

WHOSE COUP?

The Daud regime in Afghanistan was recently overthrown by a Soviet engineered coup.

Soviet Trained pilots play decisive role

The Afghan airforce possesses some of the most advanced and destructive war-machinery that has been developed by mankind. Even more important, pilots and other technical personnel have been trained by the Soviet Union to be capable of using it effectively. The pilots spend 7 or more years in the Soviet Union, and return home with skills which rank them among the most highly trained pilots in Asia. Furthermore, they have their heads pumped full of revisionist ideology, and are totally subservient to Soviet interests.

This explains the speed and efficiency of the coup, in which the airforce played the decisive role in the victory of the anti-Daud faction. It is therefore no surprise that Tarakki, the chief-tan of the local revisionists was promptly announced as the head of the post-coup government.

The Soviet Union is now moving fast to transform Afghanistan into a Soviet client state as full of sophisticated weaponry as Ethiopia; and, by contrast with the Ethiopian case, there will be no need to turn to Cuba to supply pilots capable of using it.

All the Soviet Union needs now is a breathing space in which to strengthen its hold. But recent reports suggest that opposition is building up; in the past few days the air-force has been making sorties against rebel areas. However the armed forces remain loyal, and the tremendous speed at which the Soviet Union can now carry out large-scale military transit operations (as recently demonstrated in the Ogaden war) will probably enable the Kremlin to establish in Afghanistan a new 'Dergue' - i.e. a military-fascist dictatorship totally subservient to Soviet imperialist war aims, along the lines of the present regime in Ethiopia.

Soviet Designs on Pakistan

The question now being asked in neighbouring Pakistan is this: will the Soviet Union now attempt to push its luck and use its position of strength in Afghanistan to stir up a new conflict that could lead to the further disintegration of Pakistan? The Soviet Union's previous record in Bengal in 1971 shows that it will stop at nothing in such attempts to extend its influence in South Asia.

During the years of Bhuttos' rule Soviet intrigues centred on the North West frontier province, and in particular on the National Awami Party led by Wali Khan, whom the Soviet Union hoped to make the Mujib of the Frontier province (i.e. the leaders of a new secessionist state under Soviet dominance, along the lines of the earlier Bangladesh). However, Wali Khan has switched his bets, and is now placing his hopes on the elections that have been promised by Pakistan's military regime. He

has thus incurred the wrath of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has now turned to Baluchistan, where it has long had another iron in the fire. The territory of the Baluchi spans Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Like the Kurds, Somalis and other nationalities divided by state frontiers, the Baluchis have waged a long and complicated struggle for their national rights. Soviet imperialism has long taken advantage of this to try to fish in troubled waters, by trying to use the legitimate demands of the Baluchi people to build up its own influence.

Baluchi secessionist forces suffered various defeats at the hands of Bhuttos' army. The Soviet Union dashed forward to provide facilities for secessionist leaders who went into exile. For instance, the Soviet Union beams a daily broadcast, 'Free Baluchistan', from Iraq. Experience in Bengal, Ethiopia and elsewhere shows that when the Soviet Union intervenes in such a way, its motive is not the democratic and peaceful solution of such national questions or their revolutionary solution. On the contrary, its motive is to exploit such nationalist causes for its own aims by trying to gain influence in their leadership and if possible hijack it.

If, therefore, the Soviet Union succeeds in arming Afghanistan and is creating a receptive Baluchi leadership prepared to go along with Soviet aims, then the situation in Pakistan could soon become very dangerous.

A new, pro-Soviet state of Baluchistan

In the case of Bengal in 1971, the Soviet Union succeeded in beginning the dismemberment of Pakistan. In that case, the Indian army fulfilled three functions: it delayed the Pakistan army; it enabled the Soviet Union to remain out of the firing line (like the Cubans did in Ethiopia and Angola); it prevented the new state Bangladesh from achieving genuine independence and non-alignment after its creation. The Afghan army and airforce are only too well equipped to play the role in Baluchistan that the Indian army played in Bengal.

The strategic advantage that would accrue to the Soviet Union from a new, pro-Soviet state of Baluchistan would be even greater than those it stood to gain from Bangladesh. The dream of the old Tsars of pre-1917 Russia would at last come true, and the Soviet social imperialists would reach 'warm water' on the north shore of one of Europe's most vital trade routes - the Indian Ocean. It is by this route that Western Europe receives its main supply of energy - oil from the Gulf. By achieving dominance in the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union will be in a position to weaken decisively the European capitalist countries into which it wishes to expand.

A pliant Baluchi leadership would also enable the Soviet

Union to use the Baluchi of Iran as a 'Trojan Horse' to gain a bigger toe-hold in Iran. The Shahs' dictatorship is now tottering under the blows of the Iranian masses, and the Soviet Union would dearly love to turn their gains to its advantage by establishing a pro-Soviet regime in post-Shah Iran, instead of a peoples' democratic government.

Labour governments' collusion

What has Britain's Labour government done to alert the British people to the serious threat to world peace that is posed by such Soviet adventures? Nothing! On the contrary, pro-Soviet elements are given a fairly free hand to conduct their intrigues in London. In addition the British press does nothing to make the truth known.

The 'liberal' British press has been making a big to-do about atrocities committed by the military regime in Pakistan. What hypocrisy! British imperialism and its mouthpieces couldn't give a damn about the sufferings of third world peoples as was shown by their blackout on British aggression in Dhofar, Oman. Oppression in Pakistan, whose root cause is imperialist exploitation by the US and Western imperialism, will be dealt with by the Pakistani masses, not by self-righteous and hypocritical leader-writers on the staff of the Guardian and other British newspapers.

Meanwhile these papers maintain a stony silence on developments whose danger for the people of Pakistan and the whole world completely overshadows any misdeeds of Zia and his fellow British-trained blimps.

Second world countries must reject 'appeasement'

The Labour government must not be allowed to go on pussy-footing about Soviet aggression around the world. The bitter experience of 'appeasement' in the 1930s shows that it is the new and up-and-coming imperialist powers (in those days the Axis powers, today the Soviet Union) which constitute the most dangerous source of war, and that 'appeasement' only allows them the opportunity to accumulate greater strength and prepare yet greater sufferings for the people of the world. Experience shows that when such a power starts to go on the rampage, it can only be stopped in its tracks by uniting all who can be united against it.

The trend among second world countries of Western Europe to unite against the Soviet threat should be welcomed and fully utilised. It is one more blow for Soviet war schemes. It restricts the Soviet Union's ability to launch imperialist aggression in the third world, and thus provides greater scope for anti-imperialist struggles in the third world to avoid imperialist domination by the Soviet Union when escaping that of the United States.

While the Labour government spreads fairy stories about 'detente', the third world peoples have to shed their blood and bear the brunt of struggle against the superpowers. We must not let the Labour government get away with such 'appeasement' policies while the Soviet imperialists tread in Hitler's footsteps.