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**NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
AND IMPORT CONTROLS**

POLAND

A POPULAR DEFENCE
PART TWO

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THE MARXIST

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND IMPORT CONTROLS

We consider that the following developments are taking place within the context of a de facto growing alliance between China, Japan, the EEC, the Third World and America against the increasing threat of Soviet expansionism, and a Third World War.

The two superpowers, in their quest for world hegemony, are contending with each other for the middle ground. Each seeks allies in order to strengthen its own position in relation to the other and, in the process, tries to establish hegemony over them.

Since the Second World War the biggest political, military, and economic threat to the independence of the Second and Third World countries was presented by the USA. This is now changing, with greater economic penetration by the USSR which also presents the biggest political and military threat to them.

The Second and Third World countries must, in their own interests, exploit the contradictions between the two superpowers to their own advantage.

While recognising the common interest of the Second and Third World countries in opposing both superpowers in the defence of their national independence, there are contradictions between the Second and Third World countries, and within these two groupings, which must be taken into account.

The main cause of these contradictions is imperialism.

Imperialism, whether social or of the Western classical type, is exercised through the medium of the market. In the case of social imperialism, primarily by the method of state trading organisations; in the case of classical imperialism, primarily through the transnationals.

Imperialism by its nature disregards national boundaries when such boundaries restrict its freedom to move capital to the most profitable locations and to exploit the world's natural resources to its own advantage.

The transnationals of the West and the state trading organisations of the social imperialists espouse the international division of labour to exploit, even create, contradictions between the workers of different countries.

The World Bank, the IMF, and similar international bodies have, as their main function, the preservation of such relations between states as will foster the continued development of monopoly capital. The Committee for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), while maintaining the domination by social imperialism of states in Eastern Europe and others within its sway, plays a vital role in the USSR's strategy of world domination.

The theory that national independence is an outmoded concept reflects the economic and political interests of both the transnationals and social imperialism.

The Brezhnev doctrine of Limited Sover-

eighty and the American assertion of their "right" to "leadership of the free world" express the interests of different groups of imperialists.

We oppose any arrangement within the EEC which subverts national independence and the sovereignty of member countries to one or more groups of imperialists.

In order to maintain the maximum independence a country must aim to possess an economic base that is capable of satisfying as many of the needs of its people as possible.

The present system of multilateral trade is predominantly under the control of imperialism.

The New International Economic Order that the Third World is asking for must, in the first instance, be built on the basis of the restricting of the scope and extent of the exchange of unequal value.

Each branch of industry in each country will have to restructure its productive potential to satisfy the needs of its own people, plus the exports required to pay for necessary imports.

In imperialist states this may involve a scaling down of some branches of industry. In Third World countries the reverse measures would be applicable, with the "scaling up" of some industries and with less priority given to exporting industries.

The logical conclusion of this process is that Britain will import only such items as cannot be produced in Britain; and that other countries will import from Britain only such items as they cannot produce themselves.

Self-reliance for Britain thus implies that self-sufficiency will be the principal aspect of the British economy.

The process of scaling down referred to above will involve the closure of major parts of many industries. This will be accomplished by the process of capitalist competition for the home market and a declining export market.

Decreased production and increased productivity will reduce once major industries to relative unimportance in human employment terms.

The self-reliant economy is thus left with two problems:

- a) How to support its people
- b) How to find jobs for its people

The non-productive sector contributes nothing towards a); in fact, it does the reverse. The automated sector contributes little towards b).

The self-reliant economy will, therefore, be obliged to develop the non-automated productive sector.

It is in this context that we oppose the closing down of much of Britain's labour intensive and moderately capital intensive industry.

The immediate problem in Britain is to reverse the decline in the manufacturing base.

The path being followed by the Government is the classic one for capitalism. The aim is to drive down the living standards to such a level that will make goods in Britain more competitive with those produced else-

where thus, it is hoped, leading to a relative expansion in manufacturing production in this country.

As this policy is being followed by the capitalist class in every country, it is essentially one of getting the workers in each country to see who are prepared to accept the lowest standards.

We are advocating a policy that would limit and then eliminate such competition between workers, the first step being the imposition of import controls.

Some questions of tactics.

One trigger point could be when import penetration has reached a level approximately equal to exports of a particular commodity. It goes without saying that we would not distinguish between 'foreign' imports and those produced abroad by British transnationals. Another factor for consideration would be to maintain an overall trade balance with a particular country.

In the main, the imposition of import controls would affect the industrialised countries the most. This would undoubtedly lead to retaliation, but what would be the loss?

In the baldest sense specialisation of production enables goods to be produced for a lesser amount of labour time. But a high degree of division of labour internationally destroys wealth-creating capacity and hence undermines self-reliance.

Domestic Economic Policy

History shows that the upturn in the trade cycle is brought about by an increase

in domestic capital investment.

With this in mind, (bearing in mind that we still live in a capitalist society), we should advocate the direction of capital investment that would be socially beneficial.

In practice this would mean investment in, for example, electrification of the railways, wave and tidal power. The extension of public transport could also be regarded as a form of investment to attract goods and people away from private transport.

This should generate purchasing power that would, in turn, increase demand for consumer goods.

Finance should also be made available for research and development into alternative technology, including alternative sources of energy.

The Third World

We support the forces both at home and in the Third World who are pressing for the development of technologies that are appropriate to the conditions in each country.

We support all forces that are for Third World and Second World countries to develop their economies along the lines of self-reliance and balanced development.

Some more questions of tactics

Some of the internal forces that could be mobilised along these lines would include the industrial workers who have been hardest hit by 'free trade', Trade Unions such as the TGWU which is taking a strong line on restricting imports, the unemployed whose conditions are coming under attack

POLAND

At a time when socialism should be most clearly demonstrating its superiority over capitalism, an avowedly socialist state has got itself in such a mess that it cannot feed, and has lost the confidence of, its own people. It is in debt to capitalist banks to the tune of £16,665 million and cannot afford to even pay the interest on it, and is defaulting on its commitments to its trading partners in the C.E.M.A.

In stead of relying on the working class in the political sense the united workers' (Communist) Party has only relied on it as a workhorse, forever expected to make continual sacrifices to maintain the system.

Over the past twenty years or so the Polish working class has, by its militancy and heroism, brought about the downfall of one Party and government leader after another. The old dishards remained in the driving seat but after each battle the working class became more united than before. The formation of Solidarity is the highest point reached so far.

During this period the governing Party and Government elite has shown itself to be incapable of solving the economic and social problems which its own policies created. Consequently it has become isolated from the people.

The inability of the Party to rule in the old way because of increased resistance from the working class demoralised the rank and file of the Party, particularly in the factories and mines. They were torn between loyalty to the decisions taken by

the Party hierarchy, and loyalty to their class.

This, and the widening divisions within the leading bodies of the Party about how to deal with the economic crisis and the incipient political crisis being created by the rapid growth of Solidarity, contributed to its decay as a political force.

As a consequence of the Party's failure to perform its role as the leading detachment of the working class, the void was filled by Solidarity which gained the initiative and wrung concessions out of the Government.

For one reason and another many of the concessions were not implemented, certainly not as quickly as Solidarity members wished. As a consequence frustration developed, and with it the growth of ultra-leftist tendencies.

The increased frequency of strikes was, to some extent, a manifestation of this tendency.

If the economy had been in better shape things would not have come to a head so quickly but as it was, production had fallen by between 20 and 30% below the level of the previous year, which was itself a bad year compared with the year before that.

The appointment of Jaruzelski, an army general, was a clear indication that time had run out. His negotiations with Solidarity were an attempt to either reach a working agreement with the union or, if

that proved impossible, to begin a process of isolating the ultra Left which by that time was beginning to dominate its leadership.

About this time, according to reports, growing numbers of people were tiring of the constant state of tension and food shortages. This was a sign that Solidarity was in danger of losing support and possibly the initiative which it had held for many months.

The union was therefore faced with but two options - one was to accept, and attempt to convince its membership that reform of the system was still possible, but that it would be a fairly long drawn-out political process which would have to be carried out in an atmosphere in which the strike weapon became the last, rather than the first, resort.

The alternative was to conclude that reform of the system was not possible, and to mobilise the people around demands that it knew the Government could not accept, with the object of overthrowing it. The Radom Conference embarked on the latter course.

According to tapes of the proceedings publicised by the Government, and not repudiated by Solidarity, resolutions were passed which called for the union to put out a referendum asking the people whether they wanted a Communist Party, calling for the abolition of the Party organisation in the factories, the forming of Solidarity-led workers' militia to occupy key installations.

The decision to call for a general strike and street demonstrations on December 17th, the anniversary of the Gdansk shootings in

1970 seemed, together with other resolutions, to indicate an attempt to use the occasion to seize power.

The remark, "We have now embarked upon the dismantling of the present system", attributed to Walesa, seemed to underline all that had gone before.

The thing that appeared to be absent from the whole proceedings was even the slightest indication what Solidarity, or rather its leadership, intended to do with state power if it managed to obtain it.

That fact should be of concern to every Socialist. It is one thing to aim to deepen socialist democracy and improve the working of the socialist system. It is an entirely different kettle of fish to take actions which would turn the clock back.

However, the issue to be decided, for good or evil, was whether Solidarity could seize power. Its ability to disrupt the economy and to paralyse the Party and the Government had been amply demonstrated, but seizing and holding power is a different matter.

One of the conditions for revolution did exist - namely, the inability of the old ruling class to rule in the old way and the refusal of the subject class to be ruled in the old way. The other key essential, the existence of a highly disciplined political party with a political programme which represents the interests of the subject class, does not appear to exist.

The key to Solidarity's decisions at the Radom conference was that the Government and the Party would surrender power peacefully. This seems to be borne out by a

Solidarity leader who was abroad at the time of the military takeover. He said that the Union had made plans for the eventuality of a Russian invasion but none for action by its own Government.

No account seemed to have been taken of the likelihood that a threat to the state would act as a catalyst to alter the balance of power within the Party, and thereby overcome the paralysis that had affected it.

Solidarity's apparent belief that the Government would be immobilised by the refusal of the armed forces to fire on the people was naive. It ignored the well-known fact that every State has become counter insurgency minded and has created specialist armed units that are ideologically conditioned to fire on their own people if ordered to do so.

On the other side of the fence, the hands of Jaruzelski and those who supported him were forced by the rapidly deteriorating economic situation and the knowledge that Warsaw Pact forces would intervene if it became obvious that the Poles could not resolve their own problems.

In those circumstances the only options open to Jaruzelski were either to allow Solidarity to take power without a fight, or to make an attempt to strengthen the position of the State relative to Solidarity in order to negotiate later from a position of strength.

Any analysis of the situation in Poland at the present time must involve a certain amount of speculation, but the conclusion which has been drawn by most commentators that the military takeover was comparable

to those regular occurrences in South America is, in our view, wide of the mark.

It is generally acknowledged that the top echelons of the Party were moribund due to internal dissension, a kind of stalemate. As a result the diehards were able to block moves by the 'progressives' (for want of a better word) and the impasse could not be broken through normal inner party procedures.

Secondly, any attempt to clamp down on strikes would, according to most observers, be blocked by parliament.

The 'coup' was the only way of circumventing both these obstacles and it seems likely that it was the 'progressive' faction that took the initiative.

The evidence pointing to this is that the military government has arrested three former Prime Ministers, four Deputy Prime Ministers, and other Party functionaries, but more importantly, it is publicly stated that a future government cannot go back to the old ways, that reforms already agreed will be continued, and that Solidarity has an important role to play. Its activities have been suspended, not banned.

The firm declaration that Poland's adherence to the socialist road is not open to negotiation is, at the same time, a rebuff to those in Solidarity who are working for a return to capitalism.

(Walesa, in an interview with Playboy magazine, is reported to have declined to say how the near-bankrupt economy could be rebuilt, except to say, "Poland must be different from what it is today, based on sound laws and principles of profit.")

An article in Xinhua, 18th December, headed "Polish military to continue democratization, reforms" reports:

The Polish military Council of national salvation in a statement Wednesday declared that "there is no turning back from the fundamental premises of the process of democratization initiated last year".

The Council said that it is resolved "to go on following the course of reaching agreement with all social forces which uphold the supreme interests of the socialist state of Poland".

It noted that forces hostile to the socialist state alleged that the state of siege meant the blocking of the road of democratization and renewal. "In view of this, the military council of national salvation makes the following declaration: the Council's aim is not to revive the methods of rule and the modes of social life of before August 1980."

It explained that the creation of the Council and the harsh restrictions under the state of siege were "essential" because the process of renewal was disrupted by forces hostile to socialism and stability of the country.

"Anarchy is the negation of democracy. The firm suppression of lawlessness and anarchy is the very first condition for a renewed undertaking of the process of reforms" the statement said.

The Council promised that as soon as law and order is restored, "reforms will be started and continued with full

energy, as will activities aimed at a still more profound reconstruction of the structures and mechanisms of social and political life, which do not correspond to contemporary needs.

The statement said: "The people responsible for taking Poland into crisis have been isolated. The purge of the apparatus of authority of people who are double-dealers, or are incompetent and who cannot cope with the current tasks has been speeded up.

"A relentless struggle has been launched against manifestations of unbridled criminality and speculation there is continuation of the activity aimed at introducing economic reform, which particularly requires order and efficient functioning of the structures."

The Military Council concluded by emphasising its resolve to continue to follow the line of consultation with all social forces which uphold the supreme interest of the socialist state of Poland. At the same time, it will most resolutely do away with those forces which attempt to scuttle this consultation."

The test of the Government's intentions will be whether it keeps to its promises, but that will not be its decision alone. No matter what happens to Solidarity as an organisation as a result of the present confrontation, the spirit which motivated it at the grass roots cannot be killed and the Polish state cannot, without courting its own eventual extinction, go back to the old methods.

The central problem facing the Polish

A POPULAR DEFENCE Part 2

In our last issue, we affirmed the principle that every sovereign state should possess the military means to protect itself against external aggression. We also said that for Britain and the rest of Western Europe the threat of aggression emanates from the USSR.

Despite some bellicose and contradictory statements made by members of the Reagan administration since then, it remains true that the military threat springs from the Warsaw Pact, under the command of the Soviet Union.

What defence does Britain need? One cannot seriously adopt a viewpoint on nuclear arms, NATO, weapons expenditure, or any other military problem without confronting this question. The purpose of our defence forces will determine their composition and disposition. Many on the Left hold the view that Britain only needs a 'workers' militia' to repel U.S. aggression. The CND wants Britain to leave NATO and rely on 'alternative defence' such as passive resistance and the economic blockade if the Russians ever invade.

We address this question not to them, but to people who believe our defence role should be aimed at strengthening our national independence within the framework of the existing alliances, and particularly to forging our common bonds with Europe against military, political or economic domination by either Superpower.

Ideally, a country's defence forces should deter aggression. If deterrence fails,

they should be strong enough to repel aggression, or at least withstand the onslaught. With these aims in mind, we put forward the following principles as applicable now, within the present context and essential for a popular defence.

Britain and NATO

1. Britain's armed forces must be structured to form part of the defence of Western Europe. (We stress Britain rather than the U.K: British soldiers have no right to be in any part of Ireland without the consent of the Irish people as a whole.) Britain is a member of NATO which comprises the US, Canada, Britain, West Germany, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Iceland, Greece and Turkey. Unless the burden of defending Western Europe is shared within NATO, the pressure to appease the Soviet Union will grow.

Furthermore, as a member of the EEC Britain is part of a political entity which currently offers the best framework to resist economic and hence political domination by the Superpowers. Britain's commitment to Western European unity will be properly gauged by her willingness to commit troops in the field.

2. NATO forces should not be employed anywhere outside the NATO area. Nor should they be used in any way within it to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, whether or not it is a member country. Hence the use of NATO personnel to reinforce the civil authority in the event of insurrection or civil disorder should be

expressly forbidden. It goes without saying that a "Rapid Deployment Force" for use in the Middle East and elsewhere is alien to this principle.

Countries outside the NATO alliance which feel the cold wind of expansionism by Russia or its allies should be encouraged to develop their own national, and then regional, defence forces. They could, indeed, receive arms supplies from the Alliance or members of it. But the presence of NATO troops on 'foreign' soil serves only to stir popular discontent. Here the European countries have interests quite distinct from those serving American imperialism. It is quite possible that the Americans will use the Russian threat as the excuse for intervention.

The Nuclear Option

3. There can only be one proper objective in possessing nuclear weapons: to deter aggression and thereby prevent war. The concept MAD (mutually assured destruction) offers the best hope at present of avoiding nuclear confrontation. Any weapons system or military strategy which envisages the limited use of nuclear weapons and thus "lowers the nuclear threshold" is a threat to peace and should be rejected.

The accepted NATO concept of 'flexible response' which legitimises the possible use of battlefield nuclear weapons in answer to a non-nuclear attack by Warsaw Pact forces is the example of such a strategy. The neutron bomb, or enhanced radiation warhead, the declared value of which is precisely to counter a massed tank attack, is the strategy in practice.

Certain military thinkers have already

rejected the idea of flexible response as lacking credibility. Nevertheless its very existence as part of the NATO doctrine is dangerous. We consider that Reagan should match Brezhnev's declaration not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

However, the paramount nuclear danger faced by Western Europe is not a statement of policy by an American leader but the Russian SS20 intermediate range nuclear missile. Estimates of the number deployed vary but undoubtedly there are now more than 200 ranged against Western Europe. NATO does not have an equivalent missile in Western Europe and to counter the threat the Alliance - at the request of certain West European members, not Washington's diktat - will station 462 Cruise and 108 Pershing II missiles in West Germany, Britain, and elsewhere from 1983.

Cruise has certain qualities which worry the USSR. It has a very low flightpath which enables it to travel at 600 m.p.h. beneath radar screens. It can also - like the SS20 - be fired from a mobile launcher. The missile sites cannot, therefore, be targeted. Each missile must be located before it can be shot down. We believe that Cruise will form a valuable shield in Western Europe's defences. It is simply unrealistic to view the decision to accept Cruise as merely an "escalation of the arms race".

Already the decision has led to pronouncements on arms limitation by Reagan and Brezhnev that neither would have made last year. It remains to be seen what progress can be made in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) which has now been convened, but at least Western Europe now has a bargaining counter.

Unlike Cruise, however, Trident would be under sole British control, while Cruise is an American missile and Britain only has the right to veto the firing of it from British soil. Britain should press for complete control of all weapons stationed here, Cruise included.

Army or Navy?

4. In its conventional forces Britain cannot continue to maintain an ocean-going navy, field armies and an all-purpose tactical airforce. The question is, where should the axe fall?

The maintenance of a Navy which has a major high seas role has been charitably described as "world power nostalgia". Its ostensible purpose is to protect trade routes, especially of Middle Eastern oil to the West. In reality, the Navy's function is to protect British imperialist interests at a staggeringly high cost.

The Royal Navy is, by nature, far more capital intensive than either the Army or the Air Force. 44% of the defence budget for 1981-1982 will be spent on equipment; and the Defence White Paper published in April highlighted that too much money is already tied up in ships and other vehicles and not enough in the weapons they need to convey.

We must, of course, maintain a ship-building capacity and an independent naval force for coastal and North Sea oil protection, but Britain's Navy is a remnant of its great power era. There is no reason, for example, why we should continue to patrol the coastal waters of independent states. If there is a case for patrolling European waters, the expenses and effort

The possession of a nuclear deterrent in the present circumstances is not therefore optional, but essential. Can the same be said for an independent deterrent?

Britain is suffering a recession and defence costs cannot be exempted from restrictions on public spending. Britain's defence capacity must be cut according to its cloth. Of course defence is fundamental to national independence. Like basic industries, transport networks, the health service, primary and secondary education, it cannot be allowed to disintegrate. But neither can it be isolated from economies.

In terms of weapons expenditure, this means Trident should be abandoned. The Trident missile is seen as the successor to Polaris, the British independent nuclear deterrent. Trident can be based on land or sea and has, therefore, a wider potential. However, its original estimated cost of less than £5 billion has already been well exceeded and, like all defence capital expenditure, one can accurately predict that the final figure will be considerably higher than is given now. Such projects as Trident develop a momentum of their own and no matter what the expense, a point will be reached where Government will cry, "We can't turn back now."

The military value of Trident is questionable and Lord Chalfont and several other defence strategists oppose it. Britain is at the stage of either developing its nuclear arsenal at the expense of its conventional forces, or vice versa. The expenditure on Trident will inevitably deepen our reliance on nuclear weapons. If the idea of a limited nuclear response to a conventional massed attack is unsound, then Trident is unjustified as an expense and a risk.

should be a common European one.

The pros and cons of concentrating the expenditure cuts in the Navy has been long debated in Parliament, the Times, and elsewhere. The defenders of the status quo point to Britain's "historic role" as a sea power; extol the contribution made by the Royal Navy since Nelson; and they accurately describe the starkest expansion of military power of the USSR as the Soviet Navy. It is also undeniable that the disruption which the Soviet navy could cause is considerable: 98% of petroleum, minerals, dry cargo and food entering and leaving the U.K. and Europe from the rest of the world is transported in ships. Defence of the sea lanes is seen as essential, not only to ensure trade but also to maintain armies fighting on the continent of Europe.

While these arguments are serious, we consider they are outweighed by the urgency of the times. We cannot expect to rely upon trade during wartime. This is why the policy of self-reliance assumes such strategic importance. Grasping this nettle now may serve to restore Britain's productive base in industry and to enlarge the area of land under cultivation for domestic food requirements.

Secondly, the conflict is likely to arise in Europe. The apologists of the maritime strategy are quite frank that we can only maintain a Navy by cutting our land forces. This would be a retrogressive step which would inevitably weaken European unity and resolve in the face of already superior Warsaw Pact forces.

Thirdly, the greater emphasis given to territorial defence, the wider the participation of the people. The primacy given to

high technology weapons in the field of battle is now being challenged on several grounds. We believe that the £175 million cost of a nuclear powered fleet submarine, or £120 million on a 'Type 22' frigate would be better utilised in training the civilian population in the use of modern portable weapons, or in providing a proper measure of civil defence in centres of population.

There are, of course, economies within the Army that could be made immediately to mitigate defence hyper-inflation with no loss of fighting capacity. The most important politically and economically is the standardisation of military equipment and the elimination of internal competition within NATO. It is estimated that up to one third of NATO's nominal strength in Western Europe is wasted on this account. The equipment of the Warsaw Pact is, of course, standardised.

On a lesser level, the Army Chaplain's Department - which manages to employ a major-general, eight full colonels, and twenty-five lieutenant-colonels - should be abolished, as should the Brigade of Gurkhas and all the panoply necessary only for ceremonial parades.

Civil and Democratic Defence

5. Defence measures against nuclear and conventional bombing, such as deep shelters for the civilian population, are an essential link in the country's armour. Shelters can minimise loss of life and their existence may well affect morale. Such is the pacifist propaganda about the coming nuclear war that the possibility of conventional attack is ignored. But carpet bombing can have a devastating effect. In

the last war the firestorms created by heavy aerial bombardment killed 60,000 in Hamburg and 135,000 in Dresden.

The CND normally offers two stark alternatives in its polemic: no defence - or defence capable of withstanding direct nuclear hits. This is a false choice. We cannot say with any accuracy what will happen in the event of a nuclear attack. Nor, evidently, can the unilateral disarmers.

In the pamphlet, "Civil Defence: the Cruellest Confidence Trick", Philip Bolsover says there is no defence against nuclear attack. But he also reveals the measures the Government has taken to ensure its survival:

"Secure, 50 feet below ground, the official few will be governing, even if as one TV commentator has said, there are only cinders to govern

There are to be no official shelters - except the deep one into which the Government itself will scuttle

The country would be divided into regions and sub-regions each with an underground headquarters (the Government itself would, of course, have a super-safe headquarters

So the regional seats of government and the sub-regions would be ready, with the administrators and the allotted quota of experts all comfortably settled in their deep bunkers
(Our emphasis)

The author is, of course, correct to attack the selectivity with which bunkers are to be provided. But far from campaigning for the extension of 'super-safe' bunkers, he wants the whole system dismantled.

Passive measures, however, cannot be ascribed the same importance of fighting capacity. Ideally, the shelters for the civil population would serve as springboards for attack, as in Yugoslavia in World War II, or in Vietnam when that country was fighting to liberate itself from America. But until territorial defence or defence-in-depth can be practically applied in this country, defence expenditure should be directed into the consolidation of our conventional forces and weaponry.

6. Can the armed forces be democratised? Some European Marxist-Leninists have given emphasis to the 'democratisation' of the services as an essential measure in a popular defence. Many democratic reforms proposed are, however, unworkable. The election of officers is not a realistic demand in either a bourgeois or a revolutionary army. Nor is it feasible that combat soldiers should have the right to decide tactics, how and when to engage the enemy. If the ordinary soldier could challenge the authority of his commanders in the field, he would vote to go home. It is curious that those people proposing such reforms ignore the harsh discipline that has characterised successful revolutionary armies.

Democratic discussion would have an impact in the political education of the troops. Unless soldiers are convinced of the justice of the fight, morale can falter. Free political discussion within the Army (as conducted, for example, by the Bureau of Current Affairs in World War II) might awaken some to the dangers of social imperialism and also provide an opportunity to discuss political issues which would otherwise not arise. The Russians have an ideological weapon which, to a greater or less-

COMMENT

With the acceptance by the miners of the Coal Board offer the likelihood of a clash between the Government and the big battalions of the trade union movement have almost vanished.

Although the Gormley leaflet may have had a marginal influence on the voting, the reaction to it of Scargill and McGeahy gives the impression that miners are not supposed to think for themselves but only to follow the advice of their leaders.

The result of the ballot clearly shows that the miners, like most of the organised working class, are not yet in the mood for a showdown with the Thatcher government.

There is a widespread feeling that there is no viable alternative to present government policies, and the financial pinch on a majority of the people is not yet severe enough to drive them to seek other alternatives.

Ideally it is the organised workers who constitute the leading and the main force in the fight against capital and in the ultimate, that is so. In present circumstances, however, it is possible that the frustrations caused by Government policies will build up most strongly among the unorganised and the unemployed.

The riots of 1981 are the tip of the iceberg and it is significant that they shock the Establishment a great deal more than did the reactions of the organised workers. The renewed emphasis given to youth unemployment after these incidents indicate

that the ruling class recognises where the most inflammable material is situated.

The economic and social problems of the unemployed in the over-fifty age bracket are certainly no less than those under twenty, but the flashpoint of the latter is much lower than that of the former. The name of the game, as far as the ruling class is concerned, is to play one generation off against another, and the unemployed against the employed and vice versa.

A working class person who has been without a job for any length of time gradually begins to adopt a different set of priorities from one who is still in employment, although their basic interests remain the same.

The person with a job is rightly concerned with maintaining the wages and conditions that have come to be associated with it, and tax and social security deductions are a source of continual irritation. To the unemployed this can easily be interpreted as greed, especially when wage increases are plussed up and passed on in the shape of higher prices for food, fuel, rates, fares, etc.

At the moment a good proportion of the long term unemployed have unemployment and redundancy pay to fall back on. As these become exhausted the contradictions will sharpen, not only in relation to the ruling class but also within the working class. The worker in employment will have to continue to defend his living standards but he will also have to learn to understand

how the frustrations of those who cannot find a buyer for their labour power drive them to acts of destruction of capitalist property as the only way open to them to make their presence felt.

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Fares Fair

The policy of most Labour Party-dominated local Councils is to increase its expenditure whenever possible, even on hare-brained schemes, in the somewhat vague belief that it will help counter the economic slump.

The Fares Fair policy of the Greater London Council is one exception. Although one could criticise some aspects of it, in general it is the only way to make a start at solving London's traffic problem.

The decision of the Law Lords that it was illegal came as something of a surprise, even to many Tories, and Lord Denning's observation that the publication of an electoral programme does not imply a commitment to carry it out has put the official seal on what has become recognised custom and practice.

The decision of the G.L.C. to go to the people on the matter is to be welcomed but there is growing suspicion that support for the Fares Fair policy, which cuts across traditional Party lines, is now being directed not to bring mass pressure on the Government to change the statutes which govern the L.T.E., but as part of a campaign to build up support for the return of a Labour government at the next election, maybe in about three years' time.

That feeling is strengthened by the ab-

sence of any motion in the House of Commons aimed at reversing the Law Lords' decision, and also by the fact that the London Assembly (ostensibly the means chosen to mobilise the people against that decision) has been scheduled for the end of February, only a few days before the new fares are due to come into operation.

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Meanwhile, the argument about whether production has moved up or down during recent months tends to divert attention from the main problem - unemployment, and gives credence to the unsubstantiated notion that a rise in production will automatically mean a fall in unemployment.

In the sweet bye and bye, so we are told, all will be well if we only leave our destiny in the hands of market forces. International developments point in the opposite direction.

International competition is now, in some areas, escalating into a trade war. The E.E.C., whose industries are badly hit by the recession, is greatly concerned about its collective balance of payments deficit with Japan. The Japanese consistently promise to do something about the problem, and just as consistently renege on it.

To the long running battle between EEC and US farming interests has now been added the war between the steel producers of the two continents.

It is possible that these and similar trade wars will result in a growth in protectionism, a 'solution' that the trans-nationals do not want but into which they may be forced in self defence. Working

class interests demand that we do not become embroiled in these trade wars but take advantage of the protectionist trends in order to take the first steps towards the building of a self-reliant economy in each country.

The U.S. demand for the EEC countries to impose sanctions on Russia for its alleged interference in Polish affairs is also, in part, a facet of the struggle between U.S. and EEC business interests.

If putting the straighteners on Russia was America's most immediate priority it would have included a ban on grain shipments on its embargo list. Its refusal to do so raises doubts about its immediate motives.

It is common knowledge that the U.S. disapproves of the deal whereby West German industry will supply equipment and finance to assist the Russians to exploit the huge Siberian reserves of natural gas. In return they will receive guaranteed supplies of that gas.

The main aim of the U.S. campaign is to sabotage that deal. Events in Poland are the excuse, not the reason.

Poland

In the few weeks that have elapsed since the other article on Poland in this issue was written, the internal situation in that country has changed in the sense that the drift towards anarchy has been halted, and with it the threat of Russian intervention.

From the point of view of the degree of control which the working class can directly exercise over events, the situation is worse than it has been for many years.

On the surface, the struggle within the United Workers' Party seems to be going in favour of the hard-liners but against this must be balanced the virtual certainty that the ruling class can no longer rule in the old way for a sustained period of time.

The working class has not been helped by the antics of Reagan which must have created illusions that if the class persisted in its confrontation with the state machine, help of a practical and direct nature would be forthcoming; a most unlikely circumstance.

It is clear that U.S. imperialism has cast the Polish working class in the role of permanent destabiliser, a Trojan horse within the Soviet empire.

Seen through the eyes of generals, it is quite legitimate to use people in this way but from a standpoint which regards the interests of the people as paramount, it is unacceptable.

In Poland, as in every other intermediate country, the struggle for working class power is, in present conditions, indissolubly linked with the need to strengthen national independence and oppose super-power domination.

The success of the struggle for socialism in any one country is, in many respects, conditional upon the degree to which it can assert its independence, i.e. its ability to withstand external pressures. An instantaneous leap into that condition is a pipe-dream; it can only be achieved as a result of protracted struggle.

The apparent belief that it could all be achieved at one bound was one of the causes of Solidarity's leftist errors. We should not make the same mistake.

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er degree, inspires their combatants. The bourgeois rallying cry is "the fight for democracy". Such a fight could be carried out, ideologically, within the Armed Forces.

Defence of what?

7. Defence is paid for from production and it is a necessary charge upon production. The smaller the value of the domestic product, the weaker the defence capacity; this much is axiomatic. Secondly, a balanced industrial and agricultural base is far more able to survive a military blockade than Britain could in its present debilitated condition. (A properly balanced economy, capable of meeting the main domestic needs, would have to be decentralised. At present production is far too integrated, with the result that few regions could survive for any period on their own. Bombs dropped on cities in the Midlands would paralyse industry throughout the country.)

Third, but equally important, many young people have little stake in resisting Russian aggression. The level of unemployment and the deteriorating standards of life might even convince some that life under the Russians could not be worse and might indeed be better. Youth today is greatly influenced by the "Jobs not Bombs" slogan. Although jobs cannot be counterposed to bombs in this manner, the slogan neatly captures the feeling that Mrs. Thatcher and her government are giving people nothing to fight for.

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working class is how to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. This may appear ludicrous in view of the widespread hostility to the present state which is supposed to be the embodiment of that dictatorship.

The truth is that a proletarian dictatorship has never existed in Poland in its literal sense. What dictatorship there has been over the old capitalist and feudal classes has been exercised by the Party and state security organisations. Much of it was undertaken in the interests of the class, but not by the class itself. This may have been unavoidable in the beginning but thirty-odd years on it is inexcusable.

The original revolution determined the basic proletarian character of the state, and the state ownership of the means of production. But control of the state machine and of production and distribution remains in the hands of the Party and state bureaucratic elite which, by virtue of its monopoly of power, exhibits all the characteristics of a class.

A second revolution is needed to gradually strengthen the control of the working class over the state and the means of production, thereby exerting its dictatorship over the class which has usurped power.

None of this obviates the need for the working class to have its own political party; on the contrary, in view of the complicated nature of this kind of class struggle, it is more essential than ever that the class should have a Party that is ideologically clear and united as to its objectives and knows, or is willing to learn, how to operate the mass line. How long it will take to build a Party of that

type in Poland is impossible to guess but a start dare not long be delayed.

The need for continual revolution in all the solicalist countries will eventually prove to be irresistable. In the smaller ones it is bound to be linked, in present circumstances, with the desire for national independence. In this they are objectively the allies of the working class in the capitalist countries who are themselves faced with the task of defending their national independence.

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and a growing proportion of whom now come from the organised working class, and ecologists who are concerned about the misuse of energy and raw materials. Would it be unrealistic for the TGWU to open a section for unemployed workers with a nominal membership fee?

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Correspondence to:

T. Hill,
11 Barratt Avenue, London, N.22

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