

## Human Rights: Screen For Superpower Contention

The latest catch word to emerge from the bourgeoisie is "human rights." Soon after his formal inauguration, Carter and the State Department began to make a flood of moralistic pronouncements on the issue of human rights, particularly within the Soviet Union. Carter went as far as writing a letter of support to Soviet Dissident Andrei Sakharov.

Throughout the Washington campaign around human rights little or nothing was said of human rights violations in the Phillipines, South Korea or other U.S. neo-colonies. Carter never mentions the daily violations of human rights in the Black Belt South and in the notorious prison systems of this country. Carter's campaign is pure hypocrisy. The human rights issue is being raised as an attempt by the U.S. bourgeoisie to gain a political advantage over their chief imperialist rivals. The most obvious method of gaining this advantage was to exploit one of the Soviets main liabilities-the Soviet dissident intellectuals. The dissident intelligentsia reflects a movement within one sector of the petty bourgeois strata of professionals who are demanding reforms of the most blatant practices of the fascist Soviet state. By their own admission they are not revolutionaries agitating the Soviet people for the overthrow of the revisionist clique which has usurped state power. Their interest wholly coincides with the political interest of U.S. imperialism and they are willing pawns in the struggle between the two superpowers. They serve the interest of U.S. imperialism by spreading the poison of anti-communism amongst the peoples of the Western countries, leading people to believe that socialism is synonymous with the fascist Soviet Union. One of their spokesmen in the United States outlined the views of this sector of the intelligentsia:

"We are not revolutionaries inciting the people to an uprising; we are not a political party fighting for power. We are waging a moral struggle for the recognition of human dignity and human rights and in the course of this struggle it is natural to appeal to people who have waged or are waging a similar struggle in their own country. This is why western public opinion supports us." (read "U.S. imperialism", - ED. RB)

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The views expressed by these Soviet intellectuals fully coincide with bourgeois ideology and thus U.S. imperialism is not threatened by them. On the other hand, U.S. imperialism will never come out in support of thousands of Soviet revolutionaries who are genuinely taking up the cause of human rights. The U.S. will not give genuine support for the Polish workers uprising of June 1976 where they raised the slogan: "all power to the working class." For the U.S. bourgeoisie to do so would only expose its own suppression of revolutionaries, national minorities, and the working class.

The hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism came out in bold relief when on May 1st, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance outlined the new policy on human rights. The statement essentially said the U.S. would ignore human rights violations when that suited its needs. (We will examine the basis for this retreat later in the article.)

### EUROPE

The first half of 1977 has witnessed increasing tension in the international situation, brought about by the contention of the two superpowers for spheres of influence and military superiority. The focus of this contention has been the strategic continent of



"Detente," "disarmament," and "human rights" have all been smoke screens for superpower contention. In the first half of 1977 we have seen an increase of this contention as illustrated by Carter's "Human Rights" campaign.



## REACTION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

Europe. Europe has been divided into spheres of influence well known to all observers of the European situation. Not so obvious is that Eastern Europe is virtually a "prison house of nations". These nations are groaning under the heel of the "new Czars", the Soviet Social Imperialists. The fierce opposition of the Czechoslovakian people to the invasion of their country by Soviet troops in 1968 and the more recent uprising of Polish workers against the Warsaw puppet regime, are testimonies to the profound desire of the Eastern European peoples for freedom. This reality is recognized by U.S. ruling circles.

The U.S. imperialists recognize the need to expand their market into Eastern Europe, the Soviet "sphere of influence". In recent years the U.S. has sold grain to Poland, and made loans to Hungary to the tune of \$100 million. The U.S. has also expanded investments and trade with the U.S.S.R. itself.

Along with the economic penetration of Eastern Europe the U.S. needs to spread its political influence and create dissension among the satellites of its rival. By utilization of the slogan "Human Rights" the U.S. attempted to posture as the champion of "democracy" and "freedom" for the Eastern European peoples and for the people of the U.S.S.R. For this reason they shrewdly focused their attacks on the Soviet Union, hoping to fan political dissent and create a political crisis for Soviet Social Imperialism. In this way they hoped to create a breach in the Soviet sphere of influence.

### DANGER OF WAR INCREASES

The ongoing contention for spheres of influence and military superiority between the superpowers is leading the world towards a major imperialist war. The collapse of the SALT talks in March was one of the most significant signs of the growing war danger. Each party blamed the other for the failure of the negotiations. However, this posturing was designed to cover up the fact that neither side is genuinely interested in complete disarmament. The much publicized Vladivostok Accords of 1974 in which each side "agreed" to set limits to their production of long range bombers and missiles was never signed by either party! As a result, the U.S.S.R. has already exceeded the "limit" set at Vladivostok, while the U.S. is about to exceed the agreed "limit". (see RC, Vol. 2 No. 3 1977 for more on SALT Talks)

The Soviet Union spends more than 19% of its national income on its military budget. By comparison U.S. imperialism spends six percent of its national income on the military budget. Because of the greater emphasis on military arms spending, the Soviet Union has now surpassed the United States in conventional weaponry.

The Soviet Union has 46,000 tanks compared to 10,000 for the U.S.; the U.S.S.R. has 4.2 million men on active service and Soviet reservists number approximately 25,000,000. These figures surpass that of the U.S. armed forces by about 100 per cent.

The Soviet Union's Angolan and Zaire military adventures demonstrate that as their military power increases, they correspondingly become more aggressive. (See RC Vol. 2 No. 3 for more on Zaire and Angola) The military aggressiveness of the U.S.S.R. has made it the main source of war today.

The rapid rate of development of Soviet arms has greatly alarmed U.S. imperialism, and has led to the acceleration of the U.S. arms build up. Last year the U.S. military budget was increased to an all time high of 94 billion dollars. The race for arms superiority means only one thing: preparation for war. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Stalin observed the feverish arms buildup among the imperialist powers and warned the world's peoples: "The bourgeois states are furiously arming and re-arming. What for? Not for friendship chats of course. But for war." (Stalin) These words of comrade Stalin are as valid today as they were then.

Differences have begun to sharpen among the U.S. bourgeoisie over the question of "detente" with the Soviet Union. The human rights scheme was one in a series of maneuvers to take a harder line with the Soviet Union. Within 4 months of taking office, Carter had arrested two Soviet fishing trawlers, kept Soviet union leaders from attending a ILWU convention, increased U.S. demands at SALT, and gave open support to Soviet dissidents.

There was a secondary aspect to Carter's human rights statements. U.S. support to dictatorships around the world is well known. But the U.S. also has to contend with other imperialist powers for control of Third World countries. Most of all, it fears any country taking a stand opposing both superpowers. When the U.S. bourgeoisie gets worried that some country in Latin America is taking a stand slightly independent of U.S. imperialism, it threatens economic sanctions against them, (e.g., Cuba in 1960). Thus human rights becomes a bargaining chip in U.S. aid to various Latin American, Asian, and African dictators.

The U.S. bourgeoisie, however, seriously miscalculated the reaction of their Latin American client states to the hard line policy on human rights. The State Department published a document which mildly criticized human rights violations in 82 countries including a number of Latin American dictatorships. As a result, Brazil cancelled \$50 million worth of U.S. military aid credits. Brazil also announced their intention to dissolve a 25 year old joint military assistance pact with the United States. Uruguay, Argentina, Guatemala, and El Salvador accused the U.S. of meddling in their internal affairs and followed the lead of Brazil. U.S. imperialism was reeling from the effects of these actions as its influence in Latin America was hitting an all time low.

Many U.S. businessmen opposed Carter's human rights campaign because they saw its disastrous effect in Latin America and on their desires for increased trade with the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. The U.S. bourgeoisie is solidly united on the need to maintain U.S. imperialism as the strongest superpower in the world. But there are differences -- sometimes quite sharp -- on how to tactically achieve this. Sectors of the bourgeoisie with heavy investments in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. (like the Rockefeller financial group) favor relatively more collusion with Soviet Social imperialism. Other financial groups favor more contention.

In this light, the "pro-detente" bourgeoisie launched an all out assault against Carter's human rights campaign on the grounds it would "hurt business".

Some of the comments of these bourgeois gentlemen were enlightening:

\* *William C. Norris, Chairman of Control Data Corp.* (extensive dealings with the Soviet Union)

"We're talking about a country in the Byzantine tradition with different historic ideals and different basic concepts of the relationship between the government and the people . . . It isn't realistic to expect such countries to change their social structure just because we call on them to do so." This gentleman also observed that in his dealings with the Soviets he sensed a "sort of reluctance and an attitude of cautious waiting."

\* *M.G. Mitchell, Chairman, Chicago Bridge and Iron Co.:*

"We've already lost potential business in a number of countries and we stand to lose more."

\* *Phillip Berg, Vice President, Dravo Corp.* (engineering and construction firm with 20% of its business overseas)

"All the ducks are lined up. We could be just a telephone call away from losing business".



\* *R.P. Fox, President of American Hoist and Derrick Co.:*

"Fortunately these things tend to blow over rather quickly, but if this persists nations like Japan and Germany will move in and we'll end up with nothing".

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Of course not all industrialists and bankers opposed the human rights issue. Carter took his cue from those imperialists who favored stronger contention. Their views are expressed in the following statement by a spokesman for the Campbell Soup Co. (part of the Morgan financial group):

"Human rights is a cornerstone of our nation, and its about time that we took a stand on abuses in other countries".

Debate in the House of Representatives further showed the struggle among the bourgeoisie. On April 6th, the House of Representatives was to vote on funding for financial institutions such as the World Bank. A majority within the House united to add a stipulation to the bill that would, in effect, require U.S. representatives on these bodies to vote against aid to any nation that "violated basic human rights". Interestingly enough, the Carter Administration stood in opposition to such a provision in the bill. Why would the champion of human rights change his position in such a short time? Carter obviously was beginning to feel pressure from that section of the bourgeoisie who were being hurt by the government's policy on human rights.

## U.S. IMPERIALISM RETREATS

The U.S. attempt to exploit the Soviet Union's political weakness to its own advantage backfired. The course of developments, particularly in Latin America, revealed that to pursue a hard line on human rights would have been courting disaster.

During the early months of his presidency and at the height of the human rights campaign, Carter's statements on human rights reflected cool confidence in the ability of U.S. imperialism to increase contention with the Soviets without hurting U.S. interest abroad. In one statement he said:

"I will not modify my Human Rights statements. My Human Rights statements are compatible with the consciousness of this country. I think that there has been repeated recognition in international law that verbal statements or any sort of public expression of a nation's belief is not an intrusion in other nations affairs." *Wall Street Journal 4/1/77*

Less than four months after President Carter's inauguration and the launching of the human rights campaign, he made a dramatic policy shift. He exposed the hollowness of his previous statements. On May 1st in a speech prepared for ceremonies at the University of Georgia, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance outlined the new policy:

"In pursuing a human rights policy we must always keep in mind the limits of our power and wisdom ... a sure fire formula for defeat of our goals would be a rigid, hubristic attempt to impose our values on others. A doctrinaire plan of action would be as damaging as indifference." *Los Angeles Times, 5/1/77*

The Secretary of State's speech reflected a well thought out policy which summed up U.S. imperialism's failure to exploit the Human Rights issue to its political advantage. Not the phrase; "defeat of our goals," but what are the goals of U.S. imperialism? Nothing short of world hegemony accomplished through, economic, political, and military superiority over its rivals — especially the Soviet Union. Note also the statement: "We must always keep in mind the limits of our power and wisdom."

The U.S. bourgeoisie is quickly recognizing that their sun is setting. Times used to be that the Latin American countries would toe the line of U.S. imperialism without question. Not so anymore; the developments around the human rights issue reveal that U.S. imperialism is weakening rapidly and cannot rely on its client states as in the past.

Rather than risk driving the Latin American and other Third World countries away from its sphere of influence, U.S. imperialism was forced to shift its policy on human rights. This policy shift was also done with an eye towards their chief rival the Soviet Union. Obviously any weakness of the United States' ability to dominate and economically exploit Latin American and other Third World nations would be exploited by the Soviets. Thus U.S. ruling circles are willing to take a step back in order to buttress their weakening position worldwide.

## HUMAN RIGHTS POSSIBLE ONLY UNDER SOCIALISM

Complete respect for human rights, freedom of expression, and the ability to *act* upon this freedom, is not possible under capitalism (either U.S. or Soviet style), complete democracy is only possible under socialism.

Within U.S. capitalist society, in theory we have "freedom of expression". In reality the ability to act upon this "freedom" is reserved to the capitalist class. Freedom of the press belongs to those who own the printing presses. The press, radio, television and all communication systems are monopolized by a handful of millionaires within our society. We live under their class dictatorship. Thus the majority of society, the working class, is in reality deprived of "freedom of expression" or more specifically the **power** to act upon this right. You have the "freedom" to criticize the capitalists until you become effective -- then they throw you in jail.

In socialist society, the situation is reversed. The revolution deprives the capitalist class of their ownership of the means of production as well as the means of communication. The working class sets up its dictatorship over the bourgeoisie and thus lays the conditions for the freedom of expression (political, artistic, etc.) The power to exercise this freedom is guaranteed by the masses of the working class.

The current campaign in China against the "Gang of Four" is a living example of proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie and proletarian democracy for the broad masses.

The "Gang of Four" (Chiang Ching, Wang Hung-Wen, Yao Wen Yuan, Chang chun-Chiao) was a faction within the Chinese Communist Party who politically represented the interest of the deposed bourgeoisie. Their goal was nothing less than to restore capitalism in China. This faction controlled the important organs of communication throughout China and were sabotaging the work of socialist construction.

Under the leadership of the party, the masses began a campaign of mass criticism aimed at exposing this faction's attempts at sabotage. The people wrote up big character posters and freely expressed their views without any fear of intimidation. All views whether right or wrong were openly expressed and discussed. In the course of mass debate, wrong views were corrected and the people who expressed them were won over through the method of democratic persuasion. The campaign of mass criticism of the "Gang's" activity continues and is being carried out in factories, schools, communes, the army, all institutions throughout China. Millions of people are involved in deciding the course their country will take. This is the concrete expression of proletarian democracy: Not back room deals by corrupt politicians, but the people themselves taking power into their own hands and **exercising** it.

The masses of Chinese people **demand** that the "Gang of Four" cease their sabotaging activities. The working class dictatorship was put into effect **against** the

(Mao). The working class in China has deprived these bourgeois careerists of their "right" to spread rotten bourgeois ideas. There is no such thing as democracy in the abstract; democracy either serves the interest of the bourgeoisie or else it just law the working class.

The anti-communist propaganda campaign by the U.S. bourgeoisie showed the true nature of bourgeois democracy. The campaign exposed the fact that the bourgeoisie is not interested in human rights or democracy. They use these slogans to serve their narrow self-interest.

It is the duty of the working class and oppressed people of this country to shove aside the corrupt bourgeoisie as the Chinese people overthrew their landlord bourgeois rulers, and build a new socialist society where the working class will exercise its democracy.