

labelling it a sell-out to one side or another, the whole initiative could be doomed. The 1974 power-sharing executive was critically weakened by Paisley's campaign against its Irish Dimension, for example. Certainly, Alliance and the British Government, through Mrs. Thatcher and Atkins with his Ministers in Belfast, could campaign *FOR* the measures and try to boost support for them in a referendum — but they could lose against the scare-tactics of the other local politicians.

A referendum may be a gamble the British should not take, and they will probably go for an election instead in Spring, 1981. If devolution for Ulster fails again by 1981, time could run out for the people of Northern Ireland. Direct-rule may be an acceptable alternative to a majority in both communities but it is seen as a short-term operation. Pressure for the British to do something — however unwise such actions would be — will build from the Irish Republic, *from Britain, from America, from Europe.*

By the perceptions of republicans in the Republic and the USA, “doing something” would mean moving to Irish unity and British withdrawal. Pursuing unity against the wishes of the Northern Ireland majority is a sure recipe for a civil war where the death toll would rise well beyond the present 2,000 plus. Attempts to bring about Irish unity under duress can only result in a geographical unity — if not repartition — but the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland would be further apart than ever. And that is why getting devolved government in Ulster between now and 1982 is more than a priority — it is a necessity.

#### Footnotes

1. A Green (Consultative) Paper was issued by the UK Government on July 2nd 1980.

## SOME LIGHT ON OUR DARKNESS

*by Dominick Graham*

The public was confused by the reaction of Western leaders to the invasion of Afghanistan. For when public figures spoke of raising defence budgets and sending U.S. Marine Corps and carrier units to the Indian Ocean they seemed to be suggesting that war was imminent. Then, as shares on the stock exchanges rose with the new popularity of the President of the United States, the media told the public that the President had been electioneering. And it appeared that the presidential political advisers were right, for the people responded immediately to an issue that they could get their teeth into — a good, old-fashioned case of aggression. The scenery was familiar from 1939, when the Germans marched into Poland, and 1950, when the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel. Those were wars, those were, and easy to understand. Not like this motley, half peace half war, they called *détente*.

But while the President spoke of armed force he repeatedly observed that it was inappropriate. We had no bases in the Persian Gulf; and stationing American servicemen there would undermine the stability of the Arab states. We would have to retaliate in other ways; refuse grain to the U.S.S.R., boycott the Olympics, and deny the Soviets high-level technology. And we would pursue self-sufficiency in energy with renewed vigor so that "they" could not blackmail us. We could show the Soviets that aggression must be paid for in other currency.

Predictably, the response of the public and media to the second message was negative, for it seemed to contradict the first. Had the President not said that we were impotent; that, unable to take military action, we were turning to softer options that would not "get the Soviets out of Afghanistan"? Moreover, were the proposed measures not going to hurt us more than them? Afghanistan, it was observed, was already within the Soviet sphere of influence. The President by over-reacting was destroying détente and achieving nothing except, perhaps, his re-election. Even Vietnam was disinterred and its skeleton rattled while witches intoned a curse on intervention and foretold a return to toil and trouble.

The confusion is understandable. There are many unanswered questions about the reason for this latest U-turn in American policy. In the past, we saw Truman's intervention in Korea yield to Eisenhower's non-intervention and reliance on the nuclear shield. We watched the flexible response of the Kennedy crusade lead into the morass of Vietnam. Then came the turn from Cold War to détente and non-intervention once more. Why should Afghanistan provoke yet another change? Is Marxist strategy really implacable and incorrigible while Western strategy is all expedience and reaction? Are there really Reds under every bed or is it that Red philosophy and techniques are being widely adopted, even by democrats? Why cannot we, too, have a credible and comprehensible philosophy and purpose?

In this article I shall attempt to take three steps towards providing some answers: namely, provide the reader with a guide to understanding the philosophy of the Soviet leadership and the nature of its conflict with the West, introduce some of the contradictions which affect Western strategy, and offer a counter-philosophy that accepts the Marxist's permanent war thesis but allows us to outlast him in the long-haul. These steps are only introductory. They will be followed by more detailed treatment of the themes in later issues of *Conflict Quarterly*.

It is over forty years since the policy of appeasement led to the Second World War. Those political elephants who forget nothing fight the appeasement campaign again and again by reminding us of the military strength of the Warsaw Pact. What they may forget is that lacking the will to withstand the dictators and to grapple with them on their own ground in the 'thirties, the democracies could not take the decision to arm against them. It was widely believed, not by politicians alone, that rearmament was not only unpopular and provocative but useless, for, lacking the will to use them, arms would prove unavailing. The people would not be behind the governments. Indeed, France's fears on those scores were confirmed in 1940. "Wishful thinking" was the expression coined to describe the circular reasoning that was prevalent. Not

until some years after the war did the democracies begin to comprehend what kind of enemy they had been fighting. Now, forty years on, it needs an intellectual effort to recall the confusion and ignorance of the public of the democracies about the alien philosophies and new, mind-bending techniques that the dictatorships of Left and Right directed at the democracies to render them impotent. The democracies' lack of effective military power was but a symptom of their failure to recognize, let alone to resist, the moral pressures being used against them. The apparent sureness of the dictators, praised by fellow-travellers of the Left and Right, dismayed the public and created the climate of treason in which the front appeared to be everywhere.

Hitler was a past-master at using psychology to bend the will of his opponents. He played on their nerves and susceptibilities by uttering threats and proffering rewards simultaneously. The demonstration of terror at Guernica was remembered by the Dutch when the bombing of Rotterdam, in May, 1940, induced them to weigh advantages and to find quick surrender expedient. The Reichstag fire was a staged disinformation exercise to justify a pogrom against the Jews and Communists. Hitler's stratagems were a triumph for his will and nerve over men with neither a will nor a plan. His adversaries were demoralised because, believing that the German case against the Versailles Treaty was good, they gave him the judgment even though it was to their disadvantage. The enthusiasm of young people in the dictatorships impressed and frightened democrats whose own people were divided, confused and apathetic. Nazis and Communists, alike, seemed to have found a purpose and to promise a way ahead in a world grown old and tired and corrupt.

The British were a bemused people until Winston Churchill showed them that there was no other course left but to fight. He did not ask them, then or later, to make a distinction between the Nazis and the Germans, nor to question why the Germans fought so well not only when they were winning but when they were losing too. His welcome to the devil in Moscow, Stalin, as an ally in the camp when Hitler invaded his nether regions, reflected the view of the British Commonwealth exactly. For they did not allow ideology to sickly over their actions with a pale cast of thought; they got on with the fight. And when the Americans joined in they, too, went "over there" with the single-minded intent to finish the job and return to normality. It seemed reasonable to suppose that as peace had ended when war began, surely, when war ended, peace would return.

It was not to be. For expectations about the return of peace ignored not only the nature of German fascism which had just been vanquished but, more important, of triumphant Marxist-Leninism. Both creeds treated war as a permanent state. By the end of the 'forties the Iron Curtain had descended, Jan Masaryk had been defenestrated and the Berlin airlift had been forced upon the West: the Soviet's version of peace had been demonstrated. But if there was not to be a real peace, what kind of war was there to be?

Philosophers, particularly those prophesying war, are not regarded as sure guides to action in the West. A handful of academics and political advisers who wish to impress may quote Clausewitz, Marx, Lenin and even Herman Kahn but the majority leave philosophical works on the shelf, convinced that Marxists do the same. This corollary is unfortunate. For Marxist writers are excellent

guides to Marxist actions. Their work is the key that opens all strategic doors and is a guide in all tactical situations. Even the opportunism demonstrated by Marxists is consistent with it. In the Marxist view, expressed in their literature, wars are caused by the conflicts within states; in particular, the class struggle for economic power which is a permanent feature of capitalism. Similarly, the struggle between states for markets and resources leads to conflicts between them and to the exacerbation of the class war within them. These "imperialist wars", Marxists insist, will lead to the progressive break-down of the capitalist system. Eventually, to avoid the collapse of their economic system and its associated class system, the capitalist states will wage and lose a war of aggression against Marxist states which have control of the resources that they need. Alternatively, they will collapse in chaos as their proletariats revolt and seize control of all the means of production. The permanent war will end when the proletariat gains economic power and establishes classless states everywhere.

After the appearance of nuclear weapons, low intensity conflict was the preferred strategy of Marxists to aid the proletariat of the world to throw off the class yoke. So, behind a formidable orthodox and growing nuclear armoury they exploited civil disturbances which were endemic in an unstable world. Although the strength of Marxist defences today makes any military response but that of low-intensity impracticable, the West has not challenged its enemy at that level of conflict. Indeed, it scarcely comprehends that *détente* means low intensity warfare. The pragmatism and rationalism of the Kennedy years have been blended with a little home-grown, southern, fervor of late, but essentially they are still the mode. Politicians respond to Soviet initiatives item by item. The battles they fight do not seem to form part of a campaign strategy nor do the campaigns advance the strategy of the war. Indeed, the existence of the war was regarded as incompatible with the concept of *détente*. Yet, unwilling though they were to join in, like Achilles sulking in his tent at Troy, the fray went on without them.

The first phase of the war that the Soviet Union has waged against the West was under the flag of anti-imperialism. Soviet proxies and fellow travellers fought in Asia and Africa against the old imperial system. For much of this time Americans were, at best, neutral and sometimes opposed to the European powers for they did not grasp that the wars of liberation were revolutionary as well. Since then, we have seen the revolutionary technique applied in the wider east-west struggle. For the revolutionary form of conflict has not ended with the extinction of the old empires. It has been carried over into independent states and is at work even in the democracies. The difference between the methods used to seize power in ex-colonial countries and those used in established ones is a distinction rather than a difference; a matter of timing and priority rather than doctrine.

In the colonial wars the old power was often more concerned to ensure that its successor was democratic and friendly than to remain to fight an unpopular war that could easily be continued in the streets of the mother country. Moreover, western public opinion at home too often saw the issue in simpler terms than were appropriate. The colonial people were Robin Hoods or Davids, fighting bad barons or Goliaths. This way of thinking, in terms of white hats and black

hats, persists when campaigns of violence are common in older democratic and nondemocratic countries alike. The Western Liberal is eager to sympathize with those who use political violence abroad, provided they express suitable democratic sentiments. The cause of the radicals, at least that part of it that is prepared for press release, tends to be uncritically accepted as representing the true aims of the movement rather than being propaganda aimed at the Western public.

Analyses of the methodology of campaigns of violence are seldom treated by the media. The similarity in method and commonality of language from one incident to another is noted at only a superficial level. Intimidation, the psychology of the criminal enclaves of great cities in which the police operate only conditionally, and even the feeling of impotence that a person has before he commits himself to a criminal act that he hopes will give his life a purpose, may be understood by the media-spectator vicariously. But what is seldom understood at this stage is the nature and political ends of the organization that lures such actors into its camp. Only when it is too late, when the individual is indoctrinated or compromised by some action on the organization's behalf, does the truth emerge. Because so much of our investigative journalism in such matters is shallow and ill-informed, the participant and the victim alike feel that their experiences are unique when the pestilence comes nigh them. They may have been indoctrinated to tolerate violence but not inoculated against the feeling of isolation and powerlessness that helps to make them either willing dupes or neutral spectators.

The open society in which we live with its free access to news and views is a paradox, for it is at once defenceless and impenetrable. The Marxist-Leninist instrument for entering it is a legal political front working as a unit with a covert, illegal and usually cellular para-military arm. An undercover political organization links the two wings. Violence and political action are used as a fighter his two fists; but the brain is political. Democracies have developed defences against rulers, bureaucrats, the armed forces, clerics and over-mighty subjects corporate or private, and have learned to be eternally vigilant against potential political subversives. A free, responsible and well-informed press and an educated public are essential for the defence of democracy, of course, and both are in jeopardy in the age of McLuhan. But the most effective and distinctive device, one that distinguishes democracies from dictatorships of all hues, is the separation of powers by which legislators, political executives and courts, through whom the police must work, have separate and inalienable spheres of authority.

The three elements — courts, legislature and political executive — form a system of checks and balances which are weighted differently in democratic states although the principle by which they function is the same. In effect, they form a triangle of forces, maintained in rough equilibrium by continuous adjustment and trial according to constitutional rules and customs and in response to the power which each can exercise. For instance, legislators and ministers confront one another; there are provincial or state and federal spheres of authority which conflict; and there is separation between criminal and civil law. The responsibility for civil order falls on the courts and the police but both are

subject to, or are required to interpret, statute law passed by the legislature, and common law may be a rival authority. The system is flexible, organic, in continuous movement and grows as a result of conflict short of violence. The latter is interpreted as a sign of disease, like high blood-pressure, but a natural one, nevertheless. Provided democratic institutions remain healthy they contain the conflict and use it as a source of energy.

The purpose of Marxist-Leninists is to enter the institutions and destroy their health, rendering them incapable of reacting flexibly to threats to parts of the system. Marxism is a cancerous process which attacks by imitating its victim. Whether or not it is irreversible is a moot point; as also the thesis that it can only succeed against unhealthy organisms. For violence may lead to political results that the majority do not foresee and would not wish if they did.

The toleration of political conflict, and even violence, is the fruit of centuries of political experience and education. In a democracy the end is not determined by a small priesthood that maintains a static, inorganic system: change is accepted as fact. This philosophy of change through political conflict, and even spasms of violence, is an enormous strength; an irresistible force to pit against the immovable object of dictatorial opponents. It is a talisman for the great majority of states that are not committed to any camp.

The world struggle is but our own internal struggle writ large. We have to wage it without altering our principles, or our cures may be as bad as the disease that we fight. Marxism is a Western idea that has already been adapted to a wide variety of circumstances. Its neodoxies are spreading. It is a fact of existence and its success as a technique and philosophy for acquiring power is established, even if there is a serious question whether it can ever live up to its promises. Our own system has been more successful but it is under fire and that is a fact that must be acknowledged. Herman Kahn, in the 'sixties, accepted the challenge of the permanent struggle and, with Western historical precedents in mind, provided an alternative to being Red or Dead.

Kahn accepted the continual struggle of the Marxists. But he offered a bridge between them and the patron saint of the military, Carl von Clausewitz.<sup>1</sup> Clausewitz had recognised the state as the sole authority for managing violence for political ends. The Marxist-Leninists regarded the Party as the authority, for it represented the class that was to carry on the struggle. For them, the Marxist state was only one part of a mysterious trinity: wars were between peoples and states. For Clausewitz, wars were between the armies of states. The internal war between classes and factions and governments was to be avoided since it signified escalating lawlessness, revolution and the abrogation of the principle that wars were fought for rational and attainable ends. The ends would be attained after superior force, whether it was applied or merely threatened, had convinced statesmen that to negotiate was more profitable than to continue the armed struggle.

Unlike the Marxist-Leninists, Kahn accepted the state as the only legitimate manager of violence but, like them, he turned his attention to the forms that the struggle might take short of war.<sup>2</sup> He recognized Clausewitz's principle of escalation; that violence tended to escalate and that the need to exert the maximum effort at the start of a conflict created an arms race in peace. The

nuclear bomb, by adding a new dimension to the arms race, drew his attention to the concept of de-escalation through nuclear equilibrium.

In addition to nuclear weapons two other developments urged Kahn to modernise Clausewitz's philosophy. First, the Marxist-Leninists had already absorbed much of Clausewitz and adapted his ideas to the concept of class war. Secondly, the essential core of Clausewitz's philosophy had been dishonoured by his advocates who had misapplied it in two world wars and caused it to be discarded. Consequently the West was left with no legitimate philosophy for the use of force for political ends. Kahn aimed to provide a new philosophical base, such as the Marxist-Leninists had, that would serve the West and the East alike in preventing a catastrophic Third World War between nuclear principals.

Kahn began by insisting that the Bomb need not end the international political dialogue like a guillotine. Nor need its use mark doomsday. It was not a monolithic element that made the past history of warfare and politics obsolete. It must not be unmentionable like cancer. So Kahn analysed its use and fitted it into a recognisable historical system of thought. At the same time the devastating power of the bomb, particularly since the advent of megaton weapons, made it unique. *An effective deterrent to its use was essential. But deterrence had to be based on self-interest and universal recognition of its power.* Nuclear equilibrium between the super-powers was the only means to ensure that the weapon was not used. If both recognised and sought to maintain equilibrium they would seek advantage by exercising power with other means. If nuclear restraint depended on continual vigilance over maintaining equilibrium, the same equilibrium was required in orthodox weaponry. For without restraint in their use, the weaker side would be provoked into employing nuclear weapons when its vital interests were at stake. Alternatively, the weaker side would be nibbled to death by a series of limited operations leading to a final surrender. Hence, equilibrium at the nuclear level had to be buttressed at a second level by the capacity to avoid being provoked. This meant, in the first instant, adequate conventional forces, but included effective political and economic action as a *substitute for the use of arms. The third level was the capacity to maintain the deterrent system in the long-haul.* This was particularly important in view of the historical interpretation of Marxists. The long-haul capacity, depended on the economic sinew of the state, of course, but everything rested on the will and cohesion of the people in the democracies of the Western variety. Hence, attention had to be paid to the Marxist-Leninist thesis that wars were fought by the people.

Kahn's is a system of thought designed to de-escalate violence and direct conflict into political channels. It is therefore in the main-stream of Western thought. There can be no doubt that if the West were successful in imposing a long-haul strategy on the Marxist-Leninists and their allies, one that exploits its own advantages of having a more skilled, well-educated and well-informed public, the future would be bright for mankind. But first the public has to accept the permanent struggle which Clausewitz, the Marxists, Kahn and the facts of the last 35 years bear witness to. It is not easy to understand or to accept that the front, in such a struggle, is everywhere.

Let us now take a second look at President Carter's two-pronged reaction to

Afghanistan. His hot-blooded gesture over armed force may be seen as an effort to mobilize the will of the American people. But his measures short of force were also in the second level of deterrence. This, unfortunately, he did not explain to his people, who expected his measures to take only orthodox military form. They reacted predictably, for they expect instant results and are not yet resigned to the idea of permanent conflict. Thus we have reluctant farmers and athletes and a confused public. The media has tended to talk in terms of "returning" to the Cold War. But a rose by that or any other name will smell the same. This essential point must be grasped.

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In this article I have sketched a background to the field with which this Journal will be concerned: namely, conflict lying between ordinary criminal violence and war between states. In the long-haul, it is a decisive area where the interests, authority and actions of the political community, the courts and police, the military, an observant press and an intelligent public overlap but lack definition and cohesion. Consequently, there is scope for confusion and misunderstanding and a need for enlightenment. In future articles we shall explain the contradictions in the Western and Marxist-Leninist positions when a Marxist-Kahnist war for equilibrium is conducted. Not the least of these contradictions is that each seeks equilibrium for itself but tries to destabilize its opponent.

Enlightenment about the enemy and knowledge of our own heritage are our sword and buckler. Whether we like it or not, we are the heirs of Locke and Hobbes, J.S. Mill, Marx and Clausewitz, and of many others. And without their philosophy to provide the light by which to read we are children in the dark.

#### Footnotes

1. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trs., (Princeton, 1976).
2. Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*: three lectures and several suggestions, (Princeton, 1960).

*Thinking about the Unthinkable*, (New York, 1962).

*On Escalation: metaphors and scenarios*, (New York, 1965).