



ON THE LINE

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THREAT OF WAR:

SPECIAL ISSUE ON MILITARISM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

THE CARTER DOCTRINE: WHAT IT WILL COST US

Although the Carter Doctrine may appeal to the American people's sense of honor and national pride, it is worth examining just what it will cost us and who exactly will be making the sacrifices the President is calling on us all to make together.

First of all, Carter's call for "5% real growth" in defense spending ignores the fact that the military budget is already grossly bloated. We have suffered through a decade of rising inflation due in large part to the Government's devaluation of the dollar in order to pay for the Vietnam war and other military waste.



Also, even if the present crisis does not lead to war, we will be left with an even greater stock of armaments and war materiel

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MIDDLE EAST ANALYSIS

The Middle East has always been a focal point of international conflict, but as events in Iran and Afghanistan have demonstrated it may become the staging ground for World War III.

Ask yourself, a) who are the competitors on this region? b) what are they competing for? The answers are obvious, a) the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and their junior partners and b) political and military bases.

After World War II, the strongest nations in the world, militarily and politically and economically, were the U.S. and U.S.S.R. These two super powers divided the world into two spheres of influence, substituting "God-Father" style, protection racket imperialism for the old fashioned, European style, colonialist imperialism.

In the Middle East, when the Entente defeated Germany & Turkey in the First World War, Britain and France became the major imperialist powers. Since the region had always

been troublesome, the British and French didn't bother to colonize, as they had done in Africa or Algeria. They simply sent in their troops and bureaucrats to "administer" the "unruly" local populace and set up a

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THE NEED FOR A G.I. UNION

The all volunteer Armed forces, Nixon's ploy to difuse the anti-Vietnam war movement, while providing a professional standing military, is in serious trouble.

According to Pentagon statistics, the rate of bad discharges, Courts Martial, AWOL (Absent Without Leave) and non-judical punishments (the commanders' right to fine or "bust" troops for minor infractions, without due process) indicates that discontent in most military branches is higher today than at the peak of servicemen's resistance to the war in Vietnam.

Overall, the use of non-judical punishment is up 35% since 1973. 86,000 GI's received "less tan honorable" discharges in 1976 alone. The Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force have seen more of their troops "go over the hill" then in any time in their recent histories. To make the situation worse, each of the services, except the Air Force, is having a difficult time retaining qualified personal.

While GI salaries are competitive with those other federal workers, the restrictive and irksome military environment has not changed significantly. In addition, Congress has sanctioned a clear pattern of erosion of benefits (health care, post exchanges, education and training).

The age-old concept of military duty as a calling has been replaced by the advertising slogan, "The Army is a job." Given dissatisfaction, the real impetus for unionization stems from career soliders themselves, rather than from outside agencies like the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), who, in 1977, wanted to enroll soliders into its ranks. Understandably, any union contemplating an organizing drive (will satisfy itself) that a deep sentiment for representation exists.

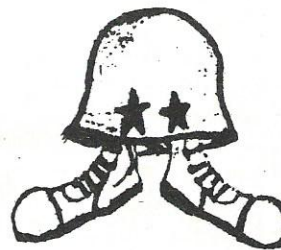
Significant evidence of union sentiment in the armed forces is not hard to come by. In the Fall of 1976, for example, researchers at the Air Force Institute of Technology in a survey among represenatitive airmen, found that 35% of enlisted ranks would join a union immediately. Another third stated they were undecided on the issue.

A questionnaire circulated by Citizen Solider to 21,000 active duty troops in all services, in April 1977, resultled in a similiar distribution of opinion. Those opposed to a GI union were mostly officers and retired military men.

Alarmed by these trends, the House Armed Services Committee schedualed, in 1977, a full set of hearings to examine military grievence procedures. This was the first serious Congressional initiative acjnowleging the dimensions of this discontent. In contrast, Storm Thurmond and his conservative allies in both Houses, proposed to outlaw both union membership and organizing efforts, without concern for the serious threat such legislation would pose to the constitutional rights of servicemembers and civilian union activists. Since 1977 the proposed law has been shelved in response to the AFGE deceision not to organize the military.

The case of Private Ben Ellerd illustrates the need for an independent organization to mediate between the rank and file soliders; their human and material interests, and an unresponsive command.

GENERAL WITH THE SHIT
KICKED OUT OF HIM



Like most enlistees today, Ben couldn't find civilian work and joined after being promised skilled training and work experiance by the recruiter. When these promises were broken, he sought redress through the chain of command as he had been taught. For this, he was branded a trouble maker and was re-assigned to permanent make-work details, referred to by GI's as "raking sand and painting rocks."

Demoralized by the rampant use of hard drugs by 80% of the men in his unit, and frustrated in every attempt

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Carter (cont.)

than before. These things have no practical use (they can't be consumed or used to produce other things), and thus can only serve as a drain on the already depleted resources of the U.S.

Furthermore, the maintenance of such a stock of instruments of destruction will create a continuing temptation to use them. They contribute nothing in reality to 'national security', given that the U.S. already possesses the capability to destroy the world many times over. Even the term 'national defense' with regards to these things is a joke, since the military defense of the U.S. in a full-scale nuclear war would be impossible.

The entire mythology about how military spending is good for the economy should be scrapped. Even though some jobs may be created at first, the long-range cost is not only economic instability, but a trade-off where military muscle is swapped for rebuilding the cities, the railroads, dying industries such as steel, etc. The Carter Doctrine may succeed in keeping the U.S. No.1 militarily, but will also succeed in reducing it to the

Carter's attempts to use international trade as a weapon against the U.S.S.R. and Iran will be paid for in the form of increased taxation, in order to pay off big agribusiness (and not small farmers) and industrialists who will have lost part of their foreign markets. A recent New York Times article pointed out that previous attempts by the U.S. and other Western power to use trade as a weapon of war have almost always failed, and in fact have often solidified the hostility of the opposing nation.

But it is not only economically that working people will pay for the return of the Cold War that the Carter Doctrine implies. Political repression and the slow but sure transformation of the U.S. into a massive stockade will surely follow, making the McCarthy era of the 1950's look mild in comparison.

In his State of the Union message, (perhaps better referred to as a bugle call), Carter stated that "...we need to remove unwarranted restraints..." from the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies. This means the repeal of the Hughes-Ryan amendment which prohibits the C.I.A. from using such methods as covert action. By allowing the C.I.A. to once again open up its bag of 'dirty tricks' (which include torture and murder), the Government will bring back the worst elements of the Nixon regime.

Once the C.I.A. is allowed to do this abroad, it will soon feel free to do the same here. The repression of political opposition in other countries, which the C.I.A. has been notorious for, will encourage the repression of dissent here.

Carter's call for the 'revitalization' of the Selective Service System means the return of the draft in the near future. Reinstitution of registration is the first step to subjecting young men (and very possibly



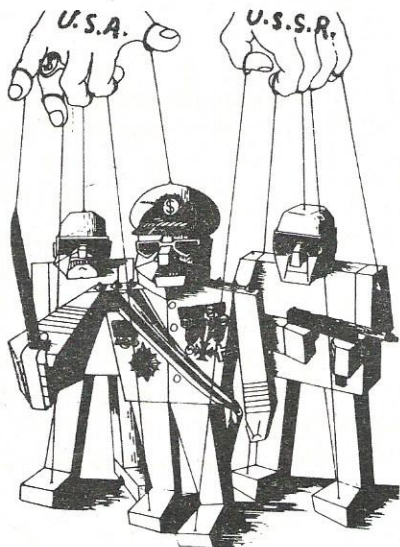
THE RETURN OF THE COLD WARRIOR

status of an underdeveloped country economically.

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women) to the sort of enslavement that many of us fought so hard against not even a decade ago.

The return of the draft would also make it easier for the military big-wigs to involve the U.S. in more brutal affairs such as Vietnam, by assuring them an ample supply of soldiers, i.e. cannon-fodder. It will also speed up the militarization of our society, by putting more and more people under the direct control of the Armed Forces. The one thing it would not do, contrary to current propaganda, is alter the military balance of power between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.



In addition, the imposition of the Carter Doctrine will help bring about other repressive measures. One of the worst of these is the Criminal Code Reform Bill of 1980, introduced in the Senate by none other than Ted Kennedy. This bill contains such measures as preventive detention (jailing someone because they might commit a crime) and other totalitarian horrors.

In short, the political results of the Carter Doctrine domestically would be to create the sort of authoritarian government that Carter and friends claim to oppose in the U.S.S.R. and other 'socialist' countries.

It should be crystal clear then, that neither the Pentagon nor its junior partner war-producing firms, nor the big owners of agricultural or industrial capital, nor the politicians who hope to milk the present crisis for power and prestige, will be making the kind of sacrifices the Carter Doctrine calls for. Instead, as in all imperialist ventures, the costs will fall on the heads of the working people, the students, the poor, all those who make up the powerless minority. The bosses, bureaucrats, generals and the rest of those in the powerful minority will reap the gains.

--- A. Kogan

Middle East (cont.)

few military bases to "help keep the peace." When World War II came to an end and the local people stepped up their struggles for independence, the British and French abandoned the area and concentrated their energies on their established colonies in North Africa, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. As soon as Britain and France pulled out, the U.S and U.S.S.R. began vying for the "support" of the newly independent nations with promises of economic and military aid.



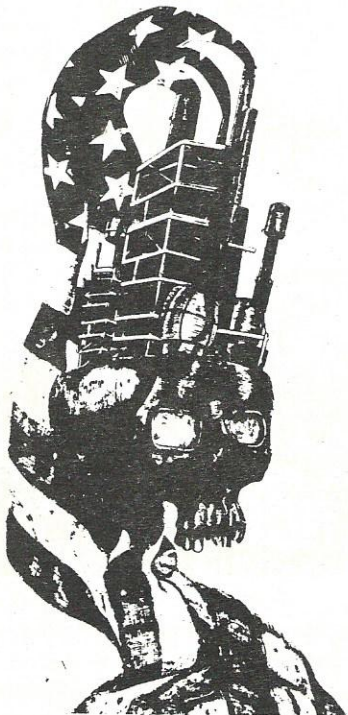
For the past 30 years, this omnipresent competition has been an important factor in the major conflicts in the region. For instance, the much publicized treaty between Israel and Egypt, arbitrated by the U.S., was not so much the product of U.S. altruism as the product of U.S. self interest. In return for the promise of peace and U.S. aid, Egypt abandoned its' former "Sugar Daddy," the U.S.S.R. and both Egypt and Israel have offered the U.S. military bases.

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Middle East (cont.)

It has been reported that there have been Joint American Egyptian Air-combat exercises and Israel's Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman has stated that Israel would willingly form an "Anti-Communist Block," with interested Arab states.

The same motives are behind U.S. criticisms of Israel's policies in the occupied territories and intervention in Lebanon. The U.S. is trying to appeal to "moderate" Arab states hoping that their apprehensions about Soviet bases in South Yemen and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan will outweigh their opposition to U.S.--Israeli ties and encourage them to be more "co-operative", thereby enabling the U.S. to consolidate its power in the region or, as Carter put it in his recent State of the Union address, "... Expand our own sphere of friendship."



As for Iran and Afganistan, in 1939 when the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany were negotiating the Hitler-Stalin pact, Molotov stated that this agreement was possible, "Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the focal point of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."

This area includes Iran and Afghanistan which, as can be seen from the recent invasion, is still the focal point of Soviet aspirations, explaining why when the Amin government seemed to be straying from the Soviet line and failing to crush the ever growing rebellion, the U.S.S.R. decided to intervene.

The situation in Iran is another factor in the Afghanistan invasion since the Hostage crisis could provoke U.S. military intervention or a U.S. backed coup by the Iranian military to establish a "pro-western" government (Recent reports indicated that Iranian officers were shot for conspiring to overthrow Khomeini). The upsurge of Islamic militancy and nationalism could incite the oppressed, Islamic national minorities in the U.S.S.R. Uprisings of the Iranian national minorities could provide an excuse for Soviet intervention and occupation of Iran, as in the early years of the Bolshevik regime and World War II.

Control of the Straits of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, the center of Middle East oil traffic, affects the oil issue, a major U.S. concern. In 1924, Otto Rühle's book, "From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution", pointed out that, "...After the ending of W.W.I, the most pressing imperative for America, if it did not want to lose again the hegemony won over world economic domains, was to bring the oil production of the world into its hands in order to thus monopolize the guarantees of its ascendancy..."

How the American multi-national corporations came to dominate the Middle East oil trade, as well as what measures the U.S. would use to protect their interests here as illustrated by such actions as the 1953 C.I.A. orchestrated coup which returned the Shah to power.

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Middle East (cont.)

So the U.S. has, to quote Carter, "...increased and strengthened our naval presence in the Indian Ocean..." and made "...arrangements for key naval and air facilities...in the region of Northeast Africa and Persian Gulf." One must realize that this effort is not to prevent the deprivation of a vital energy source for the American (Carter's energy policies demonstrate a lack of that particular concern) but, rather, to defend the power and profit of the oil companies as well as U.S. strategic position.

Another element in this present crisis is the involvement of the People's Republic of China, making the scenario for war more complete. China has entered into joint U.S. Defence talks and has promised aid to Pakistan and the Afgani rebels repelling the U.S.S.R. Already there are reports of Chinese advisors fighting besides the rebels.

Thus far, we have dealt only with the international power struggles, but equally important are the power struggles at home. Presently we are facing a global economic crisis. Unemployment and the inability of working people to make ends meet are problems which threaten the very power and authority of every ruling class, whether they are called "capitalists", "Party officials" or "Holy Men." These ruling classes are attempting to deal with their domestic crisis with old, tried, and true methods of directing popular anger and frustration toward foreign enemies who threaten national "security" or "honor" and away from the real enemy, the system that allows small groups to control the destinies of millions. Thus Khomeni encourages militant, anti-American actions and world rulers dust off the old war drums and battle standards.

Yes, the scenario is quite complete; the battlelines are drawn and all prepare for war, capable of killing millions with just one bomb. Despite government assurances, come World War III these bombs will be used-- --that is, unless the workers of this world decide they've had enough!

---Ben Mered

GI Union (cont.)

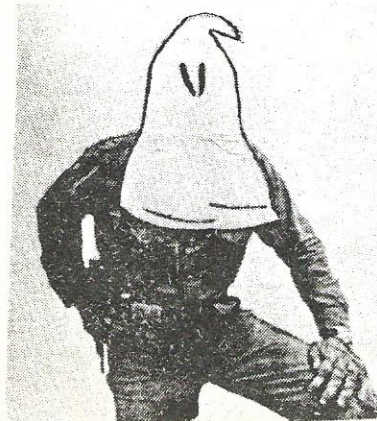
to win relief from the command, Ben developed a bleeding duodenal ulcer. The final straw was being pronounced "fit for duty" by an uncaring medical staff. Isolated and desperate, Ben saw no alternative but to flee. At 19, Ben was discharged "dishonorably"--- worse off by far than when he enlisted.

Most opponents of a GI union coldly avoid the human dimensions that have in the past, brought this issue to the fore. They warn of "battlefield picket lines" in any forthcoming conflicts as a means of justifying the second class status to which career soldiers are regulated today.

Those with a greater social vision, however, will argue that workers in uniform are still the first bulwark against future debacles like Vietnam. Further, a GI union may be one way to maintain some control over an increasingly militaristic society.

(Note: Much of the above information is based on an article written by Todd Ensign and Michael Uhl of Citizen Soldier, an organization promoting soldiers' rights and military unionism.)

-- Mike Harris



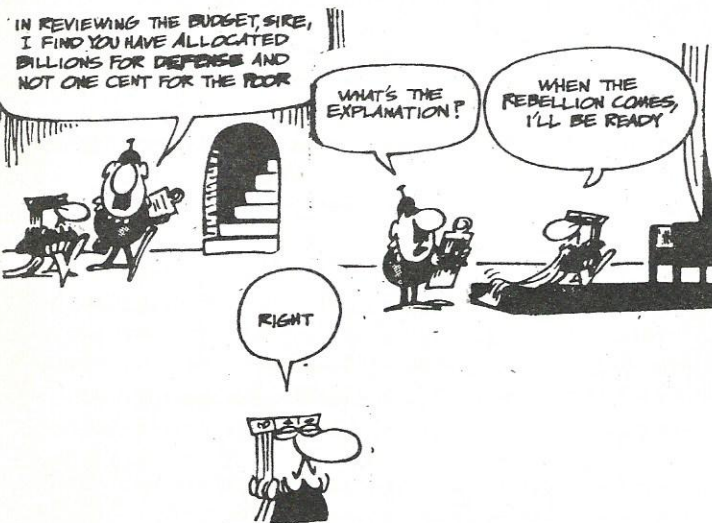
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EDITORIAL

Back in our July issue we stated that, "...developments indicate that both the governments of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are on a reckless course that can lead only to World War III." Little did we know at the time that only six months later we would be on the very brink of it.

The media have presented an image of a U.S. united and resolved to meet the Soviet threat. All of the other serious problems facing our country, such as inflation, unemployment and our decaying cities, have vanished in a cloud of patriotism and "national will," as Carter put it.



As Anarchists, we say, as in the past, that capitalism (the system of production for profit and not for use,) and the state, as well as the entire set of authoritarian and hierarchical relationships that it implies, are the greatest enemies of peace and freedom in the world. (We include in this the so called 'Communist' states.) As the old saying goes, "War is the health of the state."

We believe that as workers and students, homemakers and unemployed, it is not in our own interests to co-operate with the war machine on its road to mass slaughter. If need be, we must take matters into our own hands and stop the next war before it starts. We still believe, as we did six months ago, that:

"The only war we should be interested in is the war between rulers and ruled--a war that is fought every day in workplaces, schools and communities--that is, a Class War.

It is our hope that the American people will soon begin to pierce the cloud and see that the problems still exist behind the propaganda smokescreen. They cannot simply be wished away, no matter what Carter believes.

The present course of events can only lead to destruction. But we need not resign ourselves to the inevitability of this. It remains for the American people to wake up and realize the danger of this path, and challenge the actions of our so-called political "leaders."

The Libertarian Workers Group is affiliated with the Anarchist-Communist Federation, and is the New York group of the Syndicalist Workers Committee, which is the American group affiliated to the International Workers Association, the world federation of libertarian syndicalists organizations.

WHO WE ARE

We call ourselves "anarchist-syndicalists" and we have named our group the Libertarian Workers Group. We are a committee of working people and students who live in the N.Y. metropolitan area. We publish ON THE LINE because we feel that the news and experiences which come from many small battles between exploiters and exploited, powerful and powerless, must be shared if the workers are someday to win.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that the capitalist class is unnecessary and that government (the political state and all its bureaus) is inherently oppressive. The state and the capitalist class, while not seeing eye-to-eye on everything, are built on exploitation and domination. By "stealing" from the real producers--the workers--and then selling to consumers--most of whom are workers too--the capitalist is able to make profits and keep power. Landlords and the utility companies steal from workers in a similar way. The government insures that business goes on as usual and even runs some industries. Education is bought and sold like a commodity, and students are trained for further exploitation in factories and offices. The decisions and what will be produced, how much will be charged and how goods and services will be distributed are made in a "top-down" way in political centers by bureaucrats and capitalists.

People are taught to play a passive role in society, to take uninteresting and low-paying jobs, to vote for candidates that really have nothing to offer, to experience life through television and movies and to accept racial and sexual oppression as normal. Meanwhile, thousands of people are going to jail, becoming addicts or committing suicide.

WHAT WE WANT

It is not enough, we think, to try to reform society. The exploiter-exploited relationship, protected as it is the world over by all of the governments and social institutions (churches, philanthropies, schools, etc.), must be done away with. The capitalist system, in which one person works for another's profit and then lives only to work in that framework, is full of contradictions and shortcomings. The decisions on what will be produced and distributed, on how housing and community problems will be solved, and on how natural resources will be allocated must be made by the working class on a local level through democratic organizations controlled by the rank-and-file.

Education must be democratic and non-hierarchical and must be available to all. Racial and sexual barriers must be abolished. In short, the working class must emancipate itself. We think that it can only do so by building organizations in which all workers and students can participate, and from which all will benefit. The center of the organizations must be the workplace, the school, and the community.

The tactics we think are most useful are the general strike and the takeover of workplaces, schools and communities for rank-and-file control and for necessary immediate gains. Revolutionary unions and councils must be created to fight for decentralized economic planning and generalized self-management. Anarchist-syndicalism is the sum total of these objectives and offers the means by which to obtain them.

Subscriptions to ON THE LINE are \$1.00 for 6 issues. Send subs to:

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