

IN THESE TIMES OPINION

Salvador Luria

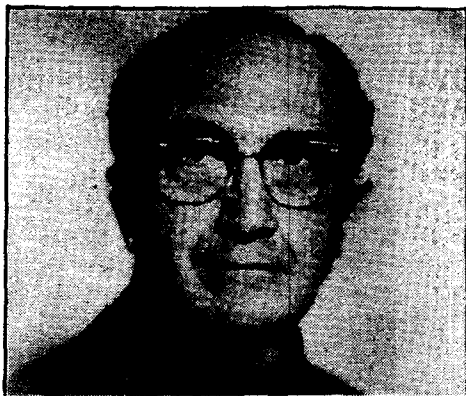
Cigarettes: health hazards can't compete with big business

Americans consume over 500 billion cigarettes a year. According to the best available statistics, cigarette smoking is responsible for about 80,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S. Because the consumption of cigarettes has been on the increase for many years, and because it usually takes many years before the effects of cigarette smoking manifest themselves, we can expect a much higher incidence of cigarette-induced lung cancer in years to come. The increase is likely to be especially high among women since heavy smoking has started among women only 50 years ago and the rate of increase is now much higher for women than for men.

Lung cancer, of course, is only one of the disorders through which cigarette smoking causes death. Heart attacks and emphysema (chronic stretching of the lungs) are other major consequences of smoking, although it is not easy yet to evaluate the annual mortality from these as precisely as for lung cancer.

Cigarette smoking has interesting and far-reaching aspects, not only medical but also socio-political.

From the medical point of view, the remarkable feature is that the frequency



of lung cancers in smokers is directly proportional to the number of cigarettes smoked over one's lifetime. This statistical finding means, to put it in simple terms, that there is no minimum safe number of cigarettes. If you smoke ten times less than the next person, you have ten times less chance to get a smoke-induced lung cancer; but your chance is not zero.

The other medical feature, not yet fully understood, is that for a given number of cigarettes smoked, the chance of getting lung cancer increases quite rapidly with age. The interpretation given, provisionally, by cancer experts is that the actual

development and growth of lung cancer in smokers depends also on several other contributing factors whose occurrences increase with age. The nature of those factors is still a matter of guess. For example, one of the factors might be a decreasing ability of the body to destroy cancer cells when they first arise. Much research is aimed at trying to define the nature of the contributing factors. If one could control these factors one might save some of those millions of smokers who will otherwise come down with lung cancer in years to come.

One may wonder why people voluntarily expose themselves to a habit that is a cause of several dread diseases. One reason, apart from the pleasure of smoking (a pleasure that a non-smoker like myself does not appreciate) is a mixture of ignorance and of gambling optimism. Ignorance blinds people to the significance of the statement that the average smoker has a 5 percent chance of dying of lung cancer. The gambling spirit makes people think: Why should I be the unlucky one?

And here we come to the socio-political angle. There are powerful forces in society that swamp the voice of reason.

The cigarette business is a huge industry: 500 billion cigarettes a year means over \$10 billion sales. The tobacco lobby is one of the most powerful in Washington. Congress, under pressure from environmentalist and cancer-prevention groups, was forced some years ago to pass a minimal warning regulation: each pack of cigarettes must state that "The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health." But effective government actions, those that count, do not discourage the use of cigarettes but help the tobacco industry in pushing and selling its wares. Tobacco brings to its growers some of the largest subsidies of all farm crops. Instead of encouraging a shift to

more useful crops, the U.S. government uses our tax money to subsidize the tobacco producers, whose only concern is to push their product on the public.

And how they push it! Even though precise figures are not available, it is estimated that the advertising bill for cigarettes is about \$300 million a year! And a good deal of this publicity is paid for by you and me in the form of tax deductions by the advertisers—for example, publicity for export purposes. Any industry that controls advertising accounts of such magnitude has a mighty hold on newspapers and magazines, especially the smaller and less independent ones. Cigarette manufacturers can readily cancel their accounts with newspapers that dare editorialize against cigarette smoking.

One cannot, of course, blame only the cigarette manufacturer for the appeal of cigarette smoking. It is apparent that cigarette smoking (a habit that is only 100 years old) has fulfilled a psychological need independent of advertising and "pushing." Cigarette smoking has not decreased in countries with socialist governments and may actually have increased, due to the improved standard of living.

Once the relation between cigarettes, lung cancer and other diseases is known, of course, the question of smoking becomes overtly political. Cigarette ads become devices to trick people into risking their lives. Government non-regulation becomes an open admission that tax revenues matter more than health.

More knowledge about smoking also raises socialist questions. Does the state have the right to outlaw cigarettes? Do people who contract smoking-related diseases have the right to receive public health services?

Salvador Luria is a Nobel laureate in bio-chemistry and a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His column appears regularly.

Letters

Any clever Arab propagandist could have done it

Editor:

I am extremely excited and pleased by the three issues of *In These Times* I have bought on newsstands here (what a welcome new publication! And a great name!), and was about to send for one or several subscriptions when I read Simon Rosenblum's column in issue #3 (*ITT*, Nov. 29, 1976). Would you expect a black person or a woman to subscribe to an exciting new magazine and simply "overlook" an occasional racist or sexist article? That's how I felt about finding this hopelessly naive and insidiously (perhaps unconsciously) anti-Jewish piece in your magazine.

The version of history that Rosenblum presents is unbelievably one-sided and twisted, as is his vision of the future. Does he suppose that none of the violence, none of the mistakes, none of the racism in Palestine of the 1920s-40s was committed by Arabs, only by Jews? Is he aware that the Palestinian Jews accepted the 1948 United Nations partition, giving them a tiny fraction of the Mandate territory, but were denied even this minimal compromise by the all-out attack of the Arab nations? The history of the area in the first half of this century was surely regrettable: it's too bad Jewish leaders insisted on dealing with Turks and Britons and Arab chieftans in order to get the swampy land they needed for national return and independence; it's unfortunate that the Buber/Magnes binational solution was never practical and never acceptable to either side. What happened was almost by accident, and certainly tragic (Remember, there was virtually no awareness of Palestinian Arabs as a distinct national group until long after Jewish settlement—autonomous, agricultural, and non-exploitative—had been established). But to

blame that failure of cooperation on the "Zionist establishment" is outrageous and distorted.

Now, Rosenblum tells us, the sole barrier to a peaceful two-state solution is "Israeli intransigence." No mention of the PLO's publicly avowed intention to accept a state as an "interim step" to taking over all of Palestine, i.e., destroying Israel. Certainly the Israeli public and government seem too often uncompromising and overcautious; but who, after all, planted the bombs and murdered the school children to make them that way? Whom can they trust, ultimately, to protect their absolutely valid right to self-determination and freedom, rather than bargaining it away in *realpolitik*?

As for the editors, I am disappointed that a publication that seemed to offer such a creative, non-doctrinaire approach could print an article written almost by formula, full of such trite, outworn ideas. Any clever and slightly dishonest Arab propagandist could have written it. (And I suspect it could only be published, given the ominous implications behind it, if written by a Jew.

Jonathan Wolf
New York City

Editor's note: In These Times has no established position on solutions to the Israel-Palestinian question. Columns in the opinion section represent the views of the columnists, although within limits that we establish. We welcome opposing views on all questions, and especially on one like this where the controversy among socialists of different nationalities is so fierce.

The feeling of being used

Editor:

Through its first five issues, *In These Times* has been a newspaper that attempts to report the news factually and not to distort it to fit anyone's ideological leanings. Having survived the *Rat*, the *Liberated Guardian*, et. al., this has been a sublime relief.

Issue six (*ITT*, Dec. 20, 1976) brought me down to earth. Margit Birge, in her

article "Mexican Agrarian Conflict," wrote with the disrespect for reality associated with those more heady times. The Movement was gravely damaged by the unrealistic, politically motivated cries of 'revolution now!' There were other factors, certainly, but this euphoric brush with a revolution that was not to be, this feeling of being used, helped send many an activist back to his or her career.

Specifically: "Land invasions are continuing everywhere;" "Not even God will stop our fight." Nonsense. Mexico is not in or even near a revolutionary situation. Why present a false picture? Who does it help? Certainly not the Mexican people.

Sheldon Wallman
New York City

SP differs on presidential elections

Editor:

You're absolutely right in your editorial criticism of third party presidential races (*ITT*, Jan. 5). I find your method of first shaking your finger at DSOC (*ITT*, Dec. 22, 1976) and then at the CP, SP, SWP, SLP, and PP simply brilliant.

I must, however, take exception with your conclusions. There is really no point in doctrinal, organizational, and sectarian rivalries, and those who engage in such activity do more to harm the building of a socialist movement in this country than anything else. But how is that socialist movement to be built?

The Socialist Party has elected city councilors in Indiana and Wisconsin, and it is there, on the local level, that we see the real battle for social change. We do not see, however, as you do, the presidential campaigns as a "painful waste." The exceptionally low vote for left parties in 1976 is less a comment on the independent political activity and more a statement on the situation the American left finds itself in today.

All the people who put together *In These Times* should be given great honors for bringing the day when there is a viable socialist movement in the U.S. closer to reality, but publishing a paper is not enough (as beautiful as it is).

Running a presidential candidate is far from enough, but it is one way to reach many people with the vision of what our society could be if people had democratic control over their own destinies.

Lee Webster
National Secretary, Socialist Party

You call this a socialist?

Editor:

The review by Chris C. Mojekwu (*ITT*, Nov. 22, 1976) of John Hatch's *Two African Statesmen*, came as a surprise. Neither in my stay in Africa nor in my current stay in Europe have I ever seen a newspaper report characterizing Kaunda of Zambia as a socialist. His activities in precisely the areas mentioned by Mojekwu have been anything but anti-capitalist. He has jailed Rhodesian leaders and guerillas, has invited Western capital into his country to take advantage of cheap Zambian labor, and I don't believe Kaunda has such a track record for liberation in Southern Africa...

To review a book like Hatch's seems appropriate in order to expose the misrepresentation of Kaunda, not to reinforce it. (As for Nyerere, I would recommend *The Silent Class Struggle* at least as a corrective to the general impression of Nyerere given in the article.)

Kaunda aside—congratulations for getting the paper going.

—Barbara Stuckey
Starnbeg, West Germany

Swept off her feet

Editor:

Issue No. 6 *ITT*, Dec. 20) has swept me off my feet; especially the editorial and the news in the articles on Hartford, Conn.'s, imaginative new tactics in rescuing the cities, and the farmers' organizing. The paper isn't just an informal warming up of old news. Here's my subscription and announcement of my enthusiastic intention to get others to subscribe.

—Frances W. Herring
Kensington, Calif.

Staughton Lynd

Effect of Steelworkers' no-strike pledge disputed by new findings

The major issue in the contest between Ed Sadlowski and Lloyd McBride for the presidency of the Steelworkers union is whether to continue the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) negotiated between the union and the companies in 1973.

Under ENA, the union gives up its right to strike at the end of the three-year Basic Steel Contract. Unresolved contract issues are submitted to binding arbitration.

ENA is part of the present Basic Steel Contract which expires Aug. 1, 1977. If an ENA clause is made part of the next Basic Steel Contract, the union will have given up its right to strike at the end of that three-year contract, in 1980.

The basic reason for ENA given by both the union and the companies is that, in its absence, American steel users import foreign steel at the end of each three-year contract when there is uncertainty about strike action.

Rank-and-file opponents of ENA sought to have it declared illegal when it was first enacted in 1973. They lost. Recent developments strengthen the likelihood a Sadlowski victory will bring the end of ENA.

On Dec. 16, J. Bruce Johnston, vice president of Labor Relations of United States Steel Corporation, speaking at a meeting of the Pittsburgh Personnel Association, stated that neither Lloyd McBride nor Ed Sadlowski "seems able or willing" to understand the real purpose of ENA. Johnston also said that "Imports still translate into 90,000 lost steelworker jobs and 15 million tons of lost

sales each year—and they threaten to get worse."

More than a month before Johnston's speech the *Labor Law Journal* called attention to "recent empirical findings that steel imports since 1959 have had little real impact on jobs in the basic steel industry." The article continued: "If the union begins to accept this research as correct, its interest in cooperating in programs such as ENA and the recent effort to influence the federal government to restrict imports on foreign steel may decline."

Meantime, two recent court decisions indicate that if ENA is even in court again, it may not fare as well as it did before.

Judge George Edwards of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, a former United Automobile Workers official, handed down a decision in the case where rank-and-file teamsters have challenged a contract "rider" on which they were unable to vote. The plaintiffs are "over-the-road" drivers who live in Michigan and are employed by various Michigan trucking companies. They claim that defendant International Brotherhood of Teamsters submitted to ratification as required by the union constitution the National Master Freight Agreement and the Central States Agreement, but did not submit to ratification the Michigan Rider. Speaking through Judge Edwards, the Court cited Section 101(a)(1) of the Landrum-Griffin Act which states in part:

Equal rights: Every member of a labor organization shall have equal rights and privileges within such organization to nominate candidates, to vote in elections

or referendums of the labor organization...

The Court then held: "We believe the word 'referendum' is sufficiently broad to guarantee to all union members a right to vote on a union contract which any of them enjoy." The Court did not decide that the union had violated Landrum-Griffin. But it held that a trial might show that it had, and so refused to dismiss the case.

Another decision by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals relates to the question: If the union at a future negotiating session refused to include ENA in the next Basic Steel Contract, could the company say that this was an unresolved issue and submit this to binding arbitration under the ENA? The Court confronted a similar question involving a contract between a printers' union in Columbus, Ga., and a newspaper. A clause in the contract provided for resolution of disputes over new contract terms by arbitration. The union, in that case, wanted the clause contained in the next contract. The company did not. The union then claimed that the company was refusing to bargain as required by Section 8(a)(5) of the National Labor Relations Act. The company responded that a clause providing for arbitration of disputes over new contract terms was not a mandatory subject of bargaining. A majority of the NLRB agreed with the company. The Fifth Circuit affirmed the decision of the NLRB. The Court explained its holding in these words:

"There are several important reasons why a new contract arbitration clause should not be enforceable to perpetuate inclusion of the clause in successive bar-

gaining agreements. The contract arbitration system could be self-perpetuating; a party, having once agreed to the provision, may find itself locked into that procedure for as long as the bargaining relationship endures.... Parties may justly fear that the tendency of arbitrators would be to continue including the clause.... Courts cannot bind the parties in perpetuity to forego the use of economic weapons in support of bargaining positions."

In an important footnote, the opinion adds that compulsory arbitration was rejected by Congress when it passed both the Wagner and Taft-Hartley Acts. The Court points out that the effect of making arbitration of unresolved contract disputes perpetual would be to enact compulsory arbitration: "Compulsory arbitration would deprive parties of their right to use economic weapons in the same way that successive contract arbitration provisions would."

The *Columbus Pressmen* case means that at any negotiating session where the Steelworkers union takes the position that it will not continue ENA, there is nothing the company can do about it. ENA does not apply to the question of whether ENA will continue.

The *Trail* case means that if the Steelworkers union changes its constitution to require membership ratification of the Basic Steel Contract, the courts are likely to take the position that ENA too must be submitted to membership ratification.

Staughton Lynd, a longtime civil rights and anti-war activist, practices law in Youngstown, Ohio. He and his wife Alice edited *Rank and File, Personal Histories by Working-Class Organizers*. His column appears regularly.



Ed Greer

Blacks are now primary victims of urban decay and federal apathy

The only feasible method of obtaining racial equality in the U.S. is to reconstruct and rebuild the nation's central cities. To achieve this goal, a coalition of all the popular and progressive forces in the U.S. will have to be mobilized politically.

The disintegration of the delivery of "public goods" such as education, mass transit, and public health care in the cities means that the main mechanism for redistribution to the poor is thwarted and that the real standard of living of city dwellers falls. Along with unemployment and on-the-job discrimination, urban decay is the main way that blacks and other national minorities are relegated to second-class citizenship.

Acquiescence in the "urban crisis" is a direct attack upon blacks. All domestic policies that accept as "inevitable" on-going urban disinvestment (such as redlining, commercial relocation to suburbs, factory flight to the Sunbelt or abroad), that argue that massive government social welfare programs for the cities are unworkable, or that assert that a "post-industrial society" no longer has a need for cities, are racist in effect.

To understand this it is essential to understand the demographic shifts of the past half century.

In the early part of the 20th century almost all American blacks lived in the rural South. The course of modern industrialization—especially after the Immigration Act of 1924—resulted in the massive urbanization of black people, who are now the most heavily urbanized

group in the country. In 1970, while only 25 percent of whites resided in central cities, 60 percent of blacks did.

Despite much media attention to black suburbanization, the concentration of blacks in the cities is still increasing. Neither economic nor political forces of the magnitude necessary to disperse blacks into the suburbs have appeared—even on the distant horizon.

The pattern of black urban concentration follows a pattern that has existed since the beginnings of capitalist development. As Frederick Engels pointed out in 1845 in his monograph, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, "The rapid extension of English industry could not have taken place if England had not possessed in the numerous and impoverished population of Ireland a reserve in command.... It has been calculated that...nearly all [the Irish migrants] enter the industrial districts, especially the great cities, and there form the lowest class of the population."

A similar pattern is evident today throughout western Europe, where migrant workers are employed in the lower strata of industrial occupations and are disproportionately concentrated in the larger urban centers. While 20 percent of the French live in metropolitan Paris, 33 percent of that nation's immigrants do.

The full extent of black central city concentration is often not fully realized. My own calculations, based on the 1970 Census, show a striking pattern: the larger the city, the bigger the percentage of black

inhabitants. The following table summarizes my findings:

Size of City	% Black
over 500,000	26.0
250,000 - 500,000	19.6
100,000 - 250,000	14.5
50,000 - 100,000	7.8
rest of country	6

Two consequences flow from this relationship: one technical in terms of public policy; the other broadly political.

To maximize the racially progressive impact of federal aid to the cities, legislation should be drafted so as to set the cut-off point for qualification at 100,000 population. Such a standard—which is well within Congressional discretion—would result in a group of 156 cities with a total population of 57 million of whom almost a quarter will be black, including the majority of all the black people in the U.S. Aid distributed in such a fashion would redistribute funds from whites to blacks.

And permitting cities of a smaller size to qualify for urban aid will dilute or even reverse its racially progressive impact. Since there is no correlation between the size of a city and the proportion of the work force employed in manufacturing, the cut-off point—regardless of where it is set—does not result in taking from white workers to give to black workers. Rather it takes from all whites (including white capitalists) and gives to all blacks. Of course, even if it did redistribute income from white workers to black workers it would still be a socially

just policy as compensation for arbitrary racist discrimination in employment.

All political efforts should be bent to shaping new federal urban programs and the administrative guidelines of existing ones to comport with this relationship.

To win such a priority—and the vast funding necessary to reconstruct our metropolises to the standard our civilization's productivity permits—a coherent political program and mass mobilization on its behalf is required. In such a mass democratic reform fight, the black people's movement and its elected representatives can provide a solid base. Demographic developments indicate that within the next decade the mayors of the majority of the 10 largest cities will be black. And this will be a tremendous accretion to the potential political forces available to realign American politics. Along with the trade union movement and middle class allies, a bloc of big city organizations will constitute a formidable set of popular institutions.

Creating this kind of political alliance through a mass struggle to force the Carter administration to rebuild the cities is now on the order of the day.

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Edward Greer is a former aide of Mayor Richard G. Hatcher of Gary, Ind., and teaches urban studies at Roosevelt University, Chicago. His column appears regularly.