

The Making of the Second Cold War

By Fred Halliday

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By Joanne Landy

This book is an important contribution to our understanding of the Cold War. It documents the changing forms of the contest between East and West that has dominated world politics since 1945 and also summarizes many current theories that attempt to explain the Cold War's roots. Halliday believes that the competition is global, bipolar and systemic, based on a "rivalry between social systems that remain, with all necessary qualifications, in continuing conflict."

Arguing against the theory that the new Cold War is simply the result of the hostility between the two superpowers, Halliday insists that the basic antagonism is between the capitalist and Communist systems, with the U.S. and the USSR at the core of their respective camps. Implicit in this analysis is the assumption that the struggle between East and West cannot be permanently resolved so long as the two systems are major contenders for world hegemony—yet, significantly, he never quite says this.

Halliday also gives his perspective on who is responsible for the Second Cold War. He argues that both sides are guilty, but unequally so. The U.S., because of its drive for military superiority, bears the primary responsibility. The USSR also shares some blame because in the '60s and '70s it engaged in its own massive nuclear build-up. But while Halliday condemns the Soviet Union's build-up for its part in heightening East-West tensions, he nonetheless sees the USSR as fundamentally reactive and defensive in the Cold War.

The greatest strength of this book is that Halliday views the post-war antagonism—despite the deep divisions within each bloc and independent behavior of countries like China—as basically rivalry between socio-economic systems. But the book's biggest weakness lies in Halliday's failure to understand the dynamics of this rivalry, in which the U.S. defends an increasingly unpopular status quo around the world, while pro-Communist forces often coopt mass movements for political and social change against this status quo.

When these forces capture the leadership of such movements, they play a role in strengthening the Soviet-type system internationally, analagous to the function military power and economic pressure play in strengthening world capitalism. Halliday fails to grasp fully this basic responsibility for the East-West conflict and the necessity for developing a third force independent of and in opposition to both superpowers.

The strengths and difficulties of Halliday's analysis become clearer as one follows his argument. He divides the post-war period into four phases. The initial period, which he terms Cold War I, lasted from 1946 until 1953. This was a time of maximum and more or less consistent tension between the U.S. and the USSR. The First Cold War ended in the year of Stalin's death and was followed by several years of "Oscillatory Antagonism" (1953-69)—a period marked by

neither permanent confrontation nor sustained negotiations between the superpowers.

The Nixon administration ushered in detente (1969-79), characterized by continuing efforts to seek negotiated settlements between the two countries. But by the late '70s, however, detente had clearly failed in the eyes of the American government, and by 1979 the Carter administration was carrying out a major military escalation, with its demands on Europe for substantial increases in arms spending, the sharp leap in the U.S. military budget, the expansion of the arms race into space and

defending the USSR, he writes that it "has to a certain extent made itself the ally of Third World emancipation," ignoring the fact that for the Soviet Union support to revolutionary movements around the world is part and parcel of its own struggle for global power and influence.

Halliday does observe that where pro-Communist movements have come to power, "revolutionary change was counterbalanced by the erection of bureaucratic political structures within these states." But this is not a question of balance sheets. The coming to power of pro-Communist forces is inseparable

movement whose domestic radical and democratic practices challenged both capitalism and Communism.

No alternative.

Of course, Ronald Reagan and his cohorts vastly exaggerate the extent to which Soviet military aid is responsible for the success of anti-Western movements. They are unable to come to terms with the deep indigenous drive for radical social change that exists throughout the underdeveloped world as an inevitable response to the ravages of world capitalism on the lives of Third World people, especially as the international economic crisis deepens. When revolutions in these countries violate the democratic aspirations of their popular base and move in a bureaucratic-totalitarian direction—as they all too often do—it is because there is no strong and viable alternative to the two dominant world social systems.

In this vacuum the Soviet model, tarnished though it is, exerts a powerful magnetism upon revolutionary leaderships, many of whom end up hoping to emulate the USSR's social order, even if they have no desire to have their countries become Soviet client-states. It should be obvious that a really progressive foreign policy by the U.S. would go a long way toward encouraging and strengthening democratic radical currents in the Third World, but neither Reagan nor the leaders of the Democratic Party appear prepared to countenance the anti-capitalist policies these currents would adopt.

Of course, there is a significant military component in the USSR's Cold War repertoire, including its continuing physical occupation of Eastern Europe and Afghanistan, its attempt to gain a military-strategic foothold in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, and its massive nuclear and conventional arsenal. But the mix of methods the two sides use to pursue their Cold War aims is very different—the West's forced to rely more heavily on military intimidation, economic pressure and dictatorships friendly to the capitalist way of life while the Communist system often employs political methods, capitalizing on its ability to appeal to mass movements for social change in parts of the globe dominated by capitalism.

The USSR's lesser reliance on military methods leads many on the left—including Halliday—to make the mistake of viewing the Soviet system and its military efforts as *ipso facto* defensive. Instead, both sides should be understood as major forces fighting a deadly serious battle, using whatever instruments are at their disposal—diplomatic, economic, political or military—not only against each other but also against the "third way" implicit in the independent struggles for democracy, self-determination and social justice that take place in the West, the East and the Third World.

For the superpowers there is no meaningful distinction between "offensive" and "defensive" strategies. As in all traditional rivalries, both have good reason to fear their enemy, and in that sense are genuinely defensive.

Strange as it might seem, Reagan's oft-cited "paranoia" has a real basis; it is a defensive reaction to the fact that since the end of World War II capitalist hegemony has been supplanted in many parts of the world—China,

Vietnam, Cuba and Eastern Europe being the most salient examples. And the process threatens to continue.

But the U.S.'s fear of losing ground in the Cold War no more justifies its drive toward military superiority than does the Soviet's well-grounded fear about Western armaments justify its intervention in Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan, or its nuclear weapons. The fears and hostilities of Eastern and Western rulers toward each other do not entitle them to violate the self-determination of smaller countries, deny social or political rights at home or threaten everyone with nuclear annihilation.

In his book Halliday criticizes but also apologizes for Soviet militarism. Fortunately, however, his tenderheartedness toward the USSR does not prevent him from supporting independent movements in both halves of Europe—such as the mass peace movements of the West and the fledgling unofficial peace groups in the East—as a force to press the superpowers to disengage from their domination of the continent.

Halliday is eloquent and inspiring when he suggests the political possibilities that would be opened up, not only for East and West Europeans but also for the less developed world, if the U.S. were forced by protest from below to initiate the disengagement process by withdrawing from Europe.

Whereas hitherto European states have acted as imperialist allies of the U.S.A., a new Europe would be able to provide an independent source of economic and diplomatic backing to states in the Third World, which have till now been pulled in opposing directions by the magnetic force of the great power conflict.... The emergence of such an independent and non-aligned Western Europe would, therefore, challenge the Cold War in three central respects—by reducing the strategic power of the U.S.A., by undermining the legitimation for the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe, and by loosening the bipolar dynamic that grips the Third World.... A socialist Europe, which pioneered a new democratic model of society, would undermine the legitimacy of both the U.S.A. and the USSR, and do more than anything to challenge the underlying political logic of the Great Contest as it has been fought out since 1945.

If this challenge is to succeed, it will have to emerge out of the struggle against both superpowers—and the systems they defend. Whether for the peace and anti-intervention movements in the U.S. and Europe, *Solidarnosc*, Chilean workers or the democratic movement in the Philippines, the key to building an influential third force is solidarity with one another, along with independence from and opposition to the military, economic and political pressures exerted by both superpowers.

Insofar as Halliday suggests a perspective that breaks down the mutually legitimating bipolar system and points to a new path, he is to be commended. But to the extent that he clings to a protective view of the Soviet side in the Cold War, he does the emerging non-aligned movements around the world a profound disservice.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

How the Cold War works and who's to blame



plans facilitating intervention into the Third World, such as development of the Rapid Deployment Force. These initiatives began the Second Cold War.

According to Halliday, the U.S. abandoned detente because American expectations were not met. The USSR continued its drive for nuclear parity with the U.S. and achieved enormous military gains. And detente did not produce the hoped-for Soviet restraint in the Third World; instead, the USSR aggressively involved itself in conflicts in Angola, Ethiopia and also occupied Afghanistan.

Tenderheartedness.

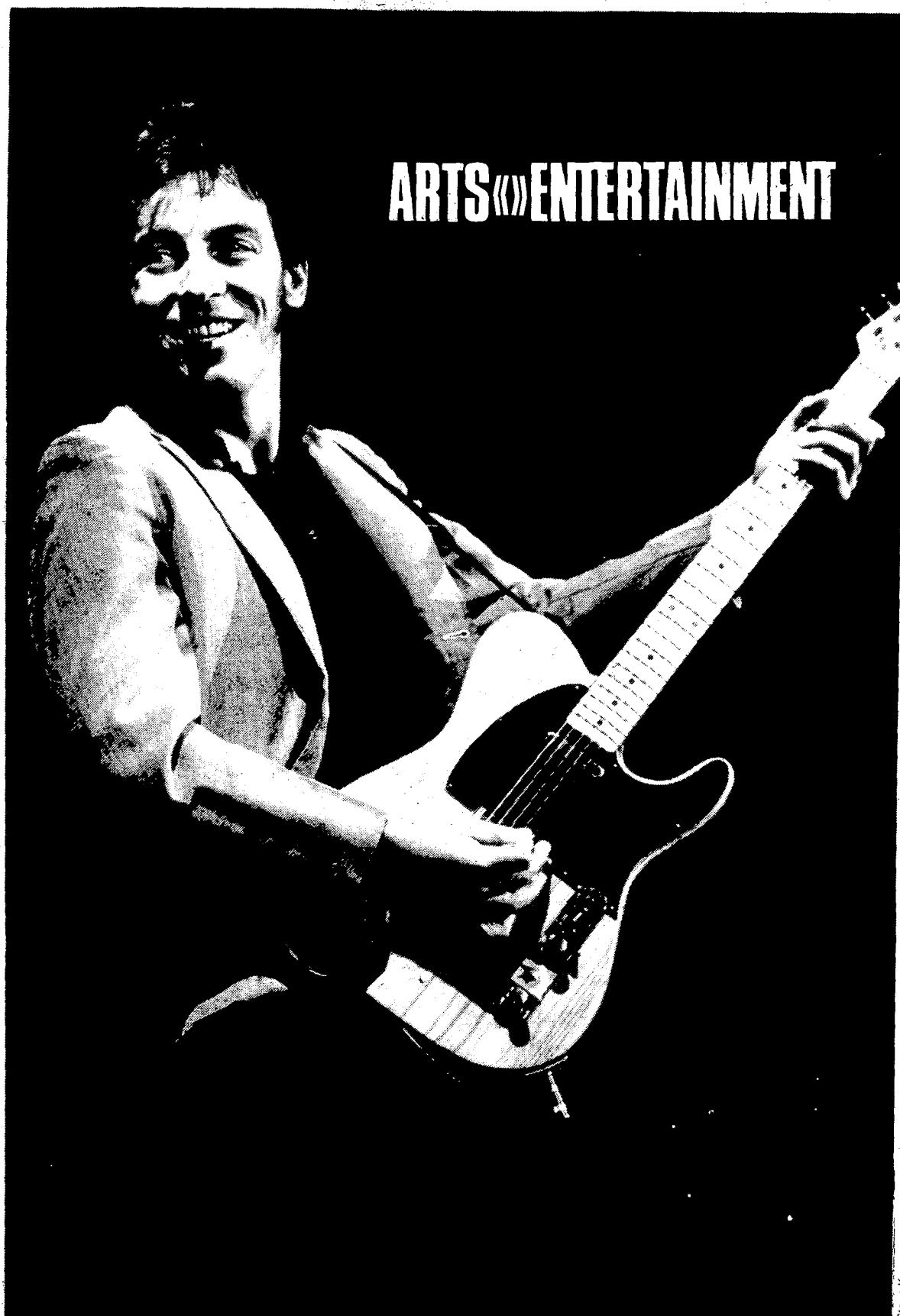
While Halliday's analysis of the impetus behind Carter's and Reagan's motives for ending detente and renewing an unbridled arms race is accurate, his view of Soviet behavior tends to be, as Edward Thompson noted in his review of the book, "tenderhearted, sometimes apologetic." Halliday seems to regard the Soviet Union as historically progressive vis-a-vis the capitalist West. He strongly suggests this when,

from the imposition of "new bureaucratic structures"—an understated way of describing one-party states like Cuba or Vietnam where, as in the USSR, real trade unions are illegal, there is no right to strike, assemble, form independent political groups or publish literature critical of the government, and political dissenters are routinely imprisoned for their ideas.

This is not to say that an embattled movement should refuse to accept guns from any source, including one of the superpowers, if it is possible to get this aid without fraying political strings. But just as it is hard to envision circumstances in which the U.S. would not attach conditions when aiding an anti-Communist movement, the Soviet Union will likewise try to exact a price for its support. Cases in point: the Cubans' public defense of the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia and Nicaragua's condemnation of Polish Solidarity. More fundamentally, it is unlikely that either the U.S. or the USSR would give substantial and sustained aid to a revolutionary government or

MUSIC

The working-class hero



By Michael S. Kimmel

Bruce Springsteen has become America's working-class hero, and there is little doubt that he is a highly skilled craftsman. Few musicians explore the contours of class society with such intensity and passion, and few can take those qualities into the Top 10. The release of his latest record, *Born in the U.S.A.*, confirms both his unsparing vision and his commercial viability.

It's been two years since Springsteen's last record. *Nebraska* was lean and sparse, pairing Springsteen's achingly hoarse vocals and his acoustic guitar on a friend's four-track. His songs were as bleak as the black-and-white cover photograph—an endless two-lane highway seen through a sleet-splattered windshield. Earlier Springsteen records implied escapes from working-class life. Songs like "The Promised Land" or his trademark, "Born to Run," celebrated the freedom of the endless highway late at night or a consuming passion (cars, women) as the routes away from the "darkness at the edge of town." *Nebraska* exposed these escapes as illusions. The darkness lay in-

side, and all roads led back to pain, fear and emptiness.

This bold departure in both theme and music, simultaneously paring away hope and the driving bar-band sound Springsteen had cultivated, resulted in an uncom-

promising record that sold fairly well despite itself. On *Born in the U.S.A.*, though, Springsteen inserts this despairing vision back into his rocking sound. The result is a passionate, ruthlessly honest record. (In addition,

Springsteen is currently on a concert tour that will bring him to six Midwestern cities as well as Toronto and Montreal before concluding at New Jersey's Meadowlands for two weeks.)

Each side of *Born in the U.S.A.* mirrors the other. Both begin with a thundering rock song, lead into two or three unmemorable, slower-paced pieces and end with a pair of brilliant compositions, an upbeat top-40 tune, followed by a slow, soft ballad. The thudding bass drum of the title song, which opens the album, immediately heralds Springsteen's return to his big rock'n'roll sound, as he tears into a song about a Vietnam veteran's lonely return to the dead-end life he had left 10 years earlier. In "Cover Me" Springsteen's electric guitar screams as he asks his lover to shield him from the pain of everyday life, though he knows it's a wish and shelter is impossible.

After two forgettable bar songs—"Darlington County" and "Working on the Highway"—Springsteen and the E Street Band ease into "Downbound Train," a slow rocker (with the same lean electric-guitar chords as "The River" and Tom Petty's "Refugee") about the painful realization that economic collapse often shatters our dreams. The listener waits for the song to kick optimistically into high gear, but like the life it describes, it never does. Instead, now he "works down at the car wash/ Where all it ever does is rain."

The side closes with "I'm on Fire," a haunting ballad about pain and passion on desperate nights. "At night I wake up with the sheets soaking wet/ And a freight train running through the middle of my head," he confesses, pressing us against our own nightmares.

The second side repeats the organization of the first. "No Surrender" is an up-tempo meditation on male friendships, a paean to E Streeter Steve Van Zandt, who is leaving the band to follow a more political musical path as Little Steven, and whose recent effort, *Voice of America* (EMI Records), is a striking rock album mostly about U.S. Central America policy. (On the tour, veteran guitarist Nils Lofgren will be replacing Van Zandt.)

Three less-than-compelling songs later, Springsteen launches into the record's first single, "Dancin' in the Dark." Even though he's bored, tired and angry—"There's a joke here somewhere and it's on me," he sings—he hoarsely offers hope in sim-

ple pleasures, while the band lopes lazily through this even-paced song. (Danny Federici's organ fillers are elegantly understated.) We have to try, Springsteen counsels, "Even if we're dancin' in the dark."

The album closes with perhaps its finest song, the plaintive ballad "My Hometown." Fronting only an organ, tambourine and acoustic guitar, Springsteen narrates a four-verse history of East Coast deindustrialization. The eight-year-old who sat on his father's lap and steered the car down Main Street grows up, watches economic decline and racial tension tear the center out of town, so that now the 35-year-old plans to head out to the Sun Belt in search of a better life. But once, before his family leaves, he sits his own son on his lap in the front seat, to show him their hometown.

In this strong album, Springsteen reverses Thomas Wolfe's adage and implies that home is the place you can never really

"At night I wake up with the sheets soaking wet/ And a freight train running through the middle of my head."

leave. Rooting his identity and his music in the working-class community where he was raised, he understands that most roads out are false ones and that the luster of consumerism is easily tarnished. "The whole time I was growing up, I couldn't wait to get away from my neighborhood," he commented in a 1982 interview. "Now, when I can go anywhere in the world, I keep coming back to it."

Born in the U.S.A. is a brilliant comment on the human costs of Reaganomics. Realizing that the promises of opportunity for the working class are hollow and the future bleak and painful, Springsteen takes what trickles down and squeezes passion and honesty from it.

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RADIO

The sound of magic realism

By Susan E. Osborn

Latin American fiction has achieved aesthetic autonomy. It is no longer a provincial literature but an innovative, diverse and sometimes audacious expression of native themes elevated to a universal plane. In tribute to this literature, National Public Radio is presenting "Faces, Mirrors, Masks," a summer series of 13 half-hour sound portraits of Latin American writers.

Beneath the diversity of con-

temporary Latin American writing lies one unifying element: the awareness of form. Apparently irreconcilable categories—formalism and stream of consciousness, nihilism and meaning, discontinuous episodes and continuous journeying—conjoin in what is misleadingly called "magic realism." But as translator Gregory Rabassa has pointed out, this presentation of the multiple dimensions of reality is magical only according to the "flat-headed" norms of the 19th century. Our archaic notion of what

is "real" has given us a false notion of what is "unreal." For example, when Garcia Marquez overlaps coincidences, coexistences and characters, he is not inducing any magic, but simply defying formulaic reality.

What is revolutionary about recent Latin America literature is the writers' negation of authorial omniscience and their recognition of the reader's role in making the fictional experience. Most contemporary Latin American authors do not offer a total interpretation of the world. Responsibility for interpreting the fictional events falls on the reader.

It is unusual for any radio station to run a series on literature, and NPR deserves praise for "Faces, Mirrors, Masks." But the problem with this presentation is that it doesn't give the listener a good idea of what the literature is about. Rather, the programs dramatize the writers' lives using material from their fictional work.

For example, the narration of

"The Solitude of Latin America: Gabriel Garcia Marquez" is punctuated by interpretations of scenes from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch* spoken by famous actors and actresses over taped background noises from settings in the books. ("This is the room where they tied up the Colonel"; "Here's where Remedios the beauty bathed"). Paradoxically, the emphasis on locating, delineating and bounding carefully created ambiguities with "irrefutable" facts denies one of the fundamental aspects of the literature: the participation of the reader's imagination. These programs are lively and often engaging (Arguedas singing an Aztec song is a real treat), but the emphasis on biography and literal reality detracts from the main point. Revolution in form is what Latin American literature is really about.

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