

INDIA— PAKISTAN WAR

FREEDOM IS THE RIGHT NOT TO CHOOSE

THE BATTLE-LINES in the India-Pakistani war are being drawn up. The battle-scarred warriors are taking up their positions, veterans of many a campaign are sharpening their weapons for the fray. The Press, left, right and centre, are taking up positions on India. God is on the side of the big battalions and everybody loves a winner, so at the moment the trend is towards support of India.

The new *New Statesman* (which is merely the old politicians writ large on a different printing process) hired the eminently expendable right-wing labour Woodrow Wyatt to do a pro-India piece. The *Socialist Leader* has a fiery piece by Hira Mukherjee welcoming India's recognition of East Bengal. The *Mirror's* John Pilger went pro-Indian and today's *Mirror* carries a story (from a French trade official) that the Pakistanis bombed their own orphanage. John Grigg (ex-War Minister) writing in the *Sunday Times* declared 'I back Indira and freedom'.

Superficially, it would seem that India is in the 'right'—if one can ever define that word in relation to a nation-state. She had the sudden problem of the acquisition of millions of East Pakistani refugees dumped on her doorstep by the loathsome policy of Yahya Khan. East Pakistan has also a 'right' to self-determination, either within, or without Pakistan. What can be doubted is whether the method chosen—of modern war—is capable of settling the refugee problem and whether India has any sincere intention—and if she has, whether it can be carried out—of granting

freedom to East Pakistan, or East Bengal in the event of victory. As anarchists we doubt if the pretext given by India for her attack upon Pakistan is the only reason. It appears to be the most respectable cause of the war, and everyone knows if one makes a pre-emptive strike (in the jargon of military strategy) even in the form of arming guerillas, one is in a much stronger position. Pakistan's military pre-emptive strike failed to come off.

Finally, in this examination of objections one would doubt if modern warfare is capable of settling any international disputes, especially when the military equipment is extensively supplied by 'neutral' powers and backers are waiting in the wings, presumably ready to escalate the conflict if their protégé fails to succeed. Any rapid crumbling of the Pakistanis in the West would presumably draw in China, in the same way that any failure of India would bring in more Russian support.

It has been pointed out in the *Observer*, 5.12.71, by Cyril Dunn (their Indian-Pakistan reporter since 1958) that 'it has been difficult not to look quizzically at any statement of intent by India when she has taken up arms against Pakistan. True, the current operations by the Indian Army in East Pakistan are—obliquely at least—in support of a rebellion by East Bengal Muslims. . . . The implied aim is simply to clear a space in which the East Bengalis can set up their own democratic state and to which the millions of refugees forced out into India

may be returned. But', writes Dunn, 'a similar state of affairs existed in Kashmir in 1947. The Indian Army ostensibly went to the aid of the Kashmiri Muslims and were indeed welcomed by their political leaders. It was not until five years later that the chief of these, Sheikh Abdullah, came to the conclusion that the "special status" granted by India to Kashmir was being steadily eroded. He turned against Nehru and thereafter spent more than a decade in Indian jails. Pakistan's belief that Kashmir was being totally absorbed into the Indian Union was a prime cause of the 1965 war.'

The *Observer's* editorial of the same date says, 'Those who do not take India's claims [about East Bengal] entirely at their face value, believe that the numbers and political impact of the refugees in India have been exaggerated. They point out that most of the refugees are Hindus and would not in any case return voluntarily to East Bengal under a Muslim government whether independent or run from Rawalpindi. These sceptics suggest that the refugee issue is being used by the "hawks" in New Delhi as an excuse to effect a huge and lasting shift in the political balance of the sub-continent: the separation of East from West Pakistan would mean a blow to the very idea of Pakistan as a separate Muslim State and homeland and so become the first step to a long-dreamed-of reunification of the sub-continent. For a push in this direction the moment, it might be argued, is also favourable internationally. India's new treaty with Russia offers some reassurance

against Chinese intervention in support of Pakistan and in any case Peking itself seems now to be in a cautious mood.'

Parallels are tempting and dangerous: remember Edward Kennedy's Ulster-Vietnam comparison? But this India-Pakistan war is cursed and heightened by the same religious bigotry which infuses Ireland; it also possesses to an alarming degree the same great-power puppetry factors which make the Vietnam war so prolonged and bitter. It is ironic that the two great 'revolutionary' powers are behind the combatants

—how far behind we have yet to see.

China's embroilment in the successor to what Lenin called 'a thieves' kitchen' has publicised this Marxist-Maoist quarrel and exposed once more, if it were ever doubted, the United Nations' impotence since they are the lawmakers for the absolutely lawless—the States which constitute its membership.

To exercise freedom, is the right not to choose between Pakistan brutality and power-seeking and Indian hypocrisy and power-seeking.

JACK ROBINSON.

Defeating the Census

OUR COMRADE Dennis Gould scored a victory over the State. A minor one no doubt, but still it is encouraging. Dennis conducted his own defence and succeeded in establishing that the census form was wrongly addressed. He told the magistrates, 'This form is made out to Mrs. Ahmad, who is my common law wife and at no time was I asked if I was head of the household. I don't intend to be the head of the household. We share the household.'

This is a victory on a technicality, but even so it is a good thing to be able to outwit the authorities at their own game, and use their own rules against them. Our comrade never minced his words. He handed the census enumerator a card on which was written:

'Census officers. Sirs, I am opposed to the 1971 census on the grounds of gross abuse of civil rights in common law and civil liberties within our society. I shall call witnesses who have only filled in the form through fear of

penalties.' He added that he had confiscated the form to use in evidence. What a pity more people had not his courage! There can't be very many who actually like filling in census forms. If all those who disliked filling them in had refused, the census would have sunk without trace.

AND IN BELFAST

In Belfast alone over 15,000 people refused to fill in their forms. Bonfires of forms were organised, but the only comrade who received a summons was one already in Long Kesh internment camp. A number of priests have refused to do the forms, and have been fined £7 each. They are not going to pay, and say that they will go to jail if necessary. But this poses a difficulty for the authorities. The prisons are crowded. Crumlin Road jail was built to house 475, but at present there are 852 there!

M.H.

'Disciplinary Action' and Union Leaders

THE TUC HAS PUBLISHED its own industrial code as an answer to the document produced by the Government and which is to be presented to Parliament in the New Year. It is a 'guide for negotiations' entitled *Good Industrial Relations* and represents the attitudes and positions of the leadership of the trade union movement. Vic Feather, General Secretary of the TUC, has said: 'This is not just a document for trade union negotiations, but a contribution to good industrial relations' and 'I think it is a real recipe for peace'.

What is interesting and crucial for trade union militants is the TUC's thinking on discipline and agreements. It says that: 'Trade unionists expect the employer to keep his side of the bargain and observe an agreement; he is entitled to look to the union and its members to do the same. Unions should therefore take steps to ensure that there is full observance of agreements by their members, stewards and full-time officials.'

The document goes on that where there is 'persistent breaches' of agreements, 'the union may have to consider

whether disciplinary action is appropriate, since it has the duty to ensure that wherever possible its members observe the collective agreements to which it is party'.

How wonderful it would be for trade union leaders if 'industrial peace' could be achieved. Life would be so much easier, but unfortunately for them, the relationship between employer and employee ensures conflict. Agreements and negotiating procedures are the rules set out to keep this conflict in check and to channel it harmlessly away. Elaborate negotiating machinery slowly turns over and deals with every kind of claim and dispute. Rank and file trade unionists are exhorted to respect and abide by these procedures and agreements when they know that the employer breaks them any time it suits him.

DOING THE GOVERNMENT'S DIRTY WORK?

The TUC speaks of disciplinary action against workers who break such agreements. Isn't this what the Government's Industrial Relations Bill is all about and

isn't the TUC supposed to be opposed to such legislation? Is it that the TUC intends to do the Government's dirty work for them as they proposed when the Labour Government withdrew the legislation they entitled *In Place of Strife*?

Union leaders are men who are interested in power. Many may feel that once they have obtained these positions, they can carry out a militant policy. It is not that we suspect their intentions, but the structure of the unions and the nature of the agreements hold them captive.

There is no doubt that the election of 'left wingers' to union executives reflects a change in the thinking of the rank and file. Members want a more militant policy and a stand to be made against the policies of the Government which attack our standard of living and undermine basic civil liberties. However the result on achieving power is usually that these same 'left wingers' are as ineffective as the 'right wingers' they have replaced.

DALY'S FALL

A perfect example of this is Lawrence Daly, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers. He was elected in 1965 with the full support of the Communist Party, all the 'left wing'

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Close Oxford St.!

THE OXFORD STREET Action Committee has decided to close the street on the last Saturday before Christmas in protest at the destruction wrought by the motor car on the environment and on the people who inhabit it.

The Committee is formed from three groups, the Dwarves, the South East England Young Liberal Federation and Commitment. The Committee says:

'We have spent too long in petitioning, in letters to MPs, in quiet lobbying of Parliament. The time for politeness has gone. Mild constitutional means have produced no solution to the problem of the car and the vested interests which perpetuate its continued dominance of our cities. This is why, on December 18, we are calling on all Londoners to join us in taking back the streets which are rightfully theirs.'

The Committee has published a leaflet urging people to walk in the streets, play in the streets, plant Christmas trees in the streets and 'be Santa Claus in

the streets (who would dare arrest Santa Claus?).' People are advised to come in paper hats and gas masks, carrying flowers, musical instruments and incense, and to turn the demonstration into a festival. 'People spending Christmas alone in Earl's Court, Notting Hill Gate, Kensington, Islington and elsewhere are especially welcome.'

The Committee has also issued a manifesto which, after giving horrifying statistics of pollution and death, makes the point that 'it mustn't just stop at Oxford Street. The fight for our homes, health and environment must be carried on in every community around the country. It's Oxford Street now—your street is next!'

For details, contact:

Commitment House,
26 Grosvenor Road,
St. Albans, Herts.
Phone: St. Albans 50910
(Code 56 from London)

JOHN BRENT.

An Open Letter to the Guardian

HOW INCREDIBLE that the *Guardian* should say in its editorial (2.12.71) that 'it is a reasonable assumption that the 25 bomb incidents and two machine gun attacks listed by the prosecution in the trial of Jack Prescott and Ian Purdie were the work of some form of anarchist organisation'. The Angry Brigade have never claimed to be an anarchist organisation, and they have never had any reason to conceal it if they were. Their targets are institutions which anarchists detest, but so do many other revolutionary organisations also.

Anarchists turned to terrorism at the turn of the century. It was called 'propaganda by the deed', and was intended to arouse the people to take action against those who were exploiting and oppressing them. It did not succeed, and the anarchists have given up this method of action.

Unfortunately the use of the bomb has come to be associated in the popular mind with 'the anarchist', seen always as a vaguely Guy Fawkes-like figure in Jacobean hat and black cloak, although no one dressed like this for centuries, and other political movements from the

extreme Right to the extreme Left have also used terrorism and still do. The Palestinian guerillas and the IRA make no claim to be anarchists.

But far worse is the bombing by governments, who have destroyed whole cities, killing hundreds of thousands of people. Recently the Americans have exploded a bomb which the Angry Brigade could never make however hard they tried, a nuclear bomb. They chose to explode it in an area where earthquakes are common, and several major earthquakes have already occurred in this part of the world.

'Democracy', we are solemnly told, 'is a preferable political system because reasonable argument is put to the test of the vote and is assumed to prevail.' The word 'assumed' is good. In practice what we have is rule by the rich, and those who control the state bureaucracy. It is a totalitarian society in embryo. The Angry Brigade consider (and how is the *Guardian* to know that they did not think the problem out and discuss it rationally among themselves before taking action?) that it is no longer possible to change this state of affairs by legal means. The

decline of democracy in Britain has gone too far. If they had come to the anarchists we could have told them that, from our past experience, the use of terrorism is counter-productive, but they did not. We do not support their action, but we consider that they have a strong case against existing society, even if the methods they adopt to try to change it are wrong both from the moral point of view, in that it endangers the innocent, and from the practical one.

'Society has an absolute right to protect itself against terrorism.' If society is so concerned to protect itself, why was so little done to prevent the Americans, Russians, Chinese and French continuing to test nuclear bombs? Is it that society is only concerned to protect itself against the weak, not against the strong? The Americans and the rest are too powerful to be checked, but a small group making home-made bombs is easy to attack, and easy to wax self-righteous over. They possess no military power, apart from their toy bombs, and no vast propaganda machine.

The editorial goes on, quite rightly, to point out that the evidence against

Prescott and Purdie is unsatisfactory. The probability of the matter is that they had little if anything to do with the Brigade. The 15-year-sentence is of course monstrous, and is intended not to punish the guilty but to deter the youth from engaging in rebellion against the *status quo*. The other six awaiting trial are no doubt being held in reserve as future scapegoats and deterrent victims. There is no evidence that the Brigade itself has been touched at all. No doubt they are all at liberty and planning new actions.

'Society sometimes has itself to blame for the violence of its rebels.' What! In this so-rational democracy? I can't believe it. Well, well, who would have believed it? And what about the nuclear bombers, the International Angry Brigade? Are they children of deprived parents and poor homes and unsatisfactory environments? Is anyone going to do anything about them? Psycho-analyse them? Not on your life. Because they have power. They can kill the world if they like, and everybody will applaud them—while they are still alive to do it!

EDITORS.

Shifting Loyalties & New Alliances in Ireland

APPARENTLY PAISLEY has said that on all social and economic issues he agrees with the SDLP. The Irish question will be solved by Irishmen and not by 'foreign troops'. If the theocratic/Catholic elements in the Southern Constitution of 1937 were removed, together with changes on divorce, contraception, etc., the way would be open for eventual reunification. Rumours have it that Paisley has had secret talks with Provo leaders.

At the same time Bole, an ex-Unionist MP, has called on Protestant workers to ensure that the Unionist Party breaks its connections with the Orange Order. On the streets bitter splits have occurred (including murder and IRA-attributed bombings in pubs) between Paisley and his 'steady, boys' line, and McKeague with his 'strike now' line, while Bunting is also re-entering the scene as Paisley 'sells out'.

The big question is whether Paisley will be totally repudiated by his Protestant constituency. Probably partially at any rate, but even so he will have laid foundations for eventual class unity in so far as the 'unthinkable' has been at least planted in the minds of thousands of Protestants, however much they at this stage still dismiss it as a 'sell out'.

The rest is my speculation. The Irish Protestants are not 'colons' who must be fought as white Algerians or white Kenyans were fought. They have been there hundreds of years. They have plenty of guns, they are determined to stay and, for the most part, they are workers or the equivalent of 'poor whites' or 'petits blancs'. Any serious attempt to escape from the reactivist politics of inter-class feuding must there-

fore bend over backwards to shake the Protestant working class from their traditional allegiance by not allowing the slightest sectarian identification to be made. PD started on this road and is still paying the price in terms of isolation.

That class-unity is not impossible is shown by the massive marches and street fighting between Belfast workers of both communities, on the one hand, and police and troops on the other. That was in 1932, just a dozen years after major sectarian pogroms in the same city, themselves the Orange Order's ideological reaction to the unity of the Belfast General Strike of 1919. After 1932 the bourgeoisie were able to reactivate the traditional antagonisms which led to the pogroms of 1935. The present events themselves fall into this pattern since the early Civil Rights demonstrations and one or two PD demonstrations did actually succeed in attracting Protestant working class people in some numbers.

Events in the South could well hold the key. The position of the 'Officials' is hopelessly compromised by the Stalinist theory of one revolution at a time (national, then socialist), the appeal to the 'progressive elements' of the 'national bourgeoisie' (who have always veered back towards the colonial or neo-colonial power-structure and against revolution as the working class get under way), and their refusal to challenge the established position of the Irish Catholic Church (many Official stalwarts are devout Catholics). The Provos are even less socialist in theory, often expressing a reactionary petit-bourgeois or peasant opposition to 'Reds', but their social composition is

younger, 'rougher', approaching lumpen, and volatile. Both groups are doubtless highly authoritarian, but both groups have the grateful support of thousands of Catholics who believe (rightly) that without them, estates like Ballymoney would have been completely overrun by the UVF, backed implicitly by sections in the Army.

The question arises: can a new organisation/movement emerge which will fulfil the following criteria?

(1) Socialist, seeing the inseparability of socialist and national revolution, North and South;

(2) Having support of the kind the IRA and the Provos have at present, i.e. a social/cultural phenomenon involving all sections of the oppressed Catholic working class communities in the North;

(3) Being explicitly anti-Rome and anti-Conway, pro-contraception and divorce, anti-special schools, etc. This is the precondition for encouraging Paisley/Bole-type developments in the Protestant working class. It is also the precondition for an effective movement in the 'priest-ridden' South, which relates to women and the peasantry.

Eamon McCann, Bernadette Devlin and others in the South are currently trying to build a new kind of movement. (Round Derry it's the Derry Socialist Resistance Group.) On point (1) they are in the clear, though, as IS Marxists, they maybe concentrate overmuch on the male worker, rather than also on young lumpen and women. The lumpen 'rough' is preponderant on many Catholic estates, but is also a major category in Paisley's constituency. On point (2) they clearly intend to build a social movement, not just political alliances. On point (3) they probably don't go far

enough, again related to their 'point of production' ideology, which seeks unity with Protestant workers against the bosses. Fair enough, but the 'super-structural' and 'outside' factors such as religion and community issues have to be fought at the same time, to lead Protestant workers to lay aside their very real fears about Papist/Lynchite supremacism.

PD, with a different class composition (a 'higher' centre of gravity), have at times fallen into the trap of 'kick Paisley, kick the Pope' position, which ignores the specific problems of relating to the religious/community factors in concrete terms. Of course Paisley must eventually bite the dust as a religious bigot and authoritarian. But the social composition of his following is such that it hates Faulkner and the gentry-bourgeoisie quite as much as it hates Catholics—indeed more, for there is honour among enemies where there is none for 'traitors', traitors from a remote class position moreover. The structural importance for events in the North of a struggle in the South against the Established Church needs to be emphasised more, especially as such a struggle might possibly split the non-macho and non-reactionary elements from the Provos and the non-Stalinist-straight-workers from the Officials.

PD have the largest number of worked-out 'libertarians' in the North, and there is something of a peasant-anarchist tradition in parts of the South. It is likely that a strong libertarian current will be generated by the experience of many independent centres of struggle, and the fact is that neither the Officials nor the Provos have got people sewn up in a unitary organisation, and each new organisation will tend to weaken the monolithic pretensions of all of them. The situation itself is forcing people to think for themselves.

Maybe the hope of class-unity in Ireland is just a dream. Even if it is, there is no harm in pointing to another: the fantastic repercussions in Britain as a million Paddies explain the situation to a British working class, previously completely fooled by the fascist news-coverage. The only danger would be if the British ruling class cottoned on to the dangers of a socialist (even more a partly libertarian) revolution in all-Ireland. Not only would they be expropriated—a thing Heath and Co. would not mind in exchange for being rid of the trouble Ireland is causing—but the

send shock waves through the ruling groups. However, they can be taught lessons in other ways.

Fraternally,
FRANCIS DRAKE.

Some Census Information

Dear Friends,

Impertinent questions I ignored and left blank. Others reflected or indicated lifestyles and attitudes I couldn't easily relate to. Some particularly objectionable queries were answered with critiques, others with slogans. Dog and Cat were entered if only to assert that Spring Bank isn't a speciest stronghold. Precise information was impossible here. For obvious reasons, Dog will always have to be under six months.

Cat came from a local strip club, a wild thing, and her age is largely a guess. Grizzel, the naked, hairy, friendly demon, protective deity who lives here, is ageless. Furthermore, he's in the process of destroying the census records by magic. Grizzel is an archetypal anarchist and he pissed on the forms, or was it Dog or Cat.

Brightly Shining,
DAVE CUNLIFFE.



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publish
FREEDOM weekly
and distribute
ANARCHY monthly

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 01-247 9249
Entrance Angel Alley,
Whitechapel Art Gallery exit,
Aldgate East Underground Stn.
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revolution would provide a nearby model for British workers/lumpen/women. At present however, Powell is insisting that 'Ulster is British' in a constitutional-blinkered sort of way, and not for fear of anti-imperialist revolution upsetting metropolitan stability.

KEITH PATON.

Prescott & Purdie

Dear Comrades,

It was a joy to read N.W.'s excellent article covering the mistrial of Jack Prescott and Ian Purdie. It is nonetheless necessary to question one or two central points made.

Firstly N.W.'s view of the 'tragedy of the Angry Brigade saga' is that there 'has been no political gain of any kind'. This despite N.W.'s contention that 'They (the State) are playing straight into the hands of the Angry Brigade, since it is now becoming true that we are all angry and getting angrier, and are finding it more and more difficult to remain content with agitation and propaganda'. What is this if it is not the essential achievement of the Angry Brigade? Is it not a significant 'political gain'?

Certainly the State has shown it's scared to hell—to those who didn't already know—by the Brigade and the developing atmosphere of liberation. 'We had best be on our guard' quacks the

Daily Telegraph but they don't understand what they have to be on guard against.

Secondly, I think there is an area which I'll call 'artistic' but might be called 'unconscious' in which the Angry Brigade speaks to a soul force in our society. I think the message of the Angry Brigade is understood and appreciated by a lot of people in our society, many more than the anarchists or the *Daily Telegraph* believe; it's a message the State got and

LETTERS

we know the ruling class is ruling because it has an instinct for the factors that endanger its rule.

Jack Prescott got 15 years because the actions associated with the Angry Brigade scare the State. I bear in mind the unhappy background of the State officials

concerned, which has undoubtedly contributed to the positions in which they find themselves. If I did not also regard the judge as a tool used by people even more sinister than him and, I suspect, more insane, I should find it easy to agree with N.W. that 'we would find it difficult to feel the slightest twinge of regret' if he were bombed or even killed. Stern but just, such an action would

Norway News

Dear Comrades,

It has been a long time since I wrote to you last. The struggle here in the north of Norway is going quite well. New groups have been built.

'The right to strike, the power to strike', has been translated into Norwegian and was issued in our local paper, *Sort Kamp* (Black Struggle). The pamphlet of Malatesta 'Vote for What' has also been translated and will be out in the beginning of 1972.

Long live anarchism! Good luck in struggle! Happy New Year.

Greetings from,
THE ANARCHIST LEAGUE OF BODØ.
c/o Rune Hagen,
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8000 Bodø, Norway

