial jail sentences.<sup>33</sup>

At 6am on 8 August 1984, hundreds of police and firemen assembled a few blocks from the MOVE house. Two other MOVE houses in Philadelphia were also put under surveillance. The police had assembled an arsenal that included fifteen police wagons, two armoured cars, a bomb-disposal unit, a K-9 dog team, mounted police officers and fire trucks with mounted Sqrut guns. Residents on Osage Avenue were told to evacuate their homes and mail delivery to the block was suspended for the day because authorities said it was too dangerous.<sup>34</sup>

MOVE's response to all this was to get on the loudspeaker to declare that they were not intimidated and would not come out of their house. They also continued to demand the release of the nine members arrested for the death of the police officer during the 1978 Powelton Village siege.

What followed was a very tense twenty-four hours, but the police at the end of that time did not storm the house. Why they didn't is not altogether clear. Sergeant Kirk testified at the commission hearings that he had no idea why the plan was not implemented.<sup>35</sup> Mayor Goode and other city officials insisted that the police were there solely in a reactive posture, and that when MOVE took no offensive action, police action was not needed. However, Ramona Africa felt the police had counted on provoking MOVE into some kind of violent confrontation by setting off a cherry bomb, but that MOVE had seen through the provocation and didn't respond.<sup>36</sup> Or perhaps because the authorities had not yet obtained felony warrants, they felt they still lacked a sufficient legal cover for an all-out assault. In any event, what is indisputable is that 8 August 1984 ended up being a fortaste of and dress rehearsal for 13 May 1985.

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By the spring of 1985, there were many signs that the showdown was not far off. Surveillance of the MOVE house and MOVE members' activities



had of course continued throughout the period. Lieutenant Frank Powell continued to study his aerial reconnaissance photos of the MOVE roof. Civil Affairs officers continued to meet with some of MOVE's neighbours, who by continuing to complain and demand that something be done about MOVE, were unknowingly contributing to the destruction of their own neighbourhood.

MOVE actually hadn't been on their loudspeaker much over the last seven or eight months, perhaps reflecting how they too were feeling out the situation after 8 August. But on 29 April they did get on the sound system, in response to several police officers lurking in the back of their property and setting their dogs to barking. Some of the neighbours then immediately phoned in a complaint about the noise MOVE was making, and shortly after a contingent of cops arrived on the scene.<sup>37</sup>

No arrests were attempted, even though Civil Affairs officers said that MOVE members threatened their lives and that of the mayor. Instead, officers tape recorded and took notes of MOVE's loudspeaker speeches, thus collecting information that would later turn up in the warrants used as the legal justification for the assault on 13 May. In fact, the events of 29 April strongly suggest a deliberate police provocation, for on the very next day Police Commissioner Sambor alerted key subordinates to begin developing plans for an assault on MOVE.<sup>38</sup>

As was true of Kirk's plan, Sambor's called for the initial use of smoke, gas and water. But unlike the earlier plan, where a lateral entry was the back-up to a rooftop assault, now a major element of the new plan called for the use of 'insertion teams' that would employ explosives to blow small holes into the walls on both sides of 6221 Osage Avenue in order to get the tear-gas inside the house. This was necessary, said Sambor, because trying to insert the gas via the roof had been made much more difficult by the large front bunker MOVE had built after 8 August. As a major contingency, however, and similar to the Kirk plan, there also were to be water cannons or Sqrut guns on hand to try and eliminate the front bunker. And if the insertion teams failed, the plan called for the use of explosives on the roof.

Sambor adamantly denied that the use of explosives on the roof was contemplated at any time prior to the afternoon of 13 May, but Sergeant Albert Revel, one of the key planners for the 13 May assault, revealed at the commission hearings that placement of explosives on the roof was planned as a back-up days before 13 May.<sup>39</sup> Sambor testified that his plan was essentially in place by the evening of 10 May and that on 11 May he told Goode the operational details.<sup>40</sup>

It was also on 11 May that the city authorities got the arrest and search warrants they wanted as a legal basis for the forthcoming assault. On that day, Judge Lynne M. Abraham, sitting in her Society Hill home, signed warrants for the arrests of four MOVE members known to be inside 6221 Osage. Frank James Africa, Conrad Hampton Africa,

Ramona Johnson Africa and Theresa Brooks Africa were charged with seven specific crimes, including four felony charges – criminal conspiracy, possession of explosives, riot and improper threats in official matters.<sup>41</sup>

Judge Abraham also wrote out a search warrant at the request of the Civil Affairs Unit, which claimed that MOVE had an illegal cache of weapons and explosives inside 6221 Osage. This was not only an important legal but also political justification for what was to come, and went hand in hand with rumours flying in the press and elsewhere that MOVE not only had a large cache of weapons and explosives but was threatening to shoot police and Mayor Goode and blow up the whole block.<sup>42</sup>

The authorities did, however, have two major public image problems to contend with as they prepared for what they called the ‘inevitable’ armed confrontation. One was the MOVE children inside 6221 Osage. They could not be charged with anything, and while the adults could be portrayed as armed and dangerous, what could be said about the children?

The city’s Human Services Commissioner, Irene F. Pernsley, says she didn’t learn of the problem with the children until 9 May, when she got a call from Sambor saying they were supposed to be picked up and held until after the confrontation. This, of course, should have been no problem, since through their surveillance the authorities knew that MOVE adults took the children every day and always at the same time to Cobbs Creek Park for them to exercise and play, and always returned with them at the same time.

But there was a problem. Pernsley told Sambor ‘that we do not have the authority to just pick up children while they are at play or while they are in the park’, and then asked him, ‘on what basis it was being proposed that the children be picked up, inasmuch as we only operate on the basis of reports and allegations of neglect and abuse of children’.<sup>43</sup> She then told the commission, perhaps in another unintended moment of revelation that the hearings were replete with, that in her entire tenure as Human Services Commissioner she had never received a report about abuse or neglect of children at 6221 Osage and therefore let Sambor know that she ‘would be unable to honor that request’.

The commission also reports in its findings that on the evening of 9 May,

the City Solicitor’s office gave the Police Commissioner specific instructions to take the children from 6221 Osage Ave. into protective custody at the first opportunity. Nevertheless, the City Solicitor’s office did not attempt to secure the legal authority to remove and detain the children until the morning of the confrontation, when it was too late.<sup>44</sup>



A second major public image problem the authorities had to contend with involved negotiations. People would want to know what kind of efforts the city had made to talk MOVE members out of the house before deciding they had no alternative but to attack them. Accordingly, an article appeared on the front page of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* one day after the confrontation, claiming that three private citizens delegated by Mayor Goode to negotiate with MOVE told him on 9 May that MOVE would be willing to leave their house under certain conditions.

Supposedly, MOVE wanted 'an ironclad guarantee from Goode himself that they would not be arrested' upon leaving 6221 Osage.<sup>45</sup> Goode then was said to have sent word back the following day that there would be no immediate arrests, but that the mayor couldn't promise there would be no arrests at any time in the future. Then, the article continues, MOVE refused the mayor's terms and 'reverted to their original, non-negotiable demand' for the release of the nine MOVE members imprisoned for the death of the police officer during the 1978 Powelton Village siege.

The article then quotes Goode as saying he received word from one of the negotiators on Saturday, 10 May, that MOVE had sent him a message 'not to bother anymore talking to them. They would not talk to me anymore about this matter . . . At that point we decided we could not negotiate them out and had to go in and serve the warrants.'<sup>46</sup>

However, Gerald Africa, a spokesperson for MOVE and the individual involved in these negotiations, maintains he never said any such thing. Nor was it the position of those in the house, he stresses, that they would come out if Goode promised not to arrest them. But, Gerald Africa says, there most certainly was an agreement reached by the negotiators and himself – one that Goode flatly rejected. MOVE members agreed to come out of the house, and thus prevent a confrontation, if either Goode or Pennsylvania Chief Justice Robert Nix would give them a verbal agreement that the courts would review the cases of the nine jailed members. MOVE also wanted the nine released on bail pending the results of the review. This was hardly an unreasonable demand, and in fact there already was a precedent for it. As part of settling the confrontation at Powelton Village in 1978, the authorities had agreed to release several other imprisoned MOVE members on the same review basis. But Goode and the other authorities now refused to consider such a compromise.<sup>47</sup>

All it would have taken, said Gerald Africa, even right through 13 May, was a phone call to him giving nothing more than verbal assurance that the cases of the nine members would be reviewed. But the call never came.

Chauncey Campbell, a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP, was one of the last people to talk with MOVE. On the afternoon of 12 May he spoke with Theresa Africa. He asked her if the

people inside the house were aware of what was going on outside, how the police were bringing in lots of weapons and how it appeared as though a violent confrontation was about to start. She said: 'I know – they're here to kill us.' She then asked him to go back to tell the ministers, to tell the journalists, particularly the Black journalists, to tell everyone that MOVE had no intention of initiating anything with the police, that anyone familiar with MOVE's philosophy knows MOVE doesn't believe in killing anyone or anything, not even a fly. She said MOVE reveres life, including their own, that they therefore had no intention of committing suicide. 'Tell them', she said, 'that we want justice. And tell them that we want to live.'<sup>48</sup>

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The MOVE members inside 6221 Osage were not warned about the bomb; they were not to be given any last chance to surrender. But residents on the north side of Pine Street, who for reasons that are not totally clear had not been forced on 12 May to evacuate, were now warned that a bomb was about to be dropped and were ordered to stay indoors. The police in 6218 Osage, the house directly across from 6221 and which had been rechristened 'Post One', were also withdrawn moments before the bomb was dropped, as were all other cops from Osage and the south side of Pine.

These withdrawals from the immediate area around the MOVE house would suggest that the bomb they were about to drop was a powerful and dangerous one. But the authorities denied they had anything more in mind than using a relatively mild and definitely safe 'entry device'. Sambor testified that he had asked Lieutenant Powell of the Bomb Disposal Unit if he could build this 'safe entry device'. Powell replied that he could, said Sambor, and then told the police commissioner that the bomb would contain Tovex (TR-2), a blasting agent developed by the Dupont Corporation and used in underground mining operations. As further evidence that dropping a bomb was not a last minute decision, Tovex was among the explosives tested for use on the MOVE house in the days leading up to the 8 August 1984 confrontation. But the bomb dropped on 13 May contained more than Tovex. It also consisted of more than three pounds of C-4.

C-4 is a very powerful and closely restricted military plastic explosive. A US Army field manual describes C-4 as being 'ideally suited for cutting steel, timber and breaching concrete'. US troops used C-4 in the infamous Claymore mines during the war in Vietnam. Compared to an equal amount of Tovex, C-4 is roughly 80 per cent more powerful, and even has more explosive power than an equivalent amount of dynamite.<sup>49</sup> The inevitable question is, where did the C-4 come from?

C-4 is a highly restricted military explosive and its transfer to civilian



agencies is illegal. C-4 also cannot be purchased commercially anywhere in the US. The police denied, of course, that they had a large stock of the explosive, which was understandable once the actual supplier was revealed to be the FBI.

The FBI and other federal agencies had been paying attention to MOVE since it came into existence in the early 1970s. Shortly after he became mayor and during the same period that he was being briefed by subordinates about MOVE, Wilson Goode met with the FBI, the Secret Service, the US Attorney's office, and the US District Attorney's office to elicit their opinions on how to deal with MOVE.<sup>50</sup> More, the FBI participated with the Philadelphia Police Department in the actual planning of the assault in the days leading up to 13 May. According to police records and Sambor's testimony before the commission, three FBI agents attended a strategy session on the morning of 9 May in Sambor's conference room, and again on 11 May.

The FBI's approval of the plan was sought and received. The FBI agents present certainly had the qualifications to pass judgement on the plan's soundness. Two were expert SWAT tacticians, the other an explosives expert. Sambor testified that the agents approved, 'The gas, the water, the smoke, the lateral entries through the walls, tactical positioning of the officers, the outer perimeter, the inner perimeter, the evacuation, the coordination with other departments . . .'<sup>51</sup> Sergeant Connor also testified that it was federal authorities who assisted the police department in obtaining the anti-tank gun and other high-powered military weapons that were used in the assault.

Finally, it was the FBI which in January 1985 delivered close to thirty-eight pounds of C-4 to the police department and its bomb squad.<sup>52</sup> In sum, the footprints of the FBI and other federal agencies are all over the 13 May assault and massacre of MOVE.

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In the last twenty years, officials at all levels of US government have been engaged in a major effort to strengthen the country's 'anti-terrorist' and counter-insurgency apparatus. This nationwide and well-coordinated campaign is being carried out largely in secrecy, including the fact that there has been a significant intensification of this effort over the last few years.

Indeed, many of the same 'anti-terrorist' and counter-insurgency tactics and techniques that have been and are continuing to be developed for dealing with 'enemies abroad' are now being developed and applied with increasing frequency to try and cope with 'enemies at home'. And underlying the stepped-up pace of these domestic military preparations, as the counter-insurgency experts themselves frequently mention and openly worry about, is the growing possibility in their eyes of civil

war in the US, concentrated in the nation's ghettos and other urban cores – in the context of all the international troubles the rulers of this country are having.

In this larger context, it becomes possible to understand more fully that the events in Philadelphia on 13 May 1985 did not represent some 'tragic mistake', or bureaucratic bungling, or even simply the conscious conspiracy of a few local politicians who should be indicted for murder and thrown out of office, but one of the 'first fruits' of a domestic military programme that has been years in the making, has been coordinated at the highest levels of government, and has now been intensified in concert with 'resurgent' America's recently unleashed fascist offensive. It is in this larger context, for example, that it is possible to understand the murder that day of five children. One government expert, in testifying before Congress about the CIA's 'counter-terror squads', explained quite well how such an atrocity could happen. He insisted on the need for violent 'preemptive strikes' against opponents of the US, even if there are incidental 'civilian casualties', and he then added that this was true *'whether you are talking about Lebanon or Philadelphia'*.<sup>53</sup> In other words, the five MOVE children met the same fate, and essentially for the same reasons, as did the children in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila in 1982.

The beginnings of the US government's effort to create this nationwide counter-insurgency network can be traced to the late 1960s, when officials fretted over the inability of police departments to handle the anti-war demonstrations and ghetto rebellions. In 1968, a Pentagon task force on civil disorder developed a programme to try and deal with these upheavals. Dubbed 'Operation Garden Plot', the programme called for the extensive use of informants and infiltrators to gather intelligence on US citizens who were in opposition to the government's foreign and domestic policies.<sup>54</sup> 'Operation Garden Plot' quickly evolved into annual training exercises, complete with contingency plans to cope with demonstrations and 'riots'. These plans were developed for every major US city, and participants in these exercises included key officials from all of the nation's law enforcement agencies, along with representatives of the National Guard, the military and the intelligence community. The training exercises consisted primarily of joint teams reacting to various scenarios based on information gathered by informants and infiltrators. The object was 'to quell urban unrest, and the different war games ranged from minor scuffles with a handful of protestors to serious confrontations between police and large mobs'.<sup>55</sup>

By 1970, 'Operation Garden Plot' moved from contingency plan to reality. On 30 April of that year, President Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia, which was met by massive and highly militant demonstrations across the nation. These in turn were met by large numbers of police and National Guardsmen, who attacked the



demonstrators in strength along a broad front and in a clearly well-coordinated manner. This was particularly evident in California, where Governor Ronald Reagan and his associates had been some of the most enthusiastic participants in 'Operation Garden Plot'.

In 1971, Governor Reagan created a special school where law enforcement officials from all over the country could learn the latest tactics for battling civil disorders. Called the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI), the man Reagan chose to head this school was General Louis O. Giuffrida, a former California National Guard officer and a specialist in military police science. Among his other accomplishments, Giuffrida was one of those to pioneer the SWAT concept, which he likened to the US Army's long-range reconnaissance patrols (LURPs) in Vietnam: 'If you know about LURP, then you know what SWAT is – adapted, of course, to domestic needs in an urban setting.'<sup>56</sup>

During his ten-year directorship of CSTI, the school trained over 27,000 officials from every state in the country and from twenty-five other countries as well – clearly demonstrating the close connection between fighting 'enemies' at home and abroad. Giuffrida personally taught the California Civil Disorder Management Course, whose topics included: 'Unrest in modern society'; 'Control force intelligence'; 'Dis-sent, disruptions and violence'; 'Contemporary insurgency'; 'Terrorism'; and 'Mass arrest procedures'.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, all during the 1970s and right up to today, 'Operation Garden Plot' has continued to exist and remains a major programme for the attempted suppression of political disorder or, to use the word preferred by authorities today, terrorism. A 1982 internal Pentagon document still describes Garden Plot as the guide for military response to civil disturbances 'in the 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and US territories and possessions, as directed by the President'.<sup>58</sup>

But by no means has the US government rested content with its Garden Plot. In 1978, the Carter Administration created a shadowy and secretive organisation called the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is supposed to be responsible for coordinating the federal response to natural and man-made disasters, such as floods, hurricanes and chemical spills. But FEMA in fact spends little of its time and efforts on disasters of this variety, concentrating instead on what are perceived by the authorities as more worrisome and potentially catastrophic emergencies such as civil disturbances, sabotage and, of course, the ubiquitous 'terrorism'.

FEMA – headed up since its inception and until 1985 by none other than General Louis O. Giuffrida, the same counter-insurgency expert to whom Ronald Reagan had earlier turned when he was governor of California – has been carrying out various war games that are similar to but also exceed in ambition those connected with 'Operation Garden Plot'.

One exercise, Rex-84, involved government response to some regional crisis, apparently in Central America, that spills into and intensifies a crisis in the US itself. The 'game' centred on a mass of refugees flooding across the US-Mexican border, triggered perhaps by a US invasion of Nicaragua. FEMA's job, with assistance from the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, was to apprehend and detain 400,000 of these refugees in a six-hour period. The exercise also consisted of holding these refugees in detention camps at military bases across the country, and the rounding up of other protesters and dissidents along with them.<sup>59</sup>

As further preparation for the development of such a crisis, an internal Pentagon document, dated 1 December 1983, indicates how troops could be called out. The document, prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, lists exceptions to the federal law that prohibits the military from operating within the US, and gives as its authority for such actions 'the inherent legal right of the United States Government to ensure the preservation of public order . . . by force if necessary'.<sup>60</sup>

In essence, the plan outlined in this Pentagon document involves the declaration of martial law, including the 'military assumption of judicial, law enforcement, and administrative functions of local government' which would be accomplished through 'coordination between the Defense Department and FEMA at the national and regional levels. [Defense] commanders [with] planning and execution responsibilities are required to coordinate plans and procedures with FEMA'.

And as an indication of concern that there be adequate force to carry out this plan, the document also states that, 'All military forces, Active and Reserve, and the National Guard, when federalized, are considered potentially available.'<sup>61</sup> Further, the Army has been developing light infantry units, composed of reserve and National Guard troops, that are being stationed at strategic places around the country and can be used to move quickly into 'trouble spots' in the urban cores. According to one military analyst, these infantry units 'show a dual viability for urban fighting. There's only a few vehicles for a large number of men; therefore, they'll be walking. And they'll be able to insert an entire battalion into a city in one and a half hours.'<sup>62</sup>

Another development that merits close attention is the 'Joint Terrorist Task Force' (JTTF), which was formed in the early years of the Reagan Administration.<sup>63</sup> The creation of the JTTF marks the first time that there has existed in the US a nationally coordinated police force, with a centralised command structure and a huge arsenal of sophisticated weaponry at its disposal. The FBI oversees the work of the JTTF, which is composed of a network of federal, state and local law enforcement officers. The specific personnel and internal structure of this organisation, however, are a closely guarded secret.

'Operation Garden Plot'; 'continuity of government'; the Rex exercises;



the 'Joint Terrorist Task Force'; the entire counter-insurgency apparatus that has been developed over the last several years by the US government, in cooperation and coordination with local police forces – *that* is what lies behind the murder of eleven Black radicals in Philadelphia on 13 May 1985.

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Mayor Goode had said to the press on the night of 13 May 1985, 'What we have going on here is war.' And it is important to note again that these words were uttered not by some blatant reactionary, but by an elected Black official who presided over the massacre of eleven Black radicals and who said in its aftermath that he took full responsibility for it and would do it again.

This points to the important role that Black officials like Wilson Goode are playing and are expected to continue to play in the counter-insurgency tactics that are presently being developed and implemented. In the 1960s, the absence of Blacks in key political positions helped to fuel the ghetto uprisings of that period, and also made it more difficult to suppress them. One of the things done in the effort to remedy that situation has been to foster the election of Black mayors and other Black officials who have often been able to fulfill the role of suppressing potential outbreaks among Black people more successfully than the whites who preceded them in these offices. These 'Black faces in high places' have been able to diffuse the anger of especially Black people and to disorient many of those who had in the past been in the forefront of opposition to these attacks. These officials have also been able to serve as living examples of the 'success' Black people are said to have achieved through travelling the electoral road to 'Black empowerment', and as material inducement to divert broader sections of Black people and others down this path.

The response to the MOVE massacre shows that this strategy has had some effect. On the one hand, there have been many in the Black community who have condemned this atrocity and Goode's role in it. But at the same time, there have been others who have said that the massacre should not be condemned because it involved an elected Black official and if he is criticised it will become increasingly difficult to elect more Black officials.

In this context, the critical importance of understanding, and remembering, what happened in Philadelphia on 13 May 1985 must be stressed. Eleven Black radicals lost their lives in the war to which Wilson Goode referred, and in which he has consciously decided to participate on one side. MOVE has made it clear in its speeches, literature and actions that it is not preparing to overthrow the existing social order by force of arms. But what MOVE does represent, and what this social

order can tolerate today even less than it did in the past, is an indomitable and unrepentant spirit of rebellion.

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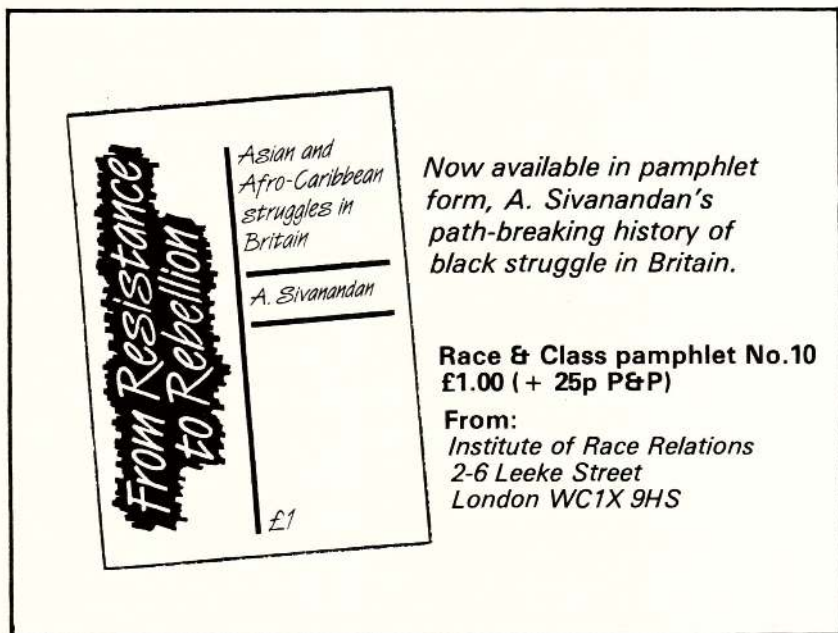
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## India's green movements

At the time of the world environmental conference, held in Sweden in 1972, the prevailing feeling was that environmental concerns – seen as those of ‘clean air and green parks’ – were luxuries of the advanced capitalist countries: what the Third World desperately needed was national independence and development. As India's then prime minister Indira Gandhi put it, ‘poverty is the worst polluter’, and some delegates went even further to hail smoke as a sign of progress. Even leftists acceded to this world division of labour, assigning ‘green’ to the North and ‘red’ to the South. Nevertheless, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was set up in 1972, and terms like ‘ecodevelopment’ began to be coined.

Only a year later, in 1973, the Third World's first grassroots ecology movement burst out in the Himalayan foothills. By today, at least in India, peasants whose lives are being disrupted by environmental destruction have grown so desperate that they are halting work on such shibboleths of development and national independence as dams, mines and military testing ranges. They are raising new questions about the relationship between science, technology and people's needs and about the continuing relevance of India's traditional forms of agriculture, and they are beginning to formulate new models of socialism itself.

### **‘They have swept the jungle clean ... ’**

The story of India's green movements begins with the Chipko movement,

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which arose when low-caste peasant men and women in the Himalayan foothill region of northern India resolved to halt commercial logging. Decades of intensified penetration of the area had led to deforestation and resulting erosion and floods, while peasants found it harder and harder to find fodder for their animals and firewood for cooking. At last, when the forest department auctioned off a large ash grove for clear-felling after forbidding the peasants to take any wood for making ploughs, the people decided on direct action. They marched to the forest and threw their bodies in front of the trees before the startled loggers. The Chipko movement – which takes its name from a Hindi word meaning ‘to hug’ – spread rapidly throughout the region.

The peasants had been organised in Gandhian local self-help organisations, and their movement quickly took on a broader social ideology. Forests should be directed for people’s needs and not for profit – on the one hand, for the protection of the land both in the mountains and the vast plains below, and on the other, for the provision of the ‘five Fs’ so important to semi-subsistence Indian peasants: fuel, fodder, firewood, food and fibre. And they should be under the control of local village communities, because increased state control has only led to destruction.

As Shakuntaladevi, a woman activist of the Chipko movement puts it:

Before, there were forests all over the hills around here and plenty of water and fodder for animals. The crops were wonderful. But these hypocrites who talk of scientific plans have swept the jungle clean. They have destroyed the water and fodder. They have forced our men to go outside for work, and then they would teach us about forest protection!

Shakuntaladevi has a point. Beginning over a century ago under colonial rule, the Indian state has gradually increased its control over forest lands, at the expense of tribal and peasant communities which used to enjoy their free use. At the same time, deforestation has gone on unchecked. While the government’s goal is 33 per cent forest cover and 22 per cent of India’s geographical area is actually under Forest Department control, aerial surveys show only 8-10 per cent actually under closed forest.

This is a dangerously low percentage. In particular, international concern about the Himalayan watershed has increased, where ecological damage can threaten the livelihood of nearly a billion people in the agricultural plains of north India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Already, increasing floods in the plains have been costing the government of India over \$1 billion a year, while soil erosion, a falling ground water level, desertification and drought have increased elsewhere. In the meantime, the masses of the poor who rely on biomass for cooking fuel



are faced with unprecedented shortages – what experts refer to as the 'other energy crisis' of the Third World. Delhi gets much of its firewood from as far away as Assam in the north-east, while women in many villages often walk miles every day to find fuel, and large numbers of tribal women now survive by earning a few rupees as 'headloaders' – carrying branches and sticks from deep in the forests to sell to contractors.

The Indian government claims to share these environmental concerns, but, in practice, it neither allocates enough funds nor takes up balanced programmes. The touted 'social forestry' schemes, funded by the World Bank, USAID and other bodies, are oriented to monocultural plantations of teak, eucalyptus, pine and other trees selected for profitable timber purposes, not to local people's needs. When mixed natural forests are felled for such plantations, the resulting popular rage can be explosive. A major conflict over such social forestry erupted in south Bihar state in 1979, when the government began planting teak in a World Bank-funded programme, usually after cutting down local forests – including the sal tree, a multi-purpose tree which is considered sacred to the tribals who inhabit the area. Tribals in Sirghbhum district responded with a campaign to cut down the teak, using the slogan 'Sal is ours, teak is the exploiters' – and the result was a clash with the police that left over sixty tribals dead. The fact is that while some commercially oriented big farmers like to plant trees such as teak or eucalyptus, these are useless for the fuel and fodder subsistence needs of local peasants and herders – let alone the fuel needs of such cities as Delhi.

With such widespread ramifications from deforestation, it is not surprising that the slogan of *jungle bachao, manav bachao* – 'save forests, save the people' – has spread far and wide since the early days of the Chipko movement. It is still the tribals, though, who provide the most organised militancy for movements, due to their economic and cultural dependence on the forest. 'When the forests disappear, we will also disappear', is the feeling of many, and the result translates often into action. As Waharu Sonavane, a young Bhil tribal organiser in western India, put it at a 'tribal forest conference' attended by representatives of fifty villages in his area:

Only tribals can save the forests! If this exploitation of the contractors keeps up we will stop the lumber trucks from going out of the hills. If they go on planting only commercial trees we will tear up their nurseries. Deforestation is leading to drought all over and misery for us. Put the forests under our control and help us get the knowledge and resources for scientific forestry, and we can stop it!

It is a demand both for popular power and people's science, and it is one of the main themes of India's green movements.

**Temples or juggernauts?**

In 1974, a year after Chipko, 15,000 Munda tribal families in the Banchi district of Bihar began to organise resistance to having their lands confiscated for the huge Koel Karo dam, designed to double the power available for the entire state. Up to that time, the massive dam-building projects of independent India had gone on with little concern for those whose lands were flooded in the name of progress. With little cash compensation, people were hurled far from their original homes, settled in waste areas with inadequate land and insufficient capital to develop it, without schools and other facilities – sometimes, ironically, without even water. With this background, the Koel Karo People's Organisation demanded 'land for land'. The state government ignored them, but when they finally moved to begin construction in 1978, they found the roads into the dam site blocked by mobilised tribal peasants. And so the situation has been at stalemate from 1978 to the present, with the government unwilling or unable to find compensatory land and the people saying, 'This dam will be built only over our corpses.'

India is one of the biggest dam-builders in the world. Between 1951 and 1982, forty-six major irrigation projects (with a command area of over 10,000 hectares each) and 517 medium projects were completed – with fifty more major projects nearly finished – to provide about a third of the country's electric power and irrigate about half of the 30 per cent of net sown area now provided with irrigated water. Dams have also been a central theme of India's ideology of development: described by Jawaharlal Nehru as the 'modern temples of India', they have also been advertised as the powerhouse of the Green Revolution, the bringers of water and prosperity to a backward countryside.

But many feel that they are instead juggernauts of destruction. Repressed peasant evictees have found it difficult to resist, with community leaders and bureaucrats telling them they have to 'sacrifice for the nation's progress', but the Koel Karo example is proving contagious. Movements are developing in many areas, while in Maharashtra state in western India a state-wide united committee of dam-affected peasants has, for some years, put forward not just the slogan of 'land for land', but argued that evictees must get irrigated land *within* the command area of the dam project. The reasoning is simple – rich farmers who will benefit from vastly increased land values can well afford to give up some excessive acreage. In the last year or two, peasants have been saying, with greater stubbornness, that they must get their land first – and only then will they allow the dam to be built. Local *satyagrahas* (jail-filling campaigns) have been held, and a demonstration of tens of thousands from all over the state was planned for Bombay in August 1986.

The Maharashtra state government (alone of those in India) has accepted the principle that evictees will be compensated by land within



the command area of the dams. And in regard to the huge Narmada project – a series of dams on India's largest west-flowing river, threatening to evict nearly a million people in total and flood 875,000 acres of land – the World Bank has written elaborate compensation clauses into contracts with state governments. But all of this has happened only *after* popular mobilisation has taken place.

It is noteworthy also that organisers of resistance are beginning to change their tendency to say that 'the dam must be built, but . . .'. More and more, the value of big dams themselves is being questioned. The costs of deforestation and land loss, the heavy rates of siltation under India's climatic conditions and the destruction of frail local ecologies leading to increased earthquakes are all among unanticipated results. Opponents argue instead for a focus on small irrigation projects and on land contouring and bunding, and point out that the amount of water that can be made available through surface storage in reservoirs is only a fraction of total rainfall: the real secret of water supply, they argue, is to develop ground water that can reach peasants, villages and towns through wells, rivers and streams. And this requires afforestation, and a massive land and water management programme.

#### **'Canals of blood will flow'**

Instead, three decades of agricultural development have seen the opposite: siltation of dams, erosion of topsoil, waterlogging and salinisation in irrigated areas, and a drastically falling ground water level elsewhere – down to 50, 100, 200 and, reportedly in some arid zones of Gujerat, 600 feet below the surface. Drought hit much of southern and western India between 1983 and the 1986 monsoons, but for the worst hit states the main problem was not shortage of food but of water and fodder for animals. Cattle starved and rivers and wells ran dry; people gasped for water while in the irrigated enclaves big farmers raked in crops and money.

Some of the popular anger is now getting directed against the whole pattern of cash-crop production and the diversion of water resources to the rich. In Maharashtra state, sugarcane, once the showpiece of agricultural development, has now become a centre of dispute. Sugarcane, the main cash crop, has provided a seeming foundation of rural prosperity, with over eighty cooperative sugar factories dotting the western areas of the state and providing a concentration of economic and political power. But opponents charge that it monopolises water and resources to the detriment of food production.

In fact, cane uses eight to ten times as much water as the crops that have traditionally been grown in the area, and though it is planted on only 1-2 per cent of the state's land, it uses at least half the irrigated water resources. Production of food crops like *jawan* (sorghum), lentils

and groundnuts has stagnated, and drought and severe water shortages have become endemic over half the state's area, sometimes appearing only miles away from the green canefields. Dryland peasants, forced to survive by labouring on rock-breaking road-building relief projects or by migrating to Bombay or even for work as harvesters on the canefields themselves, have begun to rebel.

In 1985, as anti-drought demonstrations, road-blockages, public rallies and conferences began to be held everywhere, the issue of water distribution became central. People demanded that the government provide water, fodder and work – the familiar themes of drought relief – but they also began to show a readiness to understand that drought was not simply a 'natural disaster' but a socially-caused one, and that one aspect of this was the monopolisation of water by the rich. 'Eight months water!' became a new demand and slogan – meaning that public water should be given for seasonal foodcrops; farmers of perennial cash crops like sugarcane should water them by digging their own private wells. Many economists and engineers estimate that if water is distributed on this basis, twice the present land could be provided with irrigation, even on the basis of present facilities.

But the 'sugar barons' have seen this as an attack on their access to water, and have reacted vehemently, arguing that sugarcane is the foundation of rural prosperity and has to be retained, even if this means importing food. 'Canals of blood will flow but we will not give up a drop of water from sugarcane', thundered one rural member of the state legislature. Though open conflict between groups of people fighting for water is still rare, the social tensions are obvious – indicating that, in this case at least, the question of drought and environment is directly connected with class issues.

What is striking is that in the last few years issues of deforestation, the causes of drought, the distribution of water as a public resource, even the pattern of agricultural development have become subjects of public discussion in parts of rural India – not only among the educated but also among agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

### **'The heart of our mother is bleeding'**

These themes are also embodied in songs and skits – for the new green movements have a vigorous cultural stress – and are normally linked with local cultural and religious traditions which have a strong emotional appeal (though they also criticise exploitative aspects of the heritage such as caste oppression). It is part of the strength of the movements that Chipko peasants refer to the trees they save as their 'mother', or that tribals in Orissa's western mountains, organising to stop a bauxite mining project from destroying a mythologically sanctified hill region, have looked at rivers running red from soil torn up by



bulldozers and said: 'Gandhamardan is our mother, bauxite is her heart. How can we tolerate our mother's chest being blasted and her heart bleeding?'

What the sacredness and generative qualities attributed to trees, hills and rivers symbolise is the character of India's traditional rural economy, when production was oriented to need and not profit, and agriculture was built on a balanced relation between crop land, forest and pasture land. Forests provided not only general ecological balance and subsistence for tribals, but also wood, fruit, medicines, dyes and many other products that came free or at easy barter rates to village peasantry. Grazing lands nourished the animals who provided not only milk and meat but also draught power and the most valuable fertiliser for the fields. It is this relationship, which Marx once referred to as the 'natural circulation of matter between man and the soil', which has been broken apart with capitalist 'scientific' agricultural development.

Now, deforestation, unregulated industrialisation and, in some areas, waterlogging are destroying the land to the point where it is estimated that two-thirds of India's total land area (including most of the forests and grasslands and a good part of cultivated areas) are degraded – one-third totally unproductive, one-third only partially productive. Chemical fertilisers and pesticides are poured into the fields, while imported and crossbred cows, which require expensive commercial feeds and are notable only for milk production, are promoted. The problem with this is that a capital-intensive industry cannot provide jobs for peasants forced to migrate from barren lands, and a population surviving at the margins cannot afford commercial substitutes for biomass cooking fuels and building materials, or get access to the canal water and deep wells that pretend to substitute for dried-up rivers.

Along with this, it is hard to claim even that the new 'scientific' development is feeding people better. After all, imports – fertilisers, pesticides, Jersey cows and their accompanying dairy equipment – have to be paid for, and agricultural products still constitute a major part of exports. Thus, though food grain production has just kept ahead of population growth, average consumption measured in terms of calories and proteins is stagnating, and the best vegetables, fruits, fish and even rice are increasingly being exported. The rural poor who produce these things find it harder and harder to get even vegetables and simple fruits to supplement their diet of lentils and grain, let alone such luxuries as meat, milk and eggs – while the fodder for their animals, the fuel for their mud cooking stoves, the water for their daily needs may require arduous hours of toil every day.

It is no wonder, then, that people often express the destruction of forests and hills in terms of human violence: it is their lives also that are being ripped apart along with the land and its vegetation. 'Ecology' is hardly a luxury concern in India, though there are urban middle-class

organisations and there have been primarily middle-class movements – such as the movement to protect Silent Valley, a natural mixed rainforest slated to be flooded by a dam, a movement spearheaded by a large popular science organisation. With only a few exceptions, the new green movements in India have been survival movements of the rural poor.

The effects of deforestation, dam eviction, desertification and drought have fallen hardest on the tribals who are the traditional forest dwellers (about 7.8 per cent of India's total population), on the nomadic communities who have herded sheep, goats, cattle, buffaloes, donkeys and yaks through its grasslands (about 6 per cent) and on the ex-untouchables, dispossessed artisans and poor peasants who are the lowest sections of the village communities – and, perhaps most of all, on the women of all these groups, for they have had the main responsibility of providing fuel, water, firewood and other subsistence needs while their husbands have slightly more often been able to find refuge in the cash economy.

And it is these who have provided the rising force of India's green movements in the last decade.

### **The new Green Revolution?**

These movements have been local, though some (like Chipko) have won national and even international recognition. Their organising forms are independent local committees, though with participation from activists from various political and social trends, ranging from Gandhian and tribal autonomist to socialist and communist, from members of various left oppositional parties to those suspicious of all party politics. Peasant and landless women and men have formed their backbone, while students have provided valuable networking services and environmentally oriented scientists have emerged as crucial allies.

Beginning with elementary resistance to the most directly felt forms of injustice, these movements are going on to articulate new modes of development, of science and of politics itself. Development should be in harmony with nature or it will end in disaster. It should take the needs of local people, not economic calculation, as its starting point. The sources of knowledge lie in the people and science must recreate these links; the experts and bureaucrats have only made a mess of things up to now. Give us control and we can learn how to manage the forests and the lands. So say the peasants of the Himalayan foothills, the tribals of eastern India, the rural poor of drought-stricken Maharashtra.

Ten years ago, fearful of increased class conflict provoked by the inequalities of capitalist agricultural development, even government officials were asking, 'Will the Green Revolution turn into a red one?' But, while agricultural labourers, poor peasants and industrial workers began to assert themselves, these purely economic clashes got dissipated



in the complexities of Indian politics and culminated only in Indira Gandhi's Emergency – and since then violent caste battles and pogroms against assertive ex-untouchables, regional-national assertions in Assam, Punjab and elsewhere, and, most recently, the rise of religious fundamentalist forces have begun to take centre stage.

Now, however, environmental destruction and the buffeting of droughts and floods are leading again to risings of the rural poor. Only the quest is no longer for a simple 'red' revolution in which proletarian forces take control of the means of production; it is also for a genuinely 'green' one in which the very form of production is questioned.

Along with this is a kind of base-level assertion of 'people's power' that is also a relatively new theme in Indian politics, which has been marked by centralised bureaucratic structures and heavy-handed patronage politics linked to an elite combining an age-old brahmanic cultural arrogance with the new glitter of sunrise scientism. It is still a subordinate factor, for the environmental movements themselves are still marked by personal factionalism and dominance, and occasional political sectarianism. Unity and linkage with revolutionary working-class politics are, perhaps, still to be made. But the new movements are arising out of the disaster-stricken heritage left by bureaucracies and elites, they are trying to formulate new methods, and they are beginning to win some victories. They have slowed down deforestation in some areas, they have forced plants to relocate, they have stopped the construction of a number of dam projects, they have upset some social forestry schemes . . .

Still, few of these are permanent victories: the juggernaut seems to go on eating up the land, its vegetation and its people. The fact remains that the movements are up against some very powerful forces. They face Rajiv Gandhi and his 'computerwallah' government, determined to 'modernise' their huge country – which means a vastly stepped-up need for imports of technology (including the fertiliser/pesticide technology which has come to be equivalent to agricultural modernisation), for power (and where else will this come from but coal, hydel and nuclear?), and for exports to pay for all of these (which will inevitably have to include agricultural products).

The movements also face powerful international forces such as the World Bank and the US government which, in spite of environmentalist shows, have technologism and links to the huge agrochemical and oil multinationals built into their very structure. Perhaps they also face the vast millions who throng to MacDonald's for fast food and, in so doing, add their bit to the pressure for cutting down the forests of the Third World for grazing beef. Against all of this, who will be the international allies of the peasants and tribals trying to save their lands and forests, of the disabled workers of Bhopal, of the women who have to climb for hours every day to bring drinking and cooking water for their families?

How will they link to working-class movements that have been torn by dissension and immersed in (often militant) economism? And what about unity and political leadership? These are the burning questions facing the world's green movements.

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## On being powerless in power\*

Mr President, members of the Bangladesh Economic Association, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am not competent to speak on the technical aspects of planning. Those rightly belong to the domain of economists. My interests lie more in the political objectives of economic plans, their feasibility, their successes and failures. In the circumstances, I shall try to relate some of our government's experiences of plans and planners and of the forces acting upon them.

The principal lesson we learnt during the tenure of our government can be stated in one sentence. It is that preparation of plans and their implementation is more akin to waging a war rather than smoothly carrying out a mission for which a political government wins a people-oriented mandate from the electorate. It is an unending series of battles fought simultaneously on many fronts and at many levels. The principal contenders are the following:

1. *The people:* The overwhelming majority of the people of Pakistan are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-educated, poor and backward. The proclaimed objective of almost all economic plans is to raise the economic, social and cultural level of the people. It is the people who vote, or are

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*Mubashir Hasan* was Minister for Planning and Finance in the Cabinet of Z.A. Bhutto (December 1971-October 1974), and former General-Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party.

\*Text of a speech given at the Bangladesh Economic Association, Dhaka, 17 December 1985.

*Race & Class*, XXVIII, 4(1987)

expected to vote, to bring governments into power and it is in their name that governments are formed and run.

2. *The leadership:* Generally speaking, the economic, political, social, ideological and cultural interests of the leadership of the political party in power determines the character of the government. In a country like Pakistan, these interests, depending upon the period, may tilt towards the interests of big land-owners, industrial or trading classes, or the custodians of the civil and the military apparatus of the state.

3. *The managers:* This group may consist of three or more sub-groups.

(a) At the apex of the administrative and intellectual organisation of the national planning commission are the planners. Highly educated, often at institutions of higher learning in the West, the planners are academic in their approach and generally out of touch with the problems of the people. They have little field experience, if any. Occasionally, members of this group have either served with, or have yearnings to serve with, international organisations such as the World Bank.

(b) The second sub-group may be designated as the implementers. In the former colonies of Britain, the implementers are generally members of the civil and the armed services. Among them are administrators, engineers, educationists, doctors and specialists in agriculture and other applied sciences.

(c) Industrial entrepreneurs, capitalists, agriculturists, real estate developers, big transporters, etc., constitute yet another sub-group which operates semi-independently and at a level subservient to that of the sub-groups (a) and (b).

4. *The developed countries:* To be included in this group are the industrial and financial houses of the developed countries and their governmental agencies, as well as the international agencies dominated by them, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the International Monetary Fund, etc., etc. The US Agency for International Development and similar agencies created by the governments of other developed countries are also to be included in this group.

The clash of economic, political, social, cultural and ideological interests among the 'contenders' is of a fundamental nature. Take, for example, the interests of the developed countries. They want the markets of the undeveloped countries for their produce, products, low level technology, capital, communication networks, etc., at terms as highly profitable as possible. They want to grab the fruits of the labour and wealth of undeveloped countries at as little cost as possible. On the other hand, they want to sell what they wish to export at as high a price as possible. In other words, the interests of the developed countries are best served only when they can make as much profit out of the poor countries as possible. They do not wish that the primary exports of the



poor countries should become dearer, or for these countries to become able to produce locally the goods they depended upon the developed countries to supply. As things stand today, our poverty is their riches.

The apparent interests of the 'managers', as these exist in the former colonies of Britain, are to enhance their own wealth, influence and political power. Since their legitimacy as rulers, indispensability as a necessary adjunct to the process of production, and their loyalty to the institution of the nation state have never been established beyond dispute, the managers are prone to connive and collude against the people either with the leadership or with developed countries or both to serve their own group interest. Simultaneously, they are also prone to intrigue and conspire both against the people and against the leadership. However, a small number of individuals among them may attempt to act in the national interest along genuine nationalist lines. But the members of this small group have little chance of keeping their jobs over a long period of time.

The foremost interest of the leadership is, of course, to remain in power. At times, such interest proves to be a highly corrupting factor by itself; in other words, the leadership can be swayed away from its electoral commitment to the people and move closer to the interests of the other contenders. A government dominated by big landlords would want to raise the level of the prices of agricultural produce, would like agricultural inputs to be subsidised by the state and would like a greater share of bank credit for big landlords. Naturally, this leadership is opposed to land reforms or taxes on agricultural income.

Pakistan's brief history is rich with the experience of several possible combinations among the contenders. The leadership dominated by landlords and managers joined hands with the developed countries and we saw what happened during a part of the pre-plan and the first five-year plan periods (1953-60). The managers joined hands with the developed countries and the history of the years of the second and the third five-year plans (1960-70) is also before us. It is about a few years in the early 1970s that I wish to talk in more detail. Very little comes out in public of the fierce battles which unceasingly rage behind the scenes among the contenders – to be more precise, among the contenders minus the people.

We came into power under most unenviable circumstances and ran into major problems from day one. Most of our problems arose out of our political stance, our election rhetoric and lack of proper political organisation. We had a programme to nationalise major financial and industrial undertakings; we were against the bilateral and multinational security agreements of Pakistan; we wanted to improve our ties with the Soviet Union without damaging our relations with China; in our election campaign we had been very vocal against the United States; we wanted to curb the power of the bureaucracy; and we were known as

socialists. The result was that the developed countries as well as the managers were totally hostile to us. We had also alienated the big landlords and big business. It was in such an environment that we entered Islamabad.

As a result, the legitimate government of a sovereign nation, the first ever elected on the basis of universal adult franchise in Pakistan, had to act as an 'outsider' in an environment that was hostile, to put it mildly. The nationalisation of major industrial units had to be called, in the first instance, 'taking over management' and the task had to be accomplished in the dead of night along the lines of a clandestine operation. When it came to nationalisation of the banks, no file was ever made of that operation. Not one person from the establishment, including the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, was made privy to the implementation of the secret project. To avoid hostile international reaction against a state in such a weak position as Pakistan was in January 1972, foreign-owned firms such as Attock Oil, Esso Fertilisers and ICI undertakings had to be exempted from nationalisation. The compensation to be paid for nationalisation of the American Life insurance company had to be negotiated secretly in advance of the act of nationalisation. In addition to the economic, many more examples of this nature can be cited in political, social and administrative fields, in which the government considered it necessary to act as if it was a faction in opposition to the real custodians of power – the bureaucracy and its international allies. Time and again, we were obliged to adopt extraordinary courses of action to implement our policies.

Soon after we assumed office, Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank, paid us a visit. His mission was that (1) we accept liability for all the debts Pakistan had incurred to date, irrespective of the geographical area for which they were meant, and (2) we devalue our currency. In our discussions I put to him that if the Bank was of the opinion that we had inherited a government or an administration, it was mistaken. We were sitting, I said on the 'ruins and shambles' of a country and a government. McNamara was in agreement. He was also asked to look back on the course of Pakistan's economic development. For almost two decades, Pakistan had depended upon the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for guidance. The advice of the two institutions was accepted in totality. No questions were ever raised. Pakistan's plans were prepared and economic policies were determined by foreign experts. Pakistan even went to the extent of assigning the task of preparing and implementing individual projects almost exclusively to foreign consultants, contractors and suppliers, and their output was put by the bank and other agencies to the highest possible scrutiny – namely, that of the borrower by a lender. I told McNamara, 'You described Pakistan as a model developing country.' Pakistan had accepted the Bank and the IMF and their foreign experts as its physicians



and, as a good patient, took all the medicine they had prescribed. And now the patient lay dead before them. Were they prepared to accept any kind of responsibility for the tragedy? McNamara seemed moved, but did not answer.

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When we assumed power, there existed a fourth five-year plan to cover the period from 1970 to 1975. This plan, prepared by the previous regime, had been rightly criticised throughout the country, as it then existed. The kind of economic development it had aimed at would have served to exacerbate injustices among people and regions. It did not even attempt to do anything about what our party had termed the 'internal colonial structure' of Pakistan's economy. It was scrapped summarily by our government.

Ideas about starting afresh on preparing a formal five-year plan for economic development remained constantly in our minds, but for a variety of political, economic and administrative reasons we dared not embark upon them.

1. The constitution of the country had yet to be framed. The jurisdiction of the federation and the provinces had yet to be delineated, as also the powers of raising revenues.
2. Nationalisation of basic industries, banks, insurance, shipping and oil had to be carried out first, which took us more than two years.
3. Then we were hit by the spiral of rising oil prices and the severe worldwide recession of the 1970s. To add to our economic difficulties, we were hit by droughts as well as floods.
4. There were so many 'on-going' projects – and many more were to be added by us, like the steel mill, the power projects, heavy engineering and electrical complexes – that there was hardly any room for manoeuvre left.

By the time our government succeeded in giving the country a constitution with the unanimous approval of the Constituent Assembly, and by the time we had implemented the programme of nationalisation as envisaged in our election manifesto, it was 1974. Thoughts about the next elections began to occupy our minds and an international economic crisis began to take the world in its grip with extremely harmful consequences for us. Furthermore, we were disappointed with the ability and competence of our Planning Commission. The personnel in the Planning Commission was almost totally unacquainted with the conditions in the field. Unfortunately for Pakistan, its capital city has been so designed that foreign visitors are better able to adjust themselves in Islamabad than Pakistanis. For the citizens of Pakistan, visiting the capital to put forth a point of view is a nightmare. More

painful, in practical terms, is the fact that the news of the country never seems to reach it. The majority of our *Sahib Bahadurs* of the Planning Commission live in the exclusive paper world of the secretariat. Not much could be done about them by us when we formed the government. They were probably the best available in our country in those days. In order to acquaint them with the problems of development in the real world of Pakistan, I took a trainful from city to city and they were able to see, probably for the first time, how agriculture, industry, commerce, etc., operated in the country. They had a chance to meet and talk to working people, businessmen, administration officers, professionals and others.

Our experience with the developed countries and the international lending agencies educated us in yet another dimension. We had to pledge early devaluation of the Pakistani rupee. Only then were we able to resume normal financial and commercial intercourse with the western world. Prior to that, that is when we came into power, the financial houses of the West were not honouring our letters of credit or cheques. All our payments had to be made in cash. In fact, we were under constant threat of the seizure of our national assets in the western countries. Such was the truth, in the economic sphere, about the much touted 'tilt' towards Pakistan. Our depleting stocks of wheat and edible oil had crossed the danger mark. We had to find money to purchase food, and ships to deliver the food to Karachi. Even if all had gone expeditiously, we knew it would be too late to avoid grave shortages at the ration depots, and, as a consequence, urban unrest. Once we gave the pledge (I refer to the devaluation only), ships on the high seas loaded with grain were diverted to Karachi. We heaved a sigh of relief.

We were also to discover that the developed countries exercised great influence over the planning and implementation of development projects. We found that the practice of employing foreign consultants and contractors, sponsored by or acceptable to the developed countries or their lending agencies, to carry out feasibility studies, prepare plans and designs, supply goods and services and to supervise the execution of projects is a stupendous drain on, and a blatant plunder of, the wealth of Third World countries. Quite unjustifiably, we are made to pay through the nose – five, ten, twenty times the real price – for goods supplied and services rendered. With the help of just one officer, an engineer by profession, I was able to save hundreds of millions of dollars from being looted away. But it was always a grim fight. The files bearing orders which adversely affected foreign interests tended to become untraceable. The high echelons of our administration and the top executives of corporations with foreign participation generally tended to side with foreign interests. Mr Bhutto's Minister of Finance Planning and Development soon became a very unpopular man indeed, and for good reason. Permit me to mention a few instances.



In 1971, Pakistani irrigation engineers pointed out that the design of the large Tarbela dam, under construction at that time, and costing \$600m (1971 prices) was defective, as it did not provide adequate capacity to release water for irrigation purposes in a particular period of the year. The foreign consultants responsible for the design vigorously rejected the Pakistani criticism. Rightly, as events were later to prove, the consultants were overruled and we ordered the construction of an additional tunnel in the dam. However, when the consultant and the contractor, big foreign firms both, came to know that I intended to assign the work of designing and constructing the additional tunnel to Pakistani firms a big storm broke out. The 'managers' and some forces from the elite joined hands with foreign interests to oppose my proposal. I barely managed to assign the design work to Pakistani engineers. Formidable problems arose when the time of awarding the contract arrived, as the managers continued to favour the foreign firm.

Two years later, as the dam was being commissioned, disaster struck. The tunnels designed and built by the foreigners, along with massive concrete works, were severely damaged, costing us hundreds of millions of additional dollars. But that was not all. Not a word appeared in the press about any lack of diligence shown by the foreigners in design or construction or both. The bureaucracy had connived with foreign interests. I had left the government by then, and found myself totally helpless in getting the responsibility fixed where it belonged. The dam developed other troubles, and we have ended up by spending over \$1,300m, against the original estimate of \$600m.

Then there was the project to build a new pipeline from a gas field in Sind to Karachi over a distance of about 200km. I expressed my preference that the pipeline should be built by Pakistani engineers, for I did not believe it was so highly technical a job that Pakistanis could not do it. The 'managers' balked, saying that no Pakistani firm was capable of doing the job. Using the lever of the government's ownership of a part of the gas company, I hinted of my plan to change the management, the part-ownership of a multinational firm notwithstanding. The company relented, and in due course there was a request for approving foreign exchange expenditure of about \$40 to cover the cost of the pipe to be imported. I was staggered. Within minutes I got the length of the pipe multiplied by the weight of steel per unit length and the price of steel per unit weight. The answer was between \$6m and \$7m. Adding a certain percentage as the cost of fabrication, we concluded that the pipeline should not cost over \$9m to \$10m, against the \$40m being demanded of the government. Why? In their explanation, the company said that the government was in a hurry; the pipe was nowhere available on the shelf, hence the high quotation. But when would they actually need the pipe – in a week, a month, six months? Six months was their answer. So why did they not ask for a quotation for the supply to be

made six months from now? They promised to do it forthwith. They did, and the price came down by between \$6m and \$10m, I do not remember the exact figure. But it was still much too high.

At the time the last discussion about the cost of the pipeline took place, an American gentleman was sitting in my office and he showed utter indignation and amazement at what he had heard. He was not a businessman, he said, but he had friends and if only he could talk to them over the telex, he could be helpful, he would try. He did and the price came down to about \$23m to \$25m. But his gambit did not last long. Unfortunately for him, the telex operator was a sympathiser of the Pakistan People's Party and he supplied my resourceful private secretary with the transcript of the American's conversation with his 'friends'. The transcript revealed that within a period of three days all the four manufacturers of oil and gas pipelines in the world had agreed among themselves on how to share the extra profits any one of them would make out of the Pakistani deal. And they vowed not to quote below an agreed figure. As I pondered over the course to be adopted, an executive of our state enterprise called on me in some other connection. Upon learning that he was on his way to Japan, I requested him to say the right things to the Japanese steel manufacturers. He did and the price came down – to \$19m, if I remember correctly. Ultimately, we bought the pipe for between \$12m and \$13m as against \$40m. In country after country, government after government, the Third World is robbed every working day of the year. Almost every project that came to the executive committee of the National Economic Council for approval had either an unnecessary or an inflated tag of foreign exchange expenditure attached to it. In every meeting we would save scores of millions of dollars for the country.

There is a provision in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan that the amount of compensation paid by the state in lieu of any land acquired by it for housing projects could not be challenged in a court of law. Having been so permitted by the constitution, the Punjab government passed a law, in the same year, assuming powers to acquire land at less than Rs.5 per square metre for developing residential areas. In the same law, the government also assumed the authority to declare a committee or any other body as an 'official development agency' for the purpose of developing or owning a particular housing colony. This was a wonderful law which had cleared the major hurdle in the way of tackling the housing problem – that of availability of land. As a result, the slum-dwellers of Lahore were able to organise themselves through an institution they called the People's Planning Project. Nearly 120 *katchi abadis* proceeded, in accordance with the law, to rebuild or develop in Lahore one slum colony after another into proper habitations for human beings. They were even able to build brand new, architecturally innovative neighbourhoods at a price a majority of the poor people



were willing and able to afford. But the honeymoon between the organisation of the slum-dwellers of Lahore and the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party lasted hardly a year. The feudal interests in the party and the urban landowners joined forces. The work of turning the slums into reasonably well developed living areas was halted in 1975. Today, there is a bill before the Punjab Assembly to repeal this particular law.

Following the Tarbela dam disaster in 1974 which I alluded to earlier, the consultants and contractors, their bankers and insurers, along with the international lending agencies, all from the developed countries, got together with the managers and some ministers of the government and no investigation was held to fix the responsibility for the disaster. During 1974 and 1975, serious attempts by nationalist-minded Pakistani engineers and their organisations to point unambiguously to where the blame lay were blatantly ignored. In 1976, any public discussion of the technical issues in the engineering and design of the construction of the Tarbela dam was prohibited. In the case of the purchase of pipeline, the managers did their best to connive and collude with suppliers from the developed countries against the best national interests. In both these cases, powerful foreign interests were involved. In both cases, they were helped by the managers. In the Tarbela case some ministers also colluded. However, in the case of efforts to provide better housing facilities to the slum-dwellers of Lahore the leadership pitted itself against the interests of the people. Foreign interests were not involved. With the change of the chief minister, the character of the leadership in the Punjab Province had changed. After all, it was the government of the same political party that had started the project for redevelopment of the slum areas in 1973.

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A five-year plan for the economic development of a nation may consist of hundreds of projects costing thousands of millions of dollars. Development requires that the concept of every project has to be elaborated into a working proposition. The project has to be planned and designed in detail. The project cost has to be worked out and arrangements have to be made for funds for its implementation. The project has to be executed on the ground and, finally, it has to benefit one or more sections of the population in one or more geographical location. Every stage, from the elaboration of the concept to that of deriving benefits from the project after implementation, involves solid material and other gains. Open to beg for, claim or grab are jobs for managers, fees for consultants, payments to contractors and suppliers, royalties for owners of processes and patents, profits for providers of loans and credits, goodwill and often material benefits for the leadership.

It is only natural that, for every project, a clash of interests should give rise to fierce battles for patronage, money and power among the contenders. All aspects of a project can be a matter of economic, political and, occasionally, strategic interest to the contenders.

Apart from being a generator of projects, a plan of economic development of a Third World country is an object of deep interest among the contenders for its political content. In what manner will the balance of economic, social and political power among the various classes and regions change in the country, as the plan is implemented? What kind of financial and economic intercourse is the plan likely to generate with developed countries during its implementation? In what manner will the plan influence the pattern of financial and commercial intercourse with foreign countries after its implementation? In what manner will the implementation of the plan affect the contention among the superpowers in the country and the region? These questions go to the heart of the problems of development in general, and the planning and implementation of five-year plans in particular. These can turn out to be questions of high economic and political stakes. That is why interest in plans of economic development is so deep, not only within the nation but among its foreign patrons.

Allow me to illustrate my point by describing what the developed countries did not like in the policies pursued by Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government. I quote from the Report and Recommendations made by A.W. Clausen, President of the World Bank, to his Executive Directors on 11 May 1982:

8. A series of major political disruptions took place from 1969 leading up to the separation of Bangladesh at the end of 1971. The new government which came to power in Pakistan in 1971 reversed many of the policies of the 1960s. Most large industries, domestic banks and life insurance companies were nationalised, with adverse effects on private investment and confidence. Difficulty was experienced in absorbing these nationalised enterprises into the public sector, leading to a general decline in industrial sector productivity. At the same time, the government embarked on massive, long gestation public investments in industry (notably the Pakistan Steel Mill) and by 1977 public sector investment accounted for three quarters of total industrial investment. The system of five-year plans was discontinued. From the mid-1970s, public investments were allocated through annual development plans which did not provide a framework for programming the future phasing of development expenditures.

9. In several respects, government policies in the early part of the 1970s were biased towards the improvement of welfare for urban wage earners. Substantial wage increases took place as well as over-



staffing of the newly acquired public sector enterprises, while consumer interests were protected by a combination of price controls and subsidies. The agricultural sector bore some of the burden of these policies ...

10. In addition to large-scale investments in public sector industry and the associated needs for infrastructure, there were continuing large outlays on the major Indus Basin irrigation projects which had been commenced in the 1960s. However, these investments were not accompanied by adequate efforts to utilise the irrigation water provided by these projects ... The government became committed to a policy of increasing subsidisation of agricultural inputs as the principal means of promoting agricultural productivity.

11. During the mid-1970s ... there was extensive reliance on significantly increased external borrowing, largely from OPEC sources, as well as excessive domestic borrowing, in order to maintain the pace of public investment. The relaxation of fiscal discipline led to an upsurge in domestic inflation and a depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

The foregoing is indicative of what the developed countries and their lending agencies did not like in the policies adopted by our government. They wanted the government they were negotiating with at that moment to change those policies. What they wanted to be changed was the substance of the so-called 'structural adjustment'. It was quite irrelevant for the developed countries and their lending agencies that the policies they wanted to be reversed represented the mandate given by the electorate to the Pakistan People's Party in the general elections of 1970 and 1977. The parliament of Pakistan, elected on the basis of adult franchise, had approved the measures our government had taken, the very same measures which Clausen and his patrons wanted repealed by a martial law government.

I shall not narrate the measures adopted by the developed countries to bring about political changes in Pakistan, partly in order to clear the way for the reversal of the policies of the government of the Pakistan People's Party. Let me confine myself to the realm of the economy, especially its planning aspect. Our Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was executed on 4 April 1979. Two days later, we read in the papers that the United States had cut off all economic aid to Pakistan. The World Bank and the IMF did not lag far behind and an economic squeeze was put on General Zia ul Haq's government. I am told that the Pakistanis did offer resistance but their political position was much too weak. One team after another from Washington visited Islamabad, and by the autumn of 1980 the IMF and the World Bank had broken through the Pakistani resistance. Finding itself in dire economic straits, Pakistan agreed to avail itself of an Extended Fund Facility of US\$1,500m in lieu

of agreement to change its economic policies.

In the report cited above Clausen further disclosed:

Over the past 18-24 months, there has been an intensive and fruitful dialogue between GOP [Government of Pakistan] officials and Bank as well as IMF staff on necessary reform measures to support access to the IMF's Extended Fund Facility and the proposed first phase of a program of structural adjustment lending. Bank staff participated in drawing up the sectorial policy measures of the EFF program; the SAL [Structural Adjustment Loan] program is designed to reinforce and build on those initiatives.

Now structural adjustment is an euphemism for basic changes of national economic policy. Change your policy about ownership of means of production and distribution, prices, savings, investment, industry, agriculture, energy and the priorities of your plan and you have carried out 'structural adjustments'. The agreement to the Extended Fund Facility signed with the IMF in 1980 and the Structural Adjustment Loan signed with the World Bank in 1982, together with some other loan agreements, sealed the fate of the direction of Pakistan's economy well into the 1990s. These are highly instructive documents for students of national economy and national economic planning. The Structural Loan Agreement binds the government of Pakistan in the following sector and policy issues and I quote from Clausen's report cited earlier:

*Macro-economic management and resource mobilisation*

1. Economic growth
2. Domestic resource mobilisation
3. Monetary/credit policies
4. Balance of payment/exchange rate policies
5. Revised planning framework
6. Plan priorities
7. Planning procedures

*Agriculture and water sector*

8. Reorientation of public expenditure
9. Agriculture pricing policies
10. Diversification of agriculture

*Energy sector*

11. Petroleum exploration
12. Development of domestic oil and gas fields and producer pricing policies
13. Oil and gas consumer pricing policies
14. Role of public sector oil and gas development (Oil and Gas Development Corporation of Pakistan)
15. Long-term energy planning



*Industrial policies*

16. Public/private sector balance
17. Public sector efficiency
18. Export promotion
19. Import liberalisation
20. Restructuring of industrial incentives

In much greater detail than the list, the agreement specifies the objectives, lists the 'Recent actions and performance' and details 'Further steps to be taken'.

The specifications of the Structural Reform Program cover six pages in extra fine print. Actions are specified in detail, such as: fertiliser subsidy to be reduced from 9.2 per cent of total expenditure in the year 1980/81 to 2.9 per cent in 1983/4. The sector share of public industry to decline from 15.6 per cent to 4.9 per cent of total expenditure. Expenditure in the agriculture and water sector to be increased from 19.1 per cent in 1980/81 to 24.2 per cent in 1983/4. Water charges to be increased to cover an increasing proportion of operation and maintenance expenditure in accordance with an agreed schedule. Fertiliser subsidies to be eliminated by mid-1985. All pesticide subsidies to be eliminated by the end of 1983. An agreed programme of import liberalisation to be completed by the end of the present Extended Fund Facility Program.

Mr President, the measures outlined in the Bank's report are so exhaustive that every facet of planning and controlling the economic life of Pakistan has been completely covered in the agreements I have referred to above. No flexibility is allowed to the nation state. The fate of the people is sealed to suit the interests of the overlords, not merely in terms of policies, priorities and objectives but also in terms of the day-to-day operations of the planning and implementing organisations. Clausen, in the same report, goes on to say:

A highly regarded and experienced economist has already been appointed to the previously vacant post of Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission ... More high-level staff are expected to be appointed shortly and various forms of technical assistance are being sought. In addition, GOP has taken steps to safeguard planned priorities by requiring the active involvement of the Planning Commission at all stages of the project selection process. The project selection and approval process was reviewed by the Bank.

The developed countries are keen to place their men in the key posts of development planning, monitoring and implementing machinery. They want to bind the target nation not only in the strait-jacket of the plans they like to dictate, but also in the supervision and control of the day-to-day work of their planning and implementation. The political counterpart of this conspiracy against small nations is that, in order to achieve their economic objectives, they have to prefer weak and highly

centralised governments. Blinded by an unbounded sense of economic greed and, in some cases, by geo-political considerations, they do not care about the consequences of their policies in the target nations, which are often comprised of more than one nationality or ethnic group, at differing stages of socio-economic, cultural and political development. As a result, class and regional disparities grow unchecked, breed all kinds of antagonism which, with the passage of time, become unresolvable, bringing misery, death and disaster for countless millions.

The dominance-dependence relationship of Third World countries with big powers poses extremely complex and difficult problems in the realm of preparing and implementing plans of economic development. No country having such a relationship can ever be in a position to serve genuine national interests, in whatever way the term national interests may be defined. Thus, one of the most important prerequisites for planned national economic development lies in the sphere of the foreign policy of the nation, and it is that the country should be genuinely non-aligned in the struggle between the superpowers. However, that may not suffice in some cases. For small countries can have big neighbours who may attempt to dominate their economic life. In most cases, the possibility of such dominance can be countered by developing friendly economic and political relations with other nations. Relations among nations in any part of the world are never merely bilateral. Nations can have friends or groupings which come to each other's economic and political help in times of need. Unfortunately, all this is more easily said than done.

When a superpower or a big neighbour acquires a position of dominance that is detrimental to the national economic interests of a small or poor nation, it does so through the help and in partnership with leadership in the dominated country. Thus, the prerequisite for genuine and planned national economic development is that the developing country must not have a leadership that is so weak within its own country that it requires help from abroad to remain in power.

Assume, for a moment, that we have a developing nation which is genuinely non-aligned and which is blessed with a leadership that is not dependent on outside help to remain in power. Will that ensure national economic development in its true sense? The answer is in the negative because the economic interests of the leadership may not be identical with the economic interests of the people. In all its efforts to prepare and implement plans of economic development for the people, the leadership is sure to reserve such a big proportion of developmental effort for itself that the development of the people will remain quite wanting.

The general proposition I have come to believe is that only a people can, and will, develop itself.



# Ideology, theory and revolution: lessons from the Mau Mau

Peasant reaction (including the militant Mau Mau reaction) against colonialism in Africa has been depicted as somewhat spontaneous and conceptually parochial with no ideological foundations (see Adams (1972)). This view is, in fact, not uncommon and can be found in a number of historical accounts of the Mau Mau movement in colonial Kenya. But how valid is this conception of the anti-colonial efforts of the peasantry in Africa? To what extent can we regard the specific instance of the militant Mau Mau insurrection against British colonial rule in Kenya as non-ideological in its direction? This question obviously demands at least a brief consideration of the history of the Mau Mau movement.

## I

The massive land estates expropriated by the British at the inception of settler colonial occupation of Kenya, which required an abundant supply of cheap labour, not only displaced thousands of (predominantly Kikuyu) Kenyans to render the African land reserves intensely overcrowded, but also transformed thousands of others into landless rural proletarians – squatters within the British occupied farms which, on the whole, formed the most productive agricultural land. During the Emergency the squatters were forcibly evacuated en masse to join the already congested, uprooted and unemployed population of the

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*Race & Class*, XXVIII, 4(1987)

reserves. To aggravate this already explosive situation, rigid 'apartheid' restrictions were imposed on the Africans over the production and sale of certain cash crops, as well as in the social and political spheres.

All this eventually led to a revolutionary upsurge which forced the colonial government to address itself to the agrarian problem in a more concerned manner than ever before. Under pressure from Governor Philip Mitchell, who argued that the seeming political unrest in Kenya had economic roots, the East African Royal Commission of 1953-5 was set up to study the situation and come up with recommendations on agrarian transformation which might help alleviate the agitation among the peasants.

This commission observed that productivity in the reserves and in land under tribal conditions of tenure was so low as to be unable to supply even the minimum of subsistence for the Africans. Under such conditions, it was reckoned that the solution to the agrarian problem was not so much one of allowing Africans to repossess even a part of the expropriated land, but rather one of discovering adequate new methods of land usage that would increase its agricultural yield. The formula that the colonial government came up with and imposed on the people in order to effect such a transformation in agricultural activity was the abrogation of all forms of communal land tenure systems and their substitution by individual ownership. This, it was presumed, would stimulate competitiveness among the African farmers which (a) would increase productivity, (b) would lead to the stratification of the agrarian class, and to the emergence of an agrarian 'middle class' which would then align itself with the interests of the status quo, while (c) leaving the estates of the settler farmers intact.

This formula explicitly demonstrates the degree to which the colonial government and the British settlers tried to play down the political motive force behind the mounting unrest and agitation of the peasants. They engaged in a kind of economic reductionism that sheared the resistance movement of all its political elements. It was an exercise in wishful thinking that their political domination over the Kenyan peoples was not at issue. There was thus a tendency to regard politics (in essence 'ideology') as something beyond the simple minds of the peasants, a tendency that would feature again in post-colonial discussions on the Mau Mau. Contrary to the expectations of the colonial government, however, the objectives of the new formula only led to further agitation. As the Mau Mau themselves proclaimed:

We are fighting for all land stolen from us by the Crown through its Orders in Council of 1915, according to which Africans have been evicted from the Kenya Highlands . . . The British Government must grant Kenya full independence under African leadership and hand over land previously alienated for distribution to the landless. We



will fight until we achieve freedom or until the last of our warriors has shed his last drop of blood. (Quoted in Odinga (1967: 119-120))

But what was the Mau Mau movement? It was the culmination of more localised and sporadic opposition to 'squattments' and displacements from the land in Kikuyuland. At its most formal, it was part of the underground organisational structure of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) which was banned in 1940 as a subversive association. A chain of 'land committees', with secret membership, were formed in the villages in preparation for an open military confrontation with the colonial forces. As people's patience began to run out and news of the impending military confrontation was openly discussed in meetings, a state of emergency was declared by the colonial government on 21 October 1952.

The state of emergency became an even more powerful catalyst for the growth of the guerrilla movement. Thousands of Kenyans (still predominantly Kikuyu) moved into the Aberdere forests and the forests of Mount Kenya which became the stronghold of military activity. The overall military strategies of the guerrilla movement, now christened the Land Freedom Army, fell under the responsibility of the 'Kenya Parliament' (which was conceptually pitted against the colonial Legislative Council).

In the meantime, there were efforts to recruit freedom-fighters from other ethnic groups throughout the country in an attempt to give the movement more of a national image. As one of the colonial officers remarked:

The real out and out Mau Mau leaders are also doing more to try and win over other tribes in Kenya to their cause. There is evidence that they have succeeded with many individuals in other tribes and certain black spots in other tribal areas; their influence seems to be affecting the people more deeply and there are signs of real organisation developing. (Quoted in Ogula (1974: 185))

At the same time, international support, especially from the black diaspora, was mounting. The Mau Mau movement was thus giving new strength to the Pan-Africanist Movement.

Following the notorious Operation Anvil, however, in which thousands of Africans – predominantly Kikuyu, Embu and Meru – in and around Nairobi were dispatched to detention camps, and following the persistent massive raids and bombings in the forests, the Kenya Parliament eventually found it difficult to convene meetings. In addition, the link between Nairobi, a vital supply area of information and equipment, and the forests was severed. Centralised leadership gradually dissipated and the guerrilla movement was forced into retreat. The situation was further aggravated by the compromising politics of a

section of the African proto-elite which was gaining strength in the cities, and divisiveness within the ranks of the Africans.

Despite all this, however, it became clear to the colonial government that without some kind of a programme that would incorporate the economic *and political* interests of the displaced, Kenya would never again return to a state of 'peace'. And it was out of the experience of this kind of commitment and determination on the part of the Mau Mau guerrilla movement, and its impending threat to re-emerge in one form or another, that a strategy for transition to neocolonialism, based on such land transfer programmes as the Million Acre Settlement Scheme, was conceived and finally hatched.

## II

Having looked at the Mau Mau movement in brief, let us return to the question I raised in the introduction, namely: To what extent can we say that this movement had an ideological focus?

The concept of ideology is, of course, widely used by historians and social scientists without common agreement as to its meaning. There is not even concurrence on the basic structural properties of ideology. In the context of this confusion, many of the available definitions of the term have to be regarded as purely operational.

Connolly's definition (1967:2) seems the most comprehensive. He defines ideology as a set of beliefs – as opposed to ideas: ideas are subject to scientific investigation while beliefs are accepted on faith – about society and politics which seeks to understand how the whole society is organised, what goals should be promoted and what methods should be employed to achieve them. While such a set of beliefs takes into account a good many facts, it also usually shows the connection between those facts in a false light – that is why Marx regarded ideology as 'false consciousness'. In addition, ideologies are directly connected with the economic, social and cultural situation of specific groups or classes.

An ideology is often seen as revolutionary or conservative on the basis of its function. Ideologies incorporating more traditional viewpoints and attempting to preserve the status quo have been regarded as conservative, while those questioning the status quo and seeking to establish a new social order have been called revolutionary. But such a categorical differentiation, though useful in a way, ought to take into account the *content* of ideology in order to ascertain its revolutionary or conservative character. A revolutionary ideology is not simply one that questions or attempts to overthrow the prevailing social paradigm; it is also, and more importantly, a vision of a just and a progressive social order.

According to this definition, then, we can see that even the so-called spontaneous pre-Mau Mau peasant movements in Kenya were both



ideological in orientation and revolutionary in content. At all stages, the movements clearly espoused an anti-imperialist ideology aimed at achieving self-determination as an element of democracy. This became even more pronounced with the rise of the Mau Mau armed struggle for independence and the emergence of progressive trade union movements. As we have seen, the anti-imperialist movement passed through several stages. In most instances, it started as a reaction to localised conditions of oppression in various parts of the country. In some areas, this extended to a wider regional movement as people came to acquire an ideological empathy with their neighbouring 'tribal' compatriots engaged in local resistances. At this stage, one could say that the anti-imperialist struggles were displaying (or had displayed) certain 'tribal' leanings insofar as they saw their objective as primarily that of liberating the 'tribal' unit from colonial oppression. Such 'tribal' patriotism became particularly intense in regions of British settlement and was manifested in many anti-colonial songs and oaths. Up to this point, the ideology was strongly articulated in terms of anti-Europeanism and anti-Christianity.

Lessons from the armed struggle on the force of unity, and the changing urban conditions which made it necessary to complement that struggle with a political (non-militaristic) resistance, soon exposed the need for and indispensability of a more united ('inter-tribal') front against colonialism. This was a direct challenge to the British colonial maxim of 'divide and rule'. It was at this point that, from the core of the armed movement, delegates were sent to many areas of the country to solicit support for the nationalist struggle and intensify recruitment efforts. It was at this stage also that anti-European sentiment fully crystallised itself into an anti-imperialist ideology – though the line between the two was often difficult to draw. Finally, as independence struggles began to mushroom elsewhere on the continent, the movement in Kenya probably also came to extend its ideological conception to Pan-Africanism, as some of the Mau Mau songs would seem to suggest.

There is no doubt, then, that the anti-colonial struggle in Kenya had an ideological focus from its onset which kept progressing in its revolutionary content. It moved from a narrow struggle for land, for example, to one for national independence and self-determination in a new way.

### III

It would probably be more correct to say that what the Mau Mau movement lacked was not ideology as such, but theoretical guidance. The fundamental difference between ideology and theory rests on their relation to scientific method. An ideology, as we have seen, even when it takes into account concrete facts, is based on a set of beliefs with no scientific investigation or verification behind it. Ideologies usually have

a normative foundation. Hence, a revolutionary ideology will denounce a given social status quo because there is oppression, repression, injustice and violation of democracy and legality. In this denunciation its arguments rest on moral indignation and often a somewhat idealised concept of what is just. There is very little, if any, systematic analysis of the real socioeconomic and political mechanism prevalent in society.

Theory, on the other hand, has a scientific orientation. It explains observed regularities through some kind of testing and verification. A revolutionary theory is a scientific appreciation of society, its functions, contradictions and weaknesses, the peculiarities of the socio-economic and political structures, and the specific state of internal contradictions. Thus, a revolutionary theory is one that produces the concrete knowledge necessary to engage in efficient and successful revolutionary activity.

Theory and practice have been closely interconnected in the minds of many revolutionaries. This is why Marx said that it is not enough that thought should seek its actualisation; actuality must itself strive towards thought. Lenin also appreciated the relationship between the two when he expressed that revolutionary theory was fundamental in order to understand society and change it – revolutionary theory informs revolutionary action. In other words, theory shows the revolutionists how the society really works and armed with that knowledge they engage in action to seize power. Theory, then, is not confined to a critique of the existing social relations and its ideologies, but is also a guide to action. And this is one of the most fundamental tools that the military movement of anti-colonial nationalism in Kenya lacked.

This lack of theoretical development in the process of national struggle cannot be attributed to any sort of regional insulation of the Kenya patriots. Indeed, there is evidence of contact with some of the progressive regimes of that time – for example, Egypt and the Soviet Union. But it seems that this contact did not extend beyond the level of support that was of immediate (military and political) significance to the freedom-fighters. So it remained that the revolutionary movement against British colonialism operated without the advantage of a revolutionary theory. Not a single theoretical study of the Kenyan situation was ever produced during the entire course of its armed struggle against colonialism.

#### IV

This absence of theoretical guidance on the part of the Mau Mau movement had at least three adverse effects:

1. It rendered the movement rather populist in its conception of independence from colonialism. As a result, it asked very few questions, if any, about the kind of society that was to be brought into being. The dominant force was a kind of racial consciousness which was oblivious



to the broader meaning of exploitation. This led to an expression of popular interests which reflected no more than a desire for the Africanisation of existing structures. This kind of populism was very conducive to the emergence of a 'multi-racial' policy of collaboration between Africans and Europeans which had as its ultimate aim the purely transitory programme of effecting Kenya's nominal independence without any radical disruption of the political and socioeconomic fabric that had been laid by colonialism. It was this realisation that led the New Kenya Group, the political party of the colonial settlers, to state in its manifesto, *The Challenge of the New Kenya* (1959), that:

The inherent problem lies in the wide gulf between the living and cultural standards of the well-to-do and those of the poorer majority but this is magnified into a *racial* problem by the fact that in our country racial and economic differences lie together. The usual historical economic conflict is thus, in our case, exacerbated by race. The only solution, in our view, is vigorously to tackle the basic problem of low living standards, so that there may rapidly emerge from the poorer majority people having similar interests and similar ideas, to those economically more advanced.

The economically more advanced here refers, of course, to the British settlers, and the formula stipulated above was one of nurturing from within the dominated African majority a clique that would be initiated into primitive accumulation to such a degree that it would see its class interests in terms of its alignment with the settler community and open the gates to neocolonialism, or, as the manifesto itself puts it elsewhere, to new external capital. In this goal the New Kenya Group could not have been more successful. And this success was largely based on the lack of consciousness rooted in theory that could have effectively challenged this vision of a 'New Kenya'.

2. The element of populism discussed above also came to express itself in terms of a rather naive attachment to African 'traditions'. The absence of theoretical direction, a form of direction that could have helped the movement transcend the confines of customary tradition, allowed a profound parochialism to impose obvious limitations on the development of any progressive awareness of the essence of exploitation and its multifarious dimensions. Tradition in this sense not only had an impact on the ideological conceptualisation of the colonial structure but also in the practical tasks of the movement vis-à-vis organisational roles and participation. For example, instead of incorporating women into the movement in a more productive manner, male warriors felt that their role should be circumscribed to 'fetching firewood, cooking and serving the whole camp, cleansing utensils, mending warriors' clothes and washing leaders' clothes'. (Barnett and Njama, 1966:221-222)

Such parochialism, aggravated by the popular instrument of colonial oppression, 'divide and rule', may have had a paralysing impact on the recruitability and recruitment of guerrillas into the region of warfare situated far from their homes. This is also partly why the Kenyan proto-elite (which had moved away from tradition to one degree or another) was able to join forces across ethnic boundaries while, ironically, exploiting ethnic consciousness under the umbrella of a vague and sloganised nationalism – literally to hijack the struggle for independence from the people and use it in the service of its own class interests.

Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, was in fact particularly notorious for arousing sentiments based on customary tradition in search of popular support from his tribal compatriots. It was, for example, an irony of history that the Nakuru District Ex-Freedom Fighters Organisation (INDEFFO) should have openly come out in support of Kenyatta – the same person who vigorously campaigned against them during their anti-colonial struggle, and who, after independence, continued to betray their aspirations with uncompromising arrogance, when a plot to overthrow him was unearthed in 1971. A strong theoretical foundation on the part of the Mau Mau fighters in their quest for freedom would have rendered such blind attachment to customary tradition and its attendant effects less likely.

3. Every social struggle requires its own particular alliance of classes if it is to achieve even a modicum of success. And it is in the nature of revolutionary theory to specify just what kind of class alliance is necessary in what kind of struggle. But, at least partly as a result of this lack of theoretical direction, the Mau Mau movement remained uninformed about the question of class alliances. There was, of course, always some degree of class interaction between peasants and urban workers as well as sections of the embryonic petite-bourgeoisie in the fight for independence, but this alliance was seldom articulated in terms of organisation and strategy. It is well known, for example, that the East African Trade Union Congress under Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union under John Mungai and the Labour Trade Union of East Africa under Bildad Kaggia were always supportive of the Mau Mau movement. But, first, this support came almost unidirectionally from just a couple of leaders of the trade union movement; the Mau Mau fighters themselves seem to have manifested little if any understanding of the paramountcy of forging a specific class alliance. Second, in terms of its overall effect, this support was predominantly morally, rather than organisationally or strategically, inclined. And when these particular unions were proscribed, what remained of the trade union movement, due to the reactionary nature of its leadership, could no longer serve even the symbolic purposes of a class alliance against exploitation in its broader sense. On the contrary,



the new leaders of what remained of the trade union movement, like Aggrey Minya of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions and Tom Mboya of the Kenyan Federation of Labour, went all out to attack the military challenge against colonialism and urged workers to disassociate themselves from it, even at the level of moral support. So the platform that could have served as the organisational embodiment of proletarian revolutionary energy in alliance with the Mau Mau movement was rendered impotent by 'external' and internal forces of reaction; or, to put it more correctly, it was turned against the revolutionary forces in the interests of imperialism. And the Mau Mau movement itself remained theoretically, and therefore organisationally, unprepared to deal with this turn of events.

## V

In recapitulation, contrary to the views propounded by Adams to the effect that the Mau Mau movement was non-ideological in its direction, I have tried to demonstrate that, in fact, it had a revolutionary ideology of a sort that kept widening in scope. But the movement lacked a theoretical foundation, which left it prone to several serious pitfalls – such as a narrow and somewhat distorted conception of exploitation and blind adherence to tradition. This partly allowed for the easy usurpation of the movement by a faction of the proto-elite which ended up misdirecting it to a deformed capitalism, serving thereby its interests as a class and the interests of foreign capital.

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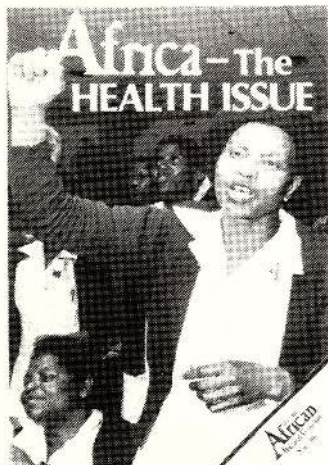
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# Notes and documents

## Resource wars on native lands

During the 1970s, indigenous peoples began to share information about the 'resource wars' that transnational corporations (TNCs) are undertaking on indigenous lands. With considerable information about these costly and destructive mining, energy and other megaprojects at hand, indigenous peoples and their allies are now planning counter-strategies. The following draws upon my experience as a consultant to Indian tribes in the upper midwestern USA which have confronted the prospect of large-scale mining activities on or next to their reservations.

### *Transnational corporate strategy and counter-strategy*

To understand the logic of counter-strategy, one must first understand what transnational corporate strategy is all about. Whether the undertaking is a mine, a dam or a timber project, the TNC is primarily concerned with reducing its political and financial risks as much as possible. It does this by limiting the arena of conflict so that the victims are completely exposed to the reach of the TNC, i.e., indigenous peoples stand to lose control of their lands, their resources, their culture, etc.

In northern Wisconsin, for instance, Exxon has discovered one of North America's largest zinc-copper deposits on land claimed by the Sokaogon Chippewa Indians under the Treaty of 1854. The Chippewas, who have gathered wild rice for centuries, are fighting to maintain their wild rice lake that lies just one mile downstream from the proposed mine site. The rice is an essential part of their diet, an important cash crop and a sacred symbol in Chippewa religious ritual.

If Exxon proceeds with its mining plans, large volumes of toxic wastes will be stored in tailings ponds 90 feet deep and encompassing 400 acres. Says Chippewa tribal chairman Arlan Ackley: 'If Exxon's

engineering is not 100 per cent perfect, the pollutants from the mine will ruin our wild rice lake. Exxon can move on when they've taken the ore out, but we have nowhere else to go.' Exxon's environmental impact report did not take the Chippewa's concern seriously, blandly mentioning that the 'means of subsistence on the reservation' may be 'rendered less than effective'.<sup>1</sup>

The Chippewa are completely exposed to devastation from Exxon's proposed mine, but only one tentacle of Exxon's worldwide organisation is exposed in its confrontation with the Chippewa. 'There are a lot of businesses where you have the sense of betting the company every once in a while', says one Exxon executive. 'But perhaps you don't ever bet Exxon – not even when you bet \$3 billion or \$5 billion on a project.'<sup>2</sup>

There are several factors that go into a successful counter-strategy. First and foremost is research and information. Next is the establishment of strategic alliances with non-indigenous groups to provide political leverage against the TNCs. And finally, there is a need for effective political organisation within indigenous communities.

### *Information is power*

The first task of any group wishing to develop an action campaign focused on a particular TNC is research on the social and environmental impacts of corporate projects, the structure of the corporation and its track record on previous projects, and the range of available technologies for minimising the negative impacts of megaprojects. Indigenous groups have the greatest chance to influence corporate decision-making on a megaproject if they begin their research as soon as they become aware of project plans. The size and scale of many of these projects requires long lead times of anywhere from three to ten years before actual construction begins. If action-oriented research is undertaken at the earliest stages of the project, it may be possible to identify the weakest, most vulnerable aspect of the project (eg, multilateral financing, dangerous or unproven technologies, violation of indigenous land rights, failure to comply with applicable environmental laws, etc.) and organise an effective counter-strategy around these issues.

In many western democratic societies there are specific laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in the United States, or the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) in Canada, which require environmental impact statements (EISs) before major development projects can be undertaken. Both NEPA and EARP provide for the study of the social as well as the physical environment prior to resource development. While these laws do not guarantee that the concerns of indigenous people will be taken into account, they do provide a public forum in which significant social and environmental



issues can be raised and potential allies drawn into the conflict.

Shortly before Exxon announced the discovery of a major zinc-copper deposit next to the Sokaogon Chippewa reservation, tribal members organised a mining committee and requested technical assistance and research funds from the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The tribe realised that the BIA would not fund a study to gather information that could be used to oppose Exxon's proposed mine, so it asked for a feasibility study to consider a tribally-run mining operation on the reservation. The BIA approved this latter request and assigned the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to administer the study. However, in typical colonial fashion, EDA insisted that the tribe hire a BIA-approved consulting firm that did not have particular expertise in mining development. The tribe insisted on hiring COACT Research Inc., which did have expertise on mining projects and was willing to work closely with the tribe in planning each stage of the research. EDA refused to release the funds to the tribe. Finally, after two years of lobbying by the tribe, the funds were released to hire COACT Research, Inc.

An essential part of COACT's report to the tribe was a review of Exxon's experience with other mining projects. This information provided the tribe with a way of checking the accuracy of Exxon's claims, based upon its performance record. When EDA received a draft of the final report, it ordered COACT to delete the section on Exxon's record prior to final publication. Exxon's lawyer also threatened COACT with a libel suit if the section was published in the final report. When COACT refused to delete the Exxon section, EDA held up final payment for the study. The final report provided such a thorough critique of Exxon's mine plans that Exxon was forced to postpone its original plans for a 1981 mine start-up date and to conduct more extensive engineering studies.

The importance of examining corporate project plans for fatal flaws at the earliest stage of development is well illustrated by the case of coal leasing on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Lame Deer, Montana, USA. Between 1966 and 1973, the BIA and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe had approved coal exploration leases covering 50 per cent of the reservation. The agreements also provided for large electrical generation facilities to be located on this small reservation. The social and environmental effects of these developments would have devastated the tribe.

Before any mining began, some far-sighted tribal members questioned the terms of the leases. Tribal attorneys eventually found thirty-six violations of law in the agreements and forced the US Department of the Interior and the BIA to suspend the leases. Most of the violations centred around the Department of the Interior's failure to assess the social and environmental effects on the reservation before it approved the leases.

In many Third World countries, however, there are no legal requirements for the preparation of EISs, let alone consideration of indigenous peoples' concerns in decisions about resource development. Even in countries where such laws are on the books, TNCs and pro-development regimes will frequently ignore them or subvert their intent. Exxon's investment in the El Cerrejón project in Colombia, South America, is a case in point. El Cerrejón is one of the richest undeveloped coal-fields in the world and the largest project of any kind ever undertaken in Colombia. It is a joint project of Intercor, a subsidiary of Exxon, and Carbocol, a Colombian government corporation. The project is located on the lands of the Guajiros, Colombia's largest group of indigenous people.

When Carbocol and Intercor signed their agreement in 1977, Colombia's environmental protection law had been on the books for several years. The law specifies that Colombia's environmental protection agency, *Inderena*, must be notified of the intention to prepare an EIS as soon as plans are made to proceed with a project. However, it was not until after the planning was completed, and the construction phase had been underway for over a year, that Intercor informed *Inderena* of its intent to prepare an EIS. And it was not until 1982, two years after construction had begun, that the EIS was submitted.<sup>3</sup> At that point it was clear that the EIS was a mere formality and would not affect the project design or the decision to go ahead with the mine.<sup>4</sup>

It is precisely in circumstances such as these, where indigenous peoples' concerns are ignored by TNCs and pro-development regimes, that corporate campaigns are necessary.

### *Strategic alliances with non-indigenous groups*

Once the initial research on the development project and the TNC is completed, indigenous groups can formulate issues and demands and seek the support of non-indigenous groups in publicising and taking action on these issues. One way of bringing indigenous peoples' concerns to the fore is through stockholder resolutions. In recent years, various church groups which own stock in corporations have raised issues ranging from nuclear weapons production to support for apartheid in South Africa and civil rights at annual stockholders meetings. While the resolutions rarely win large numbers of votes, they do succeed in publicising issues and forcing the corporations to state publicly their position on them.

Indigenous groups have made effective use of this tactic in recent years with the help of church stockholders. For example, as soon as Exxon filed its mining application with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for its proposed zinc-copper mine next to the Sokaogon Chippewa reservation, the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters of Wisconsin entered a stockholder resolution with Exxon, asking that the



company postpone any further investment in the project until Chippewa treaty claims have been settled.

Prior to Exxon's annual meeting, the Investor Responsibility Research Center, a private research service in Washington, DC, prepared a background report on the resolution which was sent out to major institutional shareholders (churches, universities, insurance companies, etc.). The report concluded that Exxon may not have adequately considered the social and environmental impacts of its mining operation on the Chippewa and that this might end up creating additional financial risks for the corporation. The Sokaogon Chippewa and Sinsinawa delegation presented its resolution at Exxon's annual shareholders meeting. When the Chippewa tribal chairman walked up to the microphone to speak on behalf of the resolution, silence descended upon the auditorium. It is a rare occasion when indigenous people address Exxon shareholders about the effects of their investments. The resolution received 2.5 per cent of the vote, representing more than 16 million shares.

In order for these resolutions to have the desired psychological effect, however, they must be accompanied by grassroots organising where the damage is being done. Thus, the Chippewa have been working with non-Indians in the local area who are concerned about potential ground and surface water contamination from Exxon's proposed mine. In 1982, the tribe joined forces with several environmental groups to form the Wisconsin Resources Protection Council (WRPC). Under Wisconsin law, the state cannot issue mining permits until zoning approval has been granted by individual townships. In March 1983, the newly formed WRPC chapter in Nashville, where the ore deposit is located, petitioned the town board for an immediate moratorium on mining. After the board turned it down, dissatisfied citizens threw their support behind a Chippewa critic of the mine who ran for town chairman in the annual election. Although the Chippewa candidate did not win, the substantial non-Indian support he received demonstrated growing local opposition to Exxon's plans.

The Chippewa have also undertaken research to support their treaty claim to the land encompassing the Exxon discovery site. Shortly after the Wisconsin DNR released its draft EIS on the Exxon project in June 1986, the tribe filed suit in federal court for recognition of their treaty lands. At a time when copper and zinc prices are depressed worldwide, the combination of stockholder resolutions, organised local opposition and legal challenges may be sufficient to convince Exxon's top management to abandon the project.

In some of the more remote regions of the world, however, TNCs have proceeded with major development projects as if local indigenous populations did not exist. In such circumstances, there is little opportunity for the kind of long range corporate campaign undertaken by

the Chippewa. More direct action tactics are necessary to focus attention on indigenous concerns. The case of Aboriginal peoples and uranium mining in Australia illustrates how indigenous people can overcome their geographical isolation through strategic alliances with environmental, trade union and anti-nuclear movements.<sup>5</sup>

In 1975, the Western Mining Corporation discovered a major uranium deposit at a site called Roxby Downs, in the semi-desert region of South Australia. The deposit lies in the Sleepy Lizard Dreaming lands, an area sacred to the Kokatha and Pitjantjatjara Aboriginal peoples. Rather than ask the traditional Aboriginal landowners for permission to work on their land, Western Mining Company concluded in a preliminary EIS that 'the Kokatha people had been effectively rendered a non-viable group'.

The proposed Roxby Downs mine, whose reserves are estimated to contain twice as much uranium as all other known Australian deposits combined, could eventually support one of the largest uranium mining and processing complexes in the world. Its developer, Roxby Management Services (RMS), jointly owned by British Petroleum and Western Mining Corporation, is Australia's third largest corporation. When the company's final EIS of April 1983 ignored evidence of damage to sacred sites and the Kokatha request to minimise future damage to sacred sites, about forty elders of the Kokatha and Pitjantjatjara peoples occupied the mine site and physically blocked the bulldozers. They were joined by more than 500 anti-nuclear and trade union activists from the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia. More than 180 people were arrested.

The Roxby Downs occupation was the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia's second nationally coordinated action against uranium mining. In May 1982, more than 400 people, including 100 Aborigines, occupied the Honeymoon uranium mine in the remote north-east of South Australia. The protesters effectively closed the mining operation for three days and focused national attention on the health and safety problems of uranium mining – 'tailings', or waste material from the mines, for example, remain dangerously radioactive for thousands of years. The Australian Labour Party government of South Australia eventually decided not to allow uranium mining at Honeymoon or at the Beverly mine nearby.

Despite this record, and the Labour Party's formerly hard-line opposition to uranium mining, it has allowed the Roxby Downs project to proceed. The Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia has continued to organise further blockades of the mine site. Whatever the final outcome, the Kokatha and Pitjantjatjara peoples have demonstrated that their survival is inseparably linked with national and international concerns about uranium mining, radioactive waste disposal and the nuclear arms race.



*Indigenous political organisation*

In the final analysis, however, the ability of indigenous peoples to defend successfully their lands and cultures is critically dependent upon the degree of their political organisation. Whether the objective is to develop a counter-strategy or to negotiate some ground rules for industrial projects in indigenous territory, political organisation is paramount. For example, after the Northern Cheyenne Tribe forced the BIA to suspend coal leases on their reservation, they were confronted with the prospect of massive electrical generating plants close to the reservation spewing pollution downwind on the reservation. The tribe's previous experience with bad advice from the BIA convinced them that they needed their own tribally-based research programme to advise them. In 1974, the tribal council established the Northern Cheyenne Research Project (NCRP) and made it directly accountable to the tribe, not the BIA.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the NCRP was the research and documentation necessary to get the reservation designated as a Class I, or clean air zone, by the federal government. Under the 1970 Clean Air Act, state and tribal governments can petition the federal government to be declared clean air zones and thus protect themselves from new sources of industrial pollution. The success of the tribe in obtaining Class I air status effectively stopped the construction of additional power plants next to the reservation.

Only from the basis of such political organisation can indigenous people – if they are forced into negotiating with TNCs – at least influence, or control to some extent, the decisions that are made. Written codes of behaviour dealing with such issues as hiring and training of indigenous people, social impact mitigation, pollution control, financial compensation for violation of the code, etc., may serve as guidelines for indigenous groups and reduce the possibility of concluding secret or substandard agreements which are not in the best interests of indigenous peoples.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, it is necessary to monitor the actions of TNCs during project development and, after any written agreements have been made, to insure compliance with their terms. The importance of an on-going monitoring of TNC project development plans is well illustrated by the Sokaogon Chippewa's monitoring of Exxon's mine plans. Exxon's early engineering plans for draining its proposed underground zinc-copper mine called for dumping heavily acidic waste water into the stream feeding the tribe's wild rice lake. Exxon assured the tribe that potential mine pollutants would bypass the lake. The tribe had doubts about Exxon's assurances and contracted with the US Geological Survey to conduct a dye test tracing the path of potential mine pollutants. The tribe found that the dye dispersed throughout the lake. As a result of this challenge to Exxon's credibility, the company was forced to modify its

plans and include a pipeline that would dump the waste water downstream from the wild rice lake.\*

### *Conclusion*

Can indigenous peoples in the remote frontier regions of the world defend their lands and cultures against the encroachments of industrial civilisation? The answer to this question requires a careful examination of the strengths and weaknesses of TNCs which are investing large amounts of capital in mining, energy, hydroelectric and timber projects which threaten the existence of indigenous peoples. The collective experience of indigenous peoples in the 1970s and the emergence of international information and support networks suggest that successful counter-strategies are possible and that indigenous groups can exercise a greater degree of control over their fate than has been the case in the past.

This conclusion emerges from three fundamental aspects of transnational corporate vulnerability. First, the size and scale of many of these projects requires the TNC to invest hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars over many years before investors begin to see a profit. This means that indigenous groups have sufficient lead time to conduct research and organise themselves politically so that they can find the most vulnerable aspects of the megaproject and develop a counter-strategy to exploit these vulnerabilities.

Second, the size and scale of these megaprojects almost always produce *visible* damages to the natural environment which extend far beyond the boundaries of indigenous lands. The visibility and extensiveness of this ecological damage provides indigenous peoples with an opportunity to enlist the support of trade unions, environmental groups and anti-nuclear groups who are concerned with the health and safety of workers, pollution of the environment, the dumping of toxic and radioactive wastes and the spread of nuclear technologies.

Third, the establishment of links between indigenous peoples' struggles and international trade union, environmental and anti-nuclear movements can provide indigenous peoples with important access to sources of information and political power strategically located in the home territory of the TNCs. The geographical isolation of indigenous peoples does not necessarily imply a political isolation if these support groups can act on behalf of indigenous peoples and put pressure on TNCs at their annual stockholders' meetings, in front of their corporate headquarters and in the mass media.

The ultimate objective of counter-strategy is to match the TNC's

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\*On 10 December 1986, Exxon announced the withdrawal of its permit application for the proposed mine next to the Sokaogon Chippewa reservation, citing poor metal prices.



internationalisation of capital with an international resistance to specific corporate investments. The outcome of the counter-strategy may be delay, abandonment of the project or some negotiated settlement. Whatever the specific objective, it is the development of a counter-strategy which provides indigenous peoples with a greater role in the decision-making process than would otherwise be the case.

Center for Alternative Mining Development Policy      AL GEDICKS  
Wisconsin

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- 3 Deborah Pacini Hernandez, 'Resource development and indigenous people: the El Cerrejón coal project in Guajira, Colombia', Cultural Survival Occasional Paper No. 15 (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).
- 4 One of the major problems with the recent Code of Conduct for Transnational Corporations drafted by the United Nations Commission on Transnational Corporations is that it does not mention the specific rights of indigenous peoples. Because the code assumes that nation states will set the standards for transnational corporations, it is of limited value where nation states pursue economic development projects that violate the rights of indigenous peoples. See 'Transnational corporations and indigenous peoples', *Anthropology Resource Center Newsletter* (Vol. 5, no. 3, September 1981), p. 6.
- 5 The Australian trade union movement has been an important ally for Aboriginal groups in the struggle for land rights. Trade unions have also played a major role in pressuring the Finnish government to withdraw financial support from a major mining project in Chile because of that regime's systematic violation of human rights. Indigenous peoples may find further support for their struggles over land rights in the recently-formed International Mineworkers' Organisation, headquartered in Paris.
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## The crisis in modern science: report from the Consumers' Association of Penang conference

How should Third World countries deal with the conflict between western science and their people's basic needs? Could 'development' mean something other than subordination to multinational corporations? Such questions were the focus for debate among over one hundred delegates who gathered in Penang last November for a six-day

conference entitled 'The crisis in modern science'. Organised by the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), the event brought together scientists, environmentalists, journalists and teachers from all over the world, especially Asia.

Our hosts, the CAP, already had much experience organising similar international gatherings in previous years. This role was an extension of their daily work in taking up consumer complaints, very broadly defined – ranging from defective or dangerous goods, to waste dumping, to inadequate public services – as well as raising broader issues of development. Operating from their large seafront headquarters, the CAP's sixty full-time staff deal with complaints brought to them, seek out complaints in more remote areas, produce a weekly radio programme and national newspaper column, as well as selling 120,000 copies of their own *Utusan Konsumer* ('consumer messenger'), especially through schools. The paper may owe its large circulation not only to the CAP's diligence but also to the country's anti-Communist ban and strict press regulation that permits no overtly left oppositional newspapers.

The conference was held at a teachers' training college near Penang island's main town, Georgetown. Although the full timetable left little time for exploring the island, certain features of local 'development' were plain to see. Just outside the grounds of the college, heavy construction equipment from a South Korean firm was tearing up the lush vegetation of what had been one of many oases of common land where anyone can relax or pick fruit; this one was now being sacrificed for the sake of building high-priced housing.

Just outside the Bayan Lepas airport, on the way to the centre, each side of the main highway was occupied by a row of western microelectronics firms protected by high security fences. Euphemistically known as an Export Processing Zone, this is one of the many sites in South-East Asia where silicon chips are turned into integrated circuits by women workers who often have their health and eyesight ruined in the process. Because of the toxic chemicals they dispose, as well as the island's untreated sewage, many of the beaches are unsafe for swimming. Amidst this Silicon Highway, a National Semiconductor building bears the sign, 'Heart, Soul and Microelectronics' – not intended ironically.

A strange combination of old and new could be seen in the island's equivalent of chemist shops. Although well stocked with western brand-name drugs, each had a prominent section devoted to large glass jars filled with traditional herbs and roots. These were being weighed out for customers on scales similar to those used in China over 2,000 years ago. Appropriately enough, the CAP's exposés encompass putative cures as diverse as 'dissolved rhinoceros horn' and counterfeited or harmful western drugs.



*Non-western science?*

The starting-point of the conference was the devastation wreaked on the Third World by western science and technology. Over and above extreme cases such as the US military's defoliation campaign during the Vietnam War, or the Bhopal disaster, speakers took up the more general case of economic 'aid' and 'development' itself, which continues to impoverish and literally poison Third World populations. Condemnation was directed at multinational corporations – microelectronics, chemicals, drugs, seeds – and at the Third World ruling elites who benefit from such foreign-dominated 'development'. Speakers also presented examples of how imported technology tended to preclude their own research efforts that could better meet people's basic human needs.

The sweeping denunciations of imported technology led some of the western delegates to resent a 'western-bashing' that denied any indigenous sources of the Third World's problems. Yet the major disagreements that arose did not divide the minority of western delegates from the Third World ones. While there was little disagreement about the destructive, inhuman effects of modern western science and technology, there was little consensus about the precise reasons and, therefore, whether or how something benign could be salvaged from it. For example, was the problem inherent in science, or specific to its use for maximising profits and dominating people? And did traditional practices avoid all such problems?

Although there were no factional divisions among the delegates, their views tended to follow one of three broad approaches:

- Western science should be adapted to Third World needs by incorporating different social priorities.
- The totality of western science and 'development' should be rejected in favour of purely indigenous knowledge and practices (though these were not assumed to be ready-made options).
- Western science should be replaced by the ethical values of traditional systems, such as Islam.

The rejectionism took many forms, such as the proposal to abandon the notion of 'development' altogether, in favour of 'survival with dignity'. In general, the rejectionist approaches were disturbing to the many Third World delegates who still identify and work with aspects of western science and technology. One of these, Dr Dinesh Mohan, of the Indian Institute of Technology at New Delhi, posed the question of what we should do with our growing appreciation of the Third World's indigenous practices. Shall we make it simply the basis of a new self-confidence? Shall we use it to replace modern science entirely? Or shall we integrate it into modern science?

The notion of modernity itself became a debated issue. Many speakers gave examples of how western values and control have been

imposed upon Third World countries in the name of modernising them. Professor D. Sinha, of the Institute of Social Sciences at Patna, generalised the issues when he argued that the Third World's indigenous science and technology was already modern in its own way. The conflict, then, should be seen as one 'not between traditional versus modern science, but between indigenous versus western science'. Unfortunately, he said, instead of adapting western science to their conditions and needs, Third World countries were allowing it to replace their indigenous science.

### *Green Revolution*

Illustrating that problem was a guest of honour, the Indian scientist Dr R.H. Riccharia, who described how his Central Rice Research Institute had been researching high-yield varieties based on local germplasm in the 1960s. Then the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) – set up by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and backed by the Indian government – made a take-over bid, subordinating his projects to their own ones using hybrid material from abroad. When Riccharia demanded that IRRI's material be quarantined, to protect the Indian varieties from pests and diseases, he was sacked. Since then, his personal tragedy has been compounded by his son's death and then his own nearly fatal injury during the Bhopal disaster, where he had been continuing his research alone on a nearby farm.

IRRI's triumph resulted in the disaster known as the 'Green revolution', as described by Dr J.K. Bajaj of the *Indian Express*. India's agriculture has become dependent upon hybrid varieties controlled by foreign experts and has actually suffered a decline in the growth rate of most crops, especially rice. Although wheat production has risen markedly, it previously had little importance in the Indian diet; now high-tech production makes wheat too expensive for many people to buy, so unsold stocks accumulate in warehouses. Meanwhile, pulses and oil seeds have become scarce, so that 'the poor simply go without high-protein food', and India has had to start importing edible oils.

Dr Bajaj went on to quote an adult literacy primer: 'Eating just rice has a bad effect on health. Eat eggs to make up for protein deficiency.' Published by the Literacy House, in turn funded by the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development, this book takes for granted the decline of vegetarian proteins. Bajaj mocked its implicit message: 'So, Indians were malnourished because they had the silly habit of being vegetarians.'

Furthermore, he said, Indian farmers now felt trapped. Many even commit suicide after a bad harvest because they cannot pay their debts for all the chemical inputs and seeds (which, as hybrids, must be purchased anew for each planting). Despite all these problems, they continue using the high-yield varieties because they can no longer easily get



seeds for the old ones. Adding to the irony was Dr Riccharia's discovery, on a recent trip to the USA, that a plant breeding project there held stocks of the Indian indigenous high-yield varieties that he had been developing in the 1960s.

The only dissent from that negative verdict on the western model of 'development' came from Dr Ram Iyengar, of India's Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research. Responsible for managing forty-two research labs in India, he described himself as a simple man who didn't understand the fancy language used by conference speakers. His frequent objections to criticism of his government's science policies were greeted with a mixture of annoyance and mirth. 'You are being misled by Indian radicals', he warned me afterwards.

### *Magic pills*

The Philippines provided more examples of the choices facing Third World countries. Dr Norman Quimpo, a maths lecturer in Manila, described his new organisation, Local Initiatives in Science and Technology (LIST). It was one of many projects begun after 'the Aquino assassination in August 1983 threw large sections of the populace, particularly the middle class, into a frenzy of soul-searching and a rethinking of basic societal assumptions'. Distressed to see their country's industry 'brought to its knees by an inability to import raw materials and equipment', LIST represented scientists's hopes for shaping a new society beyond the limits of the Marcos regime. Their efforts were now being hampered, he said, by the Aquino government's 'retreat from sweeping land reform and national resources conservation policies'.

So far, the main success of a Filipino popular science movement has been in rural health. Although rural areas have virtually no health services, neither have they been invaded by advertising and marketing of western brand-name drugs. Many rural people still look to the *herbolaryo*, a traditional practitioner who combines herbal remedies with incantations. 'Barefoot doctors' from the cities have been able to work with some of those local figures in teaching sanitation and health.

However, there still remains the more difficult task of breaking the magic spell of brand-name drugs in urban areas, where people seek 'a pill for every ill'. Meanwhile, foreign drug companies have begun testing and selecting herbs with a view towards manufacturing yet more magic pills. If successfully marketed, the pills' brand name would obscure the indigenous origin of their ingredients.

Another country's approach to drugs was illustrated in a slide show by Dr Z. Chowdhury of Bangladesh, where he had set up a People's Health Clinic in 1962. He went on to campaign for his country to implement the World Health Organisation's recommendations to import only essential generic-name drugs, as brand-name drugs were unnecessarily

expensive and often harmful to health. He told us the story of how, when his government finally took the decision in 1982, the drug companies refused to cooperate. We learned from a Sri Lankan delegate how drug companies there had cited Bangladesh's difficult experience in order to dissuade his government from taking a similar step.

### *Appropriate technology*

The broader question of industrialisation was taken up by Dr A. Reddy of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. Arguing that it was neither moral nor feasible for Third World countries to imitate the western model, he proposed that appropriate technology 'must be fashioned to achieve the purpose for which it is intended'. And the purpose of 'development', he argued, must be redefined – not for maximising gross national product, but for satisfying people's basic human needs, their aspirations for participation and control, as well as for ecological soundness. This would mean appropriating whatever was useful from both traditional and modern technologies. 'High tech should be defined by high thinking', he said.

A proposal for high tech in both senses of the word came from John Sayer of the Asia Monitor Resource Group, Hong Kong, and the only western delegate politically involved in a Third World country. Acknowledging that telecommunications have been developed by the multinationals for global domination, he proposed that the technology be appropriated by social action groups. By connecting it to any telephone, such groups could use the technology to bypass overt state obstruction, while demanding the right to free communications. Furthermore, he added later, critiques of western technology must be sensitive to the aspirations of urban workers in the Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs, such as Hong Kong), who look to industry for employment and the income to buy modern consumer items. Throughout the conference, virtually no one else referred to the specific situation of the Third World's urban working class.

The struggles of India's rural dwellers over natural resources were cited as an opportunity for promoting a 'public interest science'. As one example, Jayanta Bandyopadhyay and Vandana Shiva described the damaging effects of the misleadingly named 'social forestry', which treats forests as a commercial investment for timber sales. This reduces the forests' potential for local people to grow food, as well as for soil and water conservation. Tribal peoples (as in the Chipko movement\*) have responded to the threat by demanding continued access to the forests and the planting of those trees best suited to their needs – indeed, their sheer survival. In alliance with them, the intervention of

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\*See Gail Omvedt's article in this issue.



'deprofessionalised intellectuals' has been able to demonstrate the politically partisan character of a forestry science that measures productivity in solely monetary terms.

Despite many illuminating papers, the conference delegates remained divided over what, if anything, the Third World should accept from modern western science. Certainly, the debates among conventional scientists were considered irrelevant, as 'the Third World critique of science is generated not by issues in science but by its lack of credibility', said Claude Alvares, an Indian journalist. In that sense, it was suggested that we were really discussing a crisis of (rather than in) science – that is, a challenge to its legitimacy from outside.

When we saw Alvares' video film about Indian farmers' protests against a chemical firm polluting their land, the screening coincided with the news of yet more chemical dumping into the Rhine. The disastrous results of 'development' in the Third World, including three Development Decades, were now coming full circle back to the countries responsible for impoverishing and polluting the Third World.

That connection strengthened suggestions that modern western science was inherently violent, inhuman and destructive – and therefore to be rejected. While most delegates agreed on the negative effects, there were various causes identified: domination over nature and therefore people, as exemplified by Francis Bacon's motto, 'Knowledge is power'; the imperative (or pretence) of separating facts from values; and the capitalist drive to maximise profitability.

### *Traditional systems*

Although those reasons for the problem might be compatible with salvaging something benign from modern western science, some speakers presented value systems that necessarily conflict with its fundamentals. Dr A. Ghazali, of the Health Centre, University Sains Malaysia, presented a theory of traditional Malay medicine, which operates beyond the realm of the five senses. Dr M.D. Srinivas, of the Department of Theoretical Physics, University of Madras, demonstrated the different criteria of logic held by traditional Indian science as compared to western science.

For some speakers, the Islamic tradition provided a reference point for their critique of modern western science. Professor S.A. Ashraf, of the Islamic Academy, Cambridge, denounced Darwinism by contrasting traditional Islamic values with the selfishness, greed and aggressiveness 'which Darwin preached as the essence of evolution'. Dr A. Anees, of Chicago's East-West University, expressed fears about the new reproductive technologies: that the family may not remain intact, and that human lineage may not remain clear. In effect, he was echoing the concerns of Britain's right-wing critics of the Warnock Report (which recommended permitting limited research on human embryos); yet,

strangely enough, he did so in the name of attacking 'patriarchal science'.

The evening session devoted to Islamic science showed that Islam provided no common ground for those proposing rejection of Western science. Although there was much interest in the Islamic critique, there was no sympathy with the Islamic fundamentalists, who were challenged to show how their approaches would not reinforce the oppression of women. In informal discussions, some delegates speculated on why the speakers promoting the Islamic cause were mostly from academic institutions in the West; all of this coincided with media revelations about the US government's long-standing dealings with Islamic fundamentalism.

Despite overt disputes over both Islam and marxism, the conference ended with the acceptance of a lengthy document outlining the problems with modern western science and proposed alternatives. This document was possible only because delegates had helped to write it in workshops the previous afternoon, an editing team had gone through it in the evening, and then CAP staff duplicated it through the night. (That illustrates how it was probably the most hard-working conference I have ever attended.)

On that final day, Dr Quimpo spoke for many when he described his experience of having been 'in the presence of many wise people and some wise guys'. The conference had certainly helped to clarify the choices faced by the Third World: work within the western framework, or find Third World roots, or make some hybrid of the two. Another delegate was volunteered to present a vote of thanks on our behalf; thanking the Consumers Association of Penang for taking such good care of us, he suggested that 'The CAP should export its hospitality technology'.

London

LES LEVIDOW

**Note:** The final document of the conference is available from CAP, 87 Cantonment Road, Penang, Malaysia.

## UK commentary

### Police (1): The cover up

A black Hell's Angel is stopped by police in July 1985 after they suspect that the car he and his friends are driving in is stolen. An argument starts and John Mikkelson is hit by a police officer with a truncheon. A transit van arrives and several officers sit on top of Mikkelson as he lies on the ground. Mikkelson is then taken to Hounslow police station, West London, and left unconscious on the floor for twenty minutes. He is dead on arrival at hospital having suffered brain damage and



asphyxiated on his own vomit.

A local television station, Thames Television, wants to piece together the last minutes of John Mikkelson's life, but its documentary programme is stopped after the Police Federation takes out an injunction against the programme in the High Court. The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) alleges that the programme would be in 'contempt' of an internal police inquiry.

After an inquest returns a verdict of 'unlawful killing due to neglect' and seven Metropolitan police officers are suspended from duty, the Director of Public Prosecutions says that no charges will be brought against the officers involved due to 'lack of evidence'. The officers decide to challenge the inquest verdict in the High Court. A fresh inquest is ordered, and one witness, who refuses to give evidence on the grounds that it would be a 'pointless exercise' in which he wants no part, is gaoled for one month for contempt of court. The fresh inquest returns a verdict of misadventure.

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On 8 October 1986, a black man is arrested by police after shouting at and threatening residents on a West London estate. Anthony Lemard is carried, face down, to a police van by officers, three of whom get inside. Witnesses see the van rock back and forth and hear a noise from inside. Everything then goes silent and the van is driven away. Mr Lemard is dead on arrival at St Stephen's Hospital in Fulham, West London. His brother finds out about his death from news bulletins.

The police, angered when an inquest returns a verdict that death was caused by 'non-dependent drug abuse aggravated by lack of care', announce that they intend to appeal against the lack of care verdict. Their solicitors advise them against such an action.

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A young black man in perfect health disappears from Hackney in the East End of London on New Year's Day, 1987. His worried family report him missing at the local police station. The police deny any knowledge of his whereabouts although he was arrested on 1 January, charged with criminal damage, and taken to that very station.

Five days later, the family, through their own efforts, trace Trevor to the hospital wing of Brixton prison, on the other side of London. He has undergone brain surgery and is on a life-support machine. He is covered in bruises. His injuries, which include a blood clot and swelling to the brain, are consistent with having suffered a blow or blows to the head. He is paralysed on the left side of his body. The police put out a statement saying that Trevor Monerville had suffered from a brain tumour.

The family can get no answers to the questions that they repeatedly

put to the police. The police say that as the family have made a complaint, this is now a matter for investigation by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA). In fact, the family drop their complaint after taking the PCA to the High Court in order to get back some items of Trevor's clothing (other items were apparently destroyed by police whilst Trevor was in custody). The family were also forced to challenge the PCA on their refusal to hand over Custody Record Sheets which showed no sign of physical injury when Trevor was brought into custody. The family say they have no faith in a system whereby police investigate the police and are now suing the Metropolitan police for damages.

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These are just three of the most alarming and controversial incidents involving London's Metropolitan police that have come to light in recent months. There are others, too, that have resulted in death or near death. All these cases raise a variety of issues: the violence of the police and the vulnerability of the black individual; the compliance of a number of other institutions with a system in which facts are silenced and truth reconstructed; the sheer arrogance of a police force that will brook no criticism and avoids public scrutiny.

One would think that such incidents would serve to raise an outcry about the nature of policing in Britain today. Yet, save within the local black communities, amongst the friends and families of the dead and the brain-damaged man, there has been little public debate. The Metropolitan police have acted throughout to ensure that their version of the truth about these men becomes the dominant one. And the police 'facts' have been established via the media.

### *Controlling news*

It is not just that the police have particular contacts in the press, or that they leak stories to certain newspapers; more than that – there seems to be a systematic attempt to control the flow of information and silence any attempt at investigative journalism on the part of the press and media. The banning of the London Weekend Television programme on John Mikkleson is perhaps the most dramatic example of this. But another more effective way to avoid public scrutiny is to provide no information at all, and this, it would seem, is what the police are becoming masters at doing.

The family of Trevor Monerville made a concerted attempt to trace him after he disappeared, but they were blocked by the police, who later excused themselves on the grounds of a number of civilian and administrative errors. It was only at the point at which family and community pressure was brought to bear that the police were forced to issue a statement at all – and this to the effect that Trevor had suffered a brain tumour. No medical evidence supports this view, but this 'fact' was then reported in the press.



At this point, Trevor's case becomes remarkably similar to that of another young black man who died from a shotgun blast more than four years ago, on 12 January 1983, in the foyer of the very same police station. The following day a brief news item appeared in the *London Standard* to the effect that Colin Roach had a history of mental 'instability' and was thought to have committed suicide. The 'facts' which emanated from Scotland Yard would have been buried in that terse news item if it had not been for concerted community pressure from those who didn't believe the 'facts' for one minute. And the more community pressure grew, the more stories about Colin Roach's background began to appear in the press. The mental illness story (unfounded) was reiterated; then he was portrayed as a somewhat shady, underground character, a 'mugger' not long out of jail.

The implication was that it was all Colin's fault. And this is the implication of the 'facts' emanating from all three cases discussed here. John Mikkleson, a Hells Angel, was naturally a stupid and violent man; Anthony Lemard was a drug addict, and not even a 'respectable' member of the community (the 'poor wretch' the *Daily Mail* (8.11.86) called him); and as for Trevor Monerville, well, he was drowsy when arrested, and could have been on drugs. 'I am confident that he was never offered any violence by police of any sort' (emphasis added), said the Police Community Liaison Officer for the area, Terry Walters, 'and we have no evidence either that he was injured before arrest or after' (*Guardian*, 30.1.87). Are we to infer then that Trevor and his family have invented his injuries? Or has Trevor, like Pam Ewing in Dallas, had a terrible nightmare? Perhaps Trevor inflicted the injuries upon himself? . . .

As community demands for public investigations into cases of police brutality grow, the more the press seems to collude with the police to shield them from this public scrutiny. The Metropolitan police are becoming a closed and secretive force and it is the tabloid press which provides the smokescreen – the interpretations, suggestions and fabrications – behind which this process can continue to take place.

It is then left to someone like the Commissioner of the Metropolitan police, Sir Kenneth Newman, to suggest a public conspiracy against the police. Those who criticise the police are provoking public disorder, and this is being done for 'political reasons, racial reasons or criminal reasons and various mixtures of the three', he claimed in a speech to the Society of Conservative Lawyers on 16 February 1987. And for a chief superintendent at Scotland Yard, referring to the Monerville case, the 'innuendo' that 'the police have . . . been in some way responsible for the man's present condition . . . may heighten feelings between police and community . . . thereby increasing the likelihood of public disorder' (*Independent* 27.1.87). Further, those who staged marches through Notting Hill after Anthony Lemard's death, according to Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Newing at Scotland Yard, did so for 'their own

political purposes . . . using racial tension and the poor state of relations between police and the black community to breed further suspicion, to raise tension and to make violent conflict and violence on the streets more likely'. He added: 'How difficult it is to communicate what we are doing' (*London Standard* 17.10.86).

LIZ FEKETE

## Police (2): The image-makers

Over several years black people in inner-city areas of Britain have been forced to defend themselves both from the organised racism of neo-fascist groups like the National Front and from the persistent racial harassment of white neighbours. Time and time again, the police have failed to crack down on this violence – more often than not, like the white racists, they have seen the presence of black people as the source of all problems and have been openly hostile to the victims of racial attack.

This hostility on the part of the police has led black people (particularly the Asian community, who are more readily identified as a community apart and hence more prone to attack) to take on their own defence. In the process, a whole welter of community organisations, youth movements, self-defence and monitoring groups have grown up, uniting young and old and throwing up a locally based leadership – all of which threaten to discredit the authority of the police and show them up for what they are. Regaining control of these communities has become an even more urgent task for the police since the urban rebellions of 1981 and 1985. But instead of combating white racist activity and thereby winning the confidence of the Asian community, the police have chosen to isolate and marginalise the self-defence and monitoring groups and so wrest the initiative from the local communities.

One way of doing this is by recruiting more black police officers. Indeed, since July 1986, the Metropolitan police have embarked on their largest recruitment drive ever, which in turn has been tied into another vaunted crusade: to crack down on racist attacks – the first such campaign in the history of the Metropolitan police. The logic seems to be that the force can only crack down on racist attacks if more black people are recruited. But if the attackers are all white and police themselves have not done or been able to do anything about them, what chance would black officers have? Indeed, they themselves would be subject to attack, just on the basis of their colour – and that, in turn, would serve only to discredit the police force further. If, on the other hand, the 'ethnic' recruits were au fait with the 'ethnic' communities, they would be able to fulfil the task of infiltrating and surveying the self-defence and



monitoring groups from within – except, of course, that a policeman is a policeman, and the black community knows it.

Out of a total of 26,934 officers in the Metropolitan police, only 323 (some 2 per cent) are black – a situation that clearly worries the government.<sup>1</sup> Home Secretary Douglas Hurd wrote in one of Britain's leading black newspapers, the *Caribbean Times*,<sup>2</sup> that the lack of black officers within the Metropolitan police 'is a weakness in our society' which must be tackled. 'If we are to build a harmonious, multi-racial Britain', he said, 'we cannot afford for any ethnic group to opt out of something as crucial as the protection of the citizen and the enforcement of the law.' But it is not the black communities who have 'opted out'. Rather, it is the Metropolitan police who have 'opted' out of the 'protection' of the (black) citizen. What the black communities have done is, through their very choicelessness, acted to defend themselves.

### *Newham: the culture of racism*

Ironically, one of the first sites for the police's new recruitment drive to win black officers, ostensibly to fight racism, is Newham in the East End of London. This is an area with a large black population where there is keen hostility between the police and local Asian youth due to successive attempts by the police to criminalise Asian youths who have defended themselves from white racists. One notorious case was that of the four Virk brothers, who in April 1977 defended themselves from an attack outside their home. The brothers called the police, but when they arrived the brothers were arrested for defending themselves and their attackers allowed to go free.

And, in September 1982, eight Asian youths, who were escorting to and from school younger children who feared attack, were set upon by plainclothes policemen and then arrested. The youths had thought the policemen were members of the National Front and defended themselves; the police argued that the Asian youths were a vigilante gang and denied that racist attacks were a problem in the area. In April 1984, seven Asian youths decided to confront white racists who had carried out a day of sustained racial violence in Newham – in one incident a partially disabled Asian boy was taken in a car to some derelict flats and assaulted with a hammer. Seven Asian and three white youths were arrested. During the court case, which was directed mainly against the Asians, it emerged that the Asian boys (and not the white racists) had been targeted by police for several months for surveillance. A white waitress at a local Wimpy bar had been told to listen in on their conversations and report back on what they were doing about racist attacks.<sup>3</sup>

Most of these events took place in the north of Newham, where there is a high proportion of black people, making it easier for them to act together to defend themselves. But the situation in Canning Town in the south of the borough, where the latest spate of violent attacks has

occurred, is completely different. Gone are the small terraced houses, familiar shopping streets and sense of community. Instead, there is a vast wilderness of sprawling estates housing isolated black families, barren dockland, disused factories decorated with racist graffiti proclaiming the area 'White Man's Land'. The Rathbone Estate and Shopping Centre is a notorious white racist stronghold and organised racists drink with criminal gangs in the nearby Raffles Wine Bar. An extremely depressed area due to de-industrialisation and the collapse of the docks industry in the late 1970s, Canning Town was the home of the McDonnell family – the first family ever evicted in this country for harassing their black neighbours.

Mr Ejaz Hyat, the owner of the Southern Fried Chicken in Canning Town had been singled out for attack by a local mob – the Croydon Road Gang – ever since he came to the aid of an Asian milkman who was being persecuted. Mr Hyat has been told that unless he pays the gang protection money, the assaults will continue. His shop has been attacked on seven separate occasions (to date); there have been at least two attempted firebombings and workers have been threatened with knives. On one occasion the shop's till was stolen. Mr Hyat is able and ready to identify his attackers, but the police simply do not want to know.

Late one night, a Mr Lone and his son came to pick up Mr Hyat from the Southern Fried Chicken. They were brutally assaulted by white youths who ran out of the Raffles Wine Bar armed with pool cues, crutches and even table legs. Mr Lone suffered a fractured jaw, broken nose, extensive leg and knee injuries and had to have some fourteen stitches to his face. He has been told that he could become paralysed as a result of permanent damage to his lower back.

The Lone family were unhappy with the police response. They were attacked by fifteen to twenty white youths, yet only four arrests have been made. Similarly, when friends of a young man who had just been attacked by a gang of twenty white youths rang the police to ask for immediate help, the police responded by putting the phone down.

This attack occurred on 3 January 1987, after an Afro-Caribbean woman had held a party just 200 yards from Mr Hyat's Southern Fried Chicken. Tear-gas was pushed through the letterbox of her house by white youths having a party in an adjacent road. The police were called but did nothing. Then, at 3am, there was another tear-gas attack on her house and Trevor Ferguson and his friend went along to the white youths' party to demand that they stopped. Some twenty people charged out of the house and a bottle was smashed in Trevor's face, causing him to lose the sight of one eye.

No arrests were made at that point. The police went along to the white youths' party, but even a man with blood on his shirt was allowed to go free. The police have since said to the local monitoring group that they are looking for just one man in connection with the attacks on the



grounds that 'if they get him, they'll nail the lot' (*Searchlight* No. 140).

It is precisely in this locality, where police have shown themselves unwilling to clamp down on white racist and criminal gangs, that a major recruitment drive is taking place for more black police officers ostensibly to help fight racist attacks. Yet it is local black youth who are targeted, picked up and watched, while white racist gangs (some of whom at least must be known to the police) are apparently able to commit the most serious crimes with impunity. The presence of more black police officers in Newham, far from countering racism, can only serve to strengthen the process of surveillance and information-gathering on the black community – by making that process less visible, more surreptitious and hence harder to fight.

LIZ FEKETE

### References

- 1 For a detailed account of the Metropolitan police's recruitment drive and campaign against racist attacks, see the *IRR Police-Media Research Bulletins* (Nos 26-29).
- 2 See *Caribbean Times* (13 June 1986). This article was also reprinted in the *Guardian* (13 June 1986) under the title 'May the Multi-racial force be with us'.
- 3 For a detailed analysis of these campaigns, see successive Annual Reports of the Newham Monitoring Project.

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# Book reviews

## *Sanctuary: the new underground railroad*

By RENNY GOLDEN and MICHAEL McCONNELL (New York, Orbis Books, 1986). 240 pp. \$7.95 paper

Each day thousands of dark skinned Central Americans cross a forbidden threshold as they sneak into the United States from Mexico. Some come to find work, others flee political persecution. For the INS (Immigration and Naturalisation Service), or 'migra' as Spanish speakers call it, these people are not seen as tired and huddled masses saved by the outstretched embrace of the Statue of Liberty. These foreigners are seen as threats to US national security, and as many as can be caught are rounded up and deported to their native countries, no matter what the consequences.

To protect some of the political refugees a religious movement arose, calling itself Sanctuary, a place where the oppressed can find security and shelter. This movement has grown alongside and because of US policy in Central America.

The tiny nations between Mexico and Panama make up part of the Americas, but the question has arisen over the past six years: are they central? All but the most ideological veterans of policy-making concede that these nations are not primary economic or strategic areas, yet the revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala have produced not only the expected angry Pavlovian salivation by the US government watchdog at the mere ring of the revolutionary bell, but an unexpected religious response as well. This faith-based movement has organised a

new underground railroad and then offered sanctuary in US churches to the refugees of Central American war; moreover, it defines these wayfarers as victims – of local oligarchies and of US policy.

Ironically, US moves in Central America have provoked more than the revolutionaries in the region; middle-class church-going North Americans, outraged over Reagan's secret war and support for Salvadoran military forces, started the first important political movement inside this country since the Vietnam War. Sanctuary arose as a humanitarian response to suffering, but developed strong anti-interventionist politics as its members became aware of the causes of war and suffering in Central America. Sanctuary, like Abolitionism, its ancestral political parallel 150 years ago, sprang up to fill the moral and political vacuum in the super-individualistic world of American politics. In the late 1980s, as American radicals searched for an entry point into the political arena, the new religious activists simply moved – or were moved by a theology that preached liberation, that demanded, in Archbishop Romero's words, a 'voice for the voiceless'.

Abolitionists understood that black slaves merited an equal place in America; John Brown organised armed struggle around it. Today's Abolitionists want to destroy an evil empire – not the Soviet Union, but the US hold on Central America. They have no political party, but have organised a social movement around their cause. Today, more than 200 churches and synagogues have declared themselves sanctuaries for Central American refugees. More than 70,000 people have pledged themselves to the movement.

*Sanctuary: the new underground railroad* tells the movement's story in language as passionate as that used in the old anti-slavery tracts; the authors attack the material and moral basis of US empire in Central America, and lay down a vigorous indictment of Reagan's foreign and immigration policy. They also offer a primer on liberation theology and a participant's account of the Sanctuary process itself.

Refugees arrive via the new underground railroad that helps Guatemalans and Salvadorans travel through Mexico – a dangerous passage, like that through the old border states – and arrive in Arizona. They tell their own stories, in gory detailed first person narrative. With few exceptions, they love their families, their *patria*, and are victims of brutal torturers and fascist murderers. Then they confront the US immigration authorities and a second ordeal begins for them.

They took pictures of me, fingerprinted me. They took eight pictures and filed four of them, but when they filed them one was missing . . . Then in Guatemala it appeared on television; the announcer gave my name and said that I was a university student who had travelled to Cuba. I was accused of being a guerilla and a reward was offered for turning me in to a security officer. That is why I can't return to my country.



Testimonies like that of Ana, a recent refugee, begin each chapter of the book. They are the members of the new poor of this country, for whom some religious Americans have made sacrifices, indeed, received prison sentences.

*Sanctuary's* characterisation of the refugees is too perfect. I want to know also about the family that uses the church's allowance to speculate, who buys ten blenders at the Goodwill and then sells them at a profit to less enterprising compadres, or who uses their victim status to get sexual favours. These, too, are experiences of the sanctuarians, ones that would flush the story out with realism.

Authors Golden and McConnell criticise some of the host congregations for paternalist, racist and sexist attitudes, while the newly-arrived are portrayed as examples of innocence. The revolutionary impulses that stir the authors derive from the spark of the popular church in Latin America, but, like newly inspired guerrillas, they tend to move faster than the rest of their pack.

The strengths of the book, however, far outweigh the tendency towards revolutionary romanticism, since the authors write from such deep conviction and with such admirable passion. They compare the refugees' experiences to 'festering sores through which, if we are courageous and honest enough, we can get back to the causes of their wounds, and not content ourselves with bandages'. Golden and McConnell push the sanctuarians so that the refugees and their protectors become 'creators of a new world, makers of history'.

Those not already informed and decided are unlikely to be converted by the writers' didactic prose to liberation theology and then into action on Central America. Those non-believer activists will learn a great deal, however, about their partners in the anti-imperialist and interventionist coalitions that have informally worked to stop the covert war in Nicaragua and change US policy throughout the rest of the region. The people who appear together or separately at Congressional offices petitioning, at rallies demonstrating, at the churches, union halls and classrooms of the unconvinced, lecturing and preaching, form a powerful movement.

This book makes clear that the engine for this historic effort lies in a new and politicised morality, one that made its formal debut in the late 1960s, and whose mission is to secure for the meek, the wretched of the earth, a proper place in history, as well as the daily human rights which both Natural and Divine Law have declared as rightfully theirs. It literally demands action of those who agree with its logic, and more action from those already active. It is an inspirational book, just as it is pedagogical. It will teach all of its readers about the movement and about themselves.

Institute for Policy Studies  
Washington

SAUL LANDAU

*The CIA: a forgotten history: US global interventions since World War 2*

By WILLIAM BLUM (London and New Jersey, Zed Press, 1986).  
428pp. £8.95

Selling Europe's butter mountains cheap to the Russians is, Denis Healey once claimed, a CIA plot. All that cholesterol would kill off the Red army with heart disease, thus preventing the onward march of communism. It is a scenario only slightly more bizarre (though far less deadly) than many of those in Blum's compelling indictment, the substance of which is a carefully researched, fully documented, chronological account of major CIA interventions in some fifty countries. Since the Second World War, under the rubric of an anti-communism which is as simplistic and malevolent as it is all-embracing, this arm of the United States has tortured, poisoned, maimed and killed – or sometimes simply lied – in the espousal of freedom, justice and democracy. Elected governments are subverted, leaders thrown out of office, countries destabilised. Foodstuffs have been contaminated, diseases spread and chemicals experimented with (one was intended to make Castro's hair and beard fall out, and thereby engender another revolution in Cuba). In Guatemala, peasant guerrillas have been variously sprayed with insecticide, and with napalm (itself, according to the US army, a Vietnamese invention, whipped up from bars of soap and petrol – research chemists of such calibre were obviously wasted in jungle warfare).

Such is the battle for hearts. But the battle for minds too goes on apace – from the planting of phoney stories in phoney newspapers (which are then picked up by the genuine media) to the reaches of high scholarship (with the funding of innumerable academic publications on politics and international affairs) and high culture (with, in just one of many such ventures, an actor made up to look like Sukarno in a porn film entitled 'Happy Days').

The blatancy of the operations is frequently breath-taking, and they spread sometimes far beyond the confines of the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination. Witness, for example, the massive scale of one of the earliest interventions documented here – that in the 1948 elections in Italy, which was aimed at preventing an alliance of the Italian Socialist and Communist parties from coming to power. In that campaign tactics such as the following were employed: a massive letter-writing campaign was inaugurated through American Italians to their relatives back home, warning of the dangers of communism, the threat to the Catholic Church, the refusal of American aid and another potential world war; and sending gifts and remittances back home might no longer be possible . . . Not that such letters had to be personally written, or even paid for:



at first written by individuals in their own words or guided by 'sample letters' in newspapers . . . [the campaign] soon expanded to mass-produced, pre-written, postage paid form letters, cablegrams, 'educational circulars' and posters, needing only an address and signature.

But the US Post Office's 'Freedom Flights' of junk mail were not all. Italy was bombarded with radio broadcasts threatening that a Communist victory would mean Italian workers being sent as slave labour to the Soviet Union, and Italian factories being dismantled and sent with them. Sinatra and other showbiz luminaries did their bit, broadcasting ad nauseam on the Voice of America. The threat to withdraw US aid was repeated not once, but many times, by officials at the highest level. And, ruled the State Department, henceforth no Italian known to have even *voted* Communist would be allowed to enter the US. (Meanwhile, the CIA quietly supported Italy's 'centre' parties with \$1m. in donations.) In the immediate run-up to the vote, the carrots were brandished with increasing frequency. Millions of dollars were handed over in 'interim aid' payments, in grain, in gold bullion (to replace that looted by Italy's Nazi allies).

In the face of such an onslaught, the left coalition was defeated. That these parties had the only honourable record of fighting fascism (while their Christian Democrat opponents were riddled with fascist collaborators) did not enter the equation. They were now the enemies of democracy. And indeed, one element that recurs in all these earlier accounts of American intervention is how, time and again, the US's wartime fascist 'enemy' was pressed into service. In Germany, known and active fascists were used to commit acts of vandalism, intimidation and terror on a huge scale in the Russian-controlled zone – one factor behind the restriction of movement between East and West that is rarely mentioned. In the Philippines, even before the war ended, armed Japanese troops (ostensibly the US was there to disarm them) were being used against the Filipino resistance – a forerunner of the US's support for supine, barbaric dictatorships throughout the Third World, from Papa Doc in Haiti to Somoza in Nicaragua, so frequently glossed over as a sad but necessary evil. But whether the liberal agonisings of Kennedy, the crude brutality of Johnson, or the ramblings of the great communicator, Reagan, the result, as Blum shows, has been the same: an unremitting hostility against any attempt at self-determination in any area of the globe deemed, for whatever arbitrary reason, of 'interest' to the US. And the most relentless of that hostility has been reserved not merely for 'communists', but for 'communists' who succeed. Hence the herculean efforts to overthrow Allende – not only a marxist, but a democratically elected one – which gave the language a new word, 'destabilisation'; hence the vehemence with which Cuba has been pursued for over twenty-five years; hence the colossal resources

thrown into the US's proxy armies against Nicaragua, which continues to fight on, against all the odds, alone.

Sometimes it is the small items that disturb. A mid-Thames collision in thick fog in the mid-1960s, between a cargo ship and a freighter; banner headlines in the British press, calls for greater navigational safety measures – all in all, a nine-day wonder. But the cargo ship was carrying Leyland buses bound for Cuba, and the sabotage was carried out by the CIA. No banner headlines when that was admitted, many years later.

Indeed, part of Blum's indictment is against a supine media which accepts official statements as gospel, and rarely bothers to probe, highlight, or even report US actions abroad. One such action that went unheralded was the completely unprovoked bombing in Guatemala of the town and airfield of Puerto Barrios, and an area just outside Guatemala city, in 1960, carried out against a rebel military group who were fighting for 'democracy', 'human rights', 'ways and means to save our country from hardship' and the right to pursue a 'self-respecting foreign policy'. Guatemala was, at the time, being readied as the launching-pad for the assault on Kennedy's latest 'new frontier' – the Bay of Pigs. And nothing was going to interfere with that.

Not that this was without precedent. Seven years earlier, a filthy operation had been mounted – including large-scale bombing raids – to depose Guatemala's popular, elected, nationalist leader, Jacobo Arbenz, who was ultimately forced to flee. One of the post-hoc 'discoveries' aimed at justifying the American action, and exposing this crypto-communist, was the 'finding' of four sacks of earth in his home – one from Russia, one from China, one from Siberia and one from Mongolia. No doubt for this vampire of the people to return to each day between sunrise and sunset.

But if driving a stake through the heart and shooting with silver bullets has not been tried, it is the only thing that hasn't been. The CIA has not merely stood behind and supported the torturers, it has supplied them. Take Uruguay, for example: 'The precise pain in the precise place in the precise amount for the desired effect' was the pithy motto of one official of the US Office of Public Safety (OPS) (whose duty it apparently was to bring this art into the twentieth century). Whereas, before OPS intervened, torture in Uruguay had been a haphazard affair, hit and miss, not even regularly carried out, now it became properly taught, systematic – even technological: manuals listing the points of the body to which electrodes could be applied; ultra fine wires (smuggled in through the diplomatic pouch) for inserting into the gums; demonstrations (on disposable beggars, picked up from the slums) of drugs to induce vomiting, and the effects of different amounts of electrical current on the body.



After such knowledge, what forgiveness?

Institute of Race Relations

HAZEL WATERS

*With the Contras: a reporter in the wilds of Nicaragua*

By CHRISTOPHER DICKEY (London, Faber and Faber, 1986).  
327pp. £12.50.

It is now some six years since the CIA began rounding up the stragglers of Somoza's infamous National Guard and knocked them into shape, a well-equipped bunch of terrorists. Since their crushing defeat at the hands of the FSLN in 1979 (the Guardia were never meant actually to fight, merely to 'keep order' and repress), the National Guard had been scattered throughout Central America and Miami. Some small groups were carrying out hit-and-run forays into Nicaragua from Honduras – basically banditry. Others had been integrated into the security forces and death squads of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

It has not been easy for the CIA to turn the somocistas into a viable proxy army. On the military side, the ex-guardsmen who form nearly all the leadership have had little success in teaching old dogs new tricks. Rape, torture and terrorising the rural population come as second nature to their troops, but this is only part, however central, of the CIA strategy as outlined in their notorious 'Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare' (October 1983).

On the political level, the CIA has faced two major problems. First, how to unify a motley collection of longtime CIA agents, Somoza cronies and exiled right-wing politicians. This was at least temporarily resolved in 1985 when financial aid, and of course kickbacks and corruption, were used to coerce the disparate groups into a convenient but superficial unity. The other troublesome problem was how to sell the contras to international opinion and discredit the Nicaraguan government. Reagan has done his bit, turning the world upside down and declaring that the contras are: 'Our brothers, these freedom fighters. They are the moral equivalent of our founding fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance.' Few have been taken in. Certainly inside Nicaragua the contras are seen by hardly anyone as an alternative: forty-six years of Somozas are not easily forgotten. For the Reagan administration, the minimum option is to present its 'indirect intervention' into a sovereign state as a civil war between two distasteful groups, one close to the US and freedom, the other close to the Soviet Union and bent on totalitarianism. Bingo! the literacy campaign, health programmes, land reform, the 1984 election and unprecedented trade union freedoms all become part of the East-West conflict!

Briefly, this is the context in which Christopher Dickey set about

writing *With the Contras*, perhaps the most pernicious, confusing and distorting book I have yet read on Nicaragua. In truth, a book is needed to deal with Dickey's disinformation and attacks on the FSLN by snide implication, so this short review will simply attempt to highlight some of the problems with the book, ranging from the petty to the monstrous. First the petty: the book has a subtitle, 'a reporter in the wilds of Nicaragua', but only some 10 per cent of the book deals with Dickey's few days on a minor incursion just over the Nicaraguan border. It is a breathless, Hemingwayesque chapter from which we learn little else than how exhausting it is climbing damp mountains! More sinister is the throw-away line, 'we did not want to advertise the fact that we were American journalists travelling with this group lest the Sandinistas get wind of our presence and make a special effort to come after us'. Oh yea! Surely the peasants he interviews should know who they are talking to – common journalistic practice, and, anyway, since when have the Sandinistas spent their time chasing US writers up and down deserted mountains? If they do, they really aren't doing a very good job. No US journalists have been chased or killed in Nicaragua since Bill Stewart was murdered in cold blood by the National Guard a few weeks prior to Somoza's downfall.

Dickey's favourite trick is to use interviews carried out years after to reconstruct and describe events, complete with revealing gestures, as though he himself were present at the time. The book's title certainly suggests eyewitness accounts, after all. As the Faber and Faber blurb on the cover unwittingly warns, it 'reads like the best fiction'. One classic example is when Dickey relishes and promotes the macho mythology which surrounds Pastora, the leader of the 1978 attack on Somoza's National Palace, who turned contra less than two years after the revolution: 'Eden Pastora, the Sandinistas' 'Comandante Cero', took a long breath of wet air. It seemed he had been tired all his life, that only his anger and his balls kept him going. No guns. What was he going to fight with now?' The answer is obvious, isn't it? And Dickey wasn't even there, it is taken from a much later interview with the balls man himself. For those of you who like this type of writing, I recommend *A Farewell to Arms*. Those who want to learn about Nicaragua should read something else – which in a way is a shame as the book does contain much fascinating information. We see a close-up of the contras led by Suicida, for example. But even here the moral of the story is seriously misleading: Suicida, a psychopath, is executed by contra leaders, according to Dickey for murdering his own troops. But the real point to be made is that the contras, FDN and UNO, have no consistent policy of punishing or correcting human rights abuses carried out by their men either in Honduras or Nicaragua.

Dickey reaches rock-bottom when he comes to sum up Reagan's bloodthirsty 'crusade' as 'a crazy war that no longer had any reason to



it'. Por favor!! For the first time ever, Nicaraguans have something to defend, their revolution and their discovery of nationhood. Nicaragua in the 1980s is a genuinely subversive example which Reagan feels he has to wipe out. Most depressingly, his successor will probably agree. Subversive, because it is living proof of what can be done when Third World countries take themselves over. I'm afraid that as the US stamps on the most exciting experiment of our times, I see no role or room for neutrals. Dickey's nonsense just sticks in my gullet:

But it is with deep respect that I think of many men and women from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defence Department, the Congress, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force [the contras – ed.] and the Sandinista National Liberation Front, who have shared their time, thoughts and information with me over the last six years.

Christopher Dickey said that. 'Nurse, get your pad the boy's insane', Bob Dylan said that. Do you think he's talking about Ollie North?

London

JOHN BEVAN

### *Prisoners of the American Dream*

By MIKE DAVIS (London, Verso, 1986). 320pp. £7.95.

Too often commentaries on Reaganism in America (and Thatcherism in Britain) concentrate almost exclusively on ideology, with their emphasis on the new right's anti-permissiveness, anti-welfarism and so-called 'new' racism. Mike Davis' book, although frequently overblown in its language and jargon-ridden in its analysis, should be compulsory reading for anyone wishing to understand the deeper economic and political changes in the United States (or Britain) which underpin the current ascendancy of the new right.

The first half of the book addresses the issue of why the labour movement never achieved sustained, organised representation within the American political system along the lines of the Labour Party in Britain or social democratic parties elsewhere in Europe. Those unfamiliar with the ins and outs of American labour history may find Davis' catalogue of events over the past 100 years tedious at times. Nevertheless, one important factor to emerge from his analysis is that the inability of organised labour to overcome ethnic and racial divisions within the working class (which have often corresponded with structural divisions between skilled and unskilled workers) has robbed the American left at crucial points of a radical social and political impetus to accompany its economic demands. Indeed, when discussing the rightward shift of the Democratic Party throughout the 1970s, Davis identifies black liberation as 'the critical democratic issue of American history' and bemoans

the left's demotion of it 'to the status of another progressive "interest", coeval with sexual freedom and ecology'.

At another level, Davis shows how the New Deal ushered in a period of business-dominated 'Fordism', a mass production/consumption economy based on American militarisation and imperialism, during which the political strength of organised labour was largely neutralised within the Democratic Party. When, from the end of the Kennedy-Johnson era of the 1960s onwards, the basis of the Fordist economy collapsed, the American working class was left virtually without any political defence to the new right onslaught towards a low-wage and non-unionised economy. Davis produces remarkable figures documenting the de-unionisation of the American economy over the past fifteen years and the acquiescence of the trade union leadership in this, most notably by negotiating 'two-tier' wage agreements which 'sacrifice ... the rights of new workers in exchange for precarious protections of older members'. In the process, any pretension of the labour movement to protect the social and welfare programmes, on which the black population (and its political leaders) are so dependent, has long since been abandoned.

But Davis' book really comes alive in the second part where he thoroughly dissects the political and economic basis of the rise of Reaganism. In one chapter he analyses how political power in the United States has become more diffuse as the influence of the traditional political party machinery has been overtaken by mass political advertising and computer-directed mailing techniques of fundraising and lobbying, mastery of which is dominated by the new right. Elsewhere he deals with the collapse of mass consumerism and its replacement by the extravagant overconsumption of the new middle classes based in the high technology and financial and commercial service sectors of the economy. Davis shows how this economic structure is dependent, despite the rhetoric of monetarism, on the continuation of deficit government spending, especially on new military programmes, and the use of state power to redistribute resources away from the working classes and social and welfare provision and towards the middle classes. He concludes this section with a detailed analysis of the Democratic Party's defeat of 1984 which, despite the fact that Jesse Jackson eventually compromised much of the original radical impetus of his presidential campaign, has resulted in the 'neo-liberal' wing around such people as Gary Hart seizing control of the party and advocating barely-veiled anti-working-class and anti-black policies.

There are many points where Davis' book throws up direct parallels for Britain, not least as regards the current rightward shift of the Labour Party. Indeed, the description he quotes of the Democrats as 'a labor party without ideology, without a distinct labor program ... without an activated rank and file' would seem to describe precisely



Neil Kinnock's recipe for electoral success. And while Davis' analysis may not hold out much hope of socialist progress in the near future, he does provide a superb documentation of the new economic and political forces ranged against us on both sides of the Atlantic.

Institute of Race Relations

LEE BRIDGES

*Land, freedom and fiction: history and ideology in Kenya*

By DAVID MAUGHAN-BROWN (London, Zed Books, 1986). 284pp.

The war of liberation fought against the British by the Kenya Land and Freedom Army ('Mau Mau'), which inspired other liberation movements throughout the colonial world, has long been a source of considerable embarrassment to the post-colonial Kenya regime. Officially, once Kenya became 'independent' there were no homeguards and loyalists, no freedom fighters and detainees; officially, all Kenyans fought for independence, and all (except the subversive few) are equally involved in the tasks of 'nation-building'.

Why have the ruling circles spurned what could be regarded as Kenya's proudest inheritance? David Maughan-Brown's book goes a considerable way towards answering this question. Focused on the myths and stereotypes about 'Mau Mau' generated in the 1950s and still alive today, *Land, freedom and fiction* seeks to shed light on the complex relationship between history, ideology and fiction, and on what Maughan-Brown calls the 'politics of the unconscious'.

Some sections succeed better than others. The book is least successful when it becomes mechanically dependent on certain analytical tools, betraying its origins as a PhD thesis. Most impressive is the mass of original source material brought together here, and what this reveals of the all-pervasive racism which informed and deformed the perceptions of both the settler population and the fiction writers of the time.

After an introductory chapter which shows the author has done his theoretical homework, Maughan-Brown discusses 'Mau Mau' as a historical phenomenon. He manages to be concise without oversimplifying the causes and course of the revolt. The chapter which follows on 'Kenyan colonial settler ideology' mentions Fanon's statement, 'colonial racism is no different from any other racism', but then goes on quite a different tack, classifying colonial ideology in Kenya as *fascist*. This is a somewhat strained – and unnecessary – undertaking, which has to put on one side prevailing economic and political conditions, and the fact that there was no larger collectivity into which the settlers longed to be absorbed.

The sections on the fiction produced about 'Mau Mau' contain some surprises. The vile distortions of Robert Ruark (termed a 'fascist

writer') and his like are predictable enough, but one would not expect to find the same venomous myths being circulated in ostensibly 'liberal' metropolitan fiction, in a novel by a black writer, V.S. Reid, and in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, *New Statesman* and *Socialist Commentary*.

The novels written by Kenyans in the immediate post-colonial period (including the early work of Ngugi) were also equivocal on the representations of 'Mau Mau', as Maughan-Brown demonstrates at length. The ambivalence these display towards the forest fighters and the peasantry, and the language used in them to describe the struggle, reflect both the strength of the ideological conditioning to which the African population had been subjected, and the new neocolonial reality. As Kenyatta put it in 1962, 'we are determined to have independence in peace, and we shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. We must have no hatred towards one another. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and must never be remembered again.' The carriers of that 'disease', the forest fighters – now deemed a threat to private property and the rule of law and order – were accordingly marginalised, and in some cases even imprisoned by the Kenyatta government.

Maughan-Brown writes perceptively about the post-'independence' betrayal of the Land and Freedom Army, and about Ngugi's reaffirmation of the culture of resistance in his novel *Petals of Blood*, published in 1977. But Maughan-Brown's reliance on evidence from the Kenyatta period to explain ruling ideology today limits his overall argument. Following Leys and Swainson, he traces the emergence of an indigenous bourgeoisie which is able to use the state for its own ends. He does not, however, go on to see just how precarious was its political position, and how limited its access to state power.

For to understand the ideological uses to which 'Mau Mau' is being put in present day Kenya, it is necessary to take into account the way Kenyatta's successor has cobbled together far-flung petit-bourgeois interests in order to outmanoeuvre the largely Kikuyu bourgeoisie. Today, the ruling clique and its intellectual hirelings do not want to 'forget' Mau Mau if they can use it to put the Kikuyu in their place. In the interpretation current in university circles, Mau Mau was the attempt by one group (the Kikuyu) to establish their hegemony over the country at large; the forest fighters were motivated by 'greed' and tribalism, as are those today who invoke their cause. Such an interpretation has proved a useful way of smearing committed Kenyans who have questioned their country's status as an American satellite, and urged a renewal of the struggle for independence for which so many have already died.

Boston

NANCY MURRAY



*The making of the black working class in Britain*

By RON RAMDIN (Aldershot, Gower, 1987). 626pp. £35.00

Any post-war history of black people in Britain has got to be a history of the black working class: a black middle class as such is only now emerging. Equally, any post-war history of the British labour movement has got to include the signal contribution of black workers to that movement. To look at the chronicles of the movement, however, one would think that the black worker had not existed at all.

Ron Ramdin in charting that presence, in voluminous detail, has made good that implausible lacuna. Others before him, like Shyllon and Walvin, have dipped their toe into the earlier history of black people in Britain – and more recently Peter Fryer has, with meticulous research into primary sources, spanned the half millenium stretching from the Tudors to the second Elizabeth. But his coverage of the post-war era is compressed into thirty-two pages of the book. Ramdin, though going over some of the same ground as Fryer, devotes almost three-quarters of his tome to the post-war years when a black working class *qua* class did begin to take shape.

The size of the book alone bears witness to the amount of work that has gone into it. But it is only when one begins to read it that one becomes aware of the spade work that Ramdin had to do – albeit from secondary sources – in gathering and garnering and sifting and sieving the literature on the subject. In that sense, the book is a pioneering work, a guide to the literature if nothing else, a reference point from which all future researchers can take off, in all sorts of directions, and thereby amplify the historiography of blacks in Britain – in terms now perhaps of the specific areas in which they lived and worked and struggled and contributed to social change. For history is now and in England (*pace* Eliot) – and without a knowledge of that history there is no struggle.

Ramdin's book, that is, has the makings of the making of the black working class in Britain – and that is achievement enough – but the making it isn't, and the allusion to Thompson, alas, is vainglorious.

If the book was to have lived up to its title it would have had to go beyond the accumulation of empirical data to analysis and conceptualisation. It would have needed at least to show how racism, in the labour movement in particular, shaped the making of the black workforce into an instrument of radical working-class protest and exposed, in the process, the 'rigidification' of the trade union bureaucracy and the irrelevance of a self-serving trade union leadership to the working-class movement as a whole. And it would have needed to show therein that the making of the black working class was an integral part of and intrinsic to the making of the British working class as a whole, and that in betraying the most radical section of the class – at Grunwick

– the TUC had learned to betray its own radicalism long before it turned to betray the miners and the printers. It might also have indicated – as a footnote to labour history – how the policing of the black communities in the 1960s and 1970s had set the mode for the policing of the working class in the 1980s.

But even if one forgives the author for his misleading title, one cannot easily forgive him, a black historian, for the cavalier way in which he has played around with the names of individuals and organisations. Ajoy Ghose, for instance, becomes Ahoy (and not necessarily because his forefathers might well have been lascar seamen), Abhimanyu Manchanda for no reason at all is re-christened Amanyu, RAAS (Racial Adjustment Action Society) becomes RANS (a repeated Japanese film?), Subhas Chandra Bose goes as Subash Chandrabose and is listed under C in the index which also boasts of a Dr J. Nyerene (presumably of Tanzania) and I myself am encumbered with an extra initial, V, in the bibliography. And to cap it all, an opening quote on the first page of the book makes nonsense of Marx by having him say ‘Labour with a black skin cannot emancipate itself where labour with a black skin is branded’ – whereas it should read ‘Labour with a *white* skin ...’. In any writer such mistakes (of proof-reading or otherwise) must be held to be culpable, but in someone who works for the British Library these are mortal sins.

Institute of Race Relations

A. SIVANANDAN

*Language and Liberation: Creole language politics in the Caribbean*

By HUBERT DEVONISH (London, Karia Press 1986). £5.95 paper, £9.95 cloth. 157 pp.

There is no doubt that the setting free of the immense force of the people's language must be a major priority for any process of liberation. As the infrastructures of a new and vibrant economy and political culture are constructed, the growth of language confidence, eloquence and usage create new vehicles of word power to pull the people forward, increase their understanding of themselves, their struggles and their will to resolve creatively the host of problems which beset them. Thus language itself and the very words which are its elements become a new engine for change.

Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the Caribbean, and Hubert Devonish's book is a welcome and lucid commentary which keeps linguistic jargon at arm's length and expresses its forceful message with a clarity which will make it a vital educational tool in many parts of the world.

The concept of 'diglossia' is at the heart of his book. As Devonish explains, this term is used 'to describe a situation where two separate



language varieties, each with its own specific functions', exist within a society. In the Caribbean the high-status language is Standard English, that of low-status being the Creole speech of the working people. It is Devonish's main assertion that this latter variety is the 'most effective language medium for releasing creativity, initiative and productivity among the members of such a community', and must be the language variety that the liberation process needs to vindicate, nurture and strengthen.

Devonish achieves a great deal in his book, not only in de-mystifying the often sacred ground of linguistics, but also in his review of the approaches taken by worldwide revolutionary movements in their efforts to address the complicated language situations that they inherited. He is also most insightful, as one would expect, when he deals with the complexities of language within his own national and regional context, and the history of both Guyanese and Caribbean opposition to the imperialism of language heaved upon their peoples by the European colonial powers. From this linguistic resistance within a humus of oppression, a culture of creative energy and beauty has grown which points the way forward for the rising peoples.

But Devonish's pioneering labours are blemished by a form of arrogance which too often breaks through the vigour of his arguing. The rarefied air of academic detachment sometimes gives his own words a 'know-all' and contemptuous tone. For example, he is facetiously dismissive of Frelimo's attempts to confront an extremely difficult language situation in independent Mozambique after 1975. Without explaining the important factors of constraint facing the new nation's educators and language policy-makers – among these being the large numbers of different languages and dialects at work in the country, the dangers of favouring one particular tribal language, the sometimes non-existent physical communications, the poverty of printing resources and low level of technology, the shortage of educated cadres, the virtual exodus of experienced technicians, the need for a language as an international tool, the fact that Portuguese had been the language of command and communication during the war of liberation and within the liberated areas – Frelimo's brave attempts to address these problems through mass education programmes in the Portuguese language are thrown aside by Devonish as mere 'socialist rhetoric' which 'simply assists in continuing the process of economic underdevelopment'. The use of the word 'simply' suggests he has given little profound thought to the very formidable array of problems faced by the liberation struggle of the Mozambican people and the reasons for taking this particular linguistic path.

He is similarly carping in his approach to Grenada. There is no doubt that between the years 1979 and 1983 there were unprecedented attempts by an ex-British colonial territory at the level of government to

set in motion democratic and popular processes and structures that served to liberate the working people's speech from its past shackles and complexes. The mass of Grenadians were seeing their own language as a weapon of change, a cause for pride and a conscious vehicle of beauty and culture, while gaining more access to Standard English than at any previous time of their history. But breaking into a snide tone, Devonish wipes away the 'revo's' achievement in language through what he sees as a failure to address the Creole issue in its literacy programme, as 'a case of the grossest criminal negligence' or as a deliberate error.

Why such a bitter and violent reaction to a courageous and pathfinding process? Devonish admits his frustration at the fact that his own ideas on language policy in the Caribbean were not instantly adopted by Grenada's educators when he presented them at a seminar during the first months of the Revolution, and expresses naive surprise that those of a US Peace Corps teacher and linguistic researcher (with whom he agrees) were not accepted some three years later. The decision not to accept his own theories, he says, created the motivation for him to write his book. It is a futile reflection perhaps, but it remains a great pity that he did not patiently stay, make his contribution to the process and continue to put his positions like many other Caribbean educators and scholars who worked tirelessly for the Grenada Revolution. Then he could have endorsed his own earlier words that 'public education on the language question is not going to occur over-night' – particularly in the Caribbean where European imperialism has continued to confuse the issue for four centuries.

But instead of staying he got the huff, left Grenada and wrote his book. We should be grateful for the last act, for apart from the unfortunate lapses into haughtiness and pique, his work is a solid achievement which will help to clear away many areas of obscurity and misunderstanding over the power of words both to oppress and to liberate.

Sheffield

CHRIS SEARLE

*The Caribbean: survival, struggle and sovereignty*

By CATHERINE A. SUNSHINE (Washington, EPICA, 1985). 232pp.  
\$8.50 paper.

In *The Caribbean: survival, struggle and sovereignty*, EPICA, the US-based Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action, has made another valuable published contribution to understanding of the Caribbean region. An earlier publication, *Grenada: the peaceful revolution* (1982), was likewise a most thoroughly researched, attractively presented book, demonstrating a broad historical perspective



which came down firmly on the side of the Caribbean masses in struggle.

This new book takes all the countries bordering the Caribbean, including Central America, within its brief, while giving emphasis to the Commonwealth Caribbean, currently the fastest growing arena of US interference. It is as densely packed with factual information as Jenny Pearce's *Under the Eagle*, and its great achievement is in making that information available to the general reader. For this book will be a boon to teachers, students and community groups, with its wealth of illustrations in the form of fascinating archive photographs, political cartoons, chronologies and maps. Insets within the text give illustrations of themes through a particular example or highlight issues of parallel significance such as the development of Rastafarianism. The text is clear and readable, but can also be dipped into for specific information, which is easily found.

The book does not suffer the usual weakness common to a focus on the Commonwealth Caribbean, which tends to perpetuate a fragmented perspective, seeing only those territories formerly dominated by Britain as significant and failing to see the historical unity of experience in the region and inter-Caribbean influences, above all the Cuban revolution. The pattern of nineteenth-century US 'gunboat diplomacy' in the Spanish-speaking territories is documented and shown to have had its modern equivalents in the military invasions of the Dominican Republic and Grenada. The pattern of economic dependence through 'branch plant' or 'screwdriver' industries now entrenched in the English-speaking Caribbean (where companies, attracted by 'tax holidays', employ low-paid workers monotonously to produce components shipped back to the US for final assembly and sale) is shown to have been developed in the interests of US capitalism like the 'Puerto Rican model'. This 'model of development', in fact a guise for extreme exploitation, has been promoted by the US throughout the region, most aggressively in Jamaica in recent times, where it has exacerbated economic depression, unemployment and poverty. Thus, the general reader, perhaps for the first time, may be able to understand the historical logic which lies behind the recent eruptions of political unrest and violence in the Dominican Republic, in Guadeloupe, in Jamaica and in Haiti, all of which were reported largely without explanatory analysis in our media.

Posited against the 'Puerto Rican model' as positive alternatives are the transformation effected in Cuba since the revolution and the achievements in Grenada, 1979-83. Achievements in health and education, standard of living and the 'revolution in values' are singled out in the case of Cuba, economic growth in the case of Grenada. The Cuban revolution inspired progressive groups and individuals in the region. The author illustrates how the US has attempted to negate that influence,

primarily through control of the media and of the trade unions.

*The Caribbean: struggle, survival and sovereignty* is a forward-looking book, concerned with the issues facing the contemporary Caribbean. It confronts the massive blows inflicted on regional progressive movements through the fall of the Grenada revolution. It rightly emphasises the achievements of the Peoples Revolutionary Government, while giving a fair and factual analysis of the crisis within the New Jewel Movement which led to the tragic and shocking death of prime minister Maurice Bishop and other leaders and citizens. It raises the challenges now facing left parties: the need to clarify the nature of organisation, the need for openness, and the challenge of developing democratic instruments of the popular will. While in no way minimising the negative factors operating against the Caribbean masses, this book views the historical process as one towards liberation, and genuinely makes a contribution to that process.

Sheffield

JULIE PEARN

*Error of Judgement: the truth about the Birmingham bombings*

By CHRIS MULLIN (London, Chatto & Windus, 1986) 270pp. £10.95

The truth at the heart of Chris Mullin's book is that the police tortured and framed six Irishmen for the Birmingham pub bombings of November 1974 and that a widespread feeling of hysterical anti-Irish racism enabled them to get away with it. Mullin's book is in the distinguished tradition of Ludovic Kennedy's investigations into famous miscarriages of justice rather than a contribution to the growing body of work on Ireland's English problem.

This does not detract in any way from its quality. Mullin's purpose is to show that the wrong men were convicted for the Birmingham bombings and this he does in a clear and straightforward way. It is his commitment to the men's cause that gives the book one of its great strengths. He never pretends to be some sort of disinterested commentator taking the 'on the one hand ... but on the other hand' approach, but states very clearly that his months of research and investigation have given him a passionate belief in the men's innocence and a keen desire to see them free and exonerated.

Mullin's book makes two central charges. First, that the forensic tests the men underwent which led the police to believe they had caught the bombers in fact proved nothing of the sort. Second, that the police then proceeded to beat confessions out of five of the six men with extraordinary brutality and cruelty. Each tells a similar story of savage batterings accompanied by an unending torrent of racial abuse. These – to which the police have responded with little except bland denials of any



ill-treatment – have not varied throughout twelve years' imprisonment. The 'confessions' themselves were riddled with contradictions and inaccuracies but they served their purpose: they ensured that someone paid for the dreadful carnage in Birmingham and the public demand for vengeance was assuaged.

The conviction of the six men was only one manifestation of the public outburst of anti-Irish feeling which followed the Birmingham bombs. The Birmingham Irish Centre was firebombed, Catholic schools were attacked, Irish businesses were smashed up and for some time afterwards Irish pubs could not guarantee that their customers would not be assaulted on leaving their premises. At the British Leyland plant at Longbridge, workers staged a mass walkout demanding that IRA bombers be hanged. At factories and offices all over the country, Irish people were singled out for abuse. I was a student in Liverpool at the time and I well remember the hostile reception I got from my fellow students on the day after the bombs went off. In their eyes it seemed that my name – I do not speak with an Irish accent, I was born in Lancashire – made me guilty. My fellow students and I were studying law!

The National Federation of Licensed Victuallers telegraphed the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, to demand the reintroduction of capital punishment. At Liverpool and Manchester airports, workers refused to handle flights bound for Dublin or Belfast. But the hysteria was not confined to offices, factories and student lecture halls. One week after the bombings, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was rushed through Parliament – in seventeen hours! The Act was described at the time as a piece of 'draconian' legislation which would only remain on the statute book for the period of the immediate crisis. Nearly thirteen years later the PTA remains firmly in force, frequently used by the police to harass and intimidate the Irish community. Thousands of people have suffered arrest and detention under the Act and only a tiny handful have ever been prosecuted. It has scared many people off any involvement in Irish political activity; it has criminalised an entire community.

In such an atmosphere, it is not surprising that few dissenting voices were heard when six Irishmen were convicted of the bombings and then sentenced to imprisonment for life. The useless forensic test led police to believe they were guilty men, kicks and punches gave them the confessions they wanted, a stage-managed trial in the sombre arena of Lancaster Castle saw the majesty of the law hand out its severest punishment and the whole shabby ritual was watched in silence by a nation befuddled by prejudice and intolerance.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has promised a full review of the case in the near future, \* many people feel that this will result in freedom for

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\*The case has now been referred to the Court of Appeal.

the Birmingham Six. But they forget the words of Lord Denning.

If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous. That would mean the Home Secretary would either have to recommend they be pardoned or he would have to remit the case to the Court of Appeal. This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: It cannot be right these actions should go any further.

Can anyone charged with overseeing the honest and impartial administration of justice have ever uttered a more contemptible statement?

London

SEAN MCGUIRE

*After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives*

By EDWARD SAID, with photographs by JEAN MOHR (London, Faber & Faber, 1986). 175pp. £6.95

Unique, perhaps, to the Palestinian people is the way in which they have, at one and the same time, been written out of history (a literal non-entity) and, even as they have stubbornly refused, nonetheless, to dissolve away, been written back in as the bogey men of a twentieth-century gothic imagination. Shadowy, sinister figures, eyes hooded under dark glasses, faces swathed, they strut briefly across the pages of the world's press, only to melt away as swiftly. Always they are either infinitely less than, or larger than, life. It is the necessity to counter this dual focus of distortion, so that some of the fuller truth of the Palestinian situation can emerge, that provides the starting point for *After the Last Sky*.

Indeed, the very genesis of the book itself suggests the ambiguities and hypocrisies of those for whom the Palestinians are, at worst, anathema, at best, an (intermittently) expedient cause:

In 1983, while I was serving as a consultant to the UN for its International Conference on the Question of Palestine (ICQP), I suggested that photos be hung in the entrance hall to the main conference . . . The photos were indeed wonderful; the official response puzzling . . . You can hang them up, we were told, but no writing can be displayed with them. No legends, no explanations . . . the opposition was ascribed to 'some UN member states' who found any sustained writing on the Palestinian people objectionable and difficult in principle to accept. These member states, alas, were principally Arab . . . Israel and the US did not deign to take note of any aspect of ICQP.



Hence this book, in which Said's commentary, imbued as it is with a profound poetic sensibility, mingles personal recollection and anecdote with stark fact and political analysis, all focusing on, and generated by, Mohr's superb photos. The images themselves are rich with a sense of life, even as they hint at the strains and privations under which Palestinians live; the burnt-out cars with weeds growing round them where children play; the barbed wire, corrugated iron and cement shanty towns of the camps, always in the process of being destroyed or rebuilt or both at once; the bus load of released prisoners going back to their homes. Neither sentimental nor posed, they convey a sense not only of the complexities of the historical and political matrix within which Palestinians have to make their way, but also impressions of resilience and strength, at times of sheer physical joy in living.

Indeed, the very approach that Said and Mohr have developed speaks to the specific reality of Palestinian experience. For the situation of the Palestinian people is unlike that of any other in contemporary times. In less than half a life-span they have been dispossessed of a land – itself laden with the historical accretions of Islam, Judaism, Christianity – in which they had lived for centuries; dispersed through the Arab world to all corners of the globe; disrupted in their very existence. And to convey something of that dislocation, that discontinuity, Said uses an approach which is partial, fragmentary, almost at times tangential. But its partiality carries the weight of truth, its fragmentation glimpses the whole, its tangential quality pierces to the heart of the matter.

From it all emerges a portrait of Palestinian lives – the book's subtitle – which has both depth and fullness. In the mythology which has accrued to the Palestinian people women, for example, are either overlooked (as not fitting into the macho terrorist demonology), suspected (as the mothers of terrorists) or venerated (as martyrs and the mothers of martyrs). Said, in a lengthy passage in which he reflects both on a series of Mohr's photos and on a film by Khleifi which portrays the lives of two women, evokes their unheroic, dogged, 'unassimilated strength', and conveys in the process how Khleifi has illumined him, a male Palestinian.

But more than this, not only are the dispersed sections of the Palestinian community woven into Said's narrative, he attempts to show the relationships between them, the ways in which they view each other – from the exile in New York to the inhabitant of the 'interior', that is those who never left what is now Israel. And, in his view, it is Arafat more than anyone who gave this community external form and shape, who gave it presence:

His role has been to gather the shards of Palestine and give it a form and cohesion it never had. Our case, he has seemed to us to be saying, is formulable; it can be represented in the forums of the world; it can stand up for itself on the field of battle. Second, he has introduced

the various dispersed sectors of our society to each other ... the camp-dweller has learned about the intellectual and vice versa, the millionaire about the poor student, the doctor about the patient, the worker about the banker. Third, and perhaps most important, he has postulated ... a Palestinian idea for which many of us have striven ... No leader of any group in the Middle East so unambiguously sponsored so secular and genuinely liberating an idea: that Palestine might become the peacefully shared home of Arabs and Jews and that no one group would have privileges over the other.

Throughout, both text and image reinforce and resonate with each other, setting up echoes that linger in the mind. On occasion, Said goes too far and deep, out-distances me, explores too subtly the ambiguities for me to follow, the anecdotes are perhaps made to bear too much weight. At other times, he takes the imagination and soars. Of one of Mohr's photos – a small child looking shyly up at the photographer as she clasps her father's knee – he writes:

Her look conjures up the unappreciated fact of birth, that sudden, unprepared-for depositing of a small bundle of self on the fields of the Levant after which comes the trajectory of dispossession, military and political violence, and that constant, mysterious entanglement with monotheistic religion at its most profound – the Christian Incarnation and Resurrection, the Ascension to heaven of the prophet Mohammed, the Covenant of Yahweh with his people – that is knotted definitively in Jerusalem, center of the world, *locus classicus* of Palestine, Israel and Paradise.

Institute of Race Relations

HAZEL WATERS



# Books received

*This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews*

- Apartheid: a history.* By Brian Lapping. Grafton Books, 1986. Cloth £12.95
- The Arab military option.* By General Saad El-Shazly. San Francisco, American Mideast Research, 1986. Cloth \$26
- Asking for trouble: autobiography of a banned journalist.* By Donald Woods. London, Penguin, 1987. Paper £3.95
- Beyond ethnicity: consent and descent in American culture.* By Werner Sollors. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986. Cloth £22
- Black mirrors.* By Farooq Khalid. London, Jonathan Cape, 1987. Cloth £10.95
- Bricks of shame: Britain's prisons.* By Vivien Stern. London, Penguin, 1987. Paper £3.95
- The Chaneyville incident.* By David Bradley. London, Serpent's Tail, 1986. Paper £5.95
- Class, race, and the Civil Rights movement.* By Jack M. Bloom. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987. Paper \$12.50
- The crisis in South Africa.* By John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb. London, Zed Books, 1986. Paper
- The development of capitalism in Africa.* By John Sender and Sheila Smith. London, Methuen, 1986. Paper £7.95
- Democracy: can't we do better than that?* By Bob Avakian. Chicago, Banner Press, 1986. Paper \$10.95
- End papers.* By Breyten Breyenbach. London, Faber and Faber, 1986. Cloth £12.50
- Englishness: politics and culture 1880-1920.* Edited by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd. London, Croom Helm, 1986. Cloth £25
- Homemade love.* By J. California Cooper. London, Women's Press, 1987. Paper £3.95
- Immigrant labour and government policy: the cases of the federal republic of Germany and France.* By Dave Edye. Aldershot, Gower, 1987. Cloth £18.50
- Jews in America today.* By Lenni Brenner. London, Al Saqi Books, 1986. Paper £7.95
- Kampuchea: the revolution rescued.* By Irwin Silber. Oakland, Line of March Publications, 1986. Paper \$7.95
- Left behind: journeys into British politics.* By David Selbourne. London, Jonathan Cape, 1987. Cloth £10.95
- The living is easy.* By Dorothy West. London, Virago, 1987. Paper £3.95
- The logic of racism.* By E. Ellis Cashmore. London, Allen and Unwin, 1987. Paper £6.95
- Lone ranger in Pakistan.* By Julian Samuel. Peterborough, Emergency Press, 1986. Paper
- Neither black nor white: slavery and race relations in Brazil and the United States.* By Carl N. Degler. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986. Paper £10
- Noam Chomsky: a personal bibliography 1951-1986.* Compiled by Konrad Koerner and Matsuji Tajima. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1986. Cloth

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