

GREENIES, PEACENIKS AND ALL THAT

In view of all the barriers to efficient economy raised by despotic governments, it is remarkable that the free world's financial system should have been singled out by the socialist left and the United Nations as the cause of third world poverty. In view of the range of natural wonders it is surprising how much effort the greenies devote to the West's energy sources. South Africa and Israel are both illiberal regimes in which government authority usurps freedom but they are hardly the most extreme examples of tyranny. Why are multinational companies, which were begged by host countries to open shop, accused of sins which are surely beyond their capacity to commit? Why does the peace movement demand unilateral disarmament of the United States but never stage demonstrations in Warsaw Pact capitals? Why is not there a similar storm over Chinese nuclear tests to that raised about the French?

The extraordinary imbalance of these protests must lead the critical observer to at least suspect some form of conspiracy for ends other than those portrayed. The trouble with most conspiracy theories is that they advance complicated explanations of simple events. However, in this case, I think a conspiracy really is the simplest explanation.

We didn't express surprise or disgust when told that the CIA spread selected argument favourable to American interests in Communist Countries or encouraged Solidarity, the Hungarian dissidents and the Afghan tribes. We expect it to encourage opinions everywhere, favourable to American interests, Western World defence and liberal democracy.

Similarly, we should expect the KGB to advance opinions favourable to Soviet interests, Warsaw Pact defence and communism. It would indeed be surprising if the Soviets did not encourage "movements" in Western Countries which enhance the relative strength of the Soviet Union. In a free country it is made very easy for the KGB.

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We should not be surprised, alarmed or horrified by this, but we should be sceptical of any argument which weakens our economy or our defences. If the argument we hear is balanced, then the KGB is failing in its task.

We should never attempt to silence these views; they will not always be wrong. But a liberal society is under no obligation to tax itself to subsidise conservation and peace movements which too often play into our opponents' hands.