
Book Review

Moscow's agents in British trade unions

by Laurent Murawiec

Scargill the Stalinist?

by Nicholas Hagger
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128 pp., paperback, £2.50

Hagger's book, subtitled "The Communist Role in the 1984 Miners' Strike—A Warning to the British People," was published in November 1984 in London, in the wake of the senseless 15-month-long British miners' strike which National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) head Arthur Scargill led to defeat. The little volume is a useful case-study of the modus operandi of Soviet agents in the labor movement; through quotes from the "ex-"Communist leader of the miners, a portrait is presented of a Soviet agent cynically manipulating whatever grievances workers might have, in order to provide a model for "radicalized working-class struggle"—never mind the impoverishment and bitterness of the "rank-and-file" miners themselves as a result of the fiasco.

The miners' strike purportedly originated in the British government's and its Coal Board's policy of shutting down unprofitable coal mines. The coal industry itself is a testimony to the backwardness of the British economy. The NUM for many decades has been the flagship of the narrowly focused, corporatist, and anti-technology British trade-union movement; it is also a union capable of toppling governments, as Prime Minister Edward Heath learned in 1974.

Hagger quotes Scargill's profession of love for the U.S.S.R.: "I went to the Soviet Union . . . met Khrushchev and a lot of other leaders and played an important international role in the Young Communist League. . . . I supported the Soviet Union over Hungary. . . . I objected to the moving of Stalin's body outside the mausoleum. . . . I am not prepared to be party to these attacks on the Soviet Union, which has established a socialist system and wants to improve the quality of life of its people."

Scargill's methods are clearly stated: "I think it is as daft to suggest that we talk to this government, who are impervious to logic, as it would have been for people in the Second World War to talk to the Nazis," and since there is to be no

talk, "we wished to paralyze the nation's economy. It's as simple as that. We were fighting a class war and you don't fight a war with sticks and bladders. You fight a war with the weapons that are going to win it . . . the issue is a very simple one: it is them and it is us . . . my position is extremely clear: I want to take from them for us. In other words, I want to take into common ownership everything in Britain."

Countless other class-struggle lunacies were proffered by Scargill, with "stuff the outside world"—reported in January 1984 by the London *Daily Express*—being the ultimate expression of his outlook. It also appears clearly, from his own statements, that Scargill was ordered out of the Communist Party of Great Britain, a miserably ineffective sect, and assigned by his Soviet controllers to take over the single most powerful British labor union.

Documented in the book are the close relations of Scargill with the international apparatus of what used to be called the Comintern: the International Department of the Soviet Central Committee, the Soviet "trade unions," and their international extension, the World Federation of Trade Unions, etc. A few million pounds of Libyan Colonel Qaddafi's money also came in handy in the NUM coffers, after trips by Scargill and his lieutenants to Libya and other places, to meet the terrorist dictator's emissaries.

Early in March of this year, the London *Financial Times* reported "the biggest shakeup in the international trade-union movement in more than 30 years," namely the formation of a new, Moscow-controlled International Mineworkers Organization (IMO), which the French CGT (Communist) miners' union joined, along with the Soviet bloc's own miners' "unions." The event is the first salvo in a Russian bid to "roll back" their postwar failure to completely conquer the Western labor movement. The Western unions have for years been undergoing a "paradigm shift," away from the belief that participation in their nations' productive technological growth is the source of improvement for their members' material and cultural standards, to the radicalized "class war" policies which make them ready tools for Soviet designs. The worst examples of this are the United Autoworkers (UAW) and AFL-CIO in the United States and the German Trade Union Federation (DGB) in West Germany.

What Hagger's book fails to address is the question of *why* the ravings of such an ideological fanatic, a buffoon, could exert such a hold on the minds of hundreds of thousands of British workers?

Struck by massive unemployment, deprived of access to technological progress, the British worker is handed over to the Scargills for lack of any other opportunity. Britain being a class society, and in the absence of any potential for an alliance of labor and industry, both are at loggerheads in the framework of "class struggle." Britain's failure to develop the extraordinary potential of its nuclear industry, after a more than promising start in the 1940s and '50s, determined an absurd over-reliance on coal as a major fuel for industry, and slowed down technological progress at large. When the

vagaries of the oil price priced much of British coal out of the market, the inevitable shutdowns of coal pits were then made to appear as the cruel decision of a particular government, whereas actually the failure of British society *as a whole* to engage in technological progress was ultimately responsible. This is not meant to absolve the Thatcher government, which has done nothing to break this pattern.

The entrepreneur cannot, in Britain, expand his business from a shop-sized operation involving a few employees into a larger company: his "high-street" bank (the major commercial banks) will refuse to extend credit, on the grounds that it only funds consumer credit, and will rather advise the would-be captain of industry to turn to one of the City's merchant banks. The latter's Oxbridge manager will refuse, since such distinguished banks would not condescend to fund anything that small. However, if the gentleman were to be interested in having his company taken over by a larger one, an acquisition can be arranged—for a small fee.

Subjected to the dictates of strictly financial criteria, British industry—save a few national-security pockets of advanced industry—stagnates and fails to create skilled employment. The stage is set for class struggle, and the "credibility" of the Scargills and their opposite ideological numbers.

The trade unionists will remain faithful to such perceived "fighters for the workers' interest" as Arthur Scargill, as long as no productive alternative is provided.

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Interview: Jorge Carrillo

A battle against usury

The following interview with Colombian Labor Minister Jorge Carrillo Rojas was conducted on March 14 by Javier Almario in Bogota.

EIR: For the first time in Colombia, the minister of labor is a labor leader. Why do you think President Belisario Betancur took this historic decision?

Carrillo: I believe that the most important thing is not having a labor leader as minister of labor, but rather, than *this* labor leader, as labor minister, is interpreting and carrying out the long-held desires of the working class. I think this is what moved the President to designate me as minister of labor. He knows the Colombian labor movement very well, having participated in its struggles and its hopes. He believed it appropriate that some changes to strengthen that labor movement be carried out in his last year of government.

EIR: You have frequently proposed a labor-industry alliance for production that would take as its foundation the fight against usury. How is this proposal faring?

Carrillo: I have presented this proposal in different business forums and in numerous union meetings, and it has had the greatest reception. Today I received a letter from the businessmen of Valle del Cauca, in which they insist that a seminar be held there, in which business and labor could participate, on the subject of the "harmony of interest" between them. Thus, this proposal has moved forward rapidly, and I am convinced that once concretized, the country will advance. . . .

The problem at this time is the decision that governments must take in defense of the lives of their citizens. If they continue to defend usury, to bow before the financial institutions that promote usury, ignoring man as the fundamental element in society, then the republics and democracies of the West are in serious trouble. Therefore, a great turnaround in the world economy is necessary. Why not, therefore, design new financial institutions that take into account the important precept that man comes first and that usury is a disturbing element in relations among human beings?

EIR: How do you view the prospects for continental unity among workers to address the problem of the foreign debt?

Carrillo: I have information that the problems affecting our nations are creating the miracle of uniting workers around a single purpose, from Mexico to Argentina. There is no doubt that this unity will become reality in short order and that we are going to have an Ibero-American labor movement committed to battle for the survival of our peoples.