

IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

The world socialist rainbow

With the formation of the Third International in 1919, the world socialist movement divided into two major camps, the Communists and the social democrats. Increasingly after that time, social democrats relinquished their revolutionary goals and became supporters of managed capitalism and later of the cold war against the Soviet Union. Communists, on the other hand, sustained their revolutionary commitment but increasingly identified socialism with the Soviet state and society. Communists in the West found themselves subordinating the development of democratic socialist theory and politics in their own countries to the defense of the Soviet national interest.

Even those Communists who had doubts about Soviet practices and priorities justified them as necessary in the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist encirclement. This attitude was sustained by the character of European fascism from the 1920s through World War II, and by the nature of the cold war in the 1950s. But with the spread of socialism after World War II, in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, and elsewhere, with the growth of anti-imperialist nationalism in the former colonial world, and with growing Soviet economic and military power, the rationale of subservience by communists to the Soviet Union in the name of defending world socialism became untenable as a matter of principle or of practical politics.

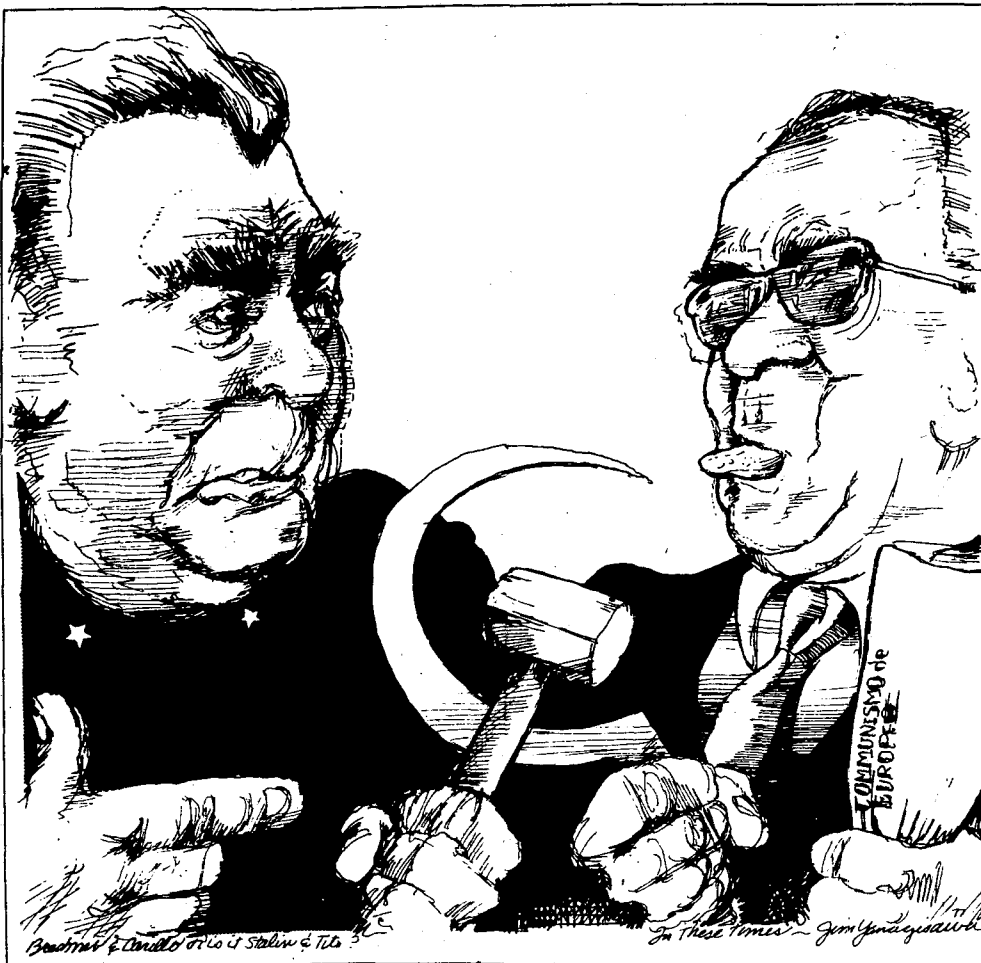
Eurocommunism, despite the differences among the Communist parties of Italy, Spain, France and Britain, represents a break with past Communist practice in two essential ways: 1) the reassertion of the inseparable link between socialism and democracy, both political and social; and 2) the reemergence of an international movement of equal parties, consulting and cooperating with one another, but with each retaining its autonomy in relating to its own working class and national conditions.

New Support.

Breaking with the Soviet conception of international party relations has won substantial new popular support for the western European Communist parties, as Spanish party leader Carrillo implied when he remarked that his only complaint about the Soviet attack on his party was that it had not come before the election, "because probably it would have gotten us thousands of votes."

The independence and democratic commitment of the western European communist parties has also made it more difficult for the United States government and its agents to maneuver against the socialist left in Europe, and for the various national capitalist classes to combat the resurgent socialist movements. The socialist renewal, moreover, has been achieved by a strengthening and deepening of the traditional principles of socialism, not by their abandonment or dilution, as the Soviets claim.

The revitalization and creative development of socialist democratic theory and practice on the part of the Eurocommunists has also had the effect of strengthening the left tendencies within the socialist and social democratic parties of France, Italy, Spain, and other European countries. The Eurocommunists have, also, encouraged those dissidents in Eastern Europe who remain committed to socialism while opposing the restrictions on democracy and civil liberties in their countries. The Italian Communist party's offer of a position on the staff of the Antonio Gramsci Institute to Milan Hubl, a signer of the Czechoslovak dissident human rights manifesto, known as Charter 77,



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is an example of this. There are many others.

Threat to U.S. and Soviet power.

Policy makers in both the U.S. and the USSR are concerned about Eurocommunism, since it threatens the power and influence of the governments of both in Europe. Its democratic nature, wide popular support and promise of socialist unity make it less vulnerable to attack from either side.

For the American corporate-capitalist ruling class, Eurocommunism and socialist unity strengthen the prospects of Communist parties assuming to government

power and posing a mortal challenge to the future of multinational corporate-capitalism. American rulers have always opposed a unified Europe hostile to American capitalism. Eurocommunism may be able to accomplish under socialist and democratic auspices what Napoleon, the Kaiser, and Hitler tried to do—and what DeGaulle dreamed of doing—under capitalist auspices.

For the present leaders of the Soviet Union, Eurocommunism represents another huge step toward the end of its hegemony over the world communist movement. Probably of more serious concern, Eurocommunism by its example seems to them to pose a threat to their own power

at home and to Soviet security in Eastern Europe.

The Soviet leadership has chosen to counter-attack "from the left" by accusing Carrillo of renouncing armed revolution, of abandoning socialist internationalism, and of indulging in attacks on the Soviet Union "in terms that even the most reactionary writers do not often venture to use."

But, in fact, the Soviets for well over a generation have not been noted as advocates of armed revolution in western Europe; the Spanish Communists are no strangers to armed and illegal struggle; they consult regularly with other communist parties; and they see the Soviet Union as a socialist society, though they believe that because it was the first country that "eliminated capitalism," and for many specific historical reasons, it represents an underdeveloped form of socialism.

Not a model.

We, too, view the Soviet Union as a socialist society, but not as the model of socialism, and we think the Soviet Union has a long way to go in fulfilling socialist principles of democracy, liberty and equality.

In world affairs, the Soviet Union has strongly supported liberation struggles and revolutionary movements—most notably and recently in Vietnam, Cuba, and Africa. There is no substantial evidence for a view of the Soviet Union as a war-mongering or belligerent state. Its military posture and deployment has been with good reason, and continues to be, defensive and deterrent. In disarmament negotiations it has generally been the American government, most recently the Carter administration in the SALT talks, that has been dishonest and obstructionist, whether in defense of the corporate economy or for broader strategic reasons.

Socialists throughout the world are more mature and sophisticated from the experiences and struggles of the past several decades. The strength of the Soviet Union no longer makes it necessary for blind defense—if it ever was necessary. There is nothing inconsistent in viewing positively the Soviet role in world affairs and the progressive aspects of its economy, while strongly criticizing wrong or unwarranted acts in international affairs and its failure to move toward a fully democratic society—one in which genuine achievements in the economic and social spheres could be matched and strengthened by political democracy.

Growing in rich array.

The growing diversity of communist and socialist parties rooted ever more deeply in their respective working classes and national conditions, can only strengthen a real socialist internationalism based on mutual respect and equality. It can only enrich the thought and practice of world socialism through the honest exchange of advice, experiences, and differences.

The Soviet communists should be proud, not fearful, in seeing socialism growing among the nations in rich array. The conformism of the past was never a real socialist internationalism nor a real and effective unity. Diversity in the common commitment to ending world capitalism and building socialist democracy in varied forms, is the path to an enduring unity and a real socialist internationalism.

We are, we believe, at the dawn of a world-wide socialist renaissance. Too many of us American socialists are oversleeping. It's time for us to rise to the duty of relating socialist and democratic principles to our own people's political, social, and economic conditions, rather than mimicking other people's yesterdays, and add an American hue to the world socialist rainbow.

The morality of inequality

The following is an excerpt from President Carter's press conference of Tuesday, July 12:

Q: Mr. President, how comfortable are you with the recent Supreme Court decision that says the federal government is not obligated to provide money for abortions for women who cannot afford to pay for them themselves?

A: I do not think that the federal government [or the states] should finance abortions except when the woman's life is threatened or when the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest.

Q: Well then, how fair do you believe it is...that women who can afford to get an abortion can go ahead and have one and women who cannot afford to are precluded from this?

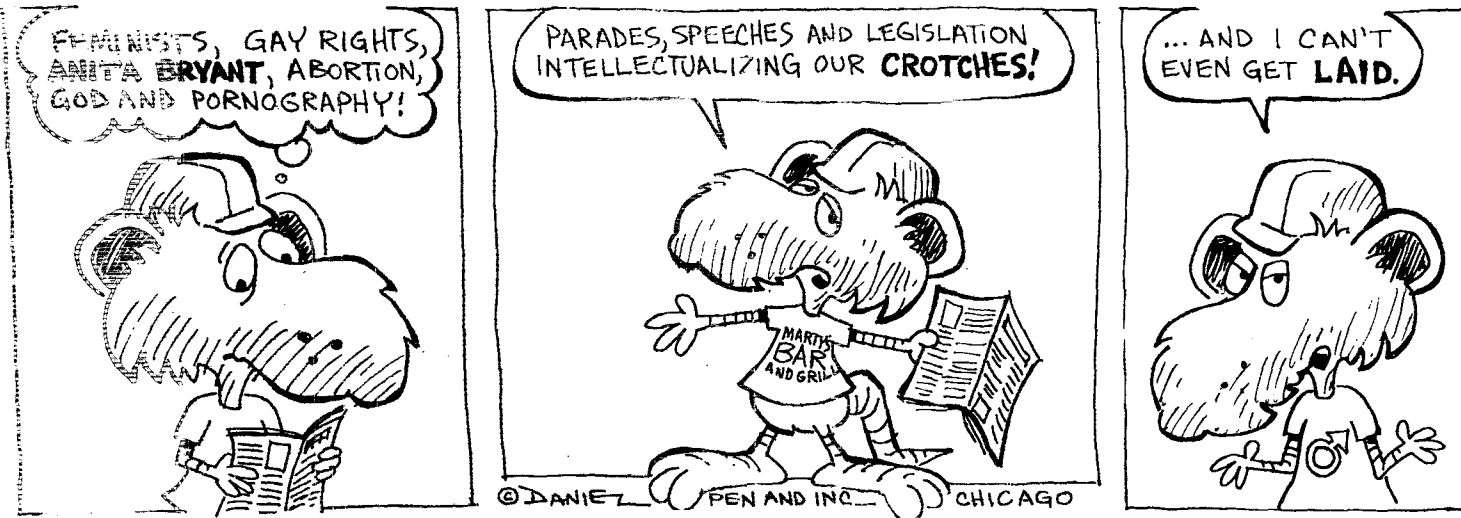
A: Well, as you know there are many things in life that are not fair, that wealthy

people can afford and poor people can't. But I don't believe that the federal government should take action to try to make these opportunities exactly equal, particularly when there is a moral factor involved.

Editor's Note: Or, as Justice Harry A. Blackman said in his dissenting opinion: "For the individual woman concerned, indigent and financially helpless, ... the result is punitive and tragic. Implicit in the court's holdings is the condescension that she may go elsewhere for her abortion. I find that disingenuous and alarming, almost reminiscent of 'let them eat cake'."

Inequality builds character. The Carter Doctrine Saves—the illicit private abortion market, and votes for the next election. Very moral.

THE FACTORY WITH RATSUS



Letters

Likes our Spanish coverage

Editor:

Having, tried for the last four years to do what we could to support the democratic opposition in Spain, we compliment you on the article on Spain (ITT, June 13).

—Wm W. Schmidt
U.S. Committee
for a Democratic
Spain, New York

Advice from the bench

Editor:

ITT deserves credit for trying to analyze the Eurocommunists, while the Guardian and others simply write them off as "revisionist." A recent column by Joseph Kraft provides much food for thought on the subject.

In the Chicago Sun Times (June 25), Kraft reported on his talks with French President Giscard. Kraft and Giscard both want to keep the communists out of the government. Kraft criticizes President Carter for starting informal talks with the French Communist leaders. He says "it hardly becomes Washington to give up on the struggle to keep the Communists out of government in Western Europe."

On one hand, such language contradicts the "revisionist" theory. According to this theory, the capitalists want the communists in the government. The communists have supposedly given up the goal of socialism and will use their "left image" to keep the workers in line.

On the other hand, Kraft's observations should cause socialists to be watchful and critical of an exclusively parliamentary strategy. "As President, moreover, Giscard retains the right to dissolve parliament. He made it plain to me that he would not scruple to use that right if the left-wing won the parliamentary elections." Let us hope that the French Communists and Socialists will look up a second string to their bow.

—Marty Wheeler
Oak Park, Ill.

The Post Office at work

Editor:

I became interested in your paper while reading it at the Post Office here where I work on the night shift.

I like your wide range of reporting, including the book reviews. Best of luck and strength. Enclosed is \$15 for a year's subscription.

—Steve Melaw
Toronto, Ont.

Gays don't threaten family

Editor:

About John Judis' (ITT's Eric Severid) July 6 column, "Feeble family fuels anti-gay support":

Judis was right to try to account for the failure of the human-rights oriented strategy in Dade County Florida, but anti-gay feeling is caused by more than just a "threatened family backlash." Homophobia, like racism, is remarkably stable through economic vicissitudes, though laws can change.

Judis says that "In stressing the disadvantages of family life, feminists gave the gay movement a rationale for seeing homosexuality and heterosexuality as equally viable." I—we—didn't need a rationale. And neither did the post-Stonewall gay movement, although the feminist resurgence helped the movement in many other ways. I suspect Judis is falling into the trap laid by Save Our Children: he seems to believe that the new gay movement (and the women's movement) is inimical to the Family. Most gay or feminist goals in no way threaten what is valid in the family. And perhaps if any point has to be made in a successful anti-Save Our Children Strategy, this one does.

Other strategic necessities may be: fighting referenda. Very few people I know, gay or not gay, believe that Americans would pass gay rights bills, just as it is unlikely that Third World or women's rights would stand up to referenda. The courts could be pressured to use their precedent not to revoke rights previously given, but we can't count on this. And we have few enough previously given rights. But there is certainly more to be said about strategy.

—Jeff Weinstein
New York City

[Judis replies: Gay liberation is a threat to the idea of the family as the basic and universal form of social organization, which is why SOC feels threatened by the movement. Whether or not it is a threat to "what is valid" in the family is another question entirely. Since gay oppression, or homophobia, has existed for thousands of years, gays also needed something more than a gay bar being raided (Stonewall) for the movement to arise. It needed a "rationale" or "legitimacy" in its own eyes, which it did not have previously. The women's movement provided it.]

Boycott Florida citrus?

Editor:

To do Anita Bryant a disservice, write to the Florida Citrus Growers' Association (P.O. Box 148, 1115 E. Memorial Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33802) mentioning her offensive statements, your belief in gay civil rights, and your intention to boycott their fruit juice until the Growers' Assn. stops funding her unholy crusade.

If we can get the Growers' Assn. to dump Anita it will chip away at her credibility with the silent (but voting) major-

ity by showing that there are sizeable doubts about her.

Remember that even with as powerful a voice as Sen. Joseph McCarthy's it was the little doubts that finally lightened his load. 1957 is not that long ago, and timing is everything.

—Robert E. Gries
Menlo Park, Calif.

Emma no socialist

Editor:

Don't you think it is carrying things a little too far to describe Emma Goldman as "an American socialist" (and in the same sentence as David Dubinsky yet)? (ITT, July 6.) I suppose your response will be more articles by Bernard Moss on Spain.

—Ralph Goldberg
Atlanta, Ga.

[Eds. note: Apologies to Goldberg and Goldman. Emma was an anarchist and no socialist. Dubinsky was a cold war liberal. Even so, we hope to have more articles by Moss on Spain.]

New American Movement

Editor:

An unfortunate division exists today in the non-sectarian left. There are those committed to socialist organization, discussion and agitation. And then, there are scores of leftists involved in organizing unions, communities, campuses, issue groups and electoral politics who have no organizational means to link their work to socialism.

The New American Movement has survived and grown in the '70s by attempting to bridge this gap between socialist perspective and presence and work in the mass movements in their present forms.

The theme of NAM's national convention this year, "Mass Organizing and Socialist Strategy," addresses this issue directly. We invite readers of IN THESE TIMES to attend and participate. It will be held August 11-14, 15 Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The convention will feature plenaries and workshops on the urban crisis; energy and the economy; women's liberation; Eurocommunism; health care; community organizing; the labor movement; campus organizing and many others.

Among the participants will be Roberta Lynch, Dorothy Healey, Barbara Ehrenreich, Stanley Aronowitz, Harry Boyte, Ken Cockrel, Julia Reichert, Max Gordon, Holly Near and Stella Nowicki.

For further information write NAM, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, or call (312) 252-7151.

—Nick Rabkin
Organizational Secretary
New American Movement

The radical rank and file

Editor:

Your response to Arthur Kinoy in the "Dialog" column (ITT, July 13) clearly pinpointed your position and my antagonism to it. While you suggest that the "continuing weakness of the American left...is related to its failure to comprehend and take seriously the nature of our own political system," you nowhere demonstrate a comprehension of the social and economic tensions within our political system that compel socialists to pursue something other than an electoral strategy for revolutionary change in the U.S.

Your editorial and many of your stories imply that the real work for socialists is defined by a somewhat vague "crisis of realignment" occurring within the two-party system. Nowhere have you presented an analysis of the economic constraints, i.e. transition from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism, on your sense of a political shift and how a socialist strategy would consider the crucial differences outlined by Andre Gorz between reformist reforms (those that facilitate the further development of the system) and structural reforms (those that facilitate the development of people's power).

Your citation of the realism of the European left does not represent a comprehension of the extra-parliamentary left movements in Europe that have generated more advanced forms of struggle, while highlighting the dangerous contradictions of political realities like the "historic compromise." (On this point, you have apparently overlooked the excellent articles by Diana Johnstone on the Italian situation in your abstract references to the "growing power of the Western European left.")

Finally, your reference to the various socialist parties in the U.S. neglects the role of radical rank-and-file movements (as opposed to those established trade unions and their leaders who you constantly play upon in your stories) from the IWW to the early CIO in developing arenas of struggle where consciousness about socialism was raised. In short, you fail to take seriously the nature of our own political system measured against the seriousness of socialist revolution in these times.

—Fran Shor
Detroit

Corrections:

● The review of *Through the Walls* (IN THESE TIMES, July 6) was written by Jeffrey Gillenkirch. Embarrassed apologies for the scrambling of his name in the credits.

● Francis Ward was the author of the article on the retirement of Roy Wilkins as the head of the NAACP that appeared last week. His name was inadvertently dropped.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.