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THE SLUMP AND AFTER

BOOK REVIEW

ARCHITECT OR BEE?

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A POPULAR DEFENCE

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PROGRAMME
General Principles

1. The liberation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat itself.

2. The proletariat cannot liberate itself without liberating all the classes which are oppressed by finance capital.

3. The liberation of the people can only be achieved by the people themselves.

4. We are opposed to the creation of elites who see themselves as liberators of the people. Such concepts arise from a lack of faith in the ability of people to liberate themselves.

5. The people can only liberate themselves under the leadership of the industrial working class, and that class can only fulfil this role when its most politically advanced elements are brought together as a collective leadership which understands and applies the laws of historical development as discovered by Marx and Engels, and further developed by Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

THE SLUMP AND AFTER

It only seems yesterday since the government, the media, all the major political parties, uncle Tom Cobbley and all, were assuring us that a return to the Thirties was out of the question.

Methods of demand management had been evolved which were able to iron out the worst fluctuations of the trade cycle and widespread introduction of automation, and later the silicon chip, was presenting the new problem of how to help people to adjust to continually increasing affluence and more abundant leisure.

The only part of the prediction that has stood the test of time is the one relating to leisure time. To be sure it is not quite the kind that was imagined. Official unemployment at around two and a half million, and the real figure substantially higher, is only part of the picture.

To this enormous waste of human productive potential (living labour) must be added the many millions of man-hours of productive labour embodied in the capital equipment that is being thrown on the scrap heap.

According to The Times (12th Feb. 1981) the state loses £3,500 a year in tax and benefits for every worker without a job.

Both Callaghan and Healey, when in Office, were well aware of the problems looming for the British economy arising from the failure of manufacturing industry to capture a bigger share of world markets and stem import penetration.

Healey's steps aimed at cutting public expenditure signified a recognition that its continued expansion was not the panacea it was once imagined to be. It was an acknowledgement that it had fueled inflation and played a big part in expanding the non-productive sector without stemming, let alone reversing, the decline of the manufacturing sector.

The rising inflation which this policy engendered, coupled with its lack of efficacy in solving the deep-seated problems of the economy, created a reaction which put the Tories back in Office.

The Tory government's simplistic approach brought its own problems. Its tight monetary policy and the relatively high exchange rate made manufacturing industry less profitable at a time when the world recession was gaining momentum. The cuts in production that this brought about reduced Government income at a time when it had to increase public spending in some areas such as unemployment pay.

Despite the income from North Sea oil the gap between Government income and expenditure actually began to increase, thus making increases in taxation and further cuts in social security payments and services almost inevitable.

In one respect, however, there is no dispute that Government policy is successful. The only costs that are directly within control of management are wage costs and it is these that are being subjected to the greatest pressure.

Inflation is falling simply because of the depressed state of the market. Manufacturers cannot raise prices as much as

they would like and, as a consequence, profits are under pressure and with it a stronger incentive to keep wages down. There is no doubt that managements, stiffened by the current economic climate, are getting tougher in all respects.

The fact that more restrictive labour legislation is being introduced indicates that this downward pressure on wages is to be a permanent feature. The fall in the level of wage settlements, particularly in the manufacturing sector, the fall in the number of strikes, and reports that productivity is rising despite the fall off in production all go to show that in one field at least Government policy is working.

Thatcher can truthfully claim that in terms of increasing efficiency (of the capitalist kind) she has succeeded where Callaghan failed. Are we then to believe that this will lead us to the promised land?

James Prior went so far as to say that it has been low labour productivity that is the cause of our current problems. The T.U.C. does not go quite that far but in its booklet "Employment and Technology" they go a great way towards it. The authors quote statistics which show that those countries with the highest rates of productivity growth have also the lowest rates of unemployment and inflation and the biggest increases in industrial output.

There is no arguing with the statistics on that point. The flaw in the argument is that it does not represent the whole picture. The 'successful' economies - West Germany, France, Japan - were successful because the greater competitiveness of their industries enabled them to grab bigger shares of the world market, whereas Britain's share declined.

Their economic growth was export-led; they exported more than they imported. Successive British governments have proclaimed that the decline of manufacturing industry in Britain could only be reversed in the same way.

In the event this was not achieved, and neglect of the home market allowed other countries to strengthen their position in world markets by grabbing a bigger share of Britain's domestic market, thus accelerating our industrial decline.

All the time that this was happening, unemployment and inflation were steadily rising in the capitalist world taken as a whole.

Far from establishing the claim that increased productivity reduces unemployment, it confirms a clear correlation between increased productivity and increased unemployment in capitalist society. The 'Left' are avoiding this fact when they concentrate all their efforts on 'exposing' the rise in unemployment since Thatcher took Office, while ignoring the long term rising trend that has been evident under every post-war government.

The important thing is to reverse the historical trend, not play about with parliamentary politics.

It can truthfully be said that every one of the established political parties has given up hope of ever returning to a situation of full employment. The line must be drawn between those who believe that a permanently high and increasing level of unem-

ployment is something that we will have to learn to live with, and those who believe that the concept is intolerable and are prepared to oppose it.

Among the former are economists such as Kenneth Galbraith whose humanitarianism makes him reject the idea of subsistence levels for the unemployed. He advocates higher taxation to enable the living standards of the unemployed to be raised nearer to those of the employed.

Apart from its lack of economic and political feasibility there are deeper and more fundamental reasons for rejecting this 'solution' to unemployment.

Participation in productive labour (in the broadest sense) has been, and still is, an essential condition for the development of the human race.

The emphasis, which is correct, on man as a tool-making animal has tended to overshadow the fact that he is also a tool-using animal and that it is the dialectical relationship between the two that has increasingly differentiated him from the other animals.

The rat race that is capitalism is not only denying the right to take part in productive labour but is so dehumanising the productive process that labour, particularly manual labour, has come to be regarded as a burden and something to be avoided whenever possible, instead of as a prime condition for physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Sadly, many Marxists have degenerated into worshippers of a kind of technological determinism. Technology is regarded as neutral and its direction determined by purely technological imperatives to which man must learn to adapt himself. The direction of social development is seen as being predetermined by technological development. In other words, the machine has taken over.

In our view, technology today offers more than one optional path of development. The one that has gained ascendency is the one which corresponds with the interests and needs of the ruling class.

There is no technological predisposition to either gigantism or dehumanisation of the productive process but there are irresistible economic incentives to go in that direction when, under capitalism, the sole reason for production is the expansion of capital.

The scramble for markets which is the outstanding feature of capitalist trade relations necessitates the constant updating of production methods in order to remain competitive. This has brought about a colossal increase in productive capacity in the short space of 150 years or so, and the population of the capitalist countries have materially benefitted by it.

Until fairly recently it was confidently assumed that this progress would continue indefinitely.

Some trade union leaders became so sold on the idea (Jack Jones, for example) that they advocated a 'high productivity - high wage' economy as the solution to all our problems, in the mistaken belief that the new methods of demand management had eliminated the disparity between productive capacity and effective demand which gave rise to periodic recessions. Now that that

bubble has burst the trade unions are like a ship without a rudder.

In default of a comprehensive policy to take advantage of the present situation by getting mass support for initiatives aimed at restricting the impact of market forces on the economy, the overriding tendency seems to be one of trying to ride out the storm so that when it subsides and when the upturn comes, trade union activity can revert to its pre-slump pattern.

This attitude is based on the unspoken assumption that the upturn will recreate pre-slump conditions. All the indicators are that the post-slump structure of the manufacturing sector will be very different from what it was in 1979 - that is if market forces continue to be the determinant.

Experience shows that the general trend towards more capital intensive methods of production are intensified as a result of deep recessions. The fixed capital that is destroyed as the trade cycle enters its trough will be replaced by more efficient, more labour displacing machines when the prospect of renewed profitability reveals itself.

Production becomes more capital intensive and the new investment that this involves stimulates demand in the machine building sector; the knock-on effect then stimulates demand in other sectors.

Thus it is the stimulation to renewed investment that is the starting point for the upturn and not an increase in consumer demand, as some mistakenly believe.

But as production becomes more capital intensive, less labour is required to produce a given volume of output and unless overall demand keeps pace with the increase in productive capacity the end result is that labour is displaced from the manufacturing sector.

The question may be asked - why is it necessary to expand productive capacity still further if productive capacity is already in excess of effective demand?

The answer lies in the motive force behind capitalist production, the need to expand the stock of capital; the production of commodities is only a by-product. The continuous expansion of capital is not a matter of choice for the capitalist, it is a condition of continuous existence. It is forced upon him by the need to remain competitive.

Today the cost of capital re-equipment is so great that only the biggest companies can stand the pace. The smaller ones are either gradually forced out of business, absorbed by the giants, or allowed to continue just as long as it suits the interests of one or other of these giants.

It has been estimated that in 1980 the top 100 manufacturing firms controlled two-thirds of all manufacturing output in Britain. A similar degree of concentration exists in every major capitalist state.

All of them are transnational; that is to say they operate across national boundaries. They transfer capital, and hence production, to localities where the highest rate of profit can be obtained. This also enables them to play off the workers they employ in one locality against those they employ in another.

In practice, the transnationals not only dominate production in the country in which they are based but between them determine the pattern of international trade or, perhaps more correctly, the international distribution of production.

Oligopoly dominates world trade

A report issued in March 1981 by the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development concludes that world trade in primary products is entirely dominated by what it calls an 'oligopoly' of transnational corporations.

Currently 15 large traders control 85-90% of globally traded cotton. "This degree of control is paralleled in many other primary commodity markets." (Daily Telegraph, May 1981).

Six transnational control 85-95% of trade in leaf tobacco, three control 70-75% of world trade in bananas, five hold more than 75% of the cocoa trade. Ralli Bros. of Liverpool, a subsidiary of Bowater, is the world's biggest cotton trader. The second is Volkart of Switzerland, while the others are all in America and Japan. Most of these giants are dominant traders in other markets. Ralli Bros., for instance, also deal in tropical hardwoods, grain, tea, coffee, rubber and metals.

The Study also finds that the textile oligopoly of 35-40 big corporations is mainly responsible for the shift of textile output and exports from developed countries to a select group of more industrialised developing countries.

It goes on to say that it is generally expected that textile employment in the E.E.C. will be halved by 1985, adding two million more workers to the ranks of the unemployed.

The Report also reveals that in the textile machinery sector 25-30 corporations exercise oligopolistic powers and often work closely with chemical fibre companies. Modern technology, it says, is overwhelmingly orientated towards synthetic fibres.

The world slump is intensifying the competition between the transnationals and, as a result, the tendency for them to move production to lower cost areas will increase.

This probability has led to much speculation by the experts. The general conclusion seems to be that things will have to be allowed to take their course and that the British economy will have to adapt to the new situation by concentrating investment in high technology products to compensate for the low technology products that will be lost to low wage areas such as Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, the China mainland, and 'twilight' areas such as Greece, Portugal and Eastern Europe.

If this is allowed to happen, two main consequences are almost inevitable. Labour intensive products will move out, but the highly capital intensive production that remains will not be able to absorb the labour so displaced. Secondly, the manufacturing base of the British economy will become even more unbalanced than it is at present, with the result that we will be even less self-reliant as a nation and hence more susceptible to external influences and pressures.

The Upturn

Thatcher has admitted that even when the

'upturn' does finally arrive it will not mean a substantial fall in the level of unemployment. This view has been underlined by many spokesmen for employers' organisations and in an interview reported in the Sunday Times of 3rd May 1981, when asked how do we come to terms with unemployment on a higher level than anyone has been used to, Mrs. Thatcher replied:

> "Well you would have a larger proportion of your national income going to services. Tourism is one of them. Look at the number of jobs it's created - in the aircraft industry, in chartered flights, in hotels, in holidays. Transport is a service industry. Insurance is a service industry. So is banking. They go world-wide.
>
> Leisure itself is a service industry. It is part of your gross domestic product. So yes, I think that we shall probably have a smaller proportion of our people in manufacturing but a bigger proportion in services."

When pressed to answer if we would have to live with a much higher level of unemployment, she said, "I think in the short term, yes."

The managing director of Guest, Keen and Nettlefold, one of the biggest employers in Britain, stated in an interview on "The Money Programme" on television that, even after the upturn, G.K.N.'s labour force in the U.K. will only be about two thirds of what it was before the present recession.

In the previous 'mini' recessions of the post-war years employers have tended to hold onto their labour, particularly skilled labour in short supply, because they didn't want to be caught with their trousers down when the upturn came.

The fact that they are now shedding labour at a rate unknown in post-war years is a sure sign that (a) the slump is going to last longer than any of the previous ones, (b) that it is going to be deeper than any of the previous ones, and (c) that less labour will be required for the pre-slump volume of output when the upturn comes.

Eventually production and hence supply will fall below effective demand, first in a few products and then more generally. The opportunity to increase sales and profits will occur for those manufacturers who, in anticipation of the upturn, have made their businesses more efficient by the introduction of new capital equipment. That is the normal course of the business cycle.

Arguments about economic policy centre around the most effective way of stimulating demand in order that the upturn can be brought forward in time, and are entirely concerned with stimulating business activity. Its effect on employment is of concern only to the politicians.

Nevertheless the working class cannot remain aloof from these arguments. Firstly, and obviously, any reduction in the rate of unemployment is to be welcomed. Secondly, the nature of the stimulation and the areas in which it is employed are of importance.

As we noted earlier, to be effective it must stimulate demand in the capital goods sector. To this, the working class must insist that it must also be socially beneficial. For example, the Confederation of British Industry mentions Transport as one of these areas without specifying whether

preference should be given to road or rail, or public or private.

Although a big road building programme would create jobs in the construction industry the environmental consequences would be disastrous. On the other hand, investment in a more efficient railway system would not only create many jobs in the engineering industry but would be extremely desirable environmentally; it would reduce traffic on the roads, reduce pollution, and save fuel.

Similarly, investment in mass passenger transport on the roads would make possible an integrated transport system. Instead of pouring money down the drain in the private car division of British Leyland, the investment could be switched to the bus division.

There is also the need to reduce interest rates as a means of lessening the burden on industry.

These, and other methods of stimulating business activity, are necessary but, taking a long term view, they are little more than stop-gap measures that enable the system to continue to lurch from one trade cycle to the next, with unemployment growing steadily worse.

Formulas for containing the 'natural' rise in unemployment are getting harder to come by.

The reformist panacea of increasing employment in the public sector in order to absorb that displaced by technological change in the manufacturing sector, is no longer a practical option.

In practice, it meant an increase in Local Authority employment, which developed a dual character. To its original function of providing essential services to the community was added the function of providing jobs. It was the original job creation scheme.

This growth in public sector employment was linked not with the growth of production but with the growth in government borrowing. This served to obscure the fact that all services are, in the final analysis, charges on the productive sector.

When inflation came to be regarded as the greatest threat to the stability of the system, government borrowing had to be cut back. One of the results was a reduction in government grants to Local Authorities. People are now being forced to realise the cost of Local Authority employment by their rate bill and further expansion is unlikely.

The Thatcher government is pinning much of its hopes on an increase in the number of small businesses which are generally more labour intensive than the big ones. Although this may meet with a measure of success as a result of government intervention, the number of jobs thereby created will inevitably fall far short of the number required to absorb the workers displaced from large scale industry.

Shorter Hours of Work

In the trade union movement there is talk of reducing the hours of work as a means of reducing the ranks of the unemployed. Past experience shows that formal reductions in the standard working week have had little effect on the number of hours actually worked. The main effect has been to increase the number of hours on which overtime rates are paid.

For any reduction in the standard week to be real rather than notional, the nettle of overtime would have to be firmly grasped and eliminated.

In addition, claims for shorter hours of work are usually accompanied with the assertion that total production will not be reduced because the remaining hours of work will be more productive. Experience shows that employers only concede shorter hours when they are pretty certain that this will be the case.

The reasoning of the employers is quite simple and, given a commitment to 'remaining competitive', indisputable. Everything else being equal, shorter hours would increase costs and render British industry less competitive in international markets.

The trade unions, being committed to the same principle, are thus driven to seek international solutions so that 'fair competition will be maintained'.

International competition forces industry to become more capital intensive, thereby reducing the need for human labour. At the same time it creates conditions which make it extremely difficult, even if it was technically possible, for workers in any one country to carry out work-sharing by reducing individual hours of work.

Yet to wait for international agreement on the matter is tantamount to shelving it.

International competition is, in essence, competition between workers. It is one of the means by which the transnationals maximise the amount of surplus value which they extract from workers on a world scale. To put it mildly, they are not likely to give it up as a result of 'pressure' in the International Labour Organisation.

They are able to maintain their position because they have the power to create contradictions between the workers of the different countries in which they operate. At the international level they will always be able to retain the initiative because of the centralised way in which they make decisions and exercise control, whereas extremely few workers are prepared to sacrifice their livelihood for what appears to be an abstract ideal.

Nationalisation could be part of the answer but only if it is used to take British industry and British workers out of the international rat race. Up to now nationalisation has been used for the express purpose of making British industry more competitive in international markets and proportionately more manual jobs have been lost in nationalised production industries than in the private sector.

The only feasible way of controlling the transnationals is on a national basis through the use of controls on the import of commodities and the export of capital; this should not be piecemeal but carried out in a planned way which will facilitate the all-round development of the productive base of the economy and restructuring industry for the purpose of maximising productive employment, as distinct from maximising output per worker employed.

It will mean developing and using alternative technologies which utilise all available human energy, are less wasteful of natural resources, and can be used not only to satisfy material needs (which is basic) but, in the process, assist mankind's social, cultural, and spiritual development.

BOOK REVIEW

ARCHITECT OR BEE? by MIKE COOLEY

"A bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of its cells but what distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is namely this. The architect will construct in his imagination that which he will ultimately erect in reality. At the end of every labour process we get that which existed in the consciousness of the labourer at its commencement."

In a previous publication, "Computer Aided Design" (reviewed in THE MARXIST, No. 20), Mike described the nature of changes taking place in the fields of design and draughtsmanship as a consequence of applying computer technology. He also outlined the implications of that technology for those working in those fields. The present publication includes recent developments in banking, journalism and university education.

But this serves as an introduction to the main content of the book which is concerned with the social and political significance of computer technology.

We live in a society where the Grand Order of Maximum Profit has been sanctified .... where the admonition to Increase Productivity has acquired the aura of Divine Inspiration and where, as a result, the solution to over-production of any given commodity is to produce more than ever before in less time with fewer people. It is hardly surprising that in such a society scant attention is paid to what must surely be the most important product of any society, namely, people.

Instead there exists what may best be described as a 'theology' that people 'sort of happen'. This idea is encouraged by our need to assuage any concern we might now and then feel over what we are doing to each other.

Only the exceptional outburst of violence or vandalism shatters this comforting illusion when there follows a brief period of discomfort until responsibility can be deposited upon the shoulders of parents, or teachers, or the police, when everything returns to normal. Mike Cooley's concern for people and their development is the very core of all he writes and does.

"Technological progress" is a somewhat cumbersome description of a process that commenced with the appearance of Homo Sapiens and has continued ever since. Whilst that process has been continuous, the rate of advance has increased and is still increasing.

In addition there have been developments which, because of their effects over a wide field of human endeavour, rank as qualitative leaps. The first of these must surely have been the wheel and others which should rank under this heading include the steam-engine, the railway, the internal combustion engine and the computer.

Employed as a Senior Development Engineer in the Aerospace Industry with years of active involvement in the Trade Union movement, and latterly a voluntary Director of the Centre for Alternative Industrial and

Technological Systems, Mike has the qualifications, experience and vantage point that makes any contribution from him on the subject of computer systems and their application required reading.

The opening paragraphs of the book state his intentions:

> "There is still a widespread belief that automation, computerisation and the use of robotic devices will free human beings from soul destroying routine, back breaking tasks and leave them free to engage in more creative work ..... It is usually added, as a sort of occupational bonus, that the masses of data we will have available to us from computers will make our decisions much more creative, scientific and logical and that, as a result, we will have a more rational form of society.
>
> I want to question some of these assumptions and attempt to show that we are beginning to repeat in the field of intellectual work most of the mistakes already made in the field of skilled manual work at an earlier historical stage, when it was subjected to the use of high capital equipment."

That this belief should persist is not surprising when we consider the factors that combine to ensure its survival. First there is the fact that many of those responsible for technical advances have been motivated by a genuine desire to improve conditions and lighten the burden for Mankind.

Second, the employing class have always been happy to 'accentuate the positive' while scurrying to ensure the maximum exploitation of any new machines or technique.

Last, but by no means least, is the fact that people need to rationalise that which they do not understand or over which they feel they can have little or no control. For whilst there has been the occasional flash of resistance to a new machine or method, the effect of any particular advance is usually too localised to engender widespread support, whilst the existence, as there always is, of a positive potential permits the general public to regard such brief outbursts as reactionary attempts to retain 'restrictive practices' on the part of an elite minority.

The following example illustrates the two aspects of the contradiction as well as its longevity:

> "From the ealiest times a view has persisted that the introduction of mechanization and automated processes would automatically free people to engage in creative work. This view has persisted as consistently in the field of intellectual work as it has in that of manual labour.
>
> As far back as 1624, when Pascal introduced his first mechanical calculating device he said, 'I submit to the public a small machine of my own invention by means of which you alone may without any effort perform all the operations of arithmetic and may be relieved of the work which has so often fatigued your spirit when you have worked with the counters and with the pen.'
>
> Only 28 years earlier, in 1596, an

opposite view was dramatically demonstrated when the city of Danzig hired an assassin to strangle the inventor of a labour-saving ribbon loom, a defensive if understandable attempt, repeated time and again in various guises during the ensuing five hundred years to resolve a contradiction at an industrial level when only a revolutionary political one would suffice."

The author expresses the view that the computer should be seen as a part of a technological continuum:

"I see it as another means of production and, as such, it has to be viewed in the context of the political, ideological and cultural assumptions of the society that has given rise to it. Consequently I look critically at technological change as a whole in order to provide the framework for questioning the way computers are used today. I take the Hegelian view that truth lies in the totality and therefore, after considering some of the equipment currently in use, I will relate its effects to the labour process and try to give an overall view of what is happening."

* * * * * * *

The equipment selected for consideration is not necessarily the most advanced but is chosen because it is typical. The problems raised by this equipment are the same whether it be architecture, design, banking, draughtsmanship or any other field in which computer systems are applied.

"Up to the 1940s the draughtsman was the centre of the design activity. He could design a component, draw it, stress it out, specify the material for it and the lubrication required.

Nowadays, each of these is fragmented down to isolated functions. The designer designs, the draughtsman draws, the metallurgist specifies the material, the stress analyst analyses the structure and the tribologist specifies the lubrication. Each of these fragmented parts can be taken over by automatic draughting equipment ..... What the draughtsman now does is to work on the digitiser and input the material through a graticule or teletype. An exact reading is set of the length of each line, the tolerance and other details. The design comes out as a tape which is expanded in the computer after which it operates some item of equipment, such as a jig-borer or a continuous path milling machine. After that the equipment will do the [illegible]ing. If perchance you want a drawing in order to show the customer exactly what he is purchasing - and that is the only reason you would bother to do it - then you can produce one on the master plotter very accurately."

Semi-skilled workers in the engineering industry are no strangers to this process of fragmentation having lived with it over a considerable period. The development of the computer and its associated systems has enabled the very same process to be applied to jobs requiring skills of a very different order and has accelerated the pace of change.

The extent of that change is illustrated by a number of examples.

"Part of the skill of a draughtsman or a designer was the ability to look at a drawing and conceptualize what the product would look like in practice. That process is now also being eliminated by computers. I have, in my lectures, illustrated systems which are capable of tracing round the profile of the conventional type, which includes plan and elevation views, and produce an accurate three dimensional representation of the object on the screen before it actually exists in practice. The computer will rotate it through any angle for you when asked."

In architecture such a facility enables data of existing buildings to be fed in, along with a proposed new building, and this will then be shown within the context of existing architectural arrangements.

"That is to say one can have the experience, in the equivalent of 'real time', of walking towards a building that still does not exist in practice. One can experience the sensation of going inside the proposed building and looking out at existing buildings."

Remaining with architecture, under the sub-heading, "Jiggle Your Standard Bits", there is the following passage:

"A system known appropriately as 'Harness' was introduced some time ago in the field of architectural design. The idea is that you can reduce a building to a system of standardized units. In systems of this kind all the architect can do is arrange the predetermined architectural elements around the V.D.U. screen ..... I understand from some colleagues who work in local government that, if you use a system like 'Harness' for about two years you are then regarded by the architectural community as being de-skilled and have great difficulty in getting jobs. This puts the architect in a similar position to the manual worker who uses a specialized lathe and cannot then get a job doing more universal and skilled work."

The recent publicity accorded the difficulties experienced by 'The Times' and the 'Sunday Times' newspapers will have drawn attention to the changes being wrought in the print and newspaper industries by the application of computer controlled systems. Visual display units can be used to compose and edit text, the type-face can be selected and varied through the computer, portable units can be used by reporters to prepare their copy and this can then be plugged straight into the system. As is to be expected, the argument goes that the greater flexibility and enhanced speed which the use of such systems makes possible should give journalists greater freedom and the opportunity to develop their creative talents.

Again those fighting against these developments lack any public support or even sympathy. Their struggle appears to be mainly concerned with the effort to retain their privileged position in the league table of wages and salaries regardless of the general public interest. That 'appearence' is by *no* means an entirely false one. But there are wider issues involved as the following indicates:

"However, experience of these new technologies in the United States has already begun to show that it is resul-

ting not in greater flexibility but in increasing rigidity. This is because standard statements can be stored in the computer and called up when required to compose a story. This is done initially by counting through the computer the rate at which certain phrases or sentences occur. The most frequent ones are then stored and treated as 'optimum sentences or 'preferred sub-routines', which the journalist is then expected to use."

Despite the low and descending standards of the British Press in general, there remains the occasional journal and newspaper which offer the individual writer the opportunity to develop a style - to present considered and well-written material that is not simply informative but also a pleasure to read. In addition the writing and reading of such material involves mental exercise, a vital need that is overlooked in the current passion for physical development. Yet the mind suffers from the condition of atrophy equally as do the muscles of the body.

Our command of language, the facility of communicating, of being able to interchange ideas and experience, discovery and development, with precise definition of shade in meaning, this must surely be a major factor distinguishing Mankind from all other species.

The current craze for simplification and trivialising seems set to put us on the road back to a world of modulated grunts. The computer, with its predigested sentences and regurgitated paragraphs, is well appointed as the guide who will conduct us along the road.

* * * * * * * *

Whatever may have been the hopes and aspirations of inventors and innovators throughout the ages, the reality is indisputable. Where the aims of those concerned with a new development were socially commendable, those aims have been perverted by the fact that, in capitalist society, the prizes go to those who achieve the maximum exploitation of both people and machines.

One infamous 'prize-winner' receives mention in the following passage:

"In my view the computer is the Trojan horse with which Taylorism is going to be introduced into intellectual work. When a human being interacts with a machine the interaction is between to dialectical opposites. The human being is slow, inconsistent, unreliable but highly creative. The machine is fast, reliable but totally non-creative."

This is a reference to F.W. Taylor (1856-1915) who was a pioneer in what is politely called 'scientific management'. He devised time and motion study, the basis of all piece-work schemes, involving the reduction of a process to its elementary actions. Any 'unnecessary' actions are then eliminated and the remainder provide the base on which piece-work earnings are calculated.

In an era when technological progress was limited to the improving and mechanisation of hand tools by workers, the speed of each operation was largely controlled by the worker. Piece-work systems served to pressurise the operators into working at the fastest rate they were capable of.

It was essential for the worker to adhere to the pre-ordained sequence of 'elementary'

motions. In Taylor's own words:

"In my system the workman is told precisely what he is to do and how he is to do it. Any improvement he makes upon the instructions given to him is fatal to success."

Mike pays tribute to the courage and resilience of workers who struggle against the constant attacks by employers upon their living standards, face the bludgeoning attacks of the mass media when they succeed in that struggle and still refuse to meet the standard set by Taylor himself when he stated that the ideal worker was one "..... so stupid and phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles, in his mental make up, the ox than any other type."

Taylor did not invent scientific management, he assembled and expressed in an ordered form the wishes and desires of employers throughout history. How to extract the most in return for the least. He developed systems whereby this ideal could be achived and in those systems the human agency served as another tool in the productive process.

The following passage, which Mike quotes from Robert Bogulshaw, (The New Utopians, A Study of Systems Designs and Social Change), shows how, whilst terminology may have become more sophisticated, the attitude of employers have, if anything, become more cold-bloodied and callous than Taylor would have dreamed of:

" ..... this statement was made following a series of discussions with some systems engineers at a major U.S. company.

'Our immediate concern, let us remember, is the exploitation of the operating unit approach to systems design no matter what materials are used. We must take care to prevent the discussion from degenerating into the single-sided analysis of the complex characteristics of one type of systems material, namely human beings. What we need is an inventory of the manner in which human behaviour can be controlled and a description of some of the instruments which will help us achieve that control. If this provides us with sufficient handles on human materials so that we can think of them as metal parts, electrical power or chemical reactions, then we have succeeded in placing human material on the same footing as any other material and can begin to proceed with our problems of systems design. There are, however, many disadvantages in the use of these human operating units. They are somewhat fragile, they are subject to fatigue, obsolescence, disease and even death. They are frequently stupid, unreliable and limited in memory capacity. But beyond all this, they sometimes seek to design their own circuitry. This is a material is unforgiveable and any system utilising them must devise appropriate safeguards.' "

As automation is applied to an increasing range of production processess, control over the rate or speed of production (productivity) passes to a considerable degree from the operator to the machine. Piece-work systems become redunant and the main area of concern to the 'Taylorists' is how the human may be most beneficially attached to the machine, in particular the computer and its associated systems.

To this end Taylor's original concept of reducing a process to its elementary motions has provided the essential means whereby the computer may be fed with the information that is essential if it is to function. The author refers to it as "the fragmenting of skills" and refers to the transfer of these skills and experience from the human being into the machine as follows:

> "The more therefore that workers put in to the object of their labour the less there remains of themselves. The welder at General Motors who takes a robotic welding device and guides its probes through the welding procedures of a car body is, on the one hand, building skill intp the machine and de-skilling himself on the other. The accumulation of years of welding experience is absorbed by the robot's self-programming systems and will never be forgotten. Similarly, a mathematician working as a stressman in an aircraft company may design a software package for the stress analysis of air frame structures and suffer the same consequences in his job. In each case they have given part of themselves to the machine and, in doing so, have conferred life on the object of their labour - but now this life no longer belongs to them but to the owner of the object."

So the machine becomes 'almost human' whilst the human is reduced to the likeness of a machine. At this point we might reflect upon the amused delight that greeted the television advertisement whosing robots employed on the production line of Fiat cars. It was adjudged one of the most successful advertisements of the year.

It is a sobering thought that many of those who were so amused would themselves have been employed in the car industry and that the advertisement often followed news bulletins portraying growing unemployment in the car industry due to over-production on a world scale. This provides a measure of the size of the task facing us.

* * * * * * * *

As with any new development the basic drive to maximise exploitation overrides any objective assessment of its optimum use value. To sell gloves to an araless man is a demonstration of first-class salesmanship. So it is that computers have been employed in fields for which their value was qualified and advantage minimal. This, added to the inevitable teething troubles experienced with any innovation, gave rise to the myth that the introduction of a computer led to increased employment. The reality is very different.

Mike uses statistics from the United States to show how the reduction in the numbers employed in one sector has been compensated by an increase in another. In the early years of the 19th century 86% of the working population in America were engaged in agriculture. Today, with mechanisation and chemicals, 6% of the working population achieve a higher production figure than 86% did then.

Over this period, industry and the service industry increased and absorbed those workers previously employed in agriculture.

In the last two decades the development and introduction of automation has led to a decline in the numbers employed in industry but, for a while, the service area contin-

ued to expand, containing the situation.

Now the increasing use of computers in the service industry must bring increasing unemployment in that area as well as increasing still further the existing unemployment in manufacturing industry.

"We are confronted, therefore, with massive and growing structural unemployment. More and more we are moving into a position where large numbers of people are going to be denied the right to work at all. The non-availability of work for large numbers of people may not seem too great a tragedy to some. I feel it necessary to declare that I believe that work is very important to people. Not the grotesque alienated work which has developed over the last 50 years, but work in its historical sense which links hand and brain and which is creative and fulfilling. If you ask anybody what they are they never say, 'I'm a Beethoven lover', '.... a Bob Dylan fan', or '.... a James Joyce reader'. They always say 'I'm a fitter', '..... a nurse', '..... a teacher', and so on. We express ourselves through our work. We relate to society through our work and we are creative through our work.

Clive Jenkins has described the decline of the Protestant ethic. Now I do not support the Protestant ethic but I do make the point that work in its historical context is important to society and we are increasingly being denied the opportunity to do that work."

So computers and their associated systems have the effect of simultaneously increasing the output and reducing the available market. This, after all, is in line with capitalist society which creates unemployment and poverty in the midst of plenty.

In this situation there is a real risk of social unrest which would have to be met. The computer has already demonstrated its role as an instrument of surveillance and control, a useful addition to the armoury of the Establishment.

Among those most sensitive to the risk of a backlash are the transnationals who, it appears, are preparing to invest a little of their ill-gotten gains in an effort to spread oil on troubled waters.

(Here we digress briefly in order to explain why we use the term 'transnational' instead of the more commonly used - the one Mike uses - 'multinational'.

We feel the latter to be euphemistic to the extent that it conveys an image of nations collaborating in a joint enterprise to their mutual benefit. This is not only incorrect, it stands reality on its head.

The companies we are referring to are based in one country and it is from this 'home base' that the secondary growths are spawned and controlled. The parent company regards the 'host' nation as a tick regards the sheep.

We therefore believe strongly that anything which veils this stark relationship fosters the illusion of filial benevolence.)

End of digression, we return to our theme. Having referred to the reaction of the transnationals to a developing economic and political situation we must underline the fact that their concern is solely how they may best preserve their facility for exploi-

tation in the face of growing hostility.

Terminology notwithstanding, Mike is quite clear on their role as the following quote makes clear and we note the title he bestows upon the 'new society' envisaged for us by these vast conglomerates:

> "..... the drift towards what I shall call industrial feudalism. Our economy is now dominated by the massive multinationals, corporations and financial institutions. The role of every Nation State is quite subordinate to these since they set the economic and, increasingly, the political framework within which the governments of the individual nation states are allowed to legislate."

The measures that are being instituted by some of these giants amount to the seconding of funds and executives to undertake community enterprise. It is foreseen that a diminishing number of people will be engaged in regular employment, given the continuation of present trends in computer technology. This small number will constitute an elite society separate from the main community.

> "A large sector of those who remain - the unemployed - will be left to fiddle around with 'community work'. These activities will be deliberately chosen because they yield no economic power. Indeed, it will be a kind of therapeutic, do-it-yourself social service. The industrial lords will sit in the multinational headquarters while the peasants scratch out a living in the deprived communities in which they reside."

* * * * * * *

For the diminishing number remaining in employment the effects of computer controlled systems are predictable given the existing circumstances of their development and application. The reduction of processes to elementary motions and the absorbtion by the machine of the skill content has reduced the human component's role to a mindless repetitive routine.

Perhaps the most widely known example of this, apart from Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times", is the track in the car industry. But the direction of future development is chillingly outlined by the following passage:

> "The extent to which capital and science have succeeded in achieving this was dramatically illustrated in the July, '79 issue of the "American Machinist". It reported that an engineering firm had found that the ideal operators for its numerically controlled machining centre were mentally handicapped workers.
>
> One of the workers held up as ideal for this type of work had a maximum intelligence level of a 12-year old.
>
> 'He loads every table exactly the way he has been taught, watches the Moog operate and then unloads. It's the kind of tedious work that some non-handicapped individual might have difficulty in coping with."

Alongside this there is the fact that these systems have the facility to raise the work-rate to the very limits of human endurance.

> "It is widely recognised on the shop

floor that technological change has resulted in a frantic work tempo for those who remain. At the Triumph plant in Coventry it is reckoned that a human being is 'burned up' in ten years when working on the main track. The Engineering Union to which I belong was asked to agree that nobody would be recruited over the age of 30 so that the last ten years would be 30-40. The same kind of thing is happening in the steel industry."

It is hardly surprising that, given the consistent manner in which technical progress has brought about a worsening of their conditions, people from time to time are moved to question its value. However, since progress is seen as something that 'happens', like people and the weather, they regard it in that context, which in turn means even if their conclusion is that, on balance, technological progress is a bad thing, it is an obvious nonsense to talk about stopping it.

Those who have on occasions been moved to express opposition to some particular aspect of progress have been regarded as meddlers who tried to turn back the clock of history in order to preserve a self-interest, (a 'restrictive practice').

Despite the quote with which we opened this review in which the author writes of the 'mistakes' already made in the field of manual work, he makes clear on several occasions that his own attitude towards the role which science and technology play is not in doubt. The following passage, which occurs on the final page of the book, is one example:

"Science and technology is not neutral and we must at all times expose its underlying assumptions. We can, at the same time, begin to indicate how science and technology might be applied in the interests of the people as a whole, rather than to maximise profits for the few.

The choices are essentially political and ideological rather than technological. As we design technological systems we are in fact designing sets of social relationships and, as we question those social relationships and attempt to design systems differently, we are beginning to challenge, in a political way, power structures in society."

The question as to how science and technology might be applied in the interests of the people is becoming a matter of some urgency since the advances now being made in these fields are of sufficient magnitude to cause considerable repercussions within our social system.

We do not accept the view that the detrimental effects arising from technological progress are the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". As for mistakes, can the predictable consequences of a consciously determined course of action be called 'mistakes'?

Research and development pursue a course determined by human beings. Therefore it is not a matter of accepting or rejecting progress as a totality but of defining what is and what is not progress.

The undertaking of such a task might seem to some to be a task in the order of light bending or the construction of time machines but we are not operating in a vacuum. Cri-

ses of over-production, a built-in feature of capitalist society, are exacerbated by technological progress and the combination seems set to produce what air crews would call "considerable turbulence".

That people are able to grasp such a concept and, what is so much more, enthusiastically competent to transform that concept into material reality, is not in doubt.

There exists on record an example of how workers, faced with the consequences of over-production, fought redundancy in a very positive manner. Instead of walk-outs and sit-ins, designers, draughtsmen, productive workers all combined to design and manufacture products that could be profitable within the criteria of a market economy and that were highly socially useful.

The example referred to occurred at Lucas Aerospace where Mike Cooley is employed. He was involved in the enterprise and describes in some detail how it started and some of the one hundred and fifty products that were suggested by the workers. The account raises the political implications of the episode and makes both interesting and encouraging reading.

Issues raised by Mike Cooley throughout his book are more than simple questions of individual frustration and anger. Collectively they are a source of potential social disorder.

In addition to the difficulties which technological progress poses for workers, there are the more immediate difficulties which it presents to the employers. The author refers to two of these, the first of which is the cost factor involved:

> "..... when viewed historically it will be seen that the total cost of the means of production is ever-increasing. This is in spite of the reduction in the cost of hardware. Whilst these costs are reduced dramatically as computerised systems are miniaturised, the total cost of the system, including the plant and the processes which the hardware is used to control, is ever-increasing. The most complicated lathe one could get 100 years ago would have cost the equivalent of ten workers' wages per annum. Today, a lathe of comparable complexity with its computer control, the total environment necessary for the production of the tapes and the operation of the machine, will cost something of the order of one hundred workers' wages per annum."

The second is one that multiplies the cost factor, it is the increasing rate of obsolescence.

> "Wheeled transport existed in its primitive form for thousands of years. Watt's steam engine was working for over 100 years after it was built. High capital equipment in the '30s was written off after 25 years and equipment of this latest kind will be obsolete in three or four years. Economists would say that this shows the increasingly short life of fixed capital."

There are other factors worth mentioning in addition to these. For example, the classical pattern of recovery from economic recession is initiated by an increase in the rate of investment. In the current recession all the economic pundits are agreed about one thing .... that this increase in investment must occur in the capital inten-

sive industries. "Only in this way will we be able to produce more in less time with fewer people."

If we relate this prospect to the current and developing conditions in world markets and the number of people unemployed we have a measure of the desperation contained in such proposals.

As the means of production become more capital intensive, so does it become economically necessary that they should be gainfully employed for 24 hours in every day. An example of this may be had from the fact that the introduction of computerised equip- into the design and draughting fields brought with it the institution of shift work into those professions.

So any idea that the contradiction between the increased productive potential of automated or robotic equipment, and the situation of a diminishing market, may be resolved by running the equipment at half-speeds or for a limited period, is a non-starter.

Every increase in the use of capital intensive means of production consigns another batch of workers to the dole office and at the same time increases our dependence upon fossil energy, the supplies of which are rapidly becoming more and more expensive in both money and environmental terms.

Whilst the use of automated or robotic equipment increases productivity it brings with it a lowering in standards of quality and durability. This is partly due to the fact that such equipment demands simplified methods of assembly. Nuts and bolts, screws and stitching are out. Bent or twisted metal tabs, crimping, spot welding and adhesives are in.

Such methods, especially when automated, are subject to a higher rate of breakdown or failure. In addition, they preclude servicing or render it an uneconomic proposition. The use of thinner, cheaper material is necessitated by the physical requirements of the machine and the need to meet its cost which still further reduces the durability of the finished article.

So we have a throw-away society, profligate in its waste of energy, materials and people.

* * * * * * * * *

Unlike previous occasions in history when isolated groups have tried to stem some particular advance in technology, we presently have a situation where the adverse effects of technological progress are being suffered by a majority of people over a wide range of occupations, professions and interests.

Our task must surely be to defina policies that will crystallize the anger, frustration and fears into a movement capable of exerting a material influence in this field. Yet these issues are not being discussed in the M-L movement in Britain and, in what is almost our final quote from this commendable publication, Mike refers to this omission:

"Marxist critics of capitalist society have tended to concentrate, at least since the turn of the century, on the contradictions of distribution. This they have done at the expense of a thorough-going analysis of the contradictions of production within technologically advanced societies.

A POPULAR DEFENCE Part 1

During the General Election campaign in May 1979, Margaret Thatcher spoke on defence:

> "This is not a moment when anyone with the interests of the country at heart should be talking about cutting our defences."

Yet within two years of this statement the Iron Maiden and her Tory administration find themselves at the centre of a furore regarding proposals to reduce defence capacity.

Is the present government leaving us unprotected against Soviet aggression? What type of protection do we need, and what type can we afford? Indeed what should we seek to protect? Marxist-Leninists have generally ignored the realities of the defence question. As a result, the only alternative facing people who view current defence policies critically is the craven appeasement of the Labour Left towards the Soviet Union. In this article we attempt to formulate some principles upon which we think Britain's defence forces should be based.

The subject of defence rarely leaves the public eye altogether but over the past year or so it has enjoyed a prominence probably not equalled since the days of the Aldermaston marches. There are many reasons for this; at home the deepening recession has been presided over by a government which has shown more concern about Russian aggression but whose economic and social policies are leaving less and less worth defending. People have witnessed drastic cuts in Council housebuilding, education, social services and the like, at the same time as the government has announced its intention to acquire a new mobile nuclear missile - Trident - from the U.S. at considerable cost.

These domestic developments, and the agreement of the Government to station the American Cruise missile here as part of NATO's answer to combat the threat to Europe posed by the Soviet SS20 missile, have strengthened the 'leftward' drift of the Labour Party and the related CND revival.

Internationally, the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, though hardly akin to an invasion of Western Europe, brought home to yet more people the fact that the 'champions of World Peace' were willing and able to move more than 100,000 troops into a neighbouring sovereign state to bolster a puppet regime; that the invasion could be achieved in a matter of days; and that the Soviet military leaders have been prepared to use the same tactics (aerial heavy bombardment) and weaponry (napalm, helicopter gunships) of conventional warfare that had previously characterised American aggression in S.E. Asia.

The best pointer to the threat posed to Europe by Soviet expansionism is the situation facing Poland whose territorial integrity is menaced by the repeated offers of 'help' from the 'international socialist community'.

All these issues have played their part in focusing attention on defence. But over the past few months it has been the cost-cutting defence review which has brought the issue so regularly to the front pages.

It was clear to some, at least as early as November last, that a major review of defence spending was inevitable. In that month a spirited correspondence on options for Britain arose in The Times. The necessity for the review was expressed by Air Vice-Marshall John Downey so lucidly that it is worth citing his letter at length:

"The long fusillade of recent letters to The Times about defence has become scattered across diverse targets ranging from strategy to military bands and there remains but one common concern: the growing impoverishment of our defences. We are finding it harder and harder to reconcile the accelerated cost of defence with the rising living standards we have come to expect. This happens to be particularly noticeable in Britain at the moment because our economy is flagging so badly, but in principle the problem is the same everywhere.

Its cause is defence hyperinflation, the product of a protracted cold war coexisting with manifold technologies. every year each defence pound, dollar or rouble buys fewer front-line replacements. For twenty years British defence spending has been held roughly constant in ordinary real money terms and in that time our forces have been almost halved.

..... there now exist two crucial new factors in the equation; the great fertility of late twentieth-century technology and the fact that in the nuclear age virtually the entire order of battle for war has to be maintained and constantly updated in peace. Together these circumstances create a new strand in military history which profoundly alters the economies of defence.

Before the atom bomb, nations at peace could rely on a nucleus of armed force supported by a research and development effort which could be run at tick-over: both could be massively expanded by mobilisation if a need was foreseen. Today the military-technological competition between the opposing power blocks, even though they are nominally at peace, is at levels formerly achieved only in war. The modern arms race in which the pace must for ever accelerate so long as neither side dares fall behind.

This is a fundamental problem which cannot be altered much by fewer brass bands or even by newer strategies. Defence inflation is now pinching so acutely that in Britain even our long standing bipartisan political approach to defence is crumbling. At the next general election we seem likely to face a choice between continued but weakening deterrence or a return to the relative defencelessness and appeasement of the middle 1930s. If so, public common sense will probably choose the former, but given time that choice will become more and more uncertain as any effective level of deterrence becomes more and more costly."

This was well underlined by Francis Pym, the former Defence Secretary, shortly before his enforced resignation, when he told

the House of Commons Defence Committee that in the year ahead, 90% of procurement expenditure (funds available to acquire hardware) was already accounted for, and 60% of the funds available for the next seven years was similarly tied up.

Pym's removal and replacement by John Nott confirmed the disagreements within the Tory Cabinet on the size of the cuts to be implemented and Nott's promise to maintain "a balance of forces maybe with a change of emphasis" has proved to be no more than a politician's euphemism.

* * * * * *

In this year Britain is spending 5.2% of her gross domestic product on defence. After America, this is the highest percentage of G.D.P. spent within the NATO alliance. The current annual defence bill amounts to approximately £12.3 billion. Of this, the Army accounts for £1.9 billion. Its 160,000 personnel are largely committed to the British Army on the Rhine and its ancillary staffs. The Navy has approximately 74,000 personnel including the Royal Marines and its 170 ships are mostly in service in the Eastern Atlantic, North Sea and the Channel. The annual cost of the Navy is £1.7 billion. The yearly cost of the Air Force is £2.2 billion and it employs 93,000 personnel.

In addition, the comparatively low figure of £3.3 million is spent annually on nuclear weapons but this, of course, will change rapidly when the projected cost of Trident, the latest estimate of which is £6 billion, is taken into account.

With this capacity, Britain has performed four major roles in Europe's collective defence, as this is perceived by military planners:

a. Forward defence of West Germany
b. The provision of anti-submarine force in the Eastern Atlantic
c. Defence of the British Isles (crucial to the U.S., even if not to continental Europe
d. Maintenance of a nuclear deterrent in Polaris.

The Tory Government has repeatedly affirmed its decision to replace Polaris with Trident, a missile which will similarly be submarine launched, and the choice of the major roles to be 'redefined' therefore fell between the BAOR and the Navy's anti-submarine tasks in the Eastern Atlantic. Although Nott insisted that he was merely carrying out the standard ten yearly review, his reported plans amounted to a 50% cut of the Navy's surface vessels, and this and other measures proposed - as they have been amended in Cabinet - will produce a saving of approximately £6 billion over the next ten to fifteen years, i.e. almost exactly the expected cost of Trident over its fifteen year procurement period.

We shall return to the alternatives facing us in defence policy in the second part of this article in our next issue, but perhaps we should first ask, "Do we need defence forces?"

Some misconceptions dispelled

Every sovereign state must possess the wherewithal to protect itself against external aggression. For Britain, as for the rest of Europe, the threat of external aggression emanates from the Soviet Union. No amount of wishful thinking on the Left

of the Labour Party can dispel this reality.

"It is of course possible to argue that the most blatant aggression by the Russians is motivated by a sense of insecurity and is therefore ultimately defensive in nature. Yet no responsible western statesman can ignore the possibility that Soviet foreign policy is precisely what it appears - aggressive, opportunist and expansionist."

Lord Chalfont; The Times
5/1/1981

Fortunately the pacifists in the Labour Left and CND have yet to attain a position where they decide defence policy but as their influence is undeniably growing, it becomes increasingly necessary to answer their arguments.

The disarmament thesis is based on the false premise that nuclear free means nuclear safe. Yet there is no historical precedent that military weakness engenders respect or forbearance by an aggressive power. In World War II the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Austria, the benelux countries and Poland by Hitler in fact demonstrated the contrary; indeed, World War II was the prime example of a major world war occurring without global rearmament

More recently, it is clear that the Soviet Union's interest in arms limitation in Europe springs directly from NATO's decision to site Cruise and Pershing in Western Europe. Common sense dictates that no bargains are struck unless the parties have something to bargain with. Regrettably, common sense is a commodity in short supply in the pecifist Left.

The CND is presently focusing its activities on Britain's nuclear weapons, arguing that possession of thes means Britain is 'targeted'. However, it also admits that Britain's geographical position will render it a target for as long as Britain remains in NATO. It therefore wishes the disbandment of NATO and the adoption of the economic blockade and civil resistance in the event of an invasion of Britain. However, one would be misled if one detected a practical concern for the civilian population in the CND pronouncements. For it also argues that a country cannot have nuclear weapons and civil defence measures, as the two are incompatible. Civil defence measures against 'fall-out' from continental Europe will, it is claimed, receive wide CND support when the nuclear missiles are removed.

Between the 'unilateralists' and the 'multilateralists' there is little objective distinction. The World Disarmament Campaign, of which Lord Fenner Brockway is a senior spokesman, favours multilateral disarmament. One would therefore assume that if the USSR said "No" to disarmament or refused adequate facilities to police arms destruction, the multilateralists would favour retaining nuclear weapons. Not so, for the 'multis' say that we in Britain should begin the process of disarmament and set an example to the others ....

* * * * * * *

Unfortunately, the Soviet Union has already made clear where it stands on disarmament. It rejected completely the proposal by President Carter in 1977 that the two superpowers should negotiate "deep cuts" in

strategic weapons "even to 50 per cent".

It has developed, and clearly regards as a normal form of conventional warfare, tactical use of chemical weapons such as nerve gas.

It has at least 110 SS20 intermediate range nuclear missiles aimed at Western Europe and is adding to the total at the rateof five a month, whereas the Cruise, against which such a tirade of abuse has been launched from Moscow, will not even be introduced into Western Europe until 1983.

The Soviet Union has ushered in the era of space warfare by development of the 'killer-satellite' which can trace enemy satellites by homing devices and which then explodes in the vicinity of its target.

Indeed, official Russian attitudes to disarmament were clearly expressed by Major General Milovidor of the Lenin Military Academy, whose contribution in a recent military journal stated that the USSR

> "cannot undertake unilateral destruction of its nuclear weapons and indeed has no right to do so as it is responsible to the peoples of the whole world for peace and progress. Marxist-Leninists decisively reject the assertions of certain bourgeois tendencies who consider nuclear missile war unjust from any point of view".

However, in spite of all the pointers to Russian intentions, the economic recession has strengthened the call here for disarmament; a prominent slogan on the recent 'People's March for Jobs' was 'Jobs not bombs'. It is therefore essential that those who do not share the Left's misconceptions about Russian objectives are able to argue for a defence policy that corresponds with our present day needs.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

We would welcome the opportunity to take part in a debate which had that as its specific task.

The aim of our endeavour must be, in the words of Mike Cooley, quoted earlier in this review, to show how science and technology - which starts with research and development - can be applied in the interests of the people as a whole rather than to maximise profits for the few.

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