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## **The New Technologies of Political Repression: A New Case for Arms Control?**

**Steve Wright**

**Despite the lofty rhetoric in which world leaders pay lip service to human rights and development, the stark truth is that many so-called liberal democracies are helping tyrannical regimes industrialise repression. Future historians will be able to label the twentieth century as the dark age of torturing states rather than the relatively amateurish Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth century. This paper explores technical ways that governments of major liberal democracies have actually backed state terror and state repression. It focusses upon a trade in special equipment meant to protect unpopular, illegitimate and authoritarian governments in the Third World against upheavals and insurrection.**

Until the 1980s, most political scientists tended to ignore the realities of current procedures and techniques of state terror and repression and deny any connection of such practices with Western liberal democracies. There are few government or academic grants to be awarded to those willing to probe the murkier realms of national security ideology and state terror. For an excellent discussion of why the social and political sciences have seemed blind to political repression see McCamant (1984).

The issue of another arms trade built on the state security industry has also been generally underexplored by the peace research community to date, apart from a few notable exceptions such as Michael Klare (1972, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1985; Klare and Arnsperg, 1981), Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (1984, 1985), Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1979), Michael Randle (1980), Richard Falk (1977), and Miles Wolpin (1981, 1986). Thankfully, in the last few years substantial progress has been made to develop new critical theory in this field. Some of the first concise theoretical overviews and approaches to conceptualising and measuring state terror were provided by Stohl (1983) and Stohl and Lopez (1984, 1985).

The US 'Contragate' scandal revealed some of the machiavellian ways that government can independently back state terrorism in other countries. Such episodes, and the suspicion that the facts on many more have been either covered up or creatively shredded, have understandably increased public nervousness about these issues. Indeed the last few years have seen a gradual blurring between military weapons and equipment sold to the police, intelligence and paramilitary formations.

What is presented below is a series of snapshot summaries of research undertaken in this field, explaining what repression technology is and the 'state of the art'; trends in research and development in the police-industrial complex; the main role and functions of the technology of political control; the dominant patterns of trade and who the key suppliers and recipients are. Using case examples from Britain and other NATO countries who supply the torturing states, there is also an attempt to explore the connection between this secret trade and what Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1979) have called the political economy of human rights and Johan Galtung (1971) has called structural imperialism.

The paper examines some methods used by companies within NATO's police-industrial complex to market the technology of political control and analyses case studies of collusion, particularly in regard to the 'multi-national merchants of repression.'

Many of the technologies discussed below are and will be used to threaten, harass and torture those who speak and promote humanitarian programmes for a more equitable form of development. They will provide technical fixes to supplant more peaceful and visionary alternative approaches to development. Currently such technologies and their associated operating logics are either removing forever the voices of conscience which can build better ways forward, or transforming socio-political development into a more militaristic and violent form.

If all the voices arguing for 'thinking in a new way' are brutally squashed by the secret police and torture squads of the old praetorian guard, what chance progress? The conclusion examines whether or not the trade in technologies to quell internal dissent is a proper matter for professional arms controllers. Alternatively, do non-government organisations, trade unions, peace and disarmament groups, the churches and Amnesty International have a more important and effective role to play in making sure that all future exports of state security supplies are subject to full democratic accountability and control?

### **The Technology of Repression**

Repression technology is the broad term used to describe the hardware, software and liveware (human) components of manipulative programmes of socio-political control. The modern technological 'hardware' of political control includes area-denial technologies such as concertinas of barbed razor wire used to seal off selected zones; helicopter-mounted crowd monitoring equipment; surveillance and night vision cameras; telephone-tapping systems; public order vehicles used either to disperse or capture; riot weapons (for example, shotguns, watercannon, plastic bullets, chemical irritants CN, CS and CR,<sup>1</sup> electroshock devices, optico-acoustic field systems, injector weapons); advanced communications and automatic vehicle tracking systems; human identity recognition technologies; computerised data and intelligence banks with remote access terminals (in police vehicles, border checkpoints, etc.); prefragmented exploding ammunition, silenced assassination rifles and precision infrared nightsights; image intensifiers; restraining and prison technologies, including leg shackles, thumb cuffs, blunt trauma inducing drugs, gallows, guillotines, execution chambers, interrogation and torture technologies.

All such equipment is used to speed up processes of socio-political control and make them more efficient in targeting and removing dissident elements who question the status quo.

Apart from this hardware, there are also numerous standard operating procedures which form the 'software' components of the trade. Examples supplied to authoritarian regimes are riot and counter-insurgency training, advisory support, technical assistance including teaching of scientific methods of interrogation, torture and the more brutal forms of human destruction.

In any bureaucracy of repression, there are personnel schooled in the ideological attitudes necessary to keep such systems in operation. They include the various technical advisors; counter-insurgency strategists; paramilitary, intelligence and internal security police training officers; the merchants who actually supply the equipment as well as the 'white collar mercenaries' who act as key technical operators in the bureaucracy of any repressive system. This 'liveware' category includes all the people who are conditioned to actually put into practice the software and hardware components of a particular policy of repression.

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<sup>1</sup> CN stands for 1-chloroacetophenone; CS stands for 2-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile; CR stands for dibenz(b,f)-1:4 oxazepine.

### Research and Development for the New Technologies of Repression

As technology of political control, all this equipment is carefully designed to fulfill certain control functions, the power and scope of which are determined by the political context and which change with it.

For example, modern riot technology — the so-called 'less-lethal' weapons — can be used to disperse, harass, kill or punish crowds. In the 1970s it formed the politician's dream technical fix — a non-lethal weapon. For example US Congressman James Scheur (1970) commented in awe: "We can tranquilize, impede, immobilize, harass, shock, upset, stupefy, nauseate, chill, temporarily blind, deafen or just scare the wits out of anyone the police have a proper need to control."

Yet some of these weapons, such as the plastic bullets used to suppress the intifada on the West Bank and Gaza, can kill. A key design criterion is that they should *appear* rather than actually *be* safe. The new technologies of political control have been designed with this public relations requirement in mind. Military scientists at the US Army Human Engineering Laboratory have commented in this regard: "It is preferred that onlookers not get the impression that the police are using excessive force or that the weapon has an especially injurious effect on the target individuals. Here again, a flow of blood and similar dramatic effects are to be avoided." (Wargovitch et al., 1975)

Of course the effects are the same, but the intent is masked. As a result, the media barely mentions the application of modern riot technologies overseas.

Information on such weapons is shared between US research laboratories and Britain's Porton Down, which scan pure scientific research undertaken at universities for profitable new options. The next generation of incapacitants was discovered in this way. For example, the evolution of CR as the next riot control irritant began from a chemical curiosity innocently mentioned in the scientific literature by two Salford College of Technology chemists, precipitating a full investigative research programme by Porton Down (Wright, 1987a).

Similarly, work has been undertaken on armoured internal security vehicles to mask their coercive appearance. Individual companies undertake their own research to sanitise their product's image and the public relations merchants sell them as 'Discreet Operational Vehicles' (Savage, 1985). The latest vehicles such as the electrified AMAC riot tank and CRAYs look like ambulances and hence excite less public interest when on standby (although they still carry an armoury of riot weapons to deliver organised violence).

Therefore, while these technologies must be effective, many clients require wares which are not provocative in appearance, so as not to alert the media and generate either a greater crisis or a further erosion in international confidence. Repression is most effective when it is ubiquitous yet invisible.

A new generation of computerised surveillance technology, vehicle-tracking, identity recognition and night vision devices have come on to the market to cater for such demands. For example the new JAI camera can take several thousand pictures of a demonstration within a few seconds — freeze-framing individual participants for later arrest. One system recently patented called WIZARD digitalises human faces so that individuals can be recognised in crowds by a suitably programmed camera.

The general trend in research is to move towards integrating several technologies into one. An example is the creation of semi-intelligent area-denial intruder-detection zones. In weaponry, the research drift is towards flexible response. The result is weapons such as the Arwen Ace which can fire gas, dye, smoke or plastic bullets and the Sky-media FRAG-12 (or 'Hamburger gun') which can fire gas followed by a prefragmented finned torpedo filled with high explosive which makes human hamburgers from all the occupants of a room or car. On sale for the first time at the 1988 Copex exhibition, it was presented as a police rather than a military weapon despite having the explosive power of a 40mm grenade.

Many companies design solutions looking for problems. A classic example is the Synchro-fire system which is advertised with the logo: "When negotiations fail you still

have a viable alternative". It is, in effect, a radio-controlled automated firing squad. One firemaster automatically shoots all the guns currently on target without anyone touching a trigger, taking a bit more of the guilt out of state-sponsored executions.

Not all of the technology is commercial in origin. For example, the riot techniques which comprise the colonially based counter-revolutionary operations of the British Army (Army Land Operations Manual, 1969) were adapted along the lines of the Hong Kong police riot procedures to make the British police national riot manual of 1981 entitled 'Public Order: Tactical Options'. Using previously restricted US government documents, Michael McClintock (1985a, 1985b), a senior researcher with Amnesty International, revealed how the standard US Army field manuals on counter-terror were transferred from Vietnam to Latin America virtually word for word.

The overall outcome of these research and development efforts to build new state security supplies is to reproduce the same processes of vertical and horizontal proliferation which are typically associated with other forms of arms races.

### Structure, Role and Function of the Repression Trade

The unprecedented acceleration in total world military expenditures over the last 40 years has become a growing concern and source of apprehension for all those in the peace research community. Global military expenditure during 1989-1990 is expected to reach an all time record of \$1 trillion. Military expenditure in the Third World has increased twice as fast as in the so-called developed world between 1960 and 1986, and its share of arms spending has risen from 8% to over 20% during the same period (Sivard, 1988). In 1983, Third World governments imported nearly \$25 billion worth of armaments from the major industrialised nations (Grimmett, 1984). The structure of world military expenditure and the geographical location of arms suppliers and recipients succinctly summarise the prevailing patterns of dependency and domination between North and South. The major arms exporters are the industrialised countries — United States, Soviet Union, Britain, Germany, Italy and France — whilst the importers are predominantly in the Third World.

The world arms trade has led to a rapid global militarisation since 1960 (Falk, 1977; Kidron and Smith, 1983). Accompanying this process of militarisation has been a series of wars, predominantly involving nations in the South, yet largely funded and serviced by industrialised states in the North. Most of these wars were internal state security conflicts, involving revolts, coups d'etat, counter-insurgencies, insurrections, states of emergency, counter-terror operations and revolutions against the status quo (Kende, 1971, 1978).

In 1984, Amnesty International prepared a global survey of torturing states. If the torturing states are mapped, it quickly emerges that these states are virtually identical with the most militarised nations in the Third World. Since highly militarised regimes are almost continuously engaged in conflicts with their own peoples, coercive internal security patterns of control predominate and these create an ever increasing demand for more powerful tools for mass repression.

Consequently, whilst the lion's share of the international arms trade consists of large weapon systems such as aircraft, submarines, tanks and artillery for waging external conflicts (see the *SIPRI Yearbook on World Armaments and Disarmament*), it also includes a trade in specialised technologies, tactics, training and weapons specifically designed for quelling internal dissent.

In Britain, this trade in the tools of repression only received widespread public attention following the exposure by the *New Statesman* of 8 July 1983 that the government was selling execution ropes, leg shackles, etc. At about the same time it also emerged (*Observer*, 13 May 1984) that a firm of British architects (Richard Sheppard, Robson and Partners) were bidding to design prisons and multiple execution chambers for Libya in high quality steel. (In the end, after several modifications, the Libyans still rejected the firm's plans.)

Leg shackles and other medieval restraining technologies are merely the crudest component of what Michael Klare (1979) has termed 'the international trade in repression.' The more sophisticated police technologies referred to above, once allowed to be used indiscriminately, become advanced tools of socio-political control.

They are most likely to be used when a highly authoritarian or militarised regime is least popular or undergoing a period of destabilisation.<sup>2</sup> Topical examples include the Pinochet regime in Chile, the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the Chinese approach to the destroying Tibetan nationalism, Yugoslavian attempts to thwart the Kosovo demands for a homeland and the Israeli approach to crushing the Palestinian intifada. What often characterises such conflicts are ethnic differences between the elites, including the military and police, and their opponents (Enloe, 1980).

The actual monetary value of this international trade in internal security technologies, perhaps \$4 to 5 billion if paramilitary equipment, counter-insurgency armoured vehicles and

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<sup>2</sup> Much of this section has been previously published in Wright (1983, 1984).

computer systems are included, is small when compared with the arms trade as a whole (Klare, 1979). Yet the fact that over 50 Third World governments are now controlled or actually run by the military makes this trade in repression a critical factor in the overall political economy of human rights.

Its effect of enhancing the operational efficiency of human rights violators means that the transfer of repressive technologies probably has a greater *direct* impact on more people's lives than the rest of the arms trade put together. This is because whilst major weapons systems contribute to massive structural violence in the Third World by locking up much needed capital, they are deployed in combat for only a small fraction of their lives — if at all. Repressive technologies are used virtually continuously by the many illegitimate governments locked in struggle against their own peoples. The export of repression technology increases the operational capacities of repressive states. Transfers of such equipment speed up their efficiency in targeting and punishing those who either question or dissent from the status quo.

The repression trade can enhance every stage of producing a new generation of prisoners of conscience: capture; interrogation; torture and extra-judicial execution. Recognising this trend towards industrialising the entire process of repression, Amnesty International decided to include the campaign against the repression trade within its mandate during the early 1980s.

Here I am concerned with a number of basic questions. What exactly is the technology of repression? How does its transfer facilitate a direct transmission of repressive capacity? Why does this trade occur and who is responsible? Who actually controls the supply of political control technology and what criteria are used to limit its export? Answering such deceptively straightforward questions is an arduous undertaking, not just because of the complexity of the issues involved but also because of the official secrecy surrounding all aspects of this trade.

The international trade in repression may simply be conceptualised as just one of the more concrete manifestations of structural and cultural imperialism. Yet it plays a key role in maintaining what Galtung has defined as structural violence within and between nations (Randle, 1980). Even so, there are still problems in actually conceptualising this trade since only a few of the items which comprise it actually fit neatly into a straightforward weapons category. Some of these exports such as communications equipment and computers are considered to have a 'dual role', in that they have potential civil as well as internal security applications. Computerised communications networks, for instance, can be used by the police for legitimate law enforcement purposes in democratic societies, yet when such equipment is transferred to unaccountable, militarised or tyrannical regimes, its role in enhancing the forces of oppression becomes perfectly clear.

Of course the centre nations are not immune from repression. As in the nations of the periphery, state coercion is likely to increase in a similar way, should government legitimacy decline. This process has been described schematically by Marjo Hoefnagels (1977). Over the last several years many examples have emerged in European liberal democracies of such a rapid switch in tactics (for example in Northern Ireland, mainland Britain during the 1984-5 miners strike, and anti-nuclear demonstrations in West Germany and France) (European Group, 1982). Whether state repression occurs in centre or periphery nations, what clearly emerges is that the highest levels of coercion are always directed at the most significant political opponents in any given time period.

### **The Export of Repression**

The leading exporters of what have been euphemistically termed 'security supplies' are the same countries that are primarily responsible for the arms trade as a whole, namely the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, France and Italy. Other major suppliers include Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia. A more recent trend, however, is for sub-imperial powers in the Third World, such as Brazil, Israel, Argentina, South Africa and Singapore (see

SIPRI Yearbooks; *Jane's Weapon Systems*; *Jane's Infantry Weapons*; Dewar, 1979), to become exporters of this equipment in their own right (Klare, 1979). The predominant flow of exports for socio-political control is from the industrialised countries to the Third World, although transfers of these technologies take place increasingly within existing power blocs of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and to their respective allies and client regimes.

There are also curious exceptions, as in the case of the supply of French surveillance equipment to the Soviet Union for policing the 1980 Moscow Olympics. The Soviet Union has had sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment manufactured by Tektronix smuggled in from the US (*Guardian*, 3 July 1986). Another example is the Chinese thumb cuffs on sale at the 1986 MILIPOL exhibition in Paris (documented by photographer David Hoffman).

Since 1978, the flow of major weapons to Third World nations has actually declined, largely due to their enormous costs. However, demand for the much cheaper and often more urgently required internal security technologies has mushroomed. As the ruling elites of the Third World have increasingly militarised their societies, international debt problems have correspondingly risen with all the associated pressures on ordinary people as their needs are marginalised. Factors such as increasing prices of food and basic necessities, expensive or nonexistent health care and decreasing amounts of money to live on whilst prices rise, irresistibly lead to vociferous demands for political change to break the external imposition of economic apartheid. Instead of initiating structural reform which may undermine their own position and alliances, the elites in many nations seek technical fixes to buy time through enhanced political repression. The ratchet effect of poverty, repression and militarism can then accelerate with renewed force.

In many Third World states now, revolution and massive social upheaval are the norm with only the army, the police and the state intelligence agencies protecting corrupt regimes from collapse. In this context, new policing technologies become the lifeblood of repressive regimes and allow them to create what are in effect human rights exclusion zones. The repression trade highlights the mutual dependence of repressive regimes and their supplier nations — a symbol of the real relationship behind the mask of what is presented as co-operation in law enforcement.



### **The Merchants of Repression**

Who then are the key NATO manufacturers of state security supplies? Many of the companies in the police industrial complex are well known for other consumer supplies including cars, fireworks, electronics, telephones, hi-fis and computers. To name but a handful, some of the larger suppliers include:

*Belgium:* Fabrique National of Herstal;

*France:* Panhard, Saviem;

*Germany:* Heckler & Koch, PK Co., Mercedes-Benz, Rhein Stahl;

*Italy:* Fiat;

*Netherlands:* Phillips;

*Switzerland:* Mowag;

*United Kingdom:* Alvis, Daimler, GKN Sankey, Glover, Hotspur, Short Brothers, Plessey, Shorrock, Racal, Rank, Marconi, Feranti, ICI, ICL, Royal Ordnance, Schermuly, Brocks, Pye Telecom;

*US:* Cadillac Gage, Federal Laboratories, Motorola, Rockwell International, Chubb, E Systems Inc; General Ordnance, Smith & Wesson, Fargo International.

There are in fact now thousands of companies involved in this business.

### **Suppliers and Recipients**

It is generally agreed by researchers in this field that the United States is the biggest supplier of repression technology and expertise, followed by Great Britain (Klare, 1977, 1979). The predominance of the US can be attributed to its superpower status and associated imperial centre nation role with extended global interests and dependencies. Its technological preponderance and superiority demand a high level of resource extraction from the nations in the South.

Popular aspirations towards a more equitable lifestyle have been subjugated, often in the most brutal fashion, to the dictates of geopolitics in the nations of the periphery. This has been accomplished through various US operations, projects, schemes and programmes of 'technical assistance' which have served as bridgeheads to promote wider US interests. These have included the Military Assistance Program (MAP); the Foreign Military Assistance Program (FMSP); the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET); the International Narcotics Control Program (INCP); and the now defunct Office of Public Safety (OPS) set up by the Kennedy Administration in the 1960s. Indeed the massive counter-insurgency research and development programme, which grew out of the Vietnam War era, proved instrumental in generating much of today's repressive hardware (US House, 1964). The associated counter-terror doctrines were formulated and refined to become the new standard operating procedures of 1980s-style state terror, the so-called 'low intensity conflicts' (McClintock, 1985).

Britain too has a well developed state security industry, because of its colonial history in general and the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland in particular. Britain's war in Ireland has spawned a whole new generation of police and paramilitary technologies. (The Ministry of Defence, in a letter to me dated 1 June 1977, said, "We do make considerable sales of equipment for internal security. As a result of the Northern Ireland operations we have something of a lead in this field".) Indeed the US and Britain actively co-operate in exchanging information relating to internal security wares. An example is the Quadrapartite Agreement of 1963, which facilitates the exchange of information on less lethal riot weapons such as the chemicals CN, CS and CR and kinetic energy weapons such as rubber and plastic bullets. Other agreements cover developments in electronic surveillance, signal intelligence, etc.

Yet whilst the procurement process between suppliers and recipients may involve governments, states are far less likely to be involved in the manufacture and distribution of political control technologies than they are with major weapons systems. The dominant trend that distinguishes the repression trade from that in major weapons systems is that it is

conducted directly through the commercial sector. Here the role of government in the supplier country might be limited to facilitating any deals made and helping to maintain secrecy where appropriate. Thus governments in the supplier nations assist with advertising the wares, granting export licences where necessary and, quite frequently, turning a blind eye. These aspects are best illustrated by example. Some typical transactions are considered below to illustrate the role of the United States, Germany and Great Britain as exporters of repression.

#### **The US Connection**

Some excellent work has been accomplished by US researchers, particularly Michael Klare who managed to extract from the State Department minutely detailed breakdowns of overseas shipments of repressive technologies. Klare (1977, 1979, 1981, 1985) and Klare and Arnson (1981) also helped formulate the conceptual basis for understanding the repression business. Later work on Latin American transfers, done as part of the Institute for Policy Studies militarism project, has yielded an invaluable source. More recently, the US Congress (1988) has examined the implications of some of this technology for the US constitutional protection of civil rights.

### The German Connection

The main thrust of German police and paramilitary transfers to Third World nations is to African countries and includes internal security vehicles, communications technology and training (Burgerrechte and Polizei, 1985; Busch, 1988).

### The British Connection

Historically, it is Britain's colonial conflicts, especially those in Ireland, which have been responsible for generating much of the world's counter-insurgency tools, software, etc. (Ackroyd et al., 1980). Today Northern Ireland has become the key factor in explaining Britain's exceptional prominence in the international repression trade. Of course Britain continues to provide assistance and advice to Commonwealth member states, former colonies in Africa, Asia and the West Indies (see *Hansard*, 1 December 1980, written answer no. 110).

But it is because of the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland that the British police-industrial complex has been able to evolve such an extensive and comprehensive range of state security supplies. The province has been used by private industries as a focus for their research and development programmes in police and paramilitary equipment. It has also allowed the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary to test the efficacy of these wares, under the quite stringent conditions of urban combat which currently prevail. Thus the Northern Irish conflict has and continues to act as a laboratory for testing new state security equipment and enables the suppliers to claim their wares have been blooded by combat and withstood the test.

The fact that many firms specialising in security hardware have military or police personnel on their management staffs facilitates an unusual degree of intimacy between these firms and government agencies throughout the procurement process. This co-operation is particularly evident in the advertising of repression technologies, where neither the Ministry of Defence nor the private sector are slow to capitalise on the operational use of their equipment in Northern Ireland to promote sales.

However, there is no public kudos attached to these transfers for either the supplier or the recipient. Usually neither side in the repression trade publicises its transactions since there is nothing of the jingoistic pseudo glory and pride we have come to see during the export of major weapons systems. Therefore only rarely do British transfers of political control technology become public knowledge. They are not normally the stuff of news broadcasts unless there is a leak, a journalistic investigation or a discovery of British equipment in torture chambers after a doomed tyrant falls, as was the case in Uganda. Nevertheless, the following transactions in the 1970s help to illustrate the kind of exports associated with the British supply of repression. They alerted a wider public about what their recipients were using British technology for.

8,000 anti-riot guns, 26,000 CS gas cartridges and 20,000 mini-smoke grenades were cleared for export to the late Shah of Iran in the summer of 1978. Additional clearance was given to Schermuly for the further export of 20,000 anti-riot helmets, 20,000 gas masks, 20,000 anti-riot shields, 20,000 baton rounds and 5,000 anti-riot guns. As the internal situation in Iran destabilised, the Iranian government requested that the delivery of 2,000 more anti-riot guns and 250,000 rubber bullets be speeded up (*New Statesman*, 28 September 1978). Marconi sold \$16 million worth of tropospheric scatter communications equipment to the South African authorities to help them police the illegally occupied Namibia (Duncan Campbell, *New Scientist*, 17 June 1976). The British government also allowed Marconi to sell a national police communications system to the police of Bangladesh at a cost of \$1,440,000 (*Ochrisa Comment*, May 1977).

The computerisation of apartheid in South Africa, through the automation of the hated pass law system, was facilitated by the export of computers from the British firm, International Computers Ltd. (ICL). In fact, of the total number of 1,436 computers in South Africa at the end of 1977, 588 had been supplied by ICL (for full details see *Computing Weekly*, 10 August 1978; Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1978).

The British sold powerful communications equipment to Idi Amin's regime in Uganda. Pye Dynamics, for example, sold Amin Mascot radio sets costing \$146,555 plus four fixed station transmitters and 30 dash-mounted mobile transceivers, antennas and battery chargers valued at \$99,000. Another British firm, Contact Radios, secured contracts worth \$180,000 to supply Amin's notorious State Research Centre with communications equipment.

Also permitted for export to Uganda were Landrovers equipped with radio detection systems and Range Rovers fitted with powerful communications equipment for Amin's personal use. An Isle of Man firm, Security Systems International, sold nightvision equipment and telephone tapping systems to Amin's regime. One of Security Systems International's former employees also managed to negotiate a computerised fingerprint identification system which would have introduced a national pass law network covering every person in Uganda (Harriman, 1979; *Guardian*, 31 October 1978).

Landrovers were also used in Soweto, South Africa, where the ICI subsidiary African Explosives provided the riot gas used during the uprisings there (Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1985).

On the software supply side, the British Special Air Service (SAS) have established themselves as the world leader in the training techniques of counter-revolutionary warfare (Davies, 1981). Several ex-SAS employees have set up private security companies such as KMS, SAS and John Donne Holdings to provide training in silent killing and other SAS-style expertise (Gordon, 1987). Indeed, in December 1984 reporters from the *Observer* exposed an offer by the AMAC company to provide a 44-week training course for 17 Libyan security personnel. Their subjects for hire included kidnapping, poisons, bugging, explosives and killing (Bailey and Leigh, 1984). The contract reportedly fell through after the Libyan killing of a British police officer. Ironically, the weapon used in the assassination was a British-made Thomson sub-machine gun. It was later traced to a lot sold by Frank Terpil from the Interarms warehouse in Hulme, Manchester. Another British company, Consolidated Gold Fields, was responsible for organising, administering and training the security police of most of South African gold and platinum mines (Pallister, 1986).

More recent examples include a case where a Mr Chris Bryant, a young English cleric on a visit to Chile, was gassed by the security forces — he was stunned to catch a glimpse of the cartridge that landed near his feet. It was clearly marked "Made In England". Chile also took possession of a Pye Telecom message switching system. The parent company Phillips flew five secret police to Manchester to see a similar system functioning there. The then beleaguered deputy Chief Constable, John Stalker, refused to give them access (Stalker, 1988). The Chilean police bought the system anyway after the company arranged a viewing elsewhere.

Having listed just a few of the kinds of transactions which have been permitted by Her Majesty's Governments, it is worth examining the question of regulation.

### **British Government-sponsored Exports of Repression**

Most of the police and paramilitary equipment produced in Britain is manufactured by private industries. Even the once government-owned Royal Ordnance factories, which manufacture riot and other public order equipment, have now passed to private hands, namely British Aerospace. The production of state security supplies by Britain's private sector is just another strand of what is the largest segment of national research and development expenditure swallowed by military and paramilitary applications of any state in the world, including the United States.

Where successive British governments have played a part, indeed a vital role, is in the promotion of repressive technologies. This is done through a number of agencies including International Military Services (IMS) and the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), which since 1976 has organised the British Army Equipment Exhibition (BAEE) — a significant number of which are given over to internal security supplies. The DESO often negotiates directly with overseas customers on behalf of private suppliers. It will also help

such clients to obtain any necessary export licences and so forth. These exhibitions take place every two years and officials from all over the world are invited to attend. Many more governments and their security agencies are sent copies of the detailed catalogues of equipment on show at each exhibition. They are urged to contact the DESO for advice on anything which may be required. DESO appear to have no qualms about dealing with human rights violators who swarm to these exhibitions. The cynicism and hypocrisy associated with the business can be gauged from the fact that whilst the 1982 BAEE took place, the British government was simultaneously attending the UN Special Session on Disarmament. As in the previous UN Special Session, the British Government peddled arms whilst paying lip service to peace.

Once a transaction has been agreed, the Crown Agents (a government procurement agency subsequently privatised) can smooth the way to getting the wares safely into the hands of foreign repressors, without any embarrassing public knowledge or comment.

The producers of repressive technologies also have their own channels to advertise their wares, including *Defence Materiel* ("the worldwide journal for promoting British defence equipment"), specialist magazines such as *SITREP*, and catalogues such as the one produced by International Law Enforcement. Others advertise in *International Defense Review*, *Jane's Security & CO-IN Equipment* catalogue, *Police Review* or *International Police Chief*. Other British manufacturers of equipment at the paramilitary end of the spectrum have banded together to protect their collective interests by forming the Defence Manufacturers Association.

Much of this police and paramilitary gear is in fact directly exported via private deals in the international marketplace. But any transaction may still require a British export licence under the provisions of the Control of Goods Order 1985 — Statutory Instruments (which are periodically amended). The inadequacy of these controls can be gathered from the leg shackles episode previously quoted.

### **Government Control of the Proliferation of Repressive Exports?**

How did any of these sales manage to get through the supposed regulatory net? If Britain will allow the export of equipment with repressive potential to be exported to the likes of Amin in Uganda and the apartheid regime in South Africa, who won't it export to? Why are such sales allowed to continue when in many cases it is clear that the recipients are abrogating human rights in the most despicable ways?

In some instances there appears to be a straightforward trade-off between a buyer's desperate need for political stability at any price and the British government's need to maintain its political, trade and economic investments in that country. The example of the fall of the torturing Shah of Iran's dynasty comes to mind, with subsequent events surrounding the rise of the Khomeini regime illustrating just how shortsighted and futile such a policy can be.

Resource considerations are another important factor which persuades successive British governments not to implement their much flaunted concerns about freedom and human rights. One striking instance involved the then biggest computer sale ever by a British firm (Scicon) to a foreign government (Saudi Arabia). Could it be just a coincidence that Scicon happens to be a subsidiary of the oil company British Petroleum, which has substantial investments in Saudi Arabia? (Campbell, 1979).

A similar rationale probably underlies the refusal of any British government to cut off the supply of computers to South Africa by companies such as ICL. The problems can be seen to lie in the terms of the provisions of subsequent control orders as they apply to implementing the United Nations embargo on trade with South Africa. They are narrowly defined to cover only military and nuclear equipment and not 'grey area' technology like computers.

Other countries have applied a less parochial interpretation of the UN embargo. The US interpretation under the terms of the so-called Frazer Amendment are far more strict.

These prohibit the export of computers and even computer programmes to South Africa, under section 301 of the Security Assistance Act 1976.

A survey sponsored in 1980 by the Parliamentary Human Rights Group has indicated that without a far tighter set of controls, and vigorous enforcement, British business with repressive regimes will continue as usual. Tyrants will obtain the tools of their trade, whilst suppliers will continue to deny any moral responsibility with the mealy-mouthed claim from their public relations departments that they are acting within the law as it now stands (Devine, 1980).

In other words, the British merchants of repression have acquired either the active compliance or the deliberate collusion of British governments to continue their trade. For example, the former Labour premier James Callaghan chose to be wilfully ignorant of the realities of this nefarious trade when the sale of British Landrovers to Uganda came to light. He is quoted as judging that they were going to be used to catch TV licence dodgers (Harriman, 1979). This was a comment made in 1979 when the scale of the genocide perpetrated by Amin in Uganda was known. Even so, there was some small effort to pay lip service to human rights considerations. The following Conservative government under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has shown even fewer scruples when international business is at stake.

Thus on 10 March 1981, Lord Strathcona, the Minister Of State at the Ministry of Defence, when asked about the supply of arms to regimes where there are "proven abuses against human rights", replied, "We would not export arms to a country which is guilty of torture." (*Hansard*, 10 March 1980, col. 540-545).

Yet barely more than one month later, Lord Strathcona was rapidly requalifying his government's previous apparently unequivocal position. Not only was the previously unambiguous refusal to sell to the torturing states retracted, torture itself was now seen merely as a matter of semantics. Now a number of factors, "political, strategic, in the world sense and in the economic sense", would be taken into account when considering arms sales (*Hansard*, 23 April 1980, col. 780-818). Nothing here about security as if people mattered.

Shortly afterwards, Prime Minister Thatcher herself took this U-turn even further when she exhorted British companies to export even more arms to the less sophisticated bracket of the weapons market. In short, far from preventing repressive expertise and equipment being supplied to military dictatorships of the worst kind, the present government has actively encouraged the trade in repression.

Put quite simply, the political control of the proliferation of repressive exports can't be trusted to government. There are clearly just too many vested interests. Successive governments have shown what is tantamount to a criminal lack of imagination, when considering how such exports are actually used. If this view is accepted, can the matter of controlling the supply of repressive technologies to authoritarian regimes be left to quiet diplomacy? Or is it more a matter for formal arms control, a set of procurement processes best left to the considerations of the strategic studies communities with their direct lines of communication to governmental decision makers?

The lead taken by the Carter Administration in the US shows that legislation can be formulated to limit the repression trade. The 'Frazer Amendment', already referred to, had a provision which required that "No security assistance be provided to any government which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights." (See Conrad (1981, 1985, 1986) for a thorough critique of the efficacy of this ban.)

This included not only grants but also sales of equipment to police, domestic intelligence or similar law enforcement agencies. There were many loopholes in the US legislation, but at least an historically significant step was taken by the United States towards controlling its lead role as an exporter of repression.

Nevertheless, the ways that such controls were eroded towards the end of the Carter were instructive. Michael Klare (1977) quotes the case of President Carter continuing to authorise training in counter-insurgency operations, urban counter-insurgency, military

intelligence interrogation, and military explosives and detonators for officers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Morocco, Zaire, Haiti and El Salvador. In 1980, when insurgent forces increased their attacks on the military-civilian junta in El Salvador, Carter approved a crash programme in counter-insurgency training. In an Orwellian attempt to disguise the repressive nature of this programme, administration officials labelled the course, 'Human Rights Aspects in International Defence' and argued that it would help promote respect for human rights on the part of Salvadorean officers.

The Reagan administration wasted no time in setting to dismantling these controls once the issue of human rights was dismissed as irrelevant rhetoric. The situation has changed so much since President Carter's time that, although the current regulations still pay lip service to human rights considerations, the Conragate scandal showed how little notice was taken. Indeed the Reagan administration during its second term specifically permitted the export of implements of torture to any NATO country — including Turkey — without a licence (set out in Controls for ECCN 5999B, 15 June 1984). This is the first time to my knowledge that any so-called civilised state has admitted that it trades in the implements of torture, not to mention actually sanctioning that trade. It remains to be seen whether or not the Bush administration will continue to condone such a policy stance.

### **A New Case for Arms Control?**

The British public were kept largely ignorant that the international arms trade also includes specialised technologies, tactics, training and weapons specifically designed for quelling internal dissent, until an internal government memo leaked in 1983.

The memo emphasised the need to avoid ministerial embarrassment when handling sensitive items such as execution ropes and leg irons. It first appeared as a story in *The New Statesman* of 8 July 1983. The story spurred two journalists, John Merritt and John Lisners from the *Daily Mirror*, to investigate a company in the West Midlands named Hiatt & Co. The then manager of Hiatt, a Mr. Hart, offered the reporters (who were posing as buyers from the South African secret police) leg shackles, gang chains and other specialised restraining equipment made to order, "providing the tooling is not too difficult" (Merritt and Lisners, 1983).

Even more surprising was the response of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Norman Tebbit, when questioned in parliament by Alf Dubs: "If this country did not export them someone else would" (*Hansard*, 14 December 1983). Such official attitudes have done nothing to deter the growing supply of repressive technologies to human rights violating regimes. Indeed, the government refused to ban such exports outright, relying instead on the whimsical fiction that they will only allow their export henceforth for theatrical performance. The issue is still a live one, given that a subsidiary of the building firm Laings (company motto: "We build for people") was reported in 1987 to be selling 12-foot high gallows for executions in Arab countries (*Daily Mirror*, 8 June 1987). Mr David Mellor, the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, kindly clarified the position of such exports in a reply to a member of parliament, Mr Ken Eastham: "But my understanding is that the manufacture of execution equipment in the UK is legal and its export is not subject to any form of licencing control." (letter from Mellor to Eastham, 17 March 1988).

Just so. However, the issue is much broader than merely seeking a means of limiting the export of new policing technologies, no matter how obnoxious. It is essentially the controversial question of the political control of technological innovation and proliferation. Yet because of the spine-chilling consequences of repression technology, it might be imagined that a consensus for the need for tight control would be much easier to achieve. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the so-called democratic nations have been unable to resist the technological imperative pushing them towards adopting the new technologies of repression.

How much more tempting these wares are then for the many illegitimate regimes facing intractable resistance because of their inability or unwillingness to tackle the much

more severe structural problems of poverty, underdevelopment and rocketing international debt. Given this context, what measures can be attempted to control the repression trade?

It would clearly be naive to expect the companies involved in the repression trade to exercise voluntary restraint. The trade is too lucrative for the merchants of repression to take moral considerations too seriously. Indeed, a more cynical perspective would suggest that it was positively against their commercial interests to have peaceful social development and political change in Third World nations. Riots, revolutions and wars are much more profitable in creating demand. If the use of repression technologies by state security forces actually promotes dissent and rebellion, then so much the better. The authorities will require more equipment to crush it and so the vicious cycle is maintained.

The exception to this rule occurs if the cosy secrets of a nasty transaction are publicly exposed. This is particularly potent if the manufacturing firms have a higher profile in the public mind regarding more innocuous products.

In theory, the policy vagaries of the various supplier governments might best be controlled by international organisations like the United Nations. If the United Nations were able to create and police effective embargoes on countries guilty of gross violations of human rights similar to the pariah South African regime, the international trade in repression would be throttled. But only since 1982 has the UN recognised that a trade in repression exists, when the Secretary General of the UN made a statement (United Nations, 1982).

Without such consolidated and coordinated action, the forces of repression continue to acquire the equipment they thrive on. Currently, if one country stops trading, another mercenary nation comes forward to exploit the opening in the market. Britain and France were certainly not slow to exploit the gaps in the market left by the US withdrawal from certain sectors of the trade following the enactment of the Frazer Amendment. Of course a major obstacle to such international solidarity against repression is the working practices and structure of the United Nations. Apart from the power bloc voting system with all the uncritical support given to favoured alliances and client regimes, one third of the constituent member countries of the UN have been designated as torturing states. Whilst this situation continues, any progressive measures would almost certainly be vetoed. Of course those at the sharp end are hardly ever consulted. In places where only the riot squads run free, those subject to repression are only targets, not human rights negotiators. Yet could professional arms control experts and strategic studies academics be trusted to ally themselves with the weak against the strong in these matters?

The question is reminiscent of the substance of the now famous Schmidt-Galtung debate. Herman Schmidt argued that peace researchers had allied their values too closely to those of the decision makers in the international system, in order to get their policy proposals implemented. Consequently peace research, far from being value free, was orientated towards maintaining a stability based not on peace but on injustice, inequality and exploitation. Schmidt advocated research to change the dominant structures responsible for maintaining the inequalities in the status quo. Johan Galtung's response broadened the definition of violence to encompass the inequalities brought about by the configuration of the power structures in the inter and intra-national systems. Paul Smoker (1983) has characterised the Schmidt-Galtung debate as a turning point for peace research which shifted the focus of structural theories of conflict from cultural studies of war, violence and aggression to analyses of dominance systems, dependency structures and imperialism. A strategic studies or simple 'arms control' approach to the repression trade would take us backwards.

Without any adequate framework of control which is proof against the superpowers and associated international protection rackets operated by their client states, the best hope may lie with grassroots human rights organisations.



### **Non-government Organisation Approaches to Halting the Repression Business**

Whilst the efforts of groups such as Amnesty International (AI) and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) can only be a catalyst towards a longer term solution, their supporters have been effective in achieving results in specific cases. CAAT for example prevented the sale of GKN Sankey's AT105 advanced internal security vehicle to El Salvador. The vehicles went instead to the Malaysian security forces — a preferable but still far from perfect solution.

Currently non-governmental organisations operate what is essentially a 'twin-track' approach, designed to put pressure on both the supplier companies and their governments. The first track involves consistent campaigning for a change in the laws surrounding the export of potentially repressive equipment. The second track involves discovering what is going on in relation to particular countries, companies, exhibitions and deals and focussing the spotlight of publicity on all the parties involved. I will consider each of these approaches in turn.

### **Legal Approaches to Halting the Repression Business**

Certainly a change in the laws governing the export of this type of equipment would be one of the first steps towards effective control. Britain currently has no legislation which specifically provides safeguards which prevent sales of equipment to authoritarian regimes which could contribute to torture and other forms of political repression.

What does exist is a set of statutory instruments known as the Export of Goods (Control) Orders which were last updated in 1989 and came into effect on 14 February 1990. These prohibit export of certain classes of military and police equipment unless a licence is granted by the Ministry of Trade following consultation with both the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Yet they do not include technologies with civilian as well as military applications such as telecommunications equipment and computers, which all too often are plugged in to act as the nervous system of a torturing state.

These regulations are inadequate for a number of other reasons, not least of which is that these agencies are also charged with increasing British arms markets. Neither do they have to account to Parliament for any policy decisions that are made and these are rarely if ever made public. Secrecy and commercial considerations get top priority and there are not even any categorical restrictions on the sale of medieval equipment like execution ropes, gallows, and restraining equipment like leg irons and gang chains, all outlawed by the UN convention on slavery. Such items are merely subject to licence and no one is ever told which countries will not receive a licence and which ones will. So for example in January 1983, the government refused to indicate whether or not it would or had granted licences for the export of electric shock prods to South Korea where Amnesty International had reported the practice of torture (Amnesty International, 1986).

A good example of what can be done to rectify this situation is provided by Amnesty International's approach in recent years. In an unusual departure from their past campaigns, the British Section of Amnesty International started a parliamentary campaign in 1979 to pursue the necessary changes. Their campaign suggested:

1. That a more thorough supervision be exercised over the export of security equipment and training where these are destined for repressive regimes.
2. The inclusion of categories of sensitive exports not at present subject to licencing controls, where there is evidence that such exports are being used in the violation of human rights.
3. A redefinition of the status of South Africa in respect of the export of repressive technology so as to ensure that all such technology be subjected to export licencing controls.

Amnesty International recognised the correlation between governments importing repressive technologies and those guilty of murdering and torturing their political prisoners. The government made no immediate concessions, but Prime Minister Thatcher felt obliged to reply to Amnesty's request. She said that a widening of the scope of existing controls would

exert an excessive degree of control over British exports, adding greatly to the burden of government and of exporters at a time when British export industry already faced serious difficulties (Amnesty International, 1980).

Amnesty has subsequently campaigned consistently around seeking a new law which publicly discloses in advance all military, security and police transfers, that requires that regular reports be issued to the government on the human rights situation in the receiving country and that effective channels be established so that the government can receive information from non-government organisations. Amnesty wants the new law to specifically prohibit the transfer to other countries of military security and police supplies and training where these can reasonably be assumed to contribute to human rights violations. Any such law should certainly prohibit the manufacture of any equipment which can only be used for torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners. Thus gas chambers, guillotines, thumbscrews, leg irons and gang chains would definitely be prohibited items. It is also looking at using the statutory procedures to deny repressive equipment a patent, for example on the grounds of invalidity — that it is socially objectionable — or that the invention would be 'generally expected to encourage offensive, immoral or anti-social behaviour'. Such procedures are currently being pursued in relationship to the FRAG12.

Organisations like CAAT are now campaigning more to get the European Parliament to effect such changes and this initiative may prove instrumental in changing the British government's intransigence (*CAAT Newsletter*, No. 95, February 1989).

### **Research Approaches to Halting the Repression Business**

Getting to know what is being traded and between whom involves a specific set of skills and research techniques. Hard information is of course required before any direct challenge by grassroots organisations can be made. In the repression trade this has been much harder to obtain than on the arms trade as a whole. For obvious reasons, neither governments nor the merchants of repression wish to give the public access to information on the full extent of their involvement. Obtaining details of the British supply of repression is particularly difficult since research is hindered by the terms of the Official Secrets Act. Potentially, the government, at least at ministerial level, has access through official agencies like the obscure Monitoring of Sensitive Services Committee of Crown Agents (since privatised). However, Parliament is currently denied this information which is only available at Cabinet level, if at all. Such secrecy is often used as a selling point since the suppliers use it to guarantee their more shady customers anonymity. Until Parliament finally gets the equivalent of the US sales list, human rights researchers can make an invaluable contribution to exposing the sort of deals which typify this nefarious trade.

The preliminary work to actually conceptualise the structure of the repression business was first begun in the early 1970s. Although information was limited, theoretical models suggested patterns of control which might be empirically analysed. Sometimes this took the form of investigative journalism. In other cases it involved detective work following the discovery of police equipment in situ or spotted on news coverage of a Third World conflict. In these early days the technique was essentially jigsawing together disparate pieces of information so that the broader processes could be revealed. The more technical researchers have for example established simple but effective means of identifying and exploring electronic spying and telephone tapping networks geared for socio-political control. (A successful application of such approaches led to legal action against several researchers in the UK and Norway when they used open sources to reveal a worldwide telephone tapping network using voice and automatic word recognition and transcription facilities.)

Researchers adopt a variety of different approaches, dependent to a large extent on the conditions relating to freedom of information in their respective countries. Some of the technical sources have already been referred to above. There are many good introductory sources of information on repressive technologies. Fuller technical information on the

equipment mentioned here can be found for example in Ackroyd et al. (1980), Applegate (1969), British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (1985), Drummond (1975), *Defence Materiel* (April-June 1979), International Law Enforcement Catalogue, and Wright (1977, 1978, 1983, 1987a,b,c). More technically detailed information is carried by *New Scientist*, *Computing*, *New Statesman*, and *Police Review*. Relevant material is also covered in the radical magazines *State Research Bulletin*, *RAMPET* (both now defunct) and *Lobster* (which is still going strong). More general surveys are contained in Dewar (1979), *Jane's Infantry Weapons* and *Jane's CO-IN* and *World Police and Paramilitary Forces* (Andrade, 1984) and in-house periodicals such as *SITREP*, *International Law Enforcement* and *National Security*.

Of course the manufacturers and suppliers of repressive technologies are in business and need to advertise their wares. Consequently, a key means of obtaining information on the police-industrial complex is through existing commercial channels. Trade magazines, advertising literature and exhibition catalogues all provide technical details and contact addresses, telephone, telex and fax numbers.

An excellent source for this purpose is the annual Buyers Guide of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, advertisements in magazines for the police such as *Police* and *Police Review*, military magazines such as *SITREP* and *Defence Materiel* and even magazines for mercenaries such as *Soldier of Fortune*.

One of the most promising means of discovering who is active in the state security supply business is to attend the special internal security and paramilitary exhibitions and get hold of their equipment catalogues. In the past such literature has proved to be of crucial significance. For example, an advertisement by Schermuly in one British Army Equipment Exhibition let slip the existence of hand-held CR SPAD sprays for the first time. An exhibition called Force 85 saw the presence of South African buyers from ARMSCOR who were soliciting new sources of riot equipment. The invitation lists for both IPEC exhibitions also included Iran, South Africa and Israel. Other key regular exhibitions are Essen Security, Force and Copex. The trend is for specialist companies to set up exhibitions in the Third World such as ASEAN (organised by MILIPOL, which runs an annual exhibition in Paris) or to target a particular continent such as the Copex exhibition held in Miami during February 1991 and targeted at Latin American countries.

Other means available for researching repressive technologies include field work, personal contact, or para-political work. As noted earlier, field work simply involves going out and discovering what exists — a particularly rewarding pastime in the case of communication and state surveillance networks. Field research by journalists in various conflict zones has also paid off in uncovering unexpected channels for the repression trade. Examples include the discovery of Hiatt leg shackles in Rhodesia and the discovery of British communications equipment in the State Research Centre of the deposed Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. Personal contacts take a variety of forms in this research and include information leaked by members of the state security services as well as tip-offs from trade union workers in factories supplying repressive equipment. Also vital is the co-operation of researchers in other countries. In recent years a number of key conferences have taken place (CILIP, CAAT, Anti-State Repression, International Peace Research Association, Amnesty International and the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control).

Conferences such as these have led to extremely useful exchanges of both knowledge and research techniques, and have yielded a variety of approaches and publications for consolidating the material available to researchers in this field. The initiative of groups such as TNI in Holland, State Research in Britain, CILIP in Germany and others to form the Anti-State Repression Network has also been useful in this regard.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> TNI, Paulus Potterstraat 20, 1071 DA Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Que Street NW, Washington DC 20009, USA; Campaign Against the Arms

This form of international research co-operation is likely to become even more important in the years ahead as the pace of authoritarianism and technological change in this area increases. State agencies worldwide are currently orchestrating their research efforts to produce even more efficient means of socio-political control. Countervailing research is necessary even just to discover the level and extent of the horizontal proliferation of repressive technology.

In the long term, it is possible that such research will have to play an active role in defending human rights from direct attack by authoritarian forces. Indeed it might be considered the duty of peace researchers to direct their efforts into such work so that social defence mechanisms of the future do not merely reinforce the extant patterns of repressive power and dominance. All repressive technologies and systems have basic flaws which permit their effects to be countermanded, if sufficient determination and skill are applied. To quote Galtung (1967:461-462): "The social scientist should have at his disposal concepts and insights that enable him to construct worlds that have never existed, societies nobody dreamt of, and even indicate the condition that may lead to them".

The use of advanced state repression technology might make any future resistance to internal repression even more difficult without prior preparation and forethought. Thus future research should address the challenge of understanding the hidden as well as the direct consequences associated with the use of repressive technology. Such knowledge may serve to avoid falling into the trap of using social resistance methods which merely reinforce the power of any regime which is serviced and sustained by repression. This in the longer term must be the objective of the collective efforts of all peace researchers working in this field.

#### **Campaigning Approaches to Halting the Repression Business.**

Now that the relationship between these sales and repression has become more clearly understood, more and more political, religious, humanitarian and peace groups are willing to study or oppose the repression trade. This surge of concern has facilitated the development of quite effective methods of tracking sources of relevant information. This in turn has created some good resource material to teach others about the trade and begin campaigning together around the issues.

With the substantial growth of the peace movement, further direct action against the merchants of repression seems likely to exert further pressure on the government towards reforms. Already, various European groups have co-operated against international security exhibitions set up to promote arms sales and in some cases managed to bring them to a halt or ensure their future cancellation. Increasingly such demonstrations make the connection between structural and direct violence in the Third World and the arms trade. It is a trend which is destined to continue and become more effectively planned as further experience is gained.

Indeed, in several cases companies either manufacturing or supplying riot equipment have either ceased manufacturing or exporting because of such means. For example, Allegheny International stopped its subsidiary Schermuly in Britain from manufacturing plastic bullets because of external pressure (Williams and Dobbie, 1983). More recently, the US company General Ordnance halted supplies of riot munitions to Israel because of popular outcry following the brutal repression of the intifada.

Throughout the 1980s, public concern about Britain's role in repression abroad grew. Religious bodies, including the Society of Friends, the Synod of the Church of England and

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Trade, 11 Goodwin Street, Finsbury Park, London N4 3HQ, UK; CILIP, Bürgerrechte & Polizei, c/o FU Berlin, Malteserstr. 74-100, 1000 Berlin 46, Germany; European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control, c/o Paddy Hillyard, Social Policy and Social Planning, University of Bristol, Alfred Marshall Building, 40 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1HY, UK.

the British Council of Churches, have adopted policies expressing their concern to prohibit military and security exports which contribute to human rights violations overseas.

In 1984, the conference of the Trades Union Congress condemned the making of instruments which can be used for torture and repression as "an affront to human decency and the dignity of labour" and called on the government to withdraw export credits and other government-provided assistance to British firms engaged in this inhuman trade. A wide range of church groups, medical practitioners and others have spoken out against this trade. The next step being undertaken at the Richardson Institute is to expand the work of a company in Manchester known as TRACES,<sup>4</sup> which tracks companies across the world which are involved in the repression trade and helps human rights organisations to expose their dealings.

To have an impact on the growing number of ethnic and nationalistic conflicts, we need to find means of directly intervening in the sickening cycle of poverty, repression and militarism. If we are to learn from the past, our work must recognise that torture, detention without trial, summary execution — the hallmarks of state terror — make the work of non-governmental terrorists look like amateurs in both scale and impact. Yet still, most of the teaching and most of the theory is about non-state actors: governmental terror for the most part vanishes from the equation. The white collar mercenaries near where we live and work and the low-intensity-conflict apologists for legitimating state terror deserve to be called to account. Our findings need to be directly applied in a form which is recognisable to those who are on the receiving end of past failures.

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<sup>4</sup> Transnational Analysis and Company Enquiry Service, 13 Paton Street, Off Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BA, UK.

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