

capitalist nations and in longitudinal comparisons of nations that experienced social transformations.

It is simply not true, as Professor Parenti contends, that we "offer no plausible explanation" of the greater militarism of socialist nations, or that our thesis is presented "without the support of any evidence." Parenti may not like our explanation and may dispute our evidence, but he is obliged as a social scientist to offer systematic evidence on behalf of his own "capitalist encirclement" and "imperialist" explanations.

We are open to suggestions regarding the measurement of "militarism." We tried to acknowledge many of the problems associated with cross-national comparisons of military spending and the size and strength of armed forces in societies. Parenti points out that CIA data is suspect. We agree. Recent revelations of the weakness of the Soviet economy show that the CIA vastly underestimated the proportion of the Soviet GNP devoted to the military. By overestimating the numerator, GNP, the CIA came up with their 16% figure, when 25% would be a better estimate of the USSR military spending ratio. In other words, the Soviet military burden is *four times* that of the United States, not merely twice as heavy as suggested by previous estimates. But we made it clear that the armed forces personnel

ratio was a more reliable measure. Parenti's suggestion that socialist nations use their military personnel for "road repairs and other construction projects" is disingenuous at best.

We agree that additional measures of militarism, not employed in our original article, would be illuminating. Indeed, direct measures of "military strength" reinforce our thesis about the greater militarism of socialist nations. Consider for example a comparison of the numbers of main battle tanks: USSR—53,350, U.S.—15,992; North Korea—3,200, South Korea—1,560; China—8,000, Taiwan—309; Vietnam—1,600, Thailand—60; Cuba—1,100, Argentina—235, Mexico—0, Brazil—0 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1989). Similar imbalances among these nations can be observed for armored personnel carriers, artillery, mortars, antitank guided weapons, air defense guns, and surface to air missiles. (The U.S. and USSR are roughly equivalent in combat aircraft, but all other socialist-capitalist nation comparisons reveal heavy imbalance in favor of socialist military air strength. The USSR deploys three times as many attack submarines as the US, but total surface ship counts are roughly equivalent.) In short, the smaller GNPs of socialist nations do not prevent them from deploying

larger *absolute numbers* of weapons, although indeed at a much greater relative burden to their economies.

We do not undertake to examine "the whole dreadful history of imperialism" but if we did, and we included interventions "indirectly with surrogate forces that were supplied, financed, trained and advised" by the USSR, we predict that our thesis would be strengthened. But such an events analysis must be systematically undertaken, with valid concepts and reliable measures. A recitation of the tired Marxist litany of Western "imperialism" is not a substitute for serious research.

The transition from socialist, centrally directed, coercive economic organizations, is a necessary condition for a reduction in military force levels. Fortunately, this transition is underway in Eastern Europe, and consequently the prospects for military reductions in Europe are encouraging.

References

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Rejoinder to Dye and Zeigler

Michael Parenti

Professors Dye and Zeigler (D&Z) take the easy way out. They invite the reader to think of their present critic as one of those "academic Marxists" in the grip of a "secular religion" "insulated from world events, spinning out theoretical webs." This approach enables them to rest secure in their ideological assumption that, while their critic is a hopeless ideologue, they themselves are value-free social scientists arguing closely from evidence.

Yet they continue to ignore evidence they do not find agree-

able—as with the numerous examples of capitalist militarism and aggression I proffered. I noted other variables that could measure militarism, including treaties, overseas bases, striking power, mobility, levels of technology, etc. Given this opportunity to respond to these specifics, D&Z choose not to. One is tempted to conclude that they fail to answer because they have no answers.

D&Z are now willing to concede that military strength could be an additional measure of militarism. But again they are selective in their treat-

ment. They find that the Soviets have more tanks, attack submarines, and more conventional defensive weapons. They still disregard the Pentagon's admonition that gross numerical comparisons are misleading since they do not account for capability. D&Z also offer not a word about various nuclear weapons systems and space weapon systems (e.g., SDI), nothing about the tactical air-to-surface missiles and the host of other new systems that Bush is cooing over. In the all-important nuclear area, the balance is decidedly

in the United States favor. (Gervasi 1986, 276-494; Aldridge 1983; Center for Defense Information 1988).

Regarding nuclear armed submarines, their deployability, their detectability, and their striking power, D&Z are dead wrong in seeing the Soviet force as superior to the U.S. force. They are right about the Soviet supremacy in number of tanks. But here too one must wonder. For forty years U.S. leaders have been arguing as did Defense Secretary Cheney recently on TV: "We can't cut our conventional forces because the Soviets have more tanks." In those forty years the U.S. easily could have built more tanks. In the eight years that the peaceful capitalist Ronald Reagan spent \$2.5 trillion on arms, we could have surpassed the Soviet tank force. But U.S. leaders *chose not to do so*, because the tank is a limited and obsolete weapon. They have no use for 53,350 tanks, especially when half of them are not operative or battle-ready, as is the case with the Soviet tank force. This has not prevented our leaders and some obliging political scientists from repeatedly pointing to the Soviet tanks as an apparently unsurpassable measure of military threat.

U.S. military leaders repeatedly have said they would not trade their defense system for the one the Soviets have (Parenti 1989, 155). As careful social scientists, D&Z ought to take such opinions into account.

I observed that some portion of the troops in socialist armies are used on civilian work projects, an unexceptional fact known to anyone who has some familiarity with socialist military practice. But D&Z call that observation "disingenuous at best." D&Z should rebut the point rather than accuse the critic of dishonesty.

As social scientists, D&Z must explain what research strategy allowed them to conclude that "until the advent of the Reagan Doctrine, no socialist nation was seriously

threatened by a capitalist nation" in the post World War II era. What allows them to ignore the many examples I brought up? D&Z do not tell us in their rejoinder.

D&Z think that any reference to Western imperialism is just a recitation of a "tired Marxist litany." Do they mean to say that what capitalist colonialists and neocolonialists have done and are doing to the Third World has never really happened?

Imperialism is that process by which the dominant interests in one nation expropriate the land, labor, natural resources, markets, financial structure, and even popular culture of another nation. D&Z do not believe such things exist under peaceful capitalism. But the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America—including the multitudes of non-Marxists among them—know what Western imperialism is. They will tell you about it. There is a whole literature documenting its past and present oppressions, including the economic exploitation, death-squad terrorism, and military suppression. Some of that literature is cited in my article above.

The view from D&Z's desk is roughly the view one gets from the White House, the Pentagon, the CIA, and NBC, CBS, and ABC. But should social scientists so indiscriminately embrace whatever the CIA says about socialist military spending, even when that agency keeps changing its story and when independent sources have shown how rigged and self-serving CIA information can be?

D&Z find confirmation for their thesis in recent events in Eastern Europe: military backing was withdrawn, socialism collapsed. Would that we could apply such a test to Guatemala, El Salvador, Indonesia, South Korea, Colombia, Mexico, Zaire, the Philippines, and a host of other capitalist nations. Unfortunately we will not get the opportunity, for these noncoercive capitalist countries are not ready to

forego their reliance on militaristic coercion when controlling their own populations.

All of which seems to refute D&Z's argument. If socialist countries are so rigidly militaristic because of their bureaucratism and lack of a free market, then why are they capable of such dramatically liberalizing political changes? Why didn't the militarists gun down the dissidents as they do in scores of free-market countries? If Third World capitalist countries are so much less militaristic, then why do they continue to resist change and terrorize their own populations with a degree of violent repression that surpasses, but is much less publicized than, the violence of Tiananmen Square. And if the U.S. is so much less militaristic than the USSR, why is it not matching the latter's military cuts?—another point I raised earlier which D&Z continue to ignore.

Finally, I welcome D&Z's idea that any measure of militaristic interventionism by surrogate forces should include those used by the Soviet Union. Such a study should be undertaken, but preferably not by Dye and Zeigler. Capitalism is more than a way of organizing an economy; it is an ideological and social order. And some people are so deeply immersed in it that they do not even know the extent of their immersion.

References

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