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DISCUSSION BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE RED EUREKA MOVEMENT

WAITING FOR A COMMUNIST PARTY ?
SOVIET UNION : GET OUT OF AFGHANISTAN, MIDDLE EAST
AND INDO CHINA.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL
TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS : THE DEBATE CONTINUES...
PUNK ROCK AND MAO

No 9 24th march 1980

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DISCUSSION BULLETIN is published approximately once every six weeks by the Red Eureka Movement as a public forum for thrashing out the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the concrete problems of the Australian revolution.

Material from non-members is welcome and all correspondence addressed to us care of the After Hours Books (address below) will be answered. Financial assistance and assistance distributing bulk copies of this bulletin to others would also be very welcome.

Individual articles are the views of the contributor. Signed articles use pseudonyms. Editorial comments are the views of the Editorial Committee and are not necessarily REM policy.

Articles hostile to REM policy and Mao Tsetung Thought may also be published in this bulletin.

The RED EUREKA MOVEMENT is a small revolutionary organisation that arose from opposition to revisionist attacks by leaders of the CPA(ML) on Mao Tsetung's close comrades, the Chinese "gang of four", and generally opposes the revisionist line of the CPA(ML) leadership including its bourgeois nationalism, extreme sectarianism, subservience to Chinese revisionism and outright opposition to socialist revolution in Australia.

Our stand is to defend the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism- Mao Tsetung Thought against the new revisionist attacks on them in China, Australia and throughout the world.

We oppose both Chinese and Albanian revisionism and reject the tendency towards "left wing communism" prevalent among many opponents of the latest revisionism.

We support the concept of "three worlds" and the united front of all forces that can be united against Soviet social imperialism, which has become more dangerous, although not more powerful, than US imperialism.

Within Australia US Imperialism is the greater enemy .

We are not, and do not pretend to be, a new vanguard party of the workingclass, nor do we pretend to have all the answers.

We believe that overcoming sectarianism is central to building a genuinely revolutionary movement in Australia and is a major contribution of Mao Tsetung Thought or "Maoism".

Our basic program is the complete overthrow of all exploiting classes, the establishment of working class rule (the dictatorship of the proletariat) in place of capitalist class rule (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) and the triumph of socialism over capitalism.

Our ultimate aim is the classless society of world communism. This is a process of continuing revolution by stages and the fight for Australian independence is part of that uninterrupted revolution.

We believe in armed revolution.

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WAITING FOR A COMMUNIST PARTY ?

(A statement by the Discussion Bulletin Editorial group)

What contribution can REM make to the Australian revolution ?

In our opinion the main contribution that REM can make at present is to play a very active role, a leading role, in helping to create an environment in Australia which is conducive to developing some genuine Marxist theoreticians.

Let us hasten to add two explanatory qualifications to this main task :

Firstly, what type of Marxist theoreticians do we want ? We don't want arm-chair Marxists, those with only a comprehensive "book" knowledge of Marxism, but with little or no inclination of putting it into practice. We want to develop some real Marxist theoreticians who have both the inclination and the ability to serve the people and thus are impatient to develop their theory so they can put it into practice.

Previous experience, and common sense, indicates that those who regard theory as very important but strive to test it in practice whenever possible tend to produce much more interesting theory than those who regard theory as primary in a formal, dogmatic sense (and do nothing but study of the Marxist classics).

Secondly, does this mean that every member of REM is expected to become a capable Marxist theoretician ?

No. Such a demand is setting too great a task for at least some members of REM. What we would rather encourage is that every REM member make efforts to raise their theoretical level, while striving to link theory and practice, and we actively support each other in this process. If this is done then we will all become better Marxists and some genuine Marxist theoreticians will emerge. Rather than 'waiting for a Communist Party' we will be beginning the process - in a collective and not an individualistic way - of creating one.

This understanding of REM's role at present has evolved as follows :

In the past some of us were loyal followers of the "great" theoretician EF Hill because we respected his contribution and because his contribution was linked to the remarkable achievements of the Peoples Republic of China under the leadership of Mao Tsetung.

Following the leader turned out to be not enough. The split between the REM and the CPA-ML struck us, at first, as being a split between the honest Marxist-Leninist's (REM) and the dishonest non Marxist-,Leninist's (the remains of the CPA-ML).

Again, this analysis proved to be inadequate.

Firstly, some of our best friends in the "Party" who we knew (and this is not said tongue in cheek) to be as honest as the day is long, decided to stay with the "Party" (much to our surprise). Second, some of our friends who we knew to be as honest as the day is long decided to support the Albanian line.

(for comprehensive critiques of the Albanian line , see 'Are Mao's critics ML's at all ?' in Discussion Bulletin no. 3 . Also see 'Beat back the Dogmato-Revisionist attack on Mao Tsetung Thought' in The Communist , theoretical journal of the Revolutionary Communist Party, SA, no. 5, May 1979. These documents are available through After Hours Books . See advert. in this issue .)

In the face of such evidence there was no other alternative but to conclude that honesty is not enough. It is true that without honesty we can achieve nothing. But with honesty alone it was not possible to achieve much either.

Nor is class origin enough. Some of those who decided to stay with the revisionists had impeccable working class backgrounds.

Now we think that the initial split was between the rebels and the blind followers. To be a Marxist, one must be a rebel and one must be honest, but again these alone are not enough.

The rebels and honest people in REM and elsewhere now have to embark on the more arduous task of learning Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and applying it to Australian conditions. If we were communists at the time of the split then we would not have been so surprised and annoyed at the whole sick show.

Many of us have been proudly calling ourselves "ML's" (at least in private, if security forbade a public utterance) for the last 10 years (or more or less) without having much idea at all about what Marxism is all about.

The example has been cited that 5 years ago some comrades (all one of them!) realised that the "Party's" explanation of inflation (eg. as expressed in the Party pamphlet "You Fight Inflation" .We intend to republish this with a refutation in a future Discussion Bulletin) was totally inadequate and that we did not really understand inflation at all. Five years later, after some fairly persistent study of political economy by a few individuals, we still don't understand inflation and so we cannot get out a leaflet for mass distribution on this.

There are other huge gaps in our knowledge, eg. no class analysis of Australia; don't understand the nature of the Australian revolution etc.

In short, at present, we have not got a great deal that is useful to give to the Australian people and working class and we should not pretend that we have.

Oppose Empiricism .

Since the split there have been different reactions to our experience with the CPA-ML and its chief theoretician.

EF Hill (in the past) made some valuable contributions to Australian revolutionary theory. This would include his book on trade union politics ("Looking Backward. Looking Forward") and his book on the Labour Party ("The Labour Party?"). One task we have yet to fulfil is to critically review these books, so that we digest their useful side and reject their negative side.

One reaction to the desertion of Hill to revisionism (see Discussion Bulletin no. 5 for a detailed exposure of Hill's revisionist book "Class struggle within the Communist Parties") has been to paint him absolutely black (forgetting his white undercoat) and to forget the contribution that he did make.

Those influenced by empiricism took the opportunity to condemn "intellectualism" (really condemning the role played by advanced theory) while glorifying all agitational work and the closest possible organic contact with the working class. These ideas have had some influence within REM. For example, see the article 'The leading role of the working class' (part 1) in The Rebel! vol. 1, no. 3 (Sept. 1977). A correction was made in the continuation of this article in The Rebel! vol. 1, no. 6 (Dec. 1977). Another example of the influence of empiricism was the article 'Working class leadership vital to win socialism!!' in Discussion Bulletin no.4

This was followed up in Discussion Bulletin no. 6 with the article 'Intellectuals and the working class' which though a deeper attempt to come to grips with the question, was still not sufficient.

The problem posed by EF Hill's desertion cannot be solved simply by honest workers summing up their experience and condemning advanced theory as "intellectualism" and "armchair Marxism". It is important that more summing up of experience is done and that bourgeois intellectuals posing as Marxists be opposed, and exposed. But this alone is not enough.

EF Hill was almost the only theoretician in the CPA-ML. The problem was not that one was too many but that one was not enough. Consequently, many CPA-ML members did not have the independence of thought and action to break with EF Hill when he became a revisionist. Since then the political study done within the CPA-ML has dropped away to almost nothing and the herd mentality of that organisation has grown stronger.

Hence, it is vitally important that REM trains a large contingent of Marxist theoreticians who adopt a proletarian class stand, irrespective of their actual class background.

For example, the Chinese Communist Party published a series of booklets in English translation by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin as well as Mao Tsetung. Obviously, they thought it important that these be studied. But very few have studied them.

Unite with empiricists while opposing empiricism.

By now most REM members who were influenced by an empiricist line have either changed their views or left the organisation. More than 90% of REM members now accept the view that our knowledge of Marxism is quite inadequate and we have to do something about it. For members to suggest, or simply, that an empiricist approach is now the main danger in REM is simply not true.

One bad tendency can be used to mask another bad tendency in the opposite direction. Opposition to empiricism has been used to actually sever the connection between theory and practice, between 'intellectual' and 'worker' and to promote an atmosphere within REM where only armchair Marxists feel comfortable.

We should think up ways to encourage those influenced by empiricism to remain in the organisation and change. We should not create an environment where such people feel completely out of their depth and have no real option but to leave.

Of course, if we don't actually care about such people (or are afraid of hurting their feelings) then we will never create such an environment.

Having come so far, the main task now facing REM is actually how to create an environment from which Marxist theoreticians with a proletarian class stand will emerge.

Before going further it is necessary to state some definitions so that at least we have a common language and know what we are talking about.

* Theoretical work : We shall use Mao's definition (in describing Marx's theoretical work) from 'Rectify the Party Style of Work' (Selected Readings, p. 176) --

"...Marx took part in the practice of the revolutionary movement and also created revolutionary theory. Beginning with the commodity, the simplest element of capitalism, he made a thorough study of the economic structure of capitalist society. Millions of people saw and

handled commodities every day but were so used to them that they took no notice. Marx alone studied commodities scientifically. He carried out a tremendous work of research into their actual development and derived a thoroughly scientific theory from what existed universally. He studied nature, history and proletarian revolution and created dialectical materialism, historical materialism and the theory of proletarian revolution. Thus Marx became a most completely developed intellectual, representing the acme of human wisdom; he was fundamentally different from those who have only book-learning. Marx undertook detailed investigations and studies in the course of practical struggles, formed generalizations and then verified his conclusions by testing them in practical struggles - this is what we call theoretical work. "

Propaganda and agitation - In 'What is to be Done?', Lenin approves Plekhanov's definition, which is :

"A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people." (Ch. III B).

Persuasion, not compulsion .

This principle applies to theoretical work, as with other things.

The capability of many REM members to just sit down and read Marx is limited. To do this people have to be self motivated.

It is true that different members of REM have grasped the concept of our ignorance in Marxism to different degrees.

Not many, at present, are prepared to consistently sit down and read Marx. But more are prepared to read Marx in relation to a concrete problem they have in mind. Eg. what causes inflation; the position of women in the workforce; analysis of a particular industry.

With encouragement, most REM members will gradually take up the reading of more Marxist classics .

But if methods of compulsion are resorted to (eg. demanding that people read 'Capital') this will only slow down the process.

Part of this involves thinking in terms of the whole organisation, not in terms of a few individuals in it. When Lenin sat in the library and wrote 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism' (1909) he did not demand that all Bolsheviks drop their propaganda and agitational work and do likewise.

Building a bridge - link theoretical work to propaganda work .

For an example of this refer to the introduction of the broadsheet "Can't Bear it ... " in this Discussion Bulletin .

Apply the theory of 2 points, not the theory of 1 point .

As argued above it is still necessary to continue to oppose empiricism.

It is also necessary to oppose armchair Marxism and the associated tendency to exaggerate our ignorance.

Although not accepting the conclusion of the article from which the following extract is taken, we do think the extract is very true and relevant :

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"To be ignorant is one thing - and ignorance can be transformed into knowledge by taking part in the process of changing the world and using Marxism as a guide to this. But to raise ignorance to a principle, to make a virtue of it, to grow arrogant in direct relation to this ignorance, and to insist that everything stop until through self-cultivation, struggling to 'accept' theory, one has overcome his own ignorance, this is both self-defeating and sabotage of the revolutionary movement..."

(The Communist , vol. 1, no. 2, p.81 : theoretical journal of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA).

An article authorised by the REM Executive ("Party Building is Bullshit", see Discussion Bulletin no. 7) airily dismisses all the struggles waged by all the ML and "ML" groups in most Western countries today as follows :

"Any energy left over is spent 'immersing oneself among the masses' leading Economist struggles against the employers and the Government". (DB 7, p. 3).

This is promoting the terrible idea that to become involved in any practical struggle at this time is Economist.

How on earth it is even possible to arrive at such a clear picture from the vantage of ones lounge room in sunny Australia is a mystery to us. Gratuitous insults , so airily wiping off all the ML groups in the Western world, will not help us build international contacts. But the implications for REM itself are far more serious.

Although it is true to say : "... we have not got a great deal that is useful to give to the Australian people and working class and we should not pretend that we have."

It becomes another thing altogether (negating all propoganda and agitational work) when it is said :

"it is an exercise in futility to attempt to systematically take our ideas out to the people or the working class", or, "our theory is reading the classics; our practice is turning the pages".

Such arguments amount to severing the nexus between theory and practice, ie. armchair Marxism. And unlike the empiricist line, armchair , Marxism is a big internal danger in REM at the moment. We should be warned of the dangers of this by the words of the Chinese Communist Party in summing up 50 years of experience :

"But the divorce of theory and practice and the split between the subjective and the objective are the ideological characteristics of Chen Tu-hsiu, Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and other sham Marxists,..."

"In reading and studying, it is essential to keep to the principle of integrating theory with practice. It is essential to read and study with problems in mind, problems arising in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, and problems in the Chinese and the world revolution. This means combining reading with investigation and study and with the summing up of experience, combining the study of historical experience with the present-day struggle and the criticism of modern revisionism. "

(from 'Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Communist Party of China', July 1, 1971 , p.14)

Judge people by their deeds, not their words alone .

In assessing the 2 bad tendencies outlined above we must judge people by their deeds, not their words. This cuts both ways.

Some people say that reading the classics is important but do nothing about it. If we develop the environment where people are actually encouraged to do this and still nothing happens, then obviously these people have not grasped this truth adequately. If we build the bridge or the boat to cross the river and the poor swimmers still don't want to cross then obviously they are not fair dinkum. While continuing to encourage them it is more important for us to cross the river ourselves, even if this means they can't hear our voices so well from the other bank.

The same applies to people who energetically advance the proposition that "Theory is primary and propaganda is secondary" while in fact apparently doing nothing to help develop collective REM propaganda work.

Opposition to this formulation is based, in part, on the apparent hypocrisy of those who advance it. Don't say cannot, say willnot !

Develop REM collective life .

Most socialist minded individuals have a strong desire to develop collective life in an organisation because they realise that their own individual ignorance and inability to change society can only be overcome by learning from others with mutual support.

Women tend to be more sensitive to the breakdown of collective life and will leave before some men who are more prepared to play the role of the "rugged individual".

Collective life and collective spirit have broken down badly in some sections of REM. This is an extremely serious problem that must be fixed.

"Anyone should be allowed to speak out, whoever he may be, so long as he is not a hostile element and does not make malicious attacks, and it does not matter if he says something wrong. Leaders at all levels have the duty to listen to others. Two principles must be observed: (1) Say all you know and say it without reserve; (2) Don't blame the speaker but take his words as a warning. Unless the principle of 'Don't blame the speaker' is observed genuinely and not falsely, the result will not be 'Say all you know and say it without reserve'." (Little Red Book, pp. 161-2)

Opposed to Mao's concept of developing a collective life in the organisation there is another bourgeois method and style of work. This breaks down and destroys the collective life of the organisation leaving only a motley collection of individuals all striving against each other.

This method and style of work does blame the speaker and by different debating tactics attempts to browbeat the speaker into submission. It attempts to deny the right of the speaker to argue a certain way or ask certain pertinent questions .

Attempting to win an argument by distorting your opponents position is a bourgeois style of work that reflects either a lack of care or a lack of understanding of people.

To wilfully exaggerate differences , rather than just fighting for what is correct does not help to resolve them (Eg. labelling one side 'menshevik' or proclaiming 'party building is bullshit' rather than premature).

To treat genuine offers of help with suspicion and to question the motives of those making such offers is bound to poison the atmosphere.

To prematurely put a contentious issue to a vote by falsely arguing that organisational decisions and ideological problems are separate and distinct from each other is a bourgeois style of work designed to avoid the essence of a problem.

Of course some questions must be resolved by vote. But it is much better to try to reach a consensus by examining all the arguments, suspicions and doubts before the vote is taken.

To demand centralism when there is no real, functioning democracy is an unacceptable hangover from the CPA-ML.

It is obvious what the main barrier to developing REM collective life is. The above bourgeois method and style of work poisons the atmosphere and turns non-antagonistic into antagonistic contradictions.

Only by developing a collective life in REM will it be possible to transform our organ, the Discussion Bulletin.

The Discussion Bulletin can develop in 2 ways. As the haphazard and sporadic work of a few individuals. Or as the collective organ of an REM that has a collective life. The latter course is the only healthy one. The Discussion Bulletin is, has been and will become as good as the organisation.

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LETTERS ...

Dear Ed.,

For my own part many thanks for the article 'Organised Robbery' (Discussion Bulletin (8)). I found it illuminating. Particularly the fact that the very high rates of company tax serve to conceal the rate of exploitation.

After reading that article a friend said : "It stood out like dogs balls that the problem is capitalism" . This was from a person who shakes his head in loathing at the prospect of reading economic theory.

A very good issue. Let us now investigate some theory to improve the distribution of this material !

.....

Dear Ed.,

I thought your article 'How to write for the patriotic press' (Discussion Bulletin 8) was good, not to mention funny. The response that I have come across from others is that if they can laugh at themselves they must be OK.

I think this is an area of writing for the Discussion Bulletin that could be expanded by including articles from Danguard , and that could lead to an irregular publication of other journals like Direct Fiction and Tribulation.

These are useful at a time when many people are weary of dogma , sceptical of Marxism and unsure of a line to take. The journals or articles will appeal to those that have become cynical and pessimistic, but still recognise oppression and the need for class struggle but do not know how to implement it anymore. We have to get rid of the dogma and stereotyped writing styles of the past .

.....

Questionnaire

Please send your replies to Discussion Bulletin, Letters pp. 8-11

c/- After Hours Bookshop,
118 Hoddle St.,
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If there is insufficient space then please attach extra paper.

(1) What is your opinion of the following articles?

Discussion Bulletin 9:

- Waiting for a Communist Party?
- Indo-china & Australia.
- The Personal is Political.
- others.

(2) How can the Discussion Bulletin be improved?

Discussion Bulletin 8:

- How to write for the patriotic press?
- Outline on Technology & Progress
- Organised Robbery
- others

(4) What themes or topics are not being discussed in the Discussion Bulletin now that you would like to see discussed more?

Discussion Bulletin 7

Letters pp.8-11

Party Building is bullshit!

Productive & Unproductive workers.

The 3 worlds debate.

others.

(2) How can the Discussion Bulletin be improved?

(3) Do you think that the name of the Discussion Bulletin should be changed? (answer yes or no & make suggestion for new name if you have one).

(4) What themes or topics are not being discussed in the Discussion Bulletin now that you would like to see discussed more?

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

"Of course...it is not strictly fair to judge a movement by its adherents; but the point is that people invariably do so, and that the popular conception of Socialism is coloured by the conception of a Socialist as a dull or disagreeable person. 'Socialism' is pictured as a state of affairs in which our more vocal Socialists would feel thoroughly at home. This does great harm to the cause. The ordinary man may not flinch from a dictatorship of the proletariat, if you offer it tactfully; offer him a dictatorship of the prigs, and he gets ready to fight" (George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier) .

I was in the CPA(ML) for nearly a year. In all that time, no-one in that organisation cared about me. How do I know? Just by looking at the behaviour that went on. For a start, look at what happened in meetings. No-one listened to anything I had to say. They just listened for the political line it represented, and then labelled it, and that's all they were interested in. For instance, if you read the quote above, noted that it was by George Orwell, and dismissed it for that reason, that amounts to much the same thing, and it's a way of avoiding the truth, or side of the truth contained in the quotation. At the time I was in the CPA(ML) I didn't understand most of the labels used, and was too intimidated to ask for explanations. I understand them better now, but I think it's much more important to have listened attentively to what the person has said, and argue about it if there's something you disagree with, rather than being able to put them down and dismiss their statement (even if it's wrong) with a label. Often when I did say something in a meeting, I was interrupted, and this is intimidating, especially when done by experts. It meant in effect that there was no democracy in meetings. Those who could shout loudest got heard. Mind you, you wouldn't expect democracy in a meeting when there was none in the organisation as a whole. Then there was this criticism ritual. Criticisms were often brought up, and they were always accepted in a seemingly humble manner, without disagreement or discussion. There seemed to be no possibility of objecting, or working out what was behind them. Because things were never taken any further than making a criticism and acceptance of it, no behaviour ever changed. Such experience can make you cynical about the criticism/self-criticism process. In fact it was mainly used as a weapon in the power struggle. This power struggle went on all the time, but it was never open or discussed in any way. It didn't depend on who actually supplied some leadership or work, but on who crawled up a certain person's arse.

The public person who represented this organisation was the worst example I have ever come across of all this uncaring behaviour. He never

listened to anyone. When I decided to leave, he was quite happy for me to go. He obviously thought I was such an inferior person that I wasn't even worth arguing with. That's really uncaring. If anyone made complaints, there was never any response. You were supposed to accept reports without question. When they wanted to discredit someone (a frequent occurrence) all sorts of lies were told (and I know they were lies) and the person discredited never had a chance to reply. The public person was openly scornful of democracy. At least he practised what he preached.

What was important about all of the behaviour that went on, was that it suppressed ideological struggle very effectively. I felt that I learned nothing in that time, because no-one really argued with each other. There was a lot of putting down, but no-one seemed to want to learn from each other. They just wanted to impose a line on me, and not struggle with me about it. All of this meant that I felt that not only didn't they care about me, but they really rejected me as a person, because they weren't interested in my ideas.

You may be wondering why I'm going on about all this. It's because it seems really important to me that we show each other that we care in political organisations, especially those of us who think of ourselves as communists. It seems to me the only valid reason for being a communist is love for the people (not that that's the only thing we need) and how can we expect to be able to put our love for the people into practice if we can't even show our love for other communists, or those developing towards communist ideas. I said that uncaring behaviour was a way of suppressing ideological struggle, and the corollary is true - that caring behaviour will lead to much greater ideological struggle, and much greater development of political ideas and practice. It's time the revolution was humanised, because we have such a great need to develop politically.

Well, then, what sort of behaviour is caring behaviour? While intentions and attitudes are basically important, there are many techniques and conditions which can be used to change our behaviour to show caring. Of course, these techniques are often misused by the bourgeoisie (E.g. the way businessmen use communication skills to exploit people more) but just because that happens, doesn't mean we should refuse to use them.

The following conditions have been found to be important for effectiveness of groups. (1) Involvement. This means conscious participation by all members of the group, and sometimes this needs to be structured in, e.g. going around the group to make sure that everyone expresses an opinion on something important. It also means that all members are involved in group decision making. Voting is one way of doing this, but there are many other things in meetings which are decided less formally.

(2) Valuing of Individual Differences. This means acknowledging and using the knowledge, past experiences and abilities of all members (if past experience is never summed up, this can't be done). An important factor here is respect, acceptance and support for each other, by all members. This involves not rubbishing another's opinion, not writing them off because they make mistakes, etc. (3) Genuine Active and Obvious Concern for Each Other. Here we need communication skills which few of us have had the opportunity to learn (See below). If we take the trouble to listen attentively and respond to others this shows that we value them. We show concern by giving the group our own experiences, ideas, etc. This shows we value others enough to want to give them what we have ourselves. Giving constructive feedback to members of the group. This is where the criticism/self-criticism process fits in. When this is done in an atmosphere of trust (do you know what that feels like in a political group?) and caring, criticism and self/criticism can be a process which does not cause resentment by the one criticised, or damage the trust in the group, and which, though painful, can feel really good, as an evidence of caring, and can really solve problems, sometimes dramatically. (4) Saying Things as they Are. Expression of ideas and feelings, openly and directly (of course this can't be done if there's no trust). This involves taking responsibility for speaking out when something is wrong in the group. Don't say "yes" if you want to say "no".

Communication Skills If you sit side-on to a speaker, look around when they're speaking, fiddle with something, or lean away from them you show that you're not really interested in what they're saying. To really pay attention to a speaker you sit square on towards them, adopt an open position (e.g. don't make a barrier of arms or legs), lean forward, maintain eye contact, sit relaxed and still. All of this shows that you are ready and interested to hear what the speaker is saying, it helps you actually to hear what the speaker is saying, and it helps you to observe the non-verbal behaviour. Summarising what the speaker has said shows that you have been attending, that you value what they've said, and gives you time to make a considered reply.

An important communication skill is observing. According to sources I've come across recently, more than 65% of a message is non-verbal, conveyed through dress, posture, distances, eye-contact, voice tone/rate/fluency, etc.* In conveying liking, only 7% is through words, feelings are conveyed through body language. Crossed arms and legs close people off from you. When a group feels in agreement, their body positions will be copies of each other. Gestures showing evaluation: pausing for thought (taking off glasses), stroking chin, putting things in mouth (may want

information), rubbing nose, eye, ear (usually indicates doubt), body drawn back. Gestures showing wish to speak: tugging at ear, putting index finger to lips. Gestures showing rejection: body moves away, feet or entire body pointing towards exit, frequent scratching, tightly clenched hands (suspicion), crossed feet, interest in teeth or fingernails (hostility). Gestures showing anxiety: rapid eye movement may suggest search for exit, sitting rigidly upright. There is a whole lot more of this, but I won't go into it any further. Just look around you at your next meeting.

Summarising is something we hardly ever do. We mostly just wait for the other person to finish, so we can say what we think. What about what they said?

It's uncaring behaviour to be in a position to give leadership on some particular issue, or at some particular time, and not to give it. Do you hold back because you feel that others in the group are not worth your time? Or perhaps because you are afraid of rejection. Either way, why don't you have more trust in them? Is it because they haven't seemed to listen to what you've said in the past?

It's also uncaring to look after other people too much, as if they're not able to do things for themselves. If there is someone who doesn't make something clear, and you keep interpreting for them to the other members of the group, you take away their power to communicate with the others. It's insulting to people to think they need such looking after. If someone can't make things clear, and you keep doing it for them, how are they ever going to learn to do it for themselves? This is what being patronising is all about, and nobody likes having it done to them. Similarly if you are always worried about how other people will react to things you say, you take away your own power to act. If you think someone will reject you just because you disagree with them, it's very hard to be honest, or to take a firm stand on anything, and it also shows no trust in other people. Do you really suspect you're so inferior that they won't like you if you disagree with them? It does seem that many people feel like this, and it must be a product of our conditioning in class society. Reluctance to struggle with someone by disagreeing and arguing with them, is a very strong bourgeois tendency that many of us have. It's uncaring to fail to struggle with someone. It shows that you think they can't change, or that they're not worth talking to. If you care about someone you'll be prepared to struggle with them, but of course this doesn't involve being rude, or impatient, or putting their ideas down.

There has been little caring behaviour in REM or AAIS/AA, and this has prevented the development of ideological struggle. We don't generally attend to people, we don't summarise what they've said, we don't respond honestly. People's ideas are often rubbished. How often do we hear the

words such as "rubbish", "pig's arse", or "bullshit" in meetings? But I hear you say you didn't mean it like that. Didn't you? You just think about it a minute before you read on. Are you saying that you can use those words in response to what someone has said, while still feeling respect and caring for them? When you call someone's ideas rubbish you are saying that they're not worth listening to. If that's not what you meant to say, then why use the word? Words such as this don't come randomly into our minds, nor do they drop from the skies, they really do express what's in your head. I'm not suggesting a crude behaviourism, but behaviour is important, and it does express attitudes. In fact, it's the only way we have of getting our intentions and attitudes across to other people. If you say you didn't mean to rubbish me, and I say I felt rubbished by what you said, then you have to accept that your behaviour did mean that to me, if you care at all about me (assuming that I am being honest). And someone else will feel bad if you say that to them, even if they won't admit it. If you call a black person a "nigger" and they object they they feel insulted by it, then you have to accept that that's what the word means to them. You can't expect them to accept your non-racist intentions when you use a racist word. Your intentions and attitudes are the most important thing, but techniques of communication are also necessary, and you have no choice but to take into account the effect your words and behaviour have on other people, if you want to communicate with them. There is no way your good intentions are going to get across to others without you doing anything. These communication techniques can help you to change your behaviour to express attitudes that you really do want to get across, but they can also reveal very clearly what your attitudes are, and then you can deal with the problem of why your attitudes may not be all you wish them to be.

If you want to argue that your intentions are really very good, you just have this unfortunate habit of using the word "rubbish" in response to many things that other people say, then I feel you should think about it a lot harder. I don't think you're being honest. Perhaps you feel a need to rubbish someone else's ideas because you have a secret fear that your own ideas will not show ^{well} up/in comparison?

Not only is it important to give caring behaviour, but to receive it. It seems to be quite a common thing to be able to accept criticism, but never praise. Criticisms confirm the fear that people have that they are inferior, but praise conflicts with this. How many times in a meeting have you heard someone praised for something, only to give excuses for their behaviour? We should believe people when they say something good about us, and it's rather insulting not to. Do we really think they're telling lies, or just being subjective?

This is all very well as applied to communists, but what about other people? You might feel there are other people, even some communists, that you just don't care about - don't like, in fact. Well, the kind of caring I'm talking about is not the same as liking. To care about someone means to respect them as a person, to listen to their ideas, to support them in their political development, all the behaviour I've been describing. It doesn't mean you have to spend evenings boozing with them. But what about trots, for example? Surely we shouldn't have to care about trots. Alright, so you're having a political discussion with a trot. If you attend to them carefully, summarise what they're saying, and respond to their arguments, you're much more likely to win the argument, and to leave them feeling that you had some respect for them after all. I don't think there's much point in arguing with trots as an ego trip for yourself, to show off. And surely trotskyist arguments are not difficult for us to win? You can show respect for them as people, while doing all you can to challenge their ideas. It's much harder for someone to put up an argument they haven't thought out properly, and which sounds a bit weak to them, if you are really listening carefully, observing them, and maintaining eye contact. I'm not suggesting you should do all you can to mix with trots, but if you are prepared to spend your time arguing with them, it's much more effective to do it in this way, and I'm sure there must be a number of trots who are worth respect as people.

It seems to me all of this is related to problems in REM because it has so many behavioural left-overs from the CPA(ML). The behaviour I've described in meetings of the CPA(ML) is nowhere near as bad in REM, but it could still be a lot better. We all know that liberalism is rife, and liberalism is uncaring behaviour. It's letting things go when we should show our care for comrades by arguing, or criticising or whatever. Another form of uncaring behaviour is to resolve things by vote when people are still unhappy about them. When we talk about democratic centralism, the democracy consists of just the sort of behaviour I've been talking about - it really doesn't have a lot to do with voting. Mao says: "If people still do not understand problems, if they still have ideas but have not expressed them, or are angry but still have not vented their anger, how can centralised unification be established". (Schram, p.164) The voting comes after all this and then people would be happy about the result. The democracy consists of the talking and arguing and struggle going on until everyone is satisfied. If we were in a crisis situation, it might be reasonable to

resolve things fairly quickly by voting, and I know we can't go on talking forever, but often there is not even an acknowledgement of the unhappiness of the losing side. This is where extensive democracy involving honest discussion, respect for ideas, etc, is vitally important, especially where there has been little opportunity to develop trust or honesty in the group as a whole. Communist democracy is so much more than a matter of the majority winning. It's bourgeois democracy that's mainly to do with voting. My major complaint about REM, and in particular about the division which exists between the two cities, is that those losing votes have not been shown that they are cared about. In fact, I'm beginning to feel that it's not just a matter of behaviour at all, but that in fact we are not cared about. No-one would resent losing a vote if they felt that every effort had been made to take care of their needs, and it's when this is not done that you can expect organisational rebelliousness. I for one am simply not prepared to accept the centralism without the democracy.

There are several issues where voting has triumphed over caring and democracy. The whole issue of the Discussion Bulletin has not been handled well, and the insistence of the executive in making the articles attacking party building into policy was another instance. In my mind this centralism without democracy is the major fault of the organisation and it's a leftover from the CPA(ML). Now surely we would all like to get rid of that?

* This figure is from a book called "Reaching Out", pages 103-115, but at this stage I can't give the author. I will try to find out.

Something to think about .

The recent discussion in REM on "Theory is primary" is an erroneous line that is very disturbing. The fact that this line has been peddled by the National Executive of REM makes it more disturbing.

The essence of the contradictions that have developed in REM over the past two years signifies the lack of political leadership. Since its formation in 1977 REM has been an organisation mainly of "intellectuals". As Chairman Mao pointed out in his writings :

"In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking without exception, is stamped with the hand of a class" (On Practice, 1937)

The intellectuals interpretations of phenomenon are seen through the eye of this or that class coloured by their upbringing, education, world outlook and source of employment. Therefore, it is necessary when intellectuals join the revolutionary movement, , that they have much soul searching to do, in their thinking and understanding if they are serious in their stand on the side of the proletariat.

Some intellectuals that put forward the line in REM that "theory is primary" consider themselves "Marxists" because they see themselves endowed in knowledge having read Marxist classics from cover to cover. How divorced they are from reality. The idea to study theory for theory sake and make theory primary is a violation of the fundamental principles of Marxism- Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought.

What these people should be doing is giving leadership and guidance to the membership. There should be study classes to attend for all to arm themselves ideologically and politically in Marxism-Leninism- Mao Tsetung Thought. But this has not been a priority.

Chairman Mao has written a criticism of the shortcomings of some cadres that fail to link theory with practice. He goes on to explain that some people study Marxism-,leninism in the abstract and without any aim :

"When making speeches they indulge in a long string of headings and when writing articles they turn out a lot of verbiage. They have no intention of seeking truth from facts but only a desire to curry favour by claptrap"
(Selected Readings p. 203)

"Where there is no correct political line there is no organisation and without organisation the correct political line is in danger of not being carried through"
(Stalin, On Organisation)

REM has not even attempted to have/^a political line. Rather it has been a group of people, friends, of friends, mostly intellectuals, some of whom see themselves as "always right, number one authority under heaven" (Mao) rush everywhere in their strata and are divorced from the ordinary people.

"To govern ones own conduct by this style of work is to harm oneself, to teach it to others is to harm others and to use it to direct the revolution is to harm the revolution" (Mao).

In my opinion, REM is at the cross roads. From bad things come good things and vice versa. Meanwhile the contradictions among the people must be resolved keeping politics in command.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LEFT ...

by Jimmy Robespierre
January 7th, 1980.

Having spent some time over the holiday period reading up on what's been happening in North Africa, Middle East and South Asia, I've come to the conclusion that in those parts of the world at least, Moscow is on the offensive and America is on the defensive; or, to put it another way, American imperialism is declining, and Soviet imperialism is advancing at America's expense. I didn't come to this conclusion by reading 'Peking Review' or NATO press releases. I came to it after reading all kinds of material including that of pro-Soviet groups in the areas mentioned.

What stands out is that a lot of people, many of whom have fought valiantly against American imperialism, are either duped by Moscow, belittle its danger, or have become incorrigible Soviet puppets. I detect the success of Moscow in infiltrating or encouraging pro-Soviet elements in political parties, liberation movements, and the ability of Moscow to behave just as badly as the Americans have but, unlike the Americans, they have by and large been able to get away with it. I would like to address myself to those left-wing and radical people who, having spent a generation opposing the crimes of the Americans and their allies, are now unable -- or unwilling -- to recognise that the Soviet Union is fast becoming the new imperialist superpower. There is a strong tendency among some to disbelieve everything and anything that emanates from the 'West', while believing, or at least giving some credibility to, anything that Moscow claims or asserts.

SOUTH YEMEN

Fred Halliday, an Arabian Peninsula affairs commentator, writing in the October 1979 edition of 'MERIP Report' accuses Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance of "talking blithely about a 'pro-Soviet coup' in South Yemen". Halliday says this is part of "a black propaganda campaign" organised by the U.S. State Department. But how wrong are Kissinger and Vance? For the rest of his 17-page analysis of events in South Yemen, Halliday is unable to convince me that the events in June 1978 in South Yemen were not in fact a pro-Soviet coup. Halliday admits that the new regime in South Yemen accused the deposed and executed former South Yemeni president, Robaya Ali, of having "undermined relations between South Yemen and the USSR". At the time of the

coup, Halliday himself wrote that the new South Yemeni leader, Abdel Fattah Ismail, "believes that the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) can only survive by strengthening its ties with the Soviet Union". (U.K. 'Guardian', July 2, 1978).

So, Robaya Ali is overthrown and executed for, among other things, having undermined South Yemen-Soviet relations, and a self-confessed ally of the Soviets takes charge - with the aid of Cuban troops stationed there, it should be noted. And Kissinger is supposed to be wrong? The point here is not to show how clever Henry Kissinger is, nor to glorify this butcher of the Indo-Chinese and Arab people. The point is that even if they do it for their own imperialist purposes, the Americans are capable of making a correct assessment of Soviet global intentions. But we are not supposed to believe it, just because the Americans said it.

I know that some people do understand that Soviet policies are not motivated by a desire to aid people's freedom struggles, but rather are opportunist policies making use of any contradiction in or near their sphere of influence in order to serve Soviet national interests. But that is not uncommon for any government - "it's politics". That understanding is no longer sufficient. What the Soviet Union is involved in now is an all-out political and military global strategy that includes encircling the Middle East, gaining access to the Persian Gulf - with its oilfields and oil-shipping lanes - by a two-pronged movement down through the Red Sea and around the Arabian Peninsula coast, and down through South Asia to the Indian Ocean.

Okay, I know ... that's what the U.S., NATO and various "reactionaries" are also saying. But what is the Soviet Union doing if not that? American allies also say that America is no longer fully capable of reacting to threats against its global interests. Well, what is the situation?

AFRICAN HORN

In the middle of 1977, the Soviet Union switched its support from Somalia (once a "progressive" regime, i.e., friendly to the Soviet Union) to the bloody military regime in Ethiopia, which now became "progressive" and "socialist" (i.e. allied to the Soviet Union). Ethiopia's enemies, the Eritrean liberation fronts (who were "progressive" in Soviet parlance in the '50's and '60's) now became "secessionists" "backed by Arab reactionaries" or mere "bandits". The once "progressive" Somalia now became

"reactionary", "backed by imperialists and Arab reactionaries". Just like that ... all very neat, eh ?

When 11,000 Cuban troops, hundreds of Soviet military advisors and a few South Yemeni brigades all pitched in to attack the Eritrean liberation movements, and the ethnic Somali guerrillas in the Ogaden (who once received Soviet aid via Somalia), there was no material response from the Americans, despite the lying propaganda of Moscow and the Ethiopians. All that Andrew Young, U.S. United Nations ambassador could do was say that it was likely to be "Moscow's 'Vietnam', and we should stay right out of it". After hinting that they might arm the Somalians against the Soviet-Cuban-Ethiopian drive, the Americans suddenly announced that they had no such intention. Encouraged by the initial hints of American support, Somalia expelled the Soviet forces and closed down their naval facilities at Berbera, and stepped up its support of the Ogaden guerrillas. But Somalia is still waiting for the American military aid it thought it would get. The Eritreans, also involved in fighting against the Soviet-Cuban-Ethiopian offensive, never asked for American or Western aid, but the point is that the Americans didn't offer it, either, or even seek ways of sending it via some 'un-American' channels.

The Soviets are bombing, napalming and attempting to decimate a genuinely leftist liberation movement in Eritrea, and supporting a brutal and chauvinistic military junta in Ethiopia in order to get a naval foothold on the Eritrean coast, i.e. the Western coast of the mouth of the Red Sea. On the Eastern coast, at the mouth of the Red Sea, they have naval facilities in South Yemen's ports of Aden and Socotra. Should they succeed in defeating the Eritreans, the Soviets will have complete control over the entrance to the Red Sea, which is, by the way, the exit from the Suez Canal and the waterway bordering Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, three major opponents of the Soviets in the Middle East. What has the U.S. been able to do about it all? Basically, very little. At least in North Yemen, the Americans did make a military response by sending military equipment to the regime there. Even this has not gone smoothly, as opposition to the military aid has come from some elements in Congress. Shipments of anti-tank missiles were cancelled in March last year due to this. But Moscow doesn't have to deal with an uppity congress

ARABIAN PENINSULA

In May last year, a conference was held in South Yemen on 'ideological questions'. Basically, its really important feature was a common political line that emerged there. Agreeing with the strategy of an alliance with the "socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union ...", were the South Yemen regime, the Popular Front guerrilla group from neighbouring Oman, the People's Front of Bahrein (an island country in the Persian Gulf), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Around the same time, this particular Palestinian group was bending over backwards in its attempts at strengthening Soviet influence over the Palestinian movement. Among the utterances from PFLP leader George Habash, at the time: ... "We must rely on the socialist countries, primarily the Soviet Union" (PFLP Bulletin, no.27, May, 1979) ... this slogan is reiterated another four times in the same issue. " any attempt to equate the Soviet Union with the United States is to become an ally of the imperialists ... creating doubts about the role of the Soviet Union is merely a plot ... " (PFLP Bulletin, no 29, July 1979). "... The Soviet Union is the faithful friend of the Arab and Palestinian people ... " (PFLP Bulletin, no 29, as above). Habash has also embarked on a campaign to increase the influence of Libya over the Palestinian movement, in order to strengthen the pro-Soviet sentiment that Libya is currently expressing. Besides increasing Soviet influence over the "Rejection Front" faction of the Palestinian movement, Habash has also: sided with Vietnam against China and supported the pro-Vietnam regime now in Cambodia; congratulated Ethiopia and Afghanistan on their decision to ally themselves with the Soviet Union. (It amazes me that this energetic pro-Soviet propaganda campaign is being aided by many in the Palestinian solidarity movement in Melbourne, supposedly led, on the Australian side, by anti-Soviet "independence movement" figures !).

With a 'healthy pro-Soviet element at work within the Palestinian resistance, with political domination over the two regimes at the mouth of the Red Sea, with pro-Soviet elements in the leadership of liberation movements that ring the Arabian Peninsula (Oman, Bahrein), with the U.S. bogged down and on the defensive in Iran ... The Soviets figure they've virtually got that part of the circle tied up. Of course, the U.S. and the 'West' are supporting the reactionary forces against whom these movements are fighting, and this only further drives them into the Soviet camp, despite their espousal of the struggle for "independence".

AFGHANISTAN

And now, the other part of the Soviet encirclement - South Asia. In Afghanistan, in a manner reminiscent of the Americans in Vietnam, Moscow has gone through a row of Soviet puppets until they at last have a reliable man in Kabul. When 22,000 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, Moscow said they had been "invited in" by the very man they overthrew - Amin ! This time, perhaps, they will not go unchallenged as in Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Yemen. Of course, when Carter and Vance attack the Soviet Union for lying about Afghanistan, for sending troops to overthrow a foreign government, for creating instability ... it has a very hollow ring about it because we remember the Americans doing it in Lebanon, Iran, Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Cambodia. But so what? Does that excuse what Moscow is doing now? Is it still not true that the power of the Americans to react to challenges has decreased? They did nothing while Moscow went crazy in the African horn. They were unable or unwilling to try to prop up Somoza or the Shah. Despite a lot of sabre rattling and the despatch of some ships to the area, the Americans are bogged down and stalemated over the Iran hostages crisis. The Soviets could tell the Americans it would mean war if they stepped into Iran, but then without a please or thank you, they roll their tanks into neighbouring Afghanistan ! They build their ring around the Middle East, send Cuban troops all over the place to do their work, roll their tanks into bordering countries, threaten others if they don't like it ... and get away with it!

I'm not saying that people on the left should be moaning about the decline of the American imperialists, I know they will keep on fighting against them and so they should ... but while they only do that, the new imperialist superpower in Moscow is making hay ! If we don't actively fight both superpowers, it means a Soviet victory ... Is this what we've been fighting for - Soviet domination? Is this likely to usher in a "golden era of peace, progress and socialism" ? Ask the Eritreans being napalmed and cluster-bombed ... Ask the Palestinians if pro-Soviet factionalism has helped them return to their homeland ... Ask the Afghans caught in the cross-fire of the quarterly coup d'etats ...

The Soviet Union is as bad as the Americans and capable of anything they ever did .. they are proving it every day. Soviet domination is just as bad as American domination. Any "liberation" movement,

REVOLUTION

government or political party that opens the door to Moscow is bringing that domination down on their own people. Ask the people of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, Eritrea or Ethiopia how joyful their lives are under Soviet domination ... Just because one lot of dogs accuse someone else of being dogs, doesn't mean they aren't. They say "it takes one to know one."

Besides, I don't mind admitting that Soviet domination would be even worse - for us, at least. So far (I know they are capable of anything if really challenged) the most we get for opposing American imperialism in Australia is a frame-up gaol sentence or a baton over the skull. In the Soviet Union our counterparts get shot dead. It's time to call a spade a spade. It's time to say "no" to Soviet imperialism .. and we can only assume that these "on the left" who refuse to say "no", must be working to force us to say "yes". Let's make sure the struggle for independence isn't a case of "out of the frying pan, but into the fire".

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Written by a member of the
"Middle East - North Africa News"
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I'm not saying that people on the left should be working against the decline of the American imperialists. I know they will keep on fighting against them and so they should ... but while they only do that, the new imperialist superpower is growing in making hay - if we don't actively fight both superpowers, it means a Soviet victory ... in this when we've been fighting for - Soviet domination? Is this likely to enter in a "golden era of peace, progress and socialism"? Ask the Brits ... being bombed and cluster-bombed ... Ask the Palestinians if pro-Soviet revolution has led them to their goal ... Ask the Africans ... in the case of the quarterly coup d'etat ...

The Soviet Union is as bad as the Americans and capable of anything they ever did ... they are proving it every day. Soviet domination is just as bad as American domination - say "liberation" movement.

15 January, 1980

1. Recent events in Indo-China raise a number of significant issues:

(a) Kampuchea has been occupied by Vietnam. Should we recognise the new Vietnamese sponsored administration in Phnom Penh, or continue to recognise the Government of Democratic Kampuchea now headed by Khieu Samphan, which is carrying on a vigorous war of resistance to that occupation ?

(b) Thailand is threatened by Vietnamese intervention. Military delegations have already been exchanged between China, the United States and Thailand in connection with that threat. The Communist Parties of Thailand, Malaya, Burma, the Philippines and other Asian countries are already adopting or moving towards a policy favouring unity with their own Governments, and with China and the United States in opposition to Vietnam and the Soviet Union. What stand should we take?

(c) Since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Western "public opinion" has for the first time been significantly mobilized by the United States in favour of a firm stand against further Soviet expansion. China has proposed a military alliance among all the countries opposed to Soviet domination. This has obvious implications for Indo-China and our region. Where do we stand?

(d) Humanitarian aid is required to cope with the starvation and other devastation in Kampuchea since the Vietnamese occupation. How much aid should be sent and where should it go?

(e) Anti-communist forces opposed to the Government of Democratic Kampuchea are also resisting the Vietnamese occupation. Prince Sihanouk has not yet accepted the offer to head a new united front in Kampuchea. Is some "third force" solution desirable, or should the proposal by the Khieu Samphan Government for a United Front until Vietnam withdraws, and then UN supervised elections, be supported?

(f) Large numbers of refugees have been driven out of Vietnam. What should Australians do about it?

(g) Serious allegations of "genocide" have been made against the Government of Democratic Kampuchea, and are widely believed. Are these allegations true, and what is to be done about them ?

(h) The ASEAN countries are a vital factor in the region. They have demanded lower tariff barriers and other concessions from Australia. Unions here have demanded protection from the export of jobs. Where do we stand?

2. Different social and political forces within Australia will inevitably have different perspectives on all these questions. During the Vietnam war period, the approach taken towards foreign policy questions by the rulers of Australia on the one hand, and the left, especially the revolutionary left, on the other hand, were diametrically opposed. The left took to the streets against Government policy, and the revolutionary left openly sided with the enemy against which Australian forces were in active combat.

3. It is well worth reminding ourselves that the left won. Every prediction made by the "experts" who helped formulate Australian Government policy has been refuted by history. Every prediction made from the left, and even most of the demands

made by the left, have been achieved. Australian troops have been withdrawn from Vietnam. There is no conscription. Australia now recognizes the Governments formed by the liberation movements in the three Indo-Chinese countries. Its worth thinking back to the days when young Australians were being bashed, gaoled and harassed for demanding these things. Remember the "light at the end of the tunnel" and the "threat from the north"? Remember our "great and powerful ally" (the one that ran away and left its puppets to fend for themselves - Thieu, Lon Nol, Chiang Kai-shek etc)?

4. But its also worth remembering that although the interests of the left and the interests of the present rulers of Australia will always be different, they need not always be diametrically opposed. For example during the second world war, after appeasement and the phony war were over, Communist Party policy and Australian Government policy both supported the war against fascism. Even earlier, in China, Mao Tsetung formed a United Front with Chiang Kai-shek against the Japanese occupation (and therefore also a United Front with Britain and the USA just as the Asian Communist Parties are today proposing United Fronts with their Governments, and with the United States and China, against Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

5. It is especially worth remembering the "threat from the North" today, when this absurd slogan, once used to depict Indo-Chinese liberation struggles as aggression by China, has now been taken up by Vietnam to justify its own aggression.

6. Since the US power structure has been dismantled in Indo-China and been placed on the defensive throughout Asia, revolutionary nationalist regimes have carried out extensive social and economic changes in the three Indo-Chinese countries, which have also drastically altered the political and military situation. The changes in Kampuchea have been especially drastic, and about as welcome to Western interests as was the October Revolution in 1917. As a result, the "Khmer Rouge" have been subjected to the same kind of atrocity propoganda as the "Bolshies" before them. This need not prevent a Western alliance with them against a common enemy, any more than the anti-Stalin propoganda of the thirties prevented an alliance with Stalin against Hitler in the forties (nor should we forget what happened in the fifties).

7. Milder changes have also occurred in the ASEAN countries. Australians, both rulers and ruled, have little to lose and much to gain from continuing social and economic progress in the region. Although the Australian ruling class derives some benefit from continuing imperialist exploitation of Asian countries, this has no better long term prospects of success than the Indo-China episode did. Even from a capitalist viewpoint, Australia has more interests in common with the people and Governments of the ASEAN countries against the two superpowers, than it has interests in common with the superpowers against those countries.

8. Australia should lower its tariff barriers and provide other assistance to the ASEAN countries. Trade Union demands for "protection" are a conservative defence of imperialism and will be rejected by the left. Attempts to prop up reactionary regimes in these countries against their own peoples will be opposed by the left in Australia, will fail, and will prove to be against the long term interests of even capitalists in Australia. Economic and social progress in these countries will inevitably increase class polarization and strengthen the basis for Communist led revolutionary movements. That will be welcomed by the left in Australia and regretted by the rulers of Australia. But it cannot be prevented by the rulers of Australia and they would do better to accommodate themselves to it than again expend needless effort in futile attempts to prevent it. Economic crisis will inevitably break out in Australia and cannot be forestalled by efforts to shift it to the ASEAN countries by means of tariff policy. How Australia copes with the necessary structural changes in the Australian economy, and what social changes occur, will be determined by the outcome of sharp struggles between different social and political forces within Australia and other imperialist countries. This coming struggle cannot be avoided by conservative attempts to prevent the structural changes in the economy that are necessary.

9. Since its own liberation, Vietnam has established hegemony over Laos, occupied Kampuchea and now threatens Thailand. After maintaining considerable independence and self reliance during a long war against what was then the most powerful imperialist war machine in world history, Vietnam has now made itself heavily dependent on the Soviet Union in order to obtain the support it needs for its present policies.

10. From a Marxist perspective, none of this is especially surprising. The present nation states of Europe arose only after an epoch of hundreds of years of revolutions and national wars. This period included the formation and breakdown of empires, the influence and intervention of Great Powers, rapidly changing partners in alliances, refugee problems, religious problems (mainly involving Christianity rather than Islam), and many other issues familiar today. It was not uncommon for nations that had been oppressed to become oppressors, and for revolutionary regimes to become reactionary. There is no reason to expect that the emergence of the nation states of Asia and the rest of the Third World will proceed without turmoil. Indeed, the last has not yet been heard from Europe either. To assist in understanding the present, it will be important to study some European history, and in particular Karl Marx's analysis of the Napoleonic wars and his campaign asserting that the interests of both the revolution and the English ruling class demanded a firm stand by England against Russia in the period leading up to the Crimean War.

11. Since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 (supported by Vietnam), it has become increasingly clear that the Soviet Union would become a more dangerous superpower than the United States. China has been pushing this theme very strongly since around 1971 although without much success in convincing the left in Western countries like Australia. To many on the left, talk of "superpower contention", "World War III" and the "three worlds" has seemed very academic and unconvincing, especially since the mass media were presenting a very different picture of the world and given that the United States was and still is a more immediate enemy of the left than the Soviet Union is, in countries like Australia.

12. Although there is continuing confusion on these questions, and especially over the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, the recent Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the resulting media campaign has produced a sharp change in public opinion. Further Soviet aggression, whether in Pakistan, Yugoslavia or elsewhere, will crystallize public opinion completely. At present unfortunately there is no coherent revolutionary movement in Australia, and public opinion among the left trails along with shifts in public opinion generally, instead of the left having any independence and initiative of its own. However it can be expected that by the time a major war breaks out in Europe, the left may have realised what is going on in the world and be able to exert some significant initiative in leading independent resistance to Soviet domination, and carrying that through to further social changes. The left has not yet started mobilizing in support of a firmer stand against the Soviet Union, but this is at least in part because people have not yet worked out how to handle a situation where their own views are not diametrically opposed to the Government's. Certainly if Australia was to adopt a policy of appeasing the Soviet Union as the present crisis develops, it would not take all that long for the left to take to the streets against appeasement.

13. A major problem in mobilizing public opinion, especially on the left, is that not only does the United States have even less credibility as an anti-fascist force than Britain or France had in the 1930s, but there is no country able to play the role then played by the socialist Soviet Union.

China never had the same authority among progressive people that the Soviet Union had in the thirties, and although the

present day "social-fascist" Soviet Union has little influence on left opinion directly, and Cuba has also lost credibility, Vietnam still has considerable prestige resulting from its successful resistance to US imperialism.

14. Internal developments in China since Mao Tsetung's death have made it blindingly obvious that China is now firmly on a "capitalist road" similar to the Soviet Union, and this has completely discredited its leadership among progressive people. These developments suggest that China too will eventually emerge as an aggressive superpower with ambitions to dominate the Asian region and the world. Although this transformation will take some time and is not directly relevant to immediate problems, signs of it can already be seen in certain aspects of changes in Chinese policy towards first, second and third world countries, towards Vietnam and Kampuchea, towards overseas Chinese and towards Asian Communist Parties and the international communist movement.

15. Although the resulting skepticism towards China, like the hostility towards the United States, is a basically healthy phenomena among the left in Western countries, an unfortunate side effect has been refusal to take seriously what either the Chinese or American rulers have been saying about Soviet strategic intentions. Warnings about Soviet aggression from right-wing supporters of American aggression have a somewhat hollow ring, and people on the left are likewise unimpressed with the fact that Chinese parrots who support every reactionary development in China over the last few years, are also enthusiastic about Chinese foreign policy.

16. Once again, from a Marxist perspective, none of this is especially surprising. The likelihood of a capitalist restoration in China was pretty clearly spelt out by Maoists during the Cultural Revolution and confusion as to what to think or do is no new phenomenon among the left. The international communist movement only had the appearance of being monolithic for a fairly brief period around the thirties and forties, and never before or since. People are having to think things out for themselves again, and once the confusion is over, that will turn out to be fundamentally a very good thing. It gives some hope that in the next World War communists will not trail passively behind their own ruling classes, as happened in Western Europe and Australia in the last World War (and as the Chinese parrots advocate today), but will maintain their own initiative and independence as the Chinese Communist Party did in the war against Japan. Signs of a revival of independent Marxist thought can be seen in various journals of the radical intelligentsia, such as Ampo in Japan and the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars in the United States, as well as a very faint glimmer in some of the "ML" parties that have kept clear of both the Albanian and Chinese camps.

17. The United States' defeat in Indo-China had no harmful effect on any significant section of Australian society, except to discredit those who closely involved Australia in that defeat. The victory of the liberation movements in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos created no significant political, social, economic or military problems for Australia, nor much of a refugee problem apart from the absorption of a small number of corrupt supporters of the previous American regime. It had nothing like the impact on Australian society that involvement in the US war of aggression created.

18. Superficially, more recent developments in Indo-China have had little effect on Australia either. But a closer look shows that they have. To start with, there is the refugee problem. This now has little to do with the collapse of the Thieu regime since, as even Wilfred Burchett admits, 80% of the refugees are ethnic Chinese who have been systematically discriminated against and expelled, as a result of Vietnam setting itself on a collision course with China, and in a manner reminiscent of Nazi treatment of the German Jews in the 1930's. Australia has a clear obligation to accept as many of these refugees as it possibly can, and also to provide extensive assistance to such countries as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore that are much poorer than Australia, have less capacity to absorb refugees, but have been forced by circumstances to accept a disproportionate share of them. The left has a clear obligation to speak out strongly against the persecution of ethnic minorities elsewhere, and also about indifference to that persecution here. Silence kills.

19. Then there is the problem of humanitarian aid. Large numbers of Khmers face the immediate possibility of starvation since the Vietnamese occupation completely disrupted a flourishing agriculture that had achieved a substantial export surplus in recent years. The Government of Democratic Kampuchea publicised the threat of famine soon after the Vietnamese invasion and has expressed support for aid to be directly distributed to the civilian population by international agencies, both in the areas it still controls, and in the areas under Vietnamese occupation. The Vietnamese administration in Phnom Penh has now stopped denying that famine conditions exist (and is now trying

to blame these conditions on the "genocidal Pol Pot regime", although no such claim was made before the invasion). But they are still obstructing the distribution of relief supplies in areas under their own control, and have even officially protested against aid going to civilians in the areas still under Kampuchean control. This clearly represents a policy deliberately aimed at starving out the Kampuchean resistance and is a war crime comparable to American war crimes in Indo-China.

20. Even the hated "Bolshies" were given food relief supplies by the United States when famine broke out in the Soviet Union during the Civil War, despite continuing atrocity propaganda and continuing efforts to subvert their regime. Whatever the Australian Government thinks of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea, which it still recognizes, Australia has a clear humanitarian obligation to provide aid to the civilian population in areas controlled by that Government, as well as aid to the civilian population in areas controlled by the imposed foreign military administration which Australia does not recognize. This aid should not be left to charitable bodies, but should be official. It should be massive and it should be immediate. This aid should not await the outcome of any official inquiries, but should be given now, while the need is urgent, and before the tide has turned. If an inquiry about Australia's relations with Indo-China must be held, then let this be the first item on the agenda, and let the obvious conclusion be announced publicly as quickly as possible. There is no difficulty sending aid into Kampuchea via the large numbers of refugees from Vietnamese aggression in camps near and across the Thai border, or directly into the Kampuchean controlled areas along substantial sections of the Thai border. Even apart from humanitarian considerations, it is obvious that aid given now, when it is desperately needed, will not be forgotten by those who receive it, and will do more for Australia's future relations with Indo-China than any other single action. Moreover it will have a far greater effect in bolstering resistance to Soviet expansionism than any number of protest gestures over the invasion of Afghanistan. So even the most cynical Australian politicians should have no objection to sending massive official aid instead of private charity. Perhaps some of the grain previously earmarked for sale to the Soviet Union could be sent to Kampuchea instead.

21. Finally, there is the strategic problem. By committing itself to long term counter-insurgency warfare with hundreds of thousands of troops in Kampuchea, Vietnam has made itself dependent on the Soviet Union to an extent that is irreversible in the short term. Continuing Vietnamese efforts to "pacify" Laos and the Mountain tribes of south Vietnam (who have recently established their own republic) has already required Soviet assistance in resuming the chemical warfare abandoned by the United States. Further conflict with Thailand and China will certainly require more direct Soviet assistance (although the Vietnamese leadership must be wondering why their "great and powerful ally" did nothing much to fulfil its treaty obligations when China openly called its bluff by "punishing" Lang Son).

22. The emergence of the Soviet Union, through Vietnam, as an Indo-Chinese, Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean regional power is certain to follow in the same way that Cuban dependence made the Soviet Union into a Latin American and (of all things), an African power. Already the Soviet Navy, which is now larger than the United States Navy, has acquired Cam Ranh Bay as a major base. If the push through Afghanistan eventually succeeds in

dismembering Pakistan then the Tsars age-old dream of land access to warm water ports would be realized, in the Indian Ocean, through which major Australian trade routes pass.

23. The main effect of these developments on Australia is a further tipping of the global strategic balance in favour of the Soviet Union, and a further enhancement of its capacity and hence willingness, to rectify the present "unfair" distribution of spheres of influence between the superpowers, by force (especially in Europe). Although not directly threatened in the same way as European and ASEAN countries, Australians cannot remain indifferent to the emergence of another superpower in the region. The emergence of Japan as an influence in the region in the 1930's had small beginnings but consequences ultimately just as serious for Australia as for the countries directly concerned. Likewise, the emergence of the United States as an Asian power replacing the British and French empires after the second world war had serious negative consequences for Australia (including several hundred killed fighting for them in Vietnam). All recent history including the consequences of "appeasement" before the second world war, shows that the emergence of powerful aggressor states bent on re-dividing the world is not just a threat to their immediate targets, but to other countries as well.
24. The frantic Soviet arms build up, and its strategic deployments generally, point strongly towards an eventual major war in Europe. Australians would certainly be affected by that, and in particular, Australian trade would be threatened by the Soviet Navy. A defensive alliance between Europe, China, Japan, the USA and many third world countries is now being proposed, and should be supported by the left on the same basis that collective security against aggression was supported by the left in the thirties. Fundamentally, the Soviet Union is much weaker than the various forces whose vital interests it threatens, and if all those opposed to Soviet expansion stand firmly together, it can be prevented. Otherwise, as with Nazi Germany, the consequences will be very serious.
25. In joining an alliance, there is no need for Australia to be subservient towards it, as in previous relationships with Britain and the United States. Certainly in supporting such an alliance, the left cannot support subservience. As with the coalition that stopped Hitler, different forces will have different interests during the struggle and certainly they will not remain united after their common interest has been achieved. Revolution broke out, successfully or unsuccessfully, in many countries following the first and second world wars, and nobody should imagine that communists on the one hand, and the rulers of countries like Australia, the US and China on the other hand, will take the same attitudes towards revolution in connection with a third world war. New threats (for example China), may also emerge after the Soviet threat has been disposed of, just as America tried to step into the shoes of Germany and Japan after they had been defeated.
26. Even if the Soviet Union succeeded in a lightning blitzkrieg against Western Europe, it would face a protracted war of resistance there, and in other parts of the world. Even if it won that protracted war, which is unlikely, its rule over countries with a much more advanced economy

and culture than Russia's, would not last indefinitely. If the Third Reich had won the second world war, it still wouldn't have lasted a thousand years.

But nobody can doubt that the consequences of a third world war, and even more the consequences of a Soviet victory, would be extremely unpleasant for everybody concerned. One doesn't need to have illusions about the real nature of "liberal democracy" and the imperialist character of the United States and other Western countries, to prefer this to the grey fascism which Soviet rule has imposed in Eastern Europe and wants to impose elsewhere.

27. An immediate test of seriousness in regard to an anti-Soviet alliance is provided by Kampuchea and Thailand. It is ironic that after SEATO was used as an excuse for aggression against Vietnam, no public commitment has yet been made as to what military assistance would be provided to Thailand in case of a Soviet backed Vietnamese attack. It is also ironic that while the Thai Communist Party prepared to fight off a Vietnamese invasion, the left in Australia remains largely indifferent.
28. Third world countries like Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Thailand should not be seen as unimportant, as Abyssinia was before the second world war (and Eritrea is today). They are the front line against aggression and should be fully supported, not with troops at present, but politically and with arms.
29. As well as helping the ASEAN countries, Australia should assist Democratic Kampuchea with military as well as humanitarian aid, and politically by opposing "third force" illusions and encouraging Prince Sihanouk to accept the position he has been offered at the head of a united front. The Government of Democratic Kampuchea has been reshuffled as a concession to its critics, and it has agreed to accept UN supervised free elections after the Vietnamese withdraw. Nobody opposed to that Government but genuinely wanting to assist Kampuchea against Vietnam can reasonably ask for more than that. Unlike many of the European Governments-in-exile which operated from London after their whole territory was occupied by the Nazis, the Khieu Samphan Government still administers large areas of Kampuchea and is directly leading the resistance there. It is fully entitled to international recognition and support.
30. Allegations of "genocide" against democratic Kampuchea should be treated with the contempt they deserve. But since these allegations were initiated by the West, and are widely believed in Australia as a result of a virulent campaign in the media, more is required than merely a cessation of this pro-occupation propaganda. The left must publicize the facts exposing these fabrications and demand that they be officially withdrawn at a Governmental level.
31. Finally, a serious response to the changing global power structure requires increased military spending for greater defence preparedness. This must not be oriented towards counter-insurgency as in the past, but should involve mobilizing the Australian people to assist other peoples

to repel invasion. Of the Indian Ocean countries, Australia is in the best position to maintain a strong navy. Political mobilization is necessary to convince public opinion about the increased importance of defence, and the left cannot afford to leave this job entirely to the right, any more than it can afford to allow a professional and right-wing army a monopoly on the knowledge of how to use arms. Far from supporting "disarmament", the left has every reason to favour as many workers as possible being given military training, preferably of a more democratic character than at present.

32. In studying events in Indo-China, it is worth remembering the Communist campaign for support to the allegedly "barbaric" Spanish Republic and in opposition to the West's tacit approval for "civilized", "Christian" Franco and his German and Italian backers. The 1930's appeasers had all sorts of clever geopolitical ideas and the American isolationists thought they had "learned the lesson" of the First World War. It would be foolish to make the same mistake twice.

.....

One of the very important factors in adult learning is the role of experience. As adults we all have a great deal of experience, from which we learn all the time, and we convey our respect for people with whom we are learning by making use of their experience as a resource for learning.

When we were at school our learning was not relevant to present problems, we supposed that when we grew up it would then become relevant (or not). With adults it is essential that the learning be seen to be relevant to problems which are being faced, at least in the near future, if not the present. This means a problem-centred orientation to learning. This is why it doesn't make much sense to anyone to sit down and read through "Capital" or some such, just for the sake of being acquainted with it. It just doesn't work. Thus education can be seen not as a process of transmitting knowledge, but as a process of mutual self-directed enquiry. Setting a climate where people can be honest, admit to mistakes, say they don't understand, ask for slowing-down, etc. is vital (see article The Personal is Political). Included in this climate are mutual planning (everyone in the group must be considered), working out what people's needs are, setting objectives, and evaluating the learning process. There is a cycle of learning which includes direct experience, reflecting on this, abstract conceptualisation, and then active experimentation. All of this fits in quite precisely with Maslow's theory of knowledge. You check it with "On Practice" and "Where do Learning Ideas Come From". It seems to me we have really been ignoring what he said about learning and failing to apply it to our study. Not that he's such an expert - it's just that it works when you try it.

STUDY

We all have attitudes towards study which are largely carried over from our childhood experience, and which for some of us, have been reinforced by our experience in other political organisations. Some of these attitudes include the notion that we can rely on experts, and that we ourselves do not have much to contribute to studying, i.e. that we are not really worthwhile. There is also the notion that we are empty vessels to be filled up with knowledge, rather than that we are active agents in our own learning. This encourages us to be passive in studying. In my experience in the past, study groups have been conducted largely using these notions about how we learn. What has often happened is that some expert, some 'heavy' decided that there was something which should be learned, he then went to more experts (e.g. the Marxist classics) and conducted the group rather like a school class.

This is not only unproductive, but it actually interferes with the learning process of adults. This is because we are in fact reasonably self-directed adults, and the practice of dependent learning is in contradiction with this. It makes us feel uncomfortable, but it's hard to put a finger on exactly what's wrong when we're in the situation. But this discomfort of not being seen as self-directed adults in the learning process causes resentment, and resistance, so that we don't learn much at all.

One of the very important factors in adult learning is the role of experience. As adults we all have a great deal of experience, from which we learn all the time, and we convey our respect for people with whom we are learning by making use of their experience as a resource for learning.

When we were at school our learning was not relevant to present problems, we supposed that when we grew up it would then become relevant (ha, ha). With adults it is essential that the learning be seen to be relevant to problems which are being faced, at least in the near future, if not the present. This means a problem-centred orientation to learning. This is why it doesn't make much sense to anyone to sit down and read through "Capital" or some such, just for the sake of being acquainted with it. It just doesn't work. Thus education can be seen not as a process of transmitting knowledge, but as a process of mutual self-directed enquiry.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BROADSHEET "CAN'T BEAR IT ... "

Given our ignorance of Marxism and the need to put time aside to fix this we cannot effectively do systematic agitational work at the moment, ie, due to both ignorance and lack of time.

The main way to build a bridge between theory and practice at the moment is by doing propaganda work in such a way as to promote theoretical work. (for definitions of theoretical, propaganda and agitational work see p5&6)

It is unrealistic to expect every REM member or supporter to take up theoretical work as their main task tomorrow. It is a difficult task so we should build a bridge to help facilitate it.

We think it is very important that REM "do things" (apart from having study groups). Although there are many things that we are very unclear on, there are some things that we are relatively clear on: Eg. the revisionist reversal in China, that the Three worlds theory is correct, that the Soviet Union is the main danger internationally, and we have started some serious study of political economy.

Obviously we can and must undertake practical activities on these questions that we are clear on. If we don't then we will become armchair Marxists and our theory will not develop (nor will our membership).

The following broadsheet was prepared after some detailed research and investigation into Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, rather than proclaiming how much we know we would rather point out the need for further study on Soviet social-imperialism.

We should be developing theoretical work now that leads our practical work. The detailed study done by REM on the theory of the 3 worlds helped to pave the way for this broadsheet. It helped us to understand: (1) the rise of Soviet imperialism and the decline of US Imperialism; (2) the need to form a broad united front, including 2nd and 3rd world Governments and to some degree US Imperialism against the more dangerous Soviet superpower; (three) the need for the left to exert independence and wage its own campaign within that united front.

Although the broadsheet does contain a lot of useful information it was brought home to us (through feedback and self awareness) that there were vital gaps in our knowledge on the following :

* The exact nature of Cuba's role. It was pointed out that Cuban troops have now refused to fight in Eritrea. ie the information in Reply 1 of "Afghanistan Fallacies" is now out of date.

Why is this? Does Cuba show any real independence from Moscow or is it basically a confidence trick on their part ?

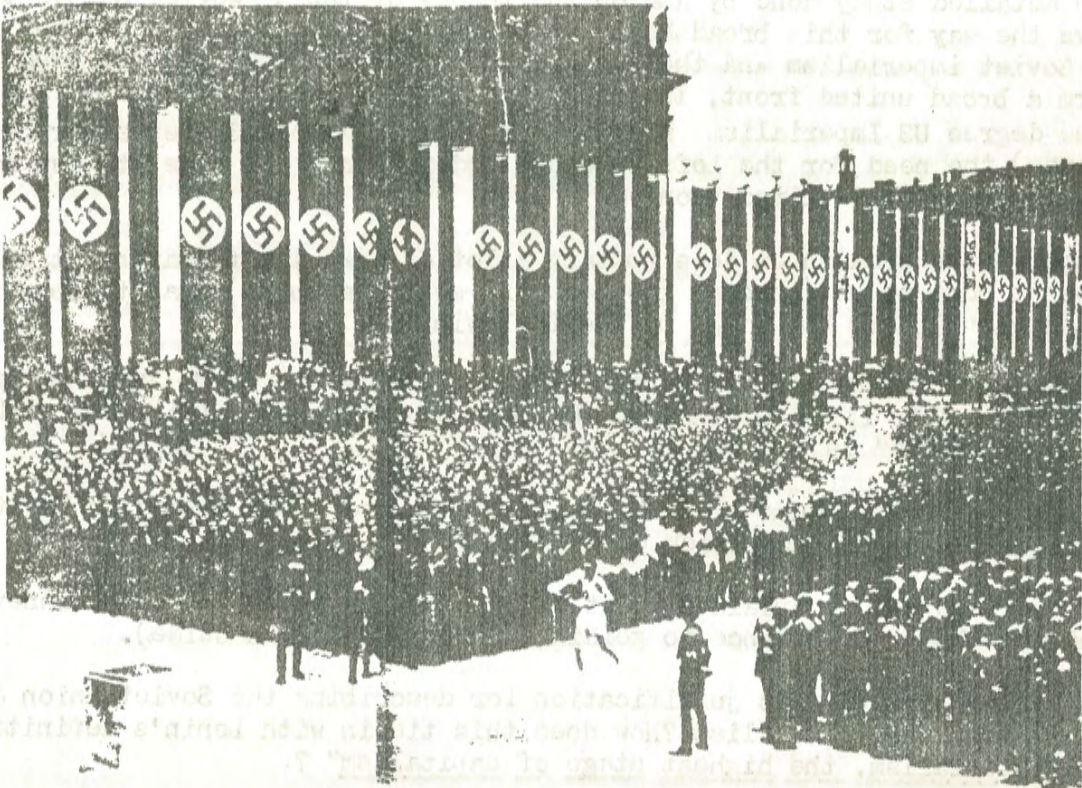
*There were some complaints about the "schoolboy humour" anti-Brezhnev joke and the obscure reference to geldings (Superpower Form Guide).

* What is our economic justification for describing the Soviet Union as capitalist and imperialist ? How does this tie in with Lenin's definition in "Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism" ?

*We lack understanding of Lenin's statement "Imperialism means war". Is World War III inevitable ? What are the economic factors pushing the Soviet Union (and US Imperialism) to war ?

* We lack precise information about repression in the Soviet Union. Although details of the repression of well known dissidents like Sakharov has been widely publicised; not so much is known about the repression of the working class.

We hope to be soon investigating all these questions in more detail. If you are interested in assisting us, or wish to be kept informed, then please keep in touch



Berlin 1936 - Moscow 1980 - Fascist & Social-Fascist
In World War II, the German factories were the
Royal Union (and in 1936) in the

CAN'T BEAR IT . . .

SUPERPOWER FORM GUIDE

THE SMALL BOYS WHO CRIED BEAR

Fraser's energetic campaign against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is showing some signs of faltering in mid stream. A big danger is that Fraser's and Carter's own actions may undermine the progressive anti-Soviet campaign.

Fraser and Carter have taken some good actions (see p. 2). But, as everyone knows, they are bad bastards and hypocrites. They are hypocrites to talk about the "free world" and "human rights". Fraser has directed the campaign in Australia in such a way as to protect his very wealthy friends. He has backed down on the strategic materials ban, gone very quiet on trade bans and he's even used increased defence spending as an excuse to delay tax relief.

The ALP, led by Hayden, and some groups on the Left, have utilised these contradictions to either defend the Soviet Union or soften the resistance to Soviet aggression.

During the 1950s and 1960s the U.S. Pentagon used a "Soviet Threat" to justify its own all-out armaments programme. There was no such threat at the time, and since Vietnam people have become wary of anything the United States might say. After all, there are lies, damned lies and Pentagon press releases.

The U.S. credibility gap has, as a result, made it unfashionable to speak of a Soviet threat regardless of the circumstances. The massive Soviet arms build-up is unmentionable in polite company. No one wants to be thought of as a Pentagon warmonger so Soviet war preparations are often referred to as merely a reaction to the United States and NATO.

Carter and Fraser today find themselves in the position of the little boy who cried "bear".

Nevertheless it is not a Pentagon press release but a cold hard fact that there is now, indeed, a "bear". The USSR has emerged as the more aggressive, militaristic and expansionist of the two superpowers. Without sparing any sympathy for the Pentagon it would be foolish to let one's delight at the plight of the little boy stand in the way of common efforts to avoid being eaten.

In reality, after going along with "detente" for years, Fraser and Carter have finally jumped on a bandwagon that was pushed off by Mao Tse Tung in about 1971. Given the Soviet expansion in the world today, if Mao were alive he would be in the position to say — "I told you so".

To concentrate on Fraser's hypocrisy also ignores the hypocrisy of others. Are not those who opposed the U.S. invasion of Indo-China but are equivocal about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also hypocrites? The U.S.'s "free world" propaganda has been flogged to death since World War II and is now a joke. What about the hypocrisy of the Soviet Union who also describe their imperialism as "socialism", their fascism as "progressive" and their occupation of other countries as "supporting the world revolution".

We did not support the American intervention in Indo-China because the American Revolution of 1776 was progressive. Where are the gains of October 1917 now?

DEFEND AUSTRALIA! ARM THE WORKERS!

SUPERPOWER FORM GUIDE FOR PUNTERS. SEE P.2

This broadsheet was published by "Adelaide anti-imperialist study action group" [AA ISAG]. For further information contact P.O. Box 88, Cowandilla 5033, S.A. February 24, 1980

SUPERPOWER FORM GUIDE

Well, it's sad news this month for some punters as the old favourite "Dejante" broke down at the barriers of the **Afghan Hurdles** and had to be destroyed. A spokesperson for the Joint owners said today, "There wasn't much racing left in the old grey mare, anyway".

Getting right down to the last big racing event, if you've been following our betting guide you've cleaned up yet again. Clearly emerging as the the new top weight contender is "Russian Might" who put in a breathtaking race that caught a lot of punters (and bookies) napping. There has been an appeal lodged but it appears that the prizemoney is safe.

After a bad start, when rider Amin was thrown, kicked in the head and killed instantly, a new jockey was flown in from Czechoslovakia. Trainer Brezhnev said the answer was a gelding, so a stable hand was gelded (see Bart Cummings for explanation).

STOP PRESS: Champion stayer "Tito" has been put to pasture. Some punters felt he had been excessively handicapped in recent events. Quite clearly, a setback for the United Stables and with not much time left till the hectic spring carnival, they could be short of starters in racing's prime event, the **European Cup**.

Top weight "Uncle Sam" finally seems to be showing form, after a disappointing series of races. New trainer, J. Carter, is rallying all concerned in an effort to get the champ ready for the Cup. Some commentators say it is moribund.

Now for a comment on the greyhounds by Vin Blewit.

Last season's racing sensation on the Asian Circuit, "Viet Deceiver" (a very lively fast-running dog from the Stables Union) has shown great form in its first two starts. This dog is a full brother to "Cuban Lash", both bred from "Russian Rubles" out of "Own Ambitions".

Rumours abound as to why chief strapper "Giap" got the boot. It's odds on that it's to do with Thailand racing (whether or not to continue). Well, just have to wait and see what position he took.

That bright young dog on the African Middle Circuit "Cuban Lash" hasn't been heard of much of late, but is reputed in heavy training under the watchful eye of trainer L. Brezhnev. There should be a lot of good dog racing in Africa before the main horse racing starts up in Europe.

Back to the horses: Best long range double — Yugoslavia and Romania within 5 years. Back "Russian Might". Too good to miss.



Question: What colour is Brezhnev after an enemy?
Answer: Clear.

AFGHANISTAN FALLACIES

Comments on some common myths about the Soviet Union in general and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in particular.

Fallacy 1: "U.S. imperialism is more dangerous than Soviet imperialism. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a defensive action."
Reply 1: Since 1975, the Soviet Union and their client States (e.g. Cuba) have considerably increased their influence and control over the following countries: Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan. In Ethiopia, Cuban troops using modern Soviet equipment and directed by Soviet military advisors are waging a genocidal war against a genuine and popular liberation movement led by the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front. Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan are occupied by Cuban or Soviet troops that were "invited" in by their governments. Vietnam has tied itself politically, economically and militarily to the Soviet Union and in turn Vietnamese troops now occupy large sections of Kampuchea and Laos and threaten to go into Thailand.

In contrast the United States is a declining superpower that suffered defeats in Indo-China in 1975 and further defeats since then. Since 1975, the United States has been defeated or severely weakened in the following countries: Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Iran.

If Soviet actions are motivated by defensive considerations then the Soviet leaders must think the Soviet border lies between the West coast of Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Fallacy 2: "There was an armed counter-revolution in Afghanistan financed and organised by the CIA with the assistance of China and Pakistan. This reactionary alliance is trying to restore a feudal regime based on the worst aspects of Islam (religious backwardness, oppression of women, anti-communism etc)"

Reply 2: It is true that China is training Afghan rebels in Pakistan, the CIA is operating on the border and so on. It also appears to be true that the resistance to the Soviet invasion is fragmented and disunited and consists of diverse elements, from communists to CIA agents, including deserters from the Afghan army.

The revolution against the Shah in Iran was led by Moslems, supported by communists (though not uncritically) and has been directed against both U.S. imperialism and Soviet imperialism.

The motivation of some people who stress the "reactionary" nature of some of the opponents of the Soviet invasion appears to be to sabotage the grass roots resistance that is developing against Soviet aggression.

Not only pro-U.S. governments oppose the Soviet invasion. The United Nations voted 104-18 with 18 abstentions against it.

It seems obvious that the Soviet Union today is much more capable of organising takeovers than the USA, China and Pakistan, rolled together.



Rebels, with an assortment of weapons, assemble for a raid inside Afghanistan

Fallacy 3: "The Soviet Union is protecting the independence and sovereignty of Afghanistan."

Reply 3: The present ruling Party, the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDDPA), though split, has been aligned to Moscow since its formation in 1965. Any elements within it with serious opposition to Moscow line policy have long ago been driven underground.

It is now a simple and obvious fact that the survival of the President of Afghanistan depends on the good graces of Moscow. The present situation of overkill (90,000 occupying troops) stems from some failure in the past for things to develop exactly as they wanted.

The PDDPA overthrew Daoud in April 1978 and Taraki became Prime Minister with Soviet backing. Hafizullah Amin overthrew Taraki in September 1979 (apparently to Moscow's displeasure) shortly after Taraki had returned from the Non-Aligned Conference in Cuba and a trip to Moscow.

Moscow's displeasure was vented when Amin was overthrown and killed in December 1979 and Karmal became the new President. Karmal's post in the previous government was Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. He was not even in Afghanistan when the coup and Soviet invasion took place.

Now there are reports that Karmal is unpopular with Moscow because he is not delivering the goods. These reports say that he is not uniting enough intellectuals behind him, is not coping with desertions from the Afghan Army and is failing to quell Moslem insurgency and the anti-Soviet movement (see 'The Australian' of 5/2/80, 14/2/80 and 18/2/80)

Does anyone doubt that if he does not satisfy Moscow then he too will fail?

WE STOPPED AMERICA. LET'S STOP RUSSIA.

In dealing with imperialism, history suggests one should rely on an ability to stop them rather than hope that they will be sensible.

The best way to defend Australia is to arm the people. This should be done democratically. Since Mr. Fraser is not popular, nor bullet proof, it is highly unlikely that he will take up this suggestion.

Conscription is deservedly unpopular and should be resisted. But we do support a vigorous campaign to encourage more Australians to do voluntary national service.

Communists were in the forefront of the struggle against appeasement in the 1930s and should be in the forefront of that struggle today. As in the 1930s when we found strange bedfellows like Winston Churchill, so we will find strange bedfellows today. Just as the Chinese communists fought Chiang Kai-Shek before, during and after the united front against Japan, we must fight to maintain our independence and initiative today. But all anti-fascist forces must still unite against the new "socialist" fascism.

"Pig Iron" Bob was derided in the 1930s for helping Japan's rearmament. Fraser should be derided for lifting bans on strategic materials in the same way.

The Soviet Union today occupies a position remarkably similar to Hitler's Germany in the 1930s.

The heat should stay on Fraser for the economic mess at home. But we do support many of the anti-Soviet measures he has taken.

We support a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. The analogy drawn with the Berlin Games in 1936 is entirely correct.

We support measures that Australia has taken such as greater Australian involvement in patrolling the Indian Ocean, indefinite suspension of all agreements and discussions with the Soviet Union on fishing, supporting the U.S. grain embargo against the Soviet Union, turning down the Soviet request for direct Soviet-Australia air flights, banning the use of Australian ports by Soviet scientific research vessels, and indefinite suspension of scientific collaboration and official talks and visits.

We support increased Australian defence spending but it should be done so as to build up Australia's own defence and manufacturing industry. For example, Whyalia ship building should be put back on the map.

We support the Australian Government working out arrangements for collective security with other governments against Soviet aggression, especially with Third World countries.

A Soviet invasion of Western Europe would eventually become a world war against fascism fought by a united front embracing most of the European countries (including the resistance in some occupied at present by the Soviet Union), China, most of the Third World, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand and opposition within the Soviet Union.

Objective circumstances would compel these forces to unite, whether they initially tried to stay out of it or not.

The Soviet Union has no more hope of winning than Hitler did. But that does not mean that it would not try.

While a third world war will certainly not be the end of the human species or even civilisation, it will be even more destructive than the First and Second World Wars.

People are not likely to be enthusiastic about reconstructing a social system that produces such catastrophes every few decades. The issue of changing the social system will certainly arise even more sharply than in the economic crisis that produces the war.

The First World War completely changed the face of Europe, and ended in victory of the October revolution in Russia, and attempts at revolution in other European countries. It also resulted in the birth of liberation movements in the colonies.

The Second World War ended in the complete destruction of Hitler's Germany, the eclipse of the other major European imperialisms, revolution in China and several other countries and the disintegration of colonialism.

Nevertheless, capitalism still survived and the United States emerged for a time as its new saviour. The revolution was only victorious in those countries where the people organised themselves and relied on their own armed strength to defeat fascism.

It was defeated where the guns were left in the hands of the ruling class.

A Third World War will certainly result in even less room on this planet for capitalism, if not its complete overthrow.

That is one reason why Western "statesmen" have been reluctant to face up to the fact that one is brewing and even more reluctant to mobilise and arm the people.

They know we will not just be cannon fodder for one imperialism against another. As well as dealing with the Soviet fascists, we will use the guns to settle the other issues raised.

AFGHANISTAN FALLACIES [continued]

Fallacy 4: "The fight against the CIA-China-Pakistan inspired counter-revolution is carried on by the Afghan Army, not by Soviet Troops".

Reply 4: This is a classic piece of double think. If it were true then why on earth did Soviet troops invade in the first place? There have been reports of 90,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, as well as troops from East Europe and South Yemen. There are other reports of rebellions and desertions from the Afghan Army.

Fallacy 5: "The Soviet Union will withdraw its troops from Afghanistan".

Reply 5: The same thing was said when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. Twelve years later.

Fallacy 6: "There is little or no likelihood that a pro-Soviet Afghanistan will invade Pakistan".

Reply 6: The new President of Afghanistan, Karmal, has declared that his government supports the right of the Pushtuns and Baluchs in Pakistan "to decide their own future".

Baluchistan alone makes up 45% of Pakistan. Pushtunistan and Baluchistan stand between the warm water ports in the Indian Ocean. It's nice to know that these people will have the opportunity "to decide their own future" in the same way that the people of Afghanistan have.

'We had to go into Afghanistan to protect our southern border. Now, to protect Afghanistan's borders...'



Fallacy 7: "The revolution of April 1978 was progressive and improve the conditions of the people of Afghanistan".

Reply 7: Afghanistan is an economically backward country with predominantly feudal relations of production. There is a great need for fundamental social change in Afghanistan. It has been pointed out that the economy was stagnant, infant mortality over 1 in 4, life expectancy about 35, illiteracy around 90%, unemployment over 20% and income levels at around \$3 a week (For example, see Bob Catley's effort to soften the Soviet blow. Letters to 'The Advertiser', 24/1/80).

Naturally, in such circumstances many progressives joined the "Marxist" PDPA and were genuinely seeking to improve the lot of their people. This sentiment is reflected in the progressive reforms in the program of the PDPA (land reform and many others).

There appears to be very little real evidence that the PDPA has actually achieved any of those reforms. No doubt many cadres in the PDPA were unaware of the extreme dangers involved in seeking Soviet support and becoming a member of Moscow's "revolutionary family" (to use Castro's words).

In the first place the ability of the PDPA cadres to carry out those reforms is in doubt. The PDPA is a party with predominantly urban-trained cadres in a country which is predominantly rural. Only 14% of Afghanistan's population are urban dwellers, another 14% are nomads and 71% are settled agricultural population.

Moscow has paternalistically interfered in the PDPA and this is turn has imbued the leadership of the PDPA with a paternalistic attitude to the Afghan people.

Also, evidence suggests that the Soviet economy itself is faltering (e.g., shortage of consumer goods, agricultural production down, failure to meet 5 year plans). Hardly a recommendation for them to take over and run another country's economy.

Even Soviet apologist Fred Halliday (author of the comprehensive study "Revolution in Afghanistan", *New Left Review*, No. 112, Nov-Dec 1978) has recently said about the PDPA:

"Faced with suspicion and resistance, it tried to solve the problems by administrative and military coercion. Land was arbitrarily redistributed by the new government and party officials, without attention to local susceptibilities. Neither did the government take into account the water and credit which landlords had provided. "Soldiers tried to force women to attend literacy classes against the wishes of their menfolk."

"From the spring of 1979, the Afghan airforce bombed villages suspected of opposition and destroyed crops in rebel areas in the hope of reducing the tribes' resistance."

"The Russians played a part in this disastrous policy. They condoned and took part in the repression in the countryside and the comparable repression in the towns which Mr. Hafizullah Amin, who became President and strong man of the regime in March, 1979, was waging". (*The Australian*, 12/1/80)

Fallacy 8: "That the Soviet invasion was 'legal'."

Reply 8: This is another funny one (along the lines of: "Have you heard the one about the wicked Afghan fairy...") pushed by the pro-Soviets. According to the Afghan-Soviet Treaty, if President Amin of Afghanistan had consented to Soviet troops entering the country then it would have been legal.

Clearly President Amin, who is now dead and is now described as a "dictator", did not consent (although the Afghanistan Ambassador to Czechoslovakia did).

Question to those who argue like this: If Australia's Ambassador to the United States overrode the Prime Minister and invited American troops to enter Australia, would that be legal?

Fallacy 9: "World war is extremely unlikely and/or unthinkable. Carter is a monster for threatening to use nuclear weapons".

Reply 9: Although world war, including nuclear war, is not certain it is a lot more likely than most people think. It is likely because there are two superpowers who both want to control the whole world and there is only one world. Most people think that nuclear war is unthinkable because it would mean mutually assured destruction (aptly abbreviated M.A.D.) and the end of the world, or at least the end of an exploitable labour force. Not an attractive proposition to any capitalist.

But nuclear war is possible because of the scenarios worked out in Washington and Moscow involving "limited strikes" and strikes directed against military, not civilian targets.

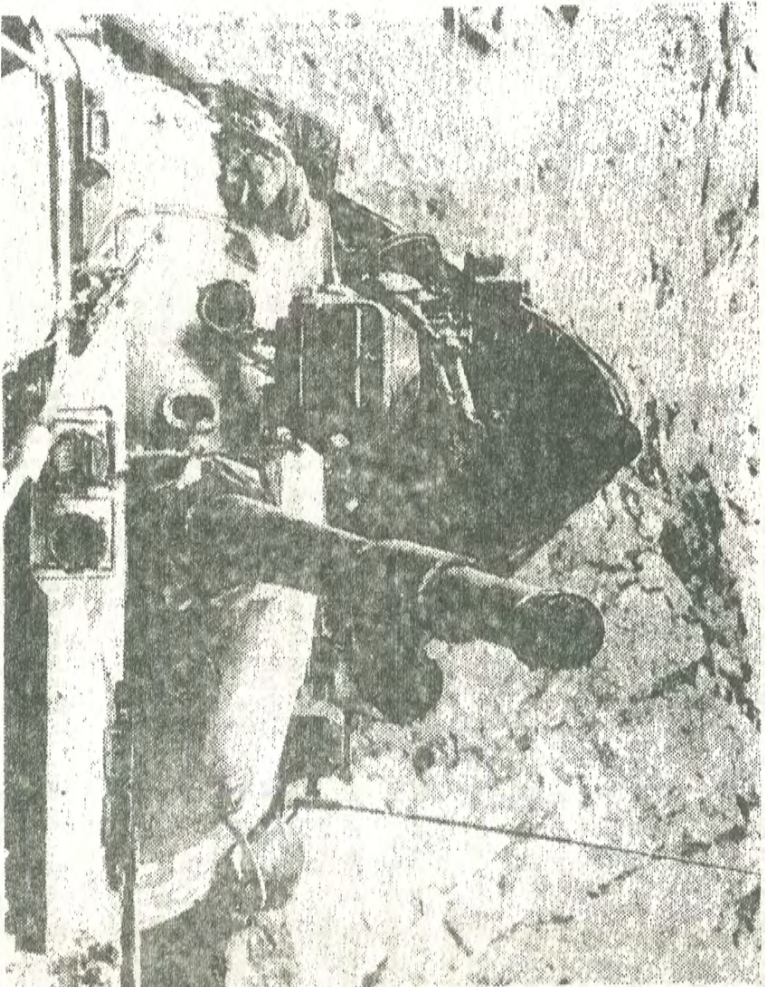
When Carter threatened the use of a "limited" nuclear strike to stop further "Soviet moves" in the Persian Gulf (Sydney **Sunday Telegraph**, Feb. 3, 1980) some "leftists" ("Socialist Workers Party") describe it as "madness". But Carter is no madder than any other capable capitalist. Nor is he necessarily bluffing. As the Soviet Union continue their takeover of the Persian Gulf the United States, as an imperialist superpower, will either fight or surrender. Since the Soviet Union is now better prepared in many respects with conventional weapons the United States feels obliged to threaten nuclear retaliation. It is as simple as that. A cold and calculated military option.

Both superpowers, not only want to be free to use nuclear weapons, they also want to be free to threaten to use them. If they only wanted to be free to use them then, as hypocrites, they could sign the pledge not to. That was initially proposed by China.

It has also been reported recently that Brezhnev told the president of the French National Assembly, Mr. Chaban-Delmas:

"Believe me, after the destruction of the Chinese nuclear sites by our missiles, there won't be much time for the Americans to choose between the defence of their Chinese allies, and peaceful co-existence with us." (The **Australian**, Feb. 8, 1980)

Don't necessarily break out in a cold sweat but please think about it. Why do those who support or apologise for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan only describe Carter as a "nuclear madman"??



A Russian soldier emerges from the turret of his T-62 tank in Afghanistan

Opinion 1: In the future as the Soviet Union and its clients become still more aggressive, bellicose, chauvinistic and openly fascist then resistance to them will increase further.

The authors of this broadsheet will then be in a stronger position to say: "We told you so", and thereby gain some satisfaction.

Much more satisfaction would be gained if the Left got its arse into gear about the Soviet Union, right now.

RUSSIA PREPARES FOR WAR

It is estimated that between 1967 and 1976, U.S. military spending dropped from \$120 billion to \$66.7 billion (adjusted for inflation), while that of the Soviet Union rose from \$79.2 billion to \$121 billion.

In 1961 U.S. military spending was double that of the Soviet Union. By 1977 the Soviet Union's was 20 per cent greater than the United States', and still expanding faster. It already amounts to 20 per cent of the Soviet national income and 35 per cent of the state budget. This is not only a much greater proportion than the USA's, but even more than Hitler's Germany immediately prior to World War Two.

The Soviet union has nearly four-and-a-half million troops on active service — double the U.S. total. In the decade since Czechoslovakia, the number of Soviet strategic missiles has increased tenfold, its naval tonnage has doubled, it has added 10,000 more tanks, thousands of military aircraft and one million troops to its armed forces.

Right now Warsaw Pact ground forces in Europe outnumber NATO by 1,335,000 to 1,190,000. Their battle tanks in operational service outnumber NATO by 27,200 to 11,000 (2½ to 1) and tactical aircraft outnumber NATO by 5,650 to 3,300.

Yet each year the Soviet Union produces 9 times as much artillery, 6 times as many warships, 6 times as many tanks, twice as many helicopters and twice as many submarines as the United States does.

Soviet war preparations are a FACT, which cannot be denied and cannot be ignored. If the Pentagon is full of warmongers (which it undoubtedly is), then the Kremlin is full of warmongers squared.

A country's military intentions must be deduced from the military capabilities it chooses to acquire, not from its proclaimed policies.

The Soviet Union has massed three-quarters of its troops, 90 per cent of its intermediate range ballistic missiles and over 80 per cent of its tanks against Western Europe. Three of its four big fleets and 70 per cent of its strategic submarines are surface warships are deployed around Europe.

Cuban troops bought and paid for by the Soviet Union are actively trying to control vital sea lanes to Western Europe from the Horn of Africa to the Cape of Good Hope.

The general tone of Soviet military literature is like that of Germany in the late 1930s or the United States in the 50s and 60s. It's all "blitzkrieg" and no "detente". No U.S. "hawk" in the 1970s would dare write publicly in terms so unmistakably and cold-bloodedly NAZI.

According to Rear Admiral A. Contayev, writing in March 1973, it is a "psychological legacy of the last war" (when the other side were the Nazis) to still hold that "surprise is mainly associated with an attack by the enemy on us, while aggressive actions of our forces, our fleet on the enemy are omitted".

A Radio Moscow broadcast on January 13, 1970 completely ruled out anything but a Soviet first strike:

"The defensive, as a means of military operation, has lost its importance. In the face of an enemy possessing nuclear weapons and pinning his hopes on a first strike, a defensive strategy means to voluntarily subject a country and its armed forces to nuclear strikes, which is contrary to the concept of modern warfare

This openly Nazi approach is not confined to the military but pervades the general culture of the Soviet Union. Take for example the novel **Dawn Here in Quiet** published in **Yunost** (Youth) No. 8, 1969, the film of which won first prize at the All-Union film festival. Its "patriotic hero" is lauded in these words:

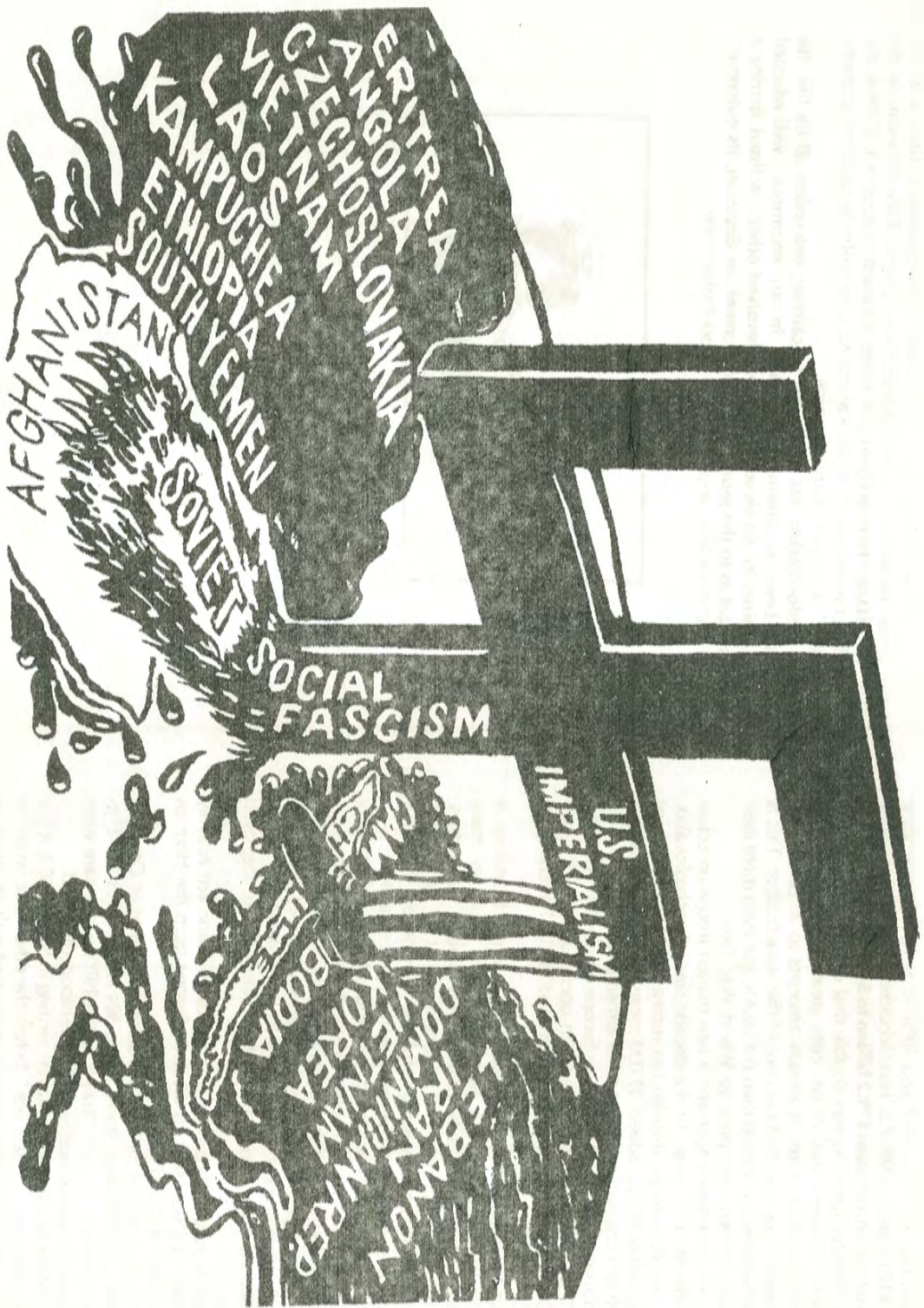
"Fedot Vaskov has been used to carrying out orders all his life. He had been a transmission pinion in an enormous, well-adjusted machine: he revolved and in turn revolved others, without sparing a thought as to the source of the movement, its direction, its outcome".

Fedot Vaskov would make a good Hitler Youth.



THE ABOMINABLE IMPERIALIST MAN

NO. 218, 4349 AUCUR



... DON'T BEAR IT

FIGHTING THE FASCISTS

Do you remember International Women's Year? No? Well, I agree that nothing dramatic happened. However, the whole point is that it wasn't supposed to be just International Women's Year, but International Women's Decade. I hear some sniggers as you read this. I felt similarly contemptuous myself when I heard about the meetings being arranged to elect delegates for a conference in Canberra early in 1980. This is because 1980 is the mid year of the International Women's Decade. There will also be a further conference in Switzerland later in the year. Who's interested in boring, bourgeois United Nations business? I thought to myself, and forgot all about it.

Some regional meetings to elect delegates to Canberra passed unnoticed, and then we heard that the meeting at Elizabeth was stacked by Festival of Light women and women members of a particularly obnoxious church known as the Assemblies of God. * They had elected their own delegates (one of them a man, would you believe?) and passed all sorts of terrible motions, e.g. banning abortions, making divorce a lot harder to get, encouraging corporal punishment in schools (apparently the AoG people are a bit kinky in this area), and so on. The women at this meeting were heard to say to each other that they would meet again at Christies Beach.

On the Saturday that the Christies Beach meeting took place, there was another big conference on. This was the Australian Women's Education Coalition Conference, involving some 200 women, quite a few from interstate. This was the conference I went to, because I still thought the other meeting sounded boring. After the opening address of the AWEC conference, one of the organisers told us that a message had just been received that 300 FoL and AoG women had stacked the Christies Beach meeting. There was a debate about whether we should all go down there; most of the interstate women were not interested in going, and were not entitled to vote anyway. About 150 of us went to Christies Beach, including only a few interstate women.

* Hereafter referred to as FoL and AoG

The United Nations had prepared a little booklet covering areas such as home and family, education, working women, etc. When we arrived the women had already formed into small discussion groups to discuss and make recommendations on these areas. We found groups for ourselves and joined in the discussions. It was obvious right from the start that there was an unbridgeable ideological gap between reactionary and progressive women, with few in the middle, but what was more significant, was that we were aware of it, and the reactionaries didn't seem to be. They were naive in the extreme, e.g. they really thought we would agree that the family must involve "the blessing of god". One woman was carrying on about choices for women, and said "We don't want socialism, do we?" Some of us laughed and said, "You speak for yourself".

We started discussing divorce and the FoL and AoG women agreed enthusiastically that marriage should be made much more difficult to obtain than divorce! Their naivety was pleasing in a way, because it does show that we know what we're on about much more than they do.

After this, we crowded into the Christies Beach School Hall (all 600 of us) to nominate delegates and hear short election speeches. The FoL candidates cunningly (but unsuccessfully) tried not to identify themselves, but word was already being passed around, who to vote for. We could vote for the delegates during lunch and up until 2.15.

We were real martyrs for the cause then, because the FoL and AoG women were provided with chicken lunches, and we had nothing! There weren't any shops for miles.

When we reconvened after lunch-time, there was an unsuccessful attempt to extend the voting time. We heard afterwards that this was because the FoL was expecting a bus-load of reinforcements, but they didn't arrive anyway.

Shortly after the afternoon session got under way, a man appeared and began taking photographs. A group of lesbians sitting together down the front objected to this activity by the enemy. As it turned out they were quite right, because he was one of the enemy - he was a Sunday Mail reporter. (The Sunday

Mail manages to be even more reactionary than the Advertiser).

A vote was taken, thought it's unlikely that many understood the issue, and the decision was that the man should stay. It occurred to me that someone should just get up and push him out, and the group of lesbians did just that. They marched over, and formed a pyramid in front of him. He gave up and went away, amidst cheers from many of us. An AoG woman stood up and said, "Now that we've got rid of the one man, let's get rid of the rest of the men". (Referring, of course, to the lesbians). One of them calmly lifted up her T-shirt! We all felt that was an adequate reply.

We heard reports from all of the groups of the morning. In a few cases these had been dominated by FoL and AoG women. One group of four FoL women had discussed and approved the National Front immigration policies (essentially a rigid white Australia policy, together with racist remarks), and there was much jeering and booing at this report. A few motions were overturned. One motion banning maternity leave had been passed by sleight of hand in a group, and this was overturned, proving to us that we had the numbers. These motions and reports were not really important, as the State Steering Committee can do what they like with them. The election of delegates was much more important, and there we defeated the reactionaries.

I think the subsequent press and radio campaigns (mostly on behalf of the FoL and AoG women) show that we did score an important victory at Christies Beach. The women's movement has been accused of all sorts of nastiness in these campaigns; having interstate voters (you will remember there were only a few interstate people who attended, and even if they voted, there were certainly not enough to make any difference, and certainly not as many as the FoL and AoG women who had already voted at Elizabeth), stacking the meeting (far less true of us than of them), and so on.

One result of these campaigns is that there seems to have developed a split between the FoL and AoG people. The newspaper campaign didn't go entirely their way. There were quite a few good articles and letters supporting the women's movement. But the radio campaign was really one-sided, and we didn't get much

of a look-in. When there was little reply from us, the AoG women became more and more hysterical. ("Typical women", I hear some of you say. Do you want a punch in the nose?) This hysteria has resulted in even the most unprogressive people, (e.g. those who run talk-back radio shows) turning against them, or at least not taking them seriously, and of course this is highly embarrassing to the FoL (who are very respectable people).

The only thing that still worries me about it is that quite a few progressive women think that the FoL and AoG women are just confused, and that they could be united with if only we could work on them a bit. There may be some like that, but I don't think it is true of most of the reactionary women. They are not conscious of their ideological commitment, and they're politically naive and inexperienced. That's to our advantage, but they are still ideologically committed.

This whole episode indicates the nature of the women's movement. On the one hand they are prepared to fight against the fascists, even to the extent of taking direct action (against the reporter). On the other hand, there is a reluctance to accept that there is a real fight going on, involving women against women. There is a reluctance to accept that there are women enemies.

In the past, most revolutionaries haven't bothered to analyse what goes on in the women's movement. Quite often they have dismissed it as bourgeois, and insisted that women had no idea of what they were fighting for unless they were actually in the Marxist left. Things are not so bad now, but there is still not much familiarity with the women's movement amongst revolutionary groups. How many male revolutionaries really think they could learn a lot about being revolutionaries from the women's movement? There is much more tolerance these days, but not integration of ideas.

There should be, amongst progressive men particularly, an increased knowledge of these sorts of women's issues, and an increased commitment to fighting for them. If progressive men were really serious about it, and about learning the many valuable things there are to be learnt from the women's movement, it would be a big step towards showing women that men can be allies, and that women sometimes are class enemies.

SOME THOUGHTS ON "OUTLINE ON TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS"
AND ON THE AUTHOR'S REPLY TO THE FIRST CRITIQUE THEREON

Introduction

- 1.1 I would ~~have~~ liked to have kept this article quite short, dealing in a positive manner with certain important points raised by the author in the original Outline. However, the reply to the critique makes it abundantly clear that a further and detailed review is needed. Although the author seems, in section 43 on page 73, to recant most of the stances logically implied in the original article, in the final paragraph (s)he claims again that the problems created by the uncontrolled application of the capitalist 'ethic' to technological enhancement of capitalist exploitation don't, after all, really exist.
- 1.2 It would still be possible to minimise time taken up in refuting the author, by using the methods of the original article. For instance, in section 18, page 49, (s)he 'refutes' the whole of Schumacher's ideas simply by stating that some of his views are not radically different from those of Santamaria. Using the same technique, I could point out that some of the author's views are very similar to those of class enemies and class traitors, approvingly quoted in sections 6, 10, 11 and 12 on pages 38, 40, 41 and 42. However, I was taught that this is not a valid method of engaging in serious discussion.
- 1.3 Instead, I intend to use methods which I believe to be acceptable, to show up some of the most blatant cases where the author applies totally inadequate methods of argument to abysmally misunderstood data in order to arrive at the traditional undialectic leap from preconcieved notions to foregone and disastrous conclusions.

Some non-arguments

- 2.1 A paradigm case of the non-argument appears in section 9, page 40. "There is even a kind of 'eco-fascism' with ideas and solutions remarkably similar to those of the fascists of the 1930s, particularly in regard to population control." In making this statement, the author is doing at second-hand exactly what the original publishers of such material are doing at first-hand. This is, to take a basic fact and offer a perverted means of dealing with it. In the author's case, the means is to pretend it doesn't exist merely because others misuse it.
- 2.2 Throughout sections 2 through 5, pages 37 and 38, the author uses the self-fulfilling argument, whereby 'orthodox marxism' is narrowly defined as such portions of published works as can be interpreted to support the author's position. It may still be necessary to point out, even to some experienced leftists, that other portions of these same works and of other works have been similarly defined to support many other strange theses. This is a major contributing factor to the fragmentation of the 'left'.
- 2.3 The same 'argument' is extended, in section 7, to indicate that orthodox marxism consists in being right for the right reasons. When orthodox marxism has led, as it is supposed to, to the irreversible elimination, in a significant area

for a significant length of time, of exploitation of a numerous class of people by another, much less numerous class of people, we can speak of being right. Until then, let us not continue the habit of being 'right' by hindsight in our analysis of what went wrong, or 'right' by foresight only until events prove us wrong.

- 2.4 In section 9, pages 39 - 40, the author uses another type of self-fulfilling argument. "Catastrophe theories are not being put forward by scientists who believe in technical progress and economic progress and are worried because they have come across some phenomena that might threaten this." This is as true - and as meaningless - as saying that socialist theories are not put forward by people who believe in capitalism and are worried because they have observed the internal contradictions thereof. Scientists who, in the course of research do come across potentially threatening phenomena do in fact cease to believe wholeheartedly in technical 'progress' and economic 'progress' as ends in themselves. A few have the courage of their convictions, to the extent of becoming debarred from receiving fat research grants and the continued approval of their governments and of some of their colleagues.
- 2.5 Ignoring these relevant facts, the author includes such scientists in a 'lunatic fringe' - thus repeating media attitudes as if this were a sound argument. Perhaps the author is unaware that the media are controlled by the same class whose interest is most directly served by uncontrolled technological progress as an adjunct to enhanced exploitation?
- 2.6 On the same page, the author's argument is the unsupported statement that "Some people want their disaster theories to be true because they want there to be some barrier to the further development of industrialisation." A similar unsupported statement is made in section 10, on page 40. The psychological analysis of peoples' unconscious motivations by reference to their published works is a subject fraught with traps for the unwary, not least of which is the choice of psychological school on which to base that analysis. Hence, I shall refrain from attempting to psychoanalyse the author.
- 2.7 Section 11 on page 41 is an example of restricting the field of possible cases for examination to limits most convenient to the author's theses. The question is not "Whether 'resources' are finite." It is: are we using up any specific essential resources faster than we can find an economic way of turning adequate quantities of otherwise unused materials to the same use? In several cases, the answer so far is indeterminate. Among people who appear equally qualified to judge, some say "Yes" and some say "No", because the problems have not yet been adequately defined as to all parameters so as to give an unequivocal solution. Incidentally, the form of the question as I pose it allows the answer eventually to escape from the limits of the finite (though large) potentially accessible volume of our planet to the still finite (but much larger) volume of the solar system - maybe ultimately into all unoccupied sectors of the galaxy.
- 2.8.1 The same section continues on page 42 with an example of a 'misrelating' argument, from a fact which is only partially and misleadingly stated, to a conclusion that does not logically follow. Even if it were true that, during a particular historic period, the total costs of extracting resources had considerably decreased, that would be no

- prima facie evidence - although the author implies that it is - that the resources are inexhaustible. It does lead to the conclusion that improved technology has so far made it continually possible to develop further proportions of resources which had been hitherto impracticable to exploit.
- 2.8.2 Even that conclusion is rendered doubtful by the fact that accounting procedures internal to the relevant industries do not take into account subsidies for infrastructures, exploration, power etc., and various direct tax concessions. Although no government would openly admit it, provision of all these financial aids is an attempt to resolve the problems of capitalism by socially funding the most rapid expansion possible, whilst masking the true costs of raw materials used in that expansion.
- 2.9 A different kind of 'misrelating' argument appears in section 13 on page 44. This purports to see a contradiction between two different (and in the author's view mutually exclusive) reasons for condemning capitalism during two different historic epochs. In fact, the criticism during both epochs has been the same, but with varying emphasis on the two halves. The whole criticism is that the capitalist productive and distributive system leaves a varying and sometimes very large minority of people short of the essentials to healthy living whilst at the same time it encourages a different and varying minority in wastefully conspicuous consumption of goods, some of which are directly deleterious to the consumers' health and some indirectly, through harming ecological balances, to the health of non-consumers too.
- 2.10 Argument by slogan appears in the same section on page 45. This type of generalisation falls to pieces as soon as it is particularised. For instance, are people (and here it seems the author means the masses, else the slogan is elitist) entitled to want Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts? If "No", where does the author draw the line? If "Yes" under capitalism, then to what extent are they to go into hock on time payment hence become less inclined to oppose (capitalist) authority?
- 2.11 Further down page 45, the author arrives at a conclusion by combining two different elements into one - the opposite error to that pointed out in my section 2.9 (S)he indicates a belief that the 'consumerist' generation is better revolutionary material than previous generations. Let me disentangle the two elements involved. It is mainly the anti-consumerist within the consumerist generation whose "general attitudes towards 'authority' etc." makes it seem likely that they "will be more ready to revolt, not less".
- 2.12 Hitherto, I have concentrated only on mechanically incorrect methods of argument, although in doing so it has sometimes been necessary to tidy up by introducing relevant facts. My next section concerns mainly arguments which are mechanically correct but applied to facts which are misunderstood or don't exist.

Some false-to-fact arguments

- 3.1 In section 10, page 40, the author states a logical case for the fact that technology provides, among other financial surpluses, an amount that can be earmarked for cleaning up any environmental mess without eating so far into profits as to render the application of that technology uneconomical. Quite true, but. The author must be unaware that it is no

less likely now than it has been for the past two centuries or so, for capitalists to earmark a much smaller amount for:

- a. suborning politicians to oppose environmental legislation and to ensure that legally 'safe' levels of pollution are anything but:
- b. bribing public servants to ensure inadequate monitoring of pollution levels, and local councils to ignore reports;
- c. employing 'heavies' to discourage the activities of concerned individuals and;
- d. paying negligible fines incurred on detected and prosecuted breaches of anti-pollution laws.

The author might be astonished at the number of sources from which it is possible to learn that, to the extent that any pollution control has ever been effective, it has resulted from a continuous uphill political battle typical of those facing any group directly menaced by the excesses of capitalism.

- 3.2 On page 41, another logical case is made out for the great advantages attendant upon technological expansion of capitalism. The author very pointedly contrasts the current public health scene with that of feudalism. No mention is, however, made of the fact that a majority of people in several consecutive generations during the transition period had lives that were nastier, more brutish and shorter than their feudal forebears'. Nor is any mention made, once again, of the political battles that were fought over all aspects of public health, up to and including the (currently lapsed) struggle for Medibank.
- 3.3 In the penultimate paragraph of the same section, it is pointed out that "Forests were denuded and dustbowls created, before modern agriculture began to reverse this process." Reversal implies that there is now more reforestation and reclamation of land than is sufficient to equal current deforestation and dustbowl creation. As far as I can make out, this impression may be gained only by accepting agribusiness propaganda based on rare 'showcase' experiments - mostly carried out by governments, not capitalists. It should also be made clear that, whereas the granary of Egypt was turned into the Sahara desert on a basis of ignorance, no such excuse can apply to the current rape of Brazil's forests.
- 3.4 In section 11, on page 41, last paragraph, the question seems to be "What has posterity ever done for me, that I should on its behalf be distracted from my important day-to-day concerns?" One has reasonable grounds for assuming the author believes that the only form of personal immortality lies in the recognition by future generations of the state of affairs that has been handed down to them. For this reason alone, I would suggest that (s)he at least not knock humane methods of instituting ZPG, on the grounds that, at worst it will do no harm, and at best it might well save millions from starvation and misery a generation or so hence - the latter being the more likely projection, especially if we don't succeed in smashing capitalism soon.
- 3.5 In the same section, on page 42, the author points out that "The essential uniformity (I assume (s)he means equivalence) of energy and matter has been discovered." It seems that this is intended to suggest that, given enough energy, anything can

be turned into anything else in commercial quantities, e.g., shit into gold, and conversely, given enough matter, unlimited quantities of energy can be liberated. However, the dreams of unlimited power from nuclear fission have long ago vanished with the dawning of awareness that total energy output therefrom over the relatively short life of a reactor is not vastly greater than the total energy inputs, when you take into account all aspects of design, building, infrastructure, adequate containment of environmental hazards, processing new and spent fuel, disposing of spent fuel, etc. There is no present guarantee that similar considerations will not be true of nuclear fusion as a commercial source of power.

- 3.6.1 In section 13, on page 44, the author grants the principle that "...some quite useless and even harmful products are sold because of advertising and this should be opposed." (Sales, advertising, or both?) (S)he then goes on to indicate that other peoples' choices of which products to oppose covers "too wide a field", also that there are only two ways in which opposition to consumerism can possibly be expressed. Both of these, (s)he claims, involve "...an enormous elitist contempt for the common sense of ordinary people."
- 3.6.2 I find a very low correlation between attitudes leading to an anti-consumerist stance and those leading to compulsion of other people, and/or contempt, elitist or otherwise, for other people. They correlate much more positively with a relatively relaxed lifestyle which is as much advertisement as is needed for the principles involved.
- 3.6.3 One is, however, tempted to ask whether it is elitist contempt, or downright realism, to recognise that ordinary people are subjected to a lifetime of capitalist indoctrination through the effects of parenting, schooling, 'socialised' labour, media propaganda, advertising etc., to the extent that most of them have not only succumbed to rampant consumerism, but also are not yet ready to take an active part in establishing a proletarian revolution.
- 3.6.4 A further question, after reading the last sentence on page 45 is; just who are the elitists who will not be compulsorily excluded from having private cars after the revolution?
- 3.7.1 Section 14 is complex, and covers many categories, both as to mechanics of argument and the subject matter. I shall deal with it here because the last part, at least, directly concerns environmentalism in a major way, hence belongs with the matter to be summarised in my section 4.
- 3.7.2 Let us first be clear on the matter of priesthoods. They have rarely ruled; they have usually facilitated the tasks of rulers who may, but only incidentally, have pre-empted high priesthood or godhood as figureheads. This would probably be known to many of the arts/humanities graduates the author derides.
- 3.7.3 On the other hand, if the author were a science graduate, it is unlikely that (s)he would ever hold the misconception that the detailed intricacies of knowledge required to create, maintain and advance modern technology are readily available to mere literacy - even coupled with basic numeracy Children's encyclopedias yet! Try using one as a basis for even specifying a system for digital control of production in a given factory, let alone manufacturing the hardware, designing the software, de-bugging it and providing an

appropriate maintenance routine.

- 3.7.4 As to the average worker, it will be some generations at least before (s)he can quote and apply Ohm's law, let alone manipulate equations containing the square root of minus one - two of the simpler fundamentals involved in electrical generation technology. The average worker's sole grasp of this which provides the power to the domestic circuit, after more than a century, is a firm one - on the light switch. Let me assure the author that the minority 'elite' who really know what they are about in the fields of much more advanced technology do so because each has had the interest, capability and drive to spend a long time intensively studying and mastering one or a few specialities in considerable depth. Unless they are well onside, comes the revolution, our author is going to be severely restricted in consumption of goodies for some considerable time thereafter.
- 3.7.5 The author could hardly have picked a worse case than the nuclear industry as an example of safety induced by public regulation. (S)he cannot be aware even of the official censure, let alone the much stronger environmentalist case, concerning the practical inadequacy of regulation in that industry's ancestral stronghold, the U.S.A. The technology may be "...completely in the public domain" - to the limit of the individual's comprehension - but so elsewhere is data to show that there has been some major malfunction in some reactor or fuel-processing plant or spent fuel dump somewhere in the world every three months or so on average since the industry's inception. Some have come within a hairs-breadth of the kind of catastrophe that would make Three-Mile Island a picnic. Details of the actual catastrophe in the USSR early in the piece are still indeterminate, but some reports suggest that, by itself, it may have enabled the nuclear industry to catch up with the casualty record of centuries of coal-mining.

Summation on environmentalism etc.

- 4.1 I have gone to some lengths, so far, to refute the author's dismissal - so short as to be cavalier - of the possible dangers of eco-catastrophe, environmental degradation, limits to growth, wasteful consumption and techno-so-called-cratic priesthood. In doing this, my intention has not been to suggest that everything published that warns of these dangers is absolutely correct. Nor would I urge that the 'left' go overboard and unquestioningly give positive support to all ecological movements.
- 4.2 What I am suggesting is that:
- a. it is not a good idea to alienate a growing minority of people by condemning their very real concern, without being bothered to examine in detail their case, and so arrive at a reasonable assessment;
 - b. on the contrary, it would be good tactics to support some environmentalist etc., campaigns;
 - c. the campaigns we should support and, where need be, provide facilitative expertise, would have the following characteristics:
 - (i) against measurable and significant abuse
 - (ii) by a recognisable firm, industry or government agency

- (iii) guidable into a potentially winnable confrontation
- (iv) the recognised political content of which would be significant in relationship to energy expended by party comrades.

4.3 By the same token, I do not believe we should oppose the concepts of 'soft' technology holus bolus. Agreed, any attempt at immediate wholesale worldwide conversion to such technology would result in utter chaos leading to lowered standards of living for some considerable time. So would any attempt at immediate wholesale world-wide conversion to communist economics. This is no reason not to explore the possible advantages of the rational, organised, phased introduction of either.

Some political/economic failed arguments

- 5.1 Although it has been necessary to glance from time to time at economics and politics with respect to arguments considered in previous sections, I want to devote this section to specific political and economic failings in the author's arguments.
- 5.2 Superficially (s)he has a fine argument in section 12, page 43, against objections to Third-World dependency effects of rampant technology and uncontrolled growth. (S)he quotes Lenin on "The Development of Capitalism in Russia" to show the great advantages of such technology and such growth, as potentiators for communist revolution. However, on page 46, (s)he still (validly) characterises the USSR as a capitalist country, and a backward one at that - 63 years after Lenin's revolution. I would suggest that the author's Third World gravediggers of capitalism may find themselves buried in the quicksands of future shock, rather than taking advantage of the supposedly automatic political class consciousness that follows their enhanced exploitation through transplanted First-world technology.
- 5.3 If the quotation from Lenin is demonstrably inappropriate to its intended conclusion, what are we to make of the naïveté of the author's quotation in section 15, page 47, of the bourgeoisie's concern for "essential services"? Surely (s)he cannot be entirely unaware that this is merely a propaganda stick with which to beat militant trade unionists in the electrical generation industry when they take action to safeguard wages and working conditions? Judging by some of the author's later statements, (s)he might not, however, be inclined to support such militancy.
- 5.4.1 The best that might be said about the author's quotations from "Computers vs Journalists - Who Wins" in section 20, pages 51 through 54, is that they illustrate some incorrect directions in which some people will point with respect to novel technological applications in the workplace. However, the popularity that pamphlet undoubtedly enjoyed reflects a dismal failure on the part of the leadership of the proletariat over the past century or so.
- 5.4.2 On the other hand, the author's own comments may be symptomatic of why this is so. (S)he shows little understanding of the technology itself, the manner in which it is likely to be applied, or a proper marxist attitude to this application. The first of these points is illustrated

by the author's apparent expectation that a VDU plus interfacing to a central shared-time processor with printout can ever become compatible in price with a platen plus typeball and drive unit. This is the only - and virtually impossible - way in which a bank of word processors could ever become cheaper in use than a corresponding bank of electric typewriters.

- 5.4.3 The second point is illustrated by the author's complete failure to acknowledge that it is exactly the present climate of mass-unemployment in which those who fear to confront bosses will remain in the shrunken typing pools, blaming technology for tighter management control, while their more militant sisters and brothers draw the dole - another blot on our escutcheon.
- 5.4.4 The third point is illustrated in this and many other sections. The author fails to give any attention to the fact that a major tactic of the class struggle must be proper leadership against worsening conditions of labour. These are the most likely outcome in specific workplaces and industries, of capitalist 'ethics' applied to greater centralisation (among other things) resulting from the introduction of some aspects of new technology. As (s)he says "Naturally, some reactionaries will try to take advantage of any change in work methods to make things worse for the workers..." This bland statement blithely ignores that 'some' reactionaries are those who:
- a. understand the technology well enough to use it thus and;
 - b. think they can minimise opposition to the point where it is economical to use it thus and;
 - c. can think of no more subtle way to exploit the workers even more, through unopposed use of the technology.
- 5.4.5 Consequently, the only advice (s)he gives on the subject seems to be to support - nay demand - the introduction of such technology at the fastest possible rate, and to hell with temporary discomforts of workers on sped-up production lines and ex-workers struggling to stay on the dole. I submit that the correct tactic is always to give support to a struggle for workers to be consulted before introduction of new technology, and to guide the demands of militant workers so that they encompass the distribution of a sizeable proportion of the extra wealth generated thereby among the workers, in terms of:
- a. shorter working hours;
 - b. more pay and;
 - c. better working conditions.

Lest this tactic be seen as economism, I shall expand on the first two aspects in my next section. The third will have to wait until a later section, where its expansion is more appropriate.

- 5.5.1 Even the author apparently applauds the first aim. However, (s)he only considers the short-sighted 35-hour week campaign. After many decades 'in the mill', it is as yet applied only rarely, and has been out of date for the past five years. To absorb existing mass-unemployment, the demand should be for a 25-hour working week. For the time being, that would

allow consumerist workers to hold two jobs without displacing other workers from the workforce. However, an eye would need to be kept on the accelerating rate at which people-replacing devices are being introduced: within a decade we should probably need to demand a 20-hour week or less.

- 5.5.2 More pay would need to encompass a reversal of the erosion in value of net take-home pay over the past five years, for each industry and each category of worker. The political implications of this should be obvious, in respect of increased taxation, reductions in welfare services and increases in retail prices resulting from the Fraser government's redistribution of income policy over the past four and a half years. I have particularly in mind at the moment the need for political/economic education of workers such as the 200 in the retail trade who petitioned their trade union not to ask for a wage rise recently. What a commentary this is on our inadequacies as a leadership!
- 5.6.1 Unemployment is another subject that I have mentioned only in passing and in part. I want now to concentrate on the author's general attitude to this, expressed in many places throughout the article. We are correctly told that this has traditionally arisen as a result of capitalism, specifically as its effects lead to cyclic overproduction/underconsumption periods.
- 5.6.2 However, the author's polemic jungle becomes somewhat impenetrable. We are first told in section 16 that the "industrial reserve army" grows as a result of burgeoning capitalist development. Later in the same section, its growth is attributed to economic stagnation. Elsewhere entirely, we are told that it gets mopped up as a result of increasingly applied technology. It seems the author does not distinguish between the potential for mass-unemployment which results from de-skilling, the eventual increase that has traditionally occurred in the labour force when new technologies have been applied, and the creation of mass-unemployment by the overproduction which is the later result of such application.
- 5.6.3 The fact that some inadequate analysts promote inadequate political/economic schemes apparently aimed at retaining capitalism but mitigating the effects of these cycles, is one thing. On the other hand, it smacks of throwing out the baby with the bathwater if we then go on to condemn any attempt to mitigate these effects while capitalism still exists. Surely, these struggles, among others, are a further means of educating workers to recognise the necessity to unite against capitalism and bring about its downfall. The author seems to see no possibility of such a tactic, which I shall show to be a rather urgent one.
- 5.6.4 In this respect, there is something fundamental which the author fails to realise. The present technological revolution represents, in its potential, a dialectic leap. (Two, actually, but I shall leave the second until later). Although the present mass-unemployment did arise in the traditional manner, it is not likely to diminish in the same manner. The fact that the only previous technological revolution in the history of humankind ultimately provided much more employment than existed before, is no guarantee that this one will provide a repeat performance.
- 5.6.5 At the time of the original industrial revolution, taking an average throughout all industries, a person plus a

power-operated machine could output about nine times the amount of goods that could be produced by an artisan in the traditional manner. As markets rapidly increased overall by very much more than ninefold, it became necessary to add more person-plus-machine combinations; approximately one such combination for every further expansion of 10% over the base figure before the revolution. In fact, markets expanded so rapidly that the artisans were eventually soaked up and it became necessary to displace the peasantry into the towns to provide additional factory-fodder. However, the increasingly common situation with the present revolution is that the mere addition of machines is enough to increase output almost to any limit, with only marginal extra employment to provide additional maintenance, absorbing only a tiny minority of those already unemployed directly as a result of the new technology.

- 5.6.6 Again, during the original industrial revolution, a considerable increase in overseer functions was needed. This was to maintain efficiency commensurate with the potential of the new factories: maximisation of output, maintenance of product-quality; monitoring much more complex accounting parameters consequent on division and departmentalisation of labour; minimising factory overheads; assessing future markets, etc., etc. (Incidentally, this facilitated industrial discipline among other things. Communist production will not, as the author seems to imagine, be able to dispense with all these overseer functions, merely alter the significance of some aspects of their use). However, all these functions can now be performed by electronics and servo-mechanisms more accurately, more promptly and responsively, and in finer detail, than by people.
- 5.6.7 Finally, the original industrial revolution gave rise to the need for an enormous labour-force to produce the capital equipment needed to keep face with the expansion of factories producing for the general market. However, it is now possible to automate the production of automated equipment needed to produce consumer goods and services.
- 5.6.8 Taking these three considerations into account, it seems time we paid some very serious heed to a proper assessment of the tactics needed to ensure that, under capitalism, there is still a proletariat to be led in a couple of decades time!
- 5.7.1 Section 16, on page 47, concerns centralisation which, it appears, the author considers to be an unmitigated 'good thing'. I am puzzled, however, as to whether the distribution of electricity from centralised power stations via a decentralised grid is a 'good' or a 'bad' thing, given the polemic context.
- 5.7.2 Whichever it may be, there are a couple of dangers to extreme centralisation of the means of production which the author and many others seem to miss. The large complexes engendered thereby may or may not be more easily defended than smaller decentralised factories, against a proletariat bent on siezing industrial power in the course of a revolution. They would certainly present a concentrated target for sabotage by counter-revolutionaries, not to mention providing a convenient mass of human targets - presumably well-leavened with cadres - for bombardment.

5.8.1 I shall return to the theme of centralism shortly, but must lead up to it with a consideration of the author's attitude to what (s)he is pleased to call 'luddism'. Let me here and now make it quite clear; I am more opposed to luddism than the author is, judging by the reason for his/her opposition. I agree that there should be no campaign to resist and/or sabotage the introduction of new technology per se.

5.9.2 Resistance should be only against technology which:

- a. on the balance of probabilities is likely to be harmful to the environment, until accompanied by measures reasonably guaranteed to prevent or fully and rapidly reverse environmental damage, and/or;
- b. is likely to be used to worsen conditions of labour and/or eliminate workers from the workforce until accompanied by guarantees against such exploitation and unheeding waste of human potential.

Such resistance will, of course, become entirely unnecessary when we have a political and economic system from which exploitation has been totally removed.

5.10.1 I come now to another extremely important point concerning new technology, particularly with respect to its generation of conditions for centralisation of productive forces. The author quotes approvingly in section 24, a historically impeccable marxist analysis of the need, whilst still under capitalism, to agitate for new technological means to develop that centralism, as a means of breaking down skill, class and national barriers. However, here comes another dialectic leap which will send the author screaming to the luddites for protection. We are on the verge of an era when the use of electronics and servomechanisms in conjunction with satellites will render unnecessary the physical presence of any person in any specific location for the purpose of participating in the productive process (or distribution, or supervision, or decision-making, or professional, or, you name it). Even procreation (though hopefully not sex) will come within the scope of remote control. With few exceptions, work will be reduced to little more than pressing buttons occasionally to set up a new program not previously sequenced. Vocoders will automatically translate verbal communication, in real time, between people who have no language in common. And these are the better working conditions of my section 5.4.5 which, I submit, should form the basis of our demands whenever and wherever, under capitalism, they become economically feasible, and the workers concerned have been educated by us to be ready to back up such a campaign.

5.10.2 Consider the results of application, world-wide, of such technology. Physical centralisation (except of a world computer with back-ups) will have become a hindrance to the most efficient means to bring masses of people together in a common production process, exchanging their varied skills for the ability to press buttons, and communicating freely and cheaply with their fellow-exploitees from all other regions, countries and continents. At one fell swoop, everybody will be cheaply and readily in communication with anyone anywhere (multi-person conferences will cost slightly less per person than conversations à deux). Everybody will possess the same work-skills - virtually

none - and there will be no language barriers. If, under these circumstances, we cannot make our revolution, then Marx might as well not have bothered. And just think of the bonuses. No more energy wasted commuting to and from work. No more need for vast conurbations, which can gradually be dismantled. Instant access to well-organised teaching programs on any subject to a vastly higher level than Childrens' Encyclopaedias. etc. etc.

Some general considerations

- 6.1.1 I would like now to take up a few matters raised by the author in her/his reply to the critique. It is all very well to be ultra-marxist and state that "...the only way to liberate the productive forces is to smash the obsolete social relations." O.K., so go ahead and try smashing, right here and now, when the majority of workers haven't received or understood the message of what a social relation is, let alone that it is obsolete. See how far you get. Lenin made a takeover bid for a revolution that was already a going concern, but neither he nor his heirs and successors among the leadership of the proletariat has smashed them - on the contrary, they have been rebuilt to a new and less fragile specification.
- 6.1.2 Our revolution will occur, irreversibly, only when a significant minority of the proletariat have earned recognition by a significant majority, that they are a leadership to be trusted. This trust will be founded only as a result of a regular, continuous, successful practice of leadership, oriented towards engendering among the masses an adequate political understanding of the nature of capitalism, their own role in it, the need to smash it, and their own role in that smashing. This must mainly occur within specific day-to-day struggles in the workplace and in the streets. Success, in this sense, cannot include creating situations or, by default, allowing situations to arise, which lead in the long run to worse conditions for a majority, or even a significant minority, of people.
- 6.1.3 This requires not only marxist understanding, but its proper application to extremely detailed knowledge of science, hard and soft, pure and applied, and the ability to bring this understanding to bear on real, present-time situations. Hence the need for a leadership of the proletariat. And I cannot consider as a leader a person who criticises details of economism but urges one of its major themes - the automaticity of increasing class-consciousness brought about by the mere increasing application of technology to industrial expansion and centralisation. The new social/economic/political system for which we shall, hopefully be heading when we get it together, will include as one of its characteristics that an increasingly large percentage of the population will become interested in and capable of leadership. There will then be a consequent lessening of the danger that they may become misled by demagogues with the facile ability to convince large numbers of people that they are capable of leadership when they are not.
- 6.1.4 I reiterate; it is in the process of correctly leading workers in their workplaces on the issues in their workplaces, that the best opportunity arises for well educated, (in politics and science) cadres to draw the atten-

tion of the masses to the broader political matters outside their workplace which give rise to those issues, and thus to forge working class unity around its strategic target - an end forever to exploitation of person by person, and of resources without thought for the future of humankind. Let us not delude ourselves that we are approaching this goal of massive class consciousness when, as the author admits, "...even...(working) people call themselves 'middle class.'" It is, indeed, the author's extolled entitlement to conspicuous and wasteful consumption that has, for a couple of generations, diminished the class-consciousness of workers and sealed them into the self-concept of petit-bourgeois.

- 6.2 Of course "...there are many examples of technological change being accompanied by increased profits and a reduced pace of work with looser control of the workers." Does the author consider this an automatic result of the kind-hearted capitalists dispensing largesse from the extra profits accruing from that technology? Or must I again stress the obvious for the nth time; that in every case this has been the direct or indirect result of well-led workers fighting for and winning what was practicable? In a few cases, the confrontation would have been avoided by employers realising the potential diseconomies of not providing better wages and conditions, lest they lose skilled workers to their opposition.
- 6.3.1 I come, finally, to my last point of issue; the very marxist one made in section 38 of the reply to the critique. Yes, Marx and Engels did, indeed, consistently condemn "sentimental moral and psychological criticism against existing conditions" and instead "celebrate" these conditions as "a step forward" to "the real preconditions of the proletarian revolution." Later writers celebrated the rise of fascism and nazism on similar grounds. One would wish they all might have kept their celebrations a bit quieter. Their attitude in these matters has often been seen as that traditionally attributed to the male, scientifically practical, far-sighted, unsentimental, uncaring and exploitative archetype. Their objections were to attitudes traditionally attributed to the female archetype. It is an interesting commentary on received marxist ideology that, in marxist parties, it has generally been true that the highest praise that a female comrade might receive was that she was as good as a male one, i.e., that she had aspired to and attained the submergence of her traditionally female attitudes and the fullest exhibition of the traditionally male ones.
- 6.3.2 This I believe to be symptomatic of a major reason why, despite the continuing development of techniques of production under capitalism, marxist parties everywhere have consistently failed to create a revolution that has genuinely, over a significant period, decreased exploitation of a numerous class by a much less numerous class of people. They operate as if they were dealing with a mass of people whose attitudes were traditionally male, whereas constancy and consistency in those attitudes are no more natural to men than to women, but are an imposition of the values of capitalist society, on both men and women.
- 6.3.3 What I am getting at is, that marxists have continually made the error of applying the capitalist traditional ethic to address what capitalism has imposed on people, rather than addressing the real people constrained by those impositions. These people do have (sometimes expressible only in rudim-

entary form) human sentiments, human morals (in a broader sense than mere sexually exploitative 'morality') and human psychology. Until we take proper account of these things in planning and executing our campaigns - and I don't mean as a method of stimulus-response manipulation as in advertising campaigns - we are going to be rejected as a leadership by a vast majority of people, no matter how 'right' we might be, if only on what might be called a humanly instinctual and, I submit, exceedingly correct basis.



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Consider this:

" Let fury have the hour, anger can be power

D'you know that you can use it ?"

(from "Working For The Clampdown", by the Clash)

It's more rebellious than we've dared be for years.

Or what about:

" When they kick at your front door

How you gonna come ?

With your hands on your head

Or on the trigger of your gun."

(from "The Guns of Brixton", by the Clash)

How long has it been since we've raised the question of armed struggle as clearly as that ?

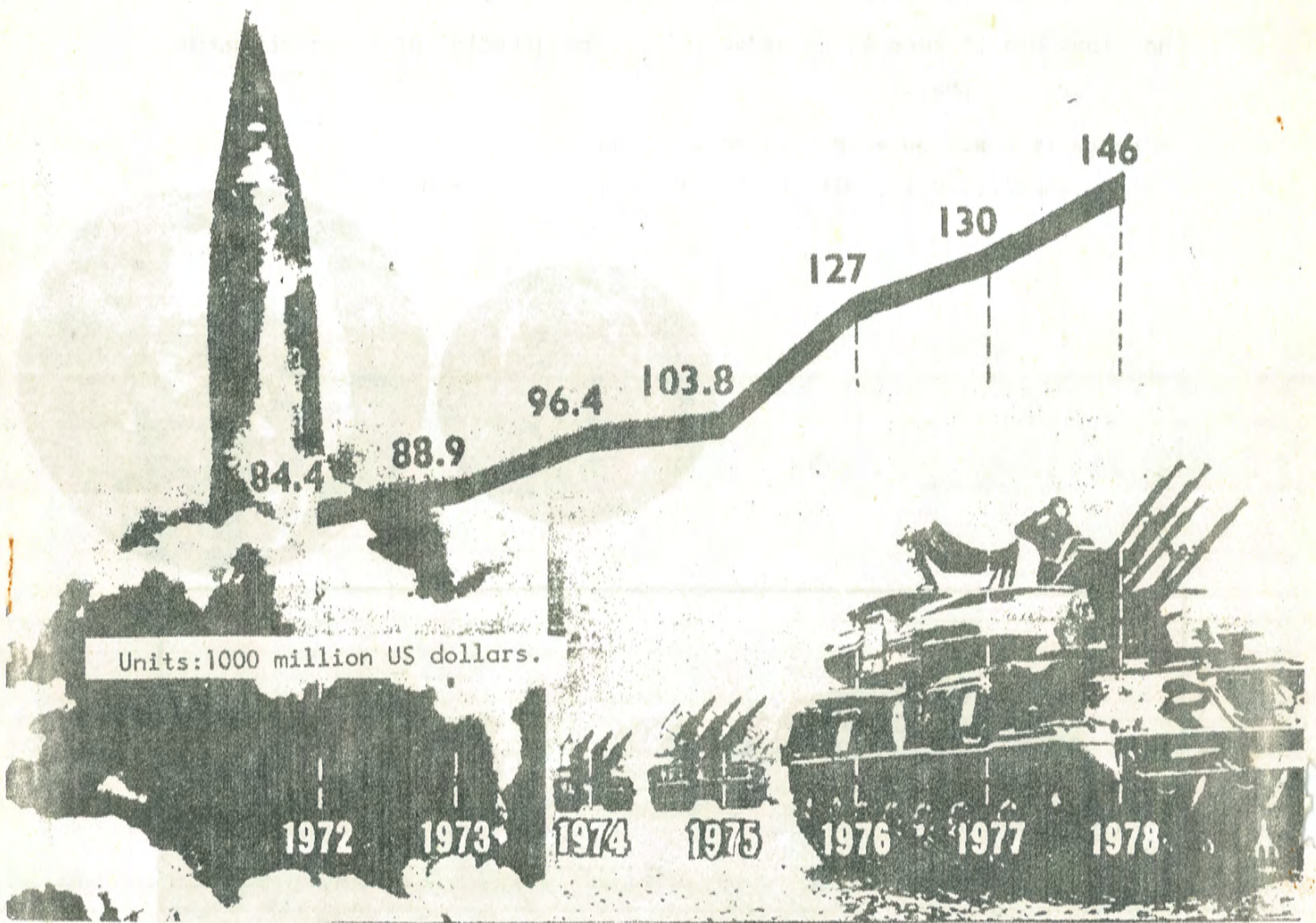
Perhaps from now on we should be chanting :

"Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, the Clash !"



Soviet Union OUT OF

- AFGHANISTAN
- ERITREA
- CZECHOSLOVAKIA
- VIETNAM
- LAOS
- KAMPUCHEA
- ETHIOPIA
- SOUTH YEMEN
- ETC.



Mounting Soviet Military Expenditure