

Barbara Ehrenreich

Ehrenreich's Corner

You are what you don't eat

When a friend first called to tell me about the end of the grape and lettuce boycott, I of course shrugged off the news. "Another trick from the Gallo gang," I told her. "Go back to Romaine until you hear it straight from Chavez." And I went back to reading the paper. If the boycott was really over, there'd probably be a special supplement on salad ideas for iceberg wedges or cooking with Gallo—or at least picture spreads of pandemonium at the produce stands.

But no, there was only a two-inch brief somewhere around page 10: The United Farm Workers had announced the end of the boycott. Adding insult to astonishment, there was a quote from an industry spokesman to the effect that the growers wouldn't even have known there was a boycott if Chavez hadn't announced its termination.

Obviously the growers had never met my kids. For example, last Christmas we were winding up an extended (in every sense) family dinner at a relative's house. The adults were still sitting around the table burping, and the children were skirmishing in the living room, when my daughter walked up to me with a look of solemn horror on her face. "Look, mommy," she said, opening her fist. "It's a grape."

"That's what it is alright," I whispered, squishing it discretely in my napkin. "We'll talk about it later in the car."

Maybe every kind of faith needs some sort of dietary laws, just as a way of passing on the teachings to the young. My children have never known the Lenten penance of tuna fish casserole or the Orthodox prohibition on ham and cheese sandwiches. But they knew about grapes and lettuce. And they knew that somewhere beyond the sumptuous, Muzak-filled supermarket were fields where other little children missed school to stoop and pick, breathe insecticides, go home at night to barrack-style company



"I have to confess I never did boycott the wine."

houses. Eating a grape would be a political act—an act that in a seven-year-old's political universe would place you on the side of rich people against poor, bad against good, and those who don't care about kids against those who do.

So I thought we ought to mark the passing of the boycott with a bit of ceremony. Maybe, I thought, the growers would even notice the little upward sales blip as I checked out of the supermarket with three heads of iceberg lettuce and a pound of grapes.

The kids were puzzled. "How do you cook the iceberg lettuce?" the five-year-old asked. "Well, I had it in a restaurant once," a bigger kid offered. "And I think you soak it overnight in lukewarm water and serve it with a mixture of mayonnaise and sugar." "How about the grapes," a kid wanted to know. "Can you eat the peels?"

Then came the hardest question of all: "Does this mean the farm workers won?"

"Hmm," I evaded. "They won some things. Yes. Then they got tired of running the boycott I guess. Unions have lots of things to do, you know. Like they have to manage the contracts."

"What's a contract?"

"That's an agreement that the union makes with the bosses that the workers will do their work and the bosses will pay them a certain amount of money."

"I didn't know they agreed on anything," says my daughter, who will either be a brilliant lawyer someday or a first-class nit-picker. "I thought they were mad at each other."

The point is that kids take boycotts very seriously. It's one of the ways they learn about strikes and dictatorships and other things that never show up in the second grade curriculum. So, even without grapes and lettuce to talk about, I'll continue to use the weekly shopping trip as a guided tour of corporate capitalism:

"Nestle's Kwik?" "I already explained

how Nestle's tries to trick poor mommies into buying their brand of baby formula instead of nursing them. ...No, of course the babies don't drink chocolate milk... Nestle's is a big company and it makes lots of things and they don't care whether they're good for kids or not... Couldn't we just get this Hersheys?"

"Tuna fish? But when they catch the tuna they get some dolphins who happen to be swimming around the tuna and we read in your book how if there's a sick dolphin the other dolphins will help him. ...Yeah, I mean him or her... Plus which some scientists say they can talk. I mean they're like people and how would you feel about eating a chunk of one in your tuna salad?"

"Wonder Bread? Remember what happened in Chile with those bad guys taking over everything and killing so many people, especially the poor people—well, the company that makes Wonder Bread is on the side of those bad guys and helped pay them to take over. I wouldn't touch anything they make—not even the Beefsteak Rye."

"Orange juice? Yeah, I know we've always had it. But we talked about this already how the orange juice companies are against gay people... That's right, women who especially love women and men who especially love men. It's like being against love. So what do you say we get this apple juice and pop a few vitamin C pills now and then."

For all I know the corporations couldn't care less, but every parent needs some nutritional principles to go by. Some mothers ban hot dogs and go for the brown rice and granola. I'll continue to shop by the boycotts. What better way for a kid to learn about capitalism and imperialism and heterosexism than at the dinner table? Better to have known about the grape pickers all these years than to have experienced a grape.

You are what you eat.

Ethel Taylor

SALT talks don't end armaments they maintain a balance of terror

I have great reservations about the whole area of arms control/limitation. I do not see it as steps to disarmament—I see SALT II as a codification of the arms race. I told this to Paul Warnke and he replied that he had always thought this was so. (Of course, now in his position he can no longer think this is so.)

We have wasted too many years increasing weaponry in order to negotiate from strength and we can't waste any more. If it's disarmament we want—then it's disarmament we should be working for.

As far back as 1971, I.F. Stone, responding to Nixon's gleeful statement that SALT encourages "bargaining chips," said—"Thus the SALT Talks continue to serve as a cover for an intensified arms race. Arms control negotiations have become the Pentagon's chief weapon in disarming the movement against the arms race."

In *Science* magazine of Aug. 2, 1977, George Kistiakowsky and Herbert York said this about SALT—"This numerical SALT Agreement does not really restrict the arms race; it merely channels it into such directions as each side perceives to be militarily most advantageous."

On a news broadcast not long ago, Walter Cronkite announced that a breakthrough had taken place in U.S.-USSR discussions. The Russians had agreed not to insist upon the limited range for our cruise missile but would agree to up to 1,300 miles range. The administration

felt that the Soviet Union is easing its opposition because they are developing a cruise missile and do not want its range to be limited by us. A gentlemen's agreement?

The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency lists in its primer what Arms Control is. Included in the list is the following description—"Arms Control may favor some advances in weapon technology, such as those that make missiles less prone to accidental launching and less vulnerable to surprise attack because these advances would make for a more stable deterrent force." So—Arms Control can mean production of the MX Mobile Missile!

Samuel H. Day Jr., in his final editorial in the *Bulletin of Atomic Science*, December 1977, said, "It is my hope that the *Bulletin* will continue to play its part by finding imaginative ways of scaring the hell out of people...and will continue to probe the underlying societal problems which propel the world toward nuclear oblivion. One of them is the sidetracking of disarmament efforts in 'Arms Control' programs which have served only to bring legitimacy, order and a measure of predictability to the international arms race while lulling the public into a false sense of security. Arms control has proven in practice to be the virtual opposite of disarmament."

No concept has been more central to SALT negotiations than that of the bar-

gaining chip—the idea that the development of new weapons systems may stimulate an agreement. President Nixon and Laird argued that success of SALT I was a direct result of the decision to go ahead with Safeguard ABM, the Poseidon submarine and Minuteman III. They insisted that any subsequent success in SALT II would depend on whether Congress would approve a new set of bargaining chips such as the Trident submarine, the B-1 Bomber or the cruise missile.

Jimmy Carter, during his campaign, stated that a bargaining chip policy was not a "viable procedure and as a general principle was a foolish approach." But with the failure to reach an immediate SALT II agreement with the Soviets last March, Carter warned that he would be forced to consider acceleration of American weapons development, if he judged the Soviets were no longer negotiating in good faith.

MIRV was our bargaining chip and now the Russians have it and so it goes with the cruise missile. Can this be called arms limitation?

William Epstein, formerly the director of the Disarmament Division of the UN, said in the *Bulletin of Atomic Science*, June 1977, "The SALT agreements put no limitation or restriction on the technological or qualitative ceilings for offensive nuclear weapons. Each side is now engaged in a technological race for maximum improvement or perfection of its

deterrent. And so the nuclear race is proceeding apace and moving in the direction of infinite killing power whereas the purpose of strategic arms limitation negotiations should be to move in the direction of zero killing power."

If SALT II is not moving in the direction of "zero killing power" and is moving in the direction of "infinite killing power"—how can we support it? I don't find it a valid reason to be told that the arms control agreements *do not control*. I believe we have to create a third position and not be co-opted into one side or another so we can tell it as it is. I'm aware that many groups are supporting SALT II, but Women Strike for Peace (WSP) has never hesitated to expose the Emperor as a flasher and I don't think we should now. I think our job is to tell the people what SALT is not and what it should be.

We rejected "Negotiate Now" during the war—we were consistent in our demand for "Out Now." Remember when we were asked how we could get "Out Now"—we answered "By ship!" If we are asked how we can possibly get disarmament, we answer—"By starting on it!"

Ethel Taylor is a national coordinator of Women Strike for Peace and a commissioner of the International Women's Conference (Houston). This column first appeared in La Wisp, February 1978, the Monthly News Bulletin of Southern California WSP.

PERSPECTIVES

□ FOR A NEW AMERICA □

Democracy's defense means capitalism's end

By Herman Rosenstein
and Arthur H. Landis

Independence! Electoral pluralism! Hegemony of the 'historic bloc'! Internationalism! The concepts are an amalgam of the old and the new, as expounded by Sr. Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of Spain's 300,000-member Communist party (PCE). They become united in a clarity that bespeaks both the urgency of our times and the historical lessons learned by those who have dared to think, and *act*, beyond existing dogmas.

These concepts are the strategy for socialism of the Communist parties of Italy and Spain, which stress the achievements and extension of democratic liberties and human rights as a prime requisite in winning electoral mandates—deemed central to the struggle for the total transformation of capitalism.

Carrillo states bluntly that 'Eurocommunist' views of the state in advanced capitalist democracies differ from Lenin's theses of 1917-1918. The reasons: A change in economic structure and the objective expansion of progressive social forces, including the explosive development of the productive forces due to the scientific and technological revolution, including nuclear energy and the advance of socialism, decolonization and the defeat of fascism in World War II.

Breaking with the dogma of smashing the existing military state apparatus and replacing it with a people's militia as the single road to power, Carrillo proposes new tactics. "A prime task for socialists," he argues, "is to reverse the *ideological apparatus* of the State (church, family, media, armed forces, etc.); to turn it—if not wholly, then partly—against the State power of monopoly capital." Among additional proposals is one for "a *continuous public debate* on the role of the forces of public order in a democratic society."

In dealing with the more formidable dogma of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," around which most left criticism

of Eurocommunism is centered, Carrillo takes pains to trace it from inception to application. "The question," he concludes, after having advanced all arguments and strategies for the development of a democratic socialism, "is whether working people in developed capitalist countries can impose their hegemony without resorting to the 'Dictatorship'... We Spanish Communists and other parties declare that this is possible."

"Eurocommunism," according to Carrillo, opts for the democratic road to socialism through a long-term process of coexistence of public and private forms of property. Its prime aim is to socialize the decisive levers of the economy; to guarantee the hegemony of the 'historic bloc,' consisting of the working class, students, intellectuals, professionals, farmers, small business people, and the like.

In Spain, democratic socialism in the first stages means: a redistribution of land with mixed forms, private, cooperative, and collective; free education, free medical care; coexistence of public and private ownership of property; complete social and political democracy—all to be guaranteed by the political hegemony of the aforementioned 'historic bloc,' and leading to a classless, equitable society—i.e. Socialism.

It would appear then that Eurocommunism, more than any previous application of Marxist theory, goes beyond classes in that it dares to presume to base itself upon the people as a whole. In the advanced countries it accepts the challenge of the ballot box with an intrinsic belief in the justice and the appeal of socialist-humanist concepts, as well as the axiom that people, if given the truth, and a way to enforce it, will respond, positively.

To the charge of 'reformism,' Carrillo replies that, "The generations of Marxists who have lived through the grievous experience of fascism and who, in another order of things, have experienced Stalinist degeneration, appraise the concept of

democracy in a different way, and not in opposition to socialism and communism, but as a road toward them and as a main component of them."

He states further that Spain's PCE has not abandoned its vanguard role—"but no longer regards itself as the only representative of the working class... The Marxist method," he writes, "is not our exclusive property... The role of vanguard is not a privilege derived from a name or program. It is a position to be earned every day and every hour." All situations, he tells us, must be dealt with "on the basis of a concrete analysis of a concrete reality!"

And, lest there be doubts as to the resolve of Carrillo and the PCE in the face of a constant peril from the right, he states simply that, "We think that if—in a majority government—there is an attempt by force from reactionary quarters, then one must respond with force and, of course, must be prepared for that moment."

In reply to the charge that 'human rights' and democracy are products of capitalism while, conversely, socialism equals Soviet domination, Carrillo has this to say:

"Eurocommunism must overcome this dilemma, and raise the question of democracy and socialism to its appropriate historic level." It must "demonstrate that democracy is not only not consubstantial with capitalism, but that its defense and development require the overthrow of that social system..."

"Eurocommunism must also demonstrate that a victory of the social forces of Western Europe will not augment Soviet State power in the slightest, nor will it imply the spread of the Soviet model of a single party. It will be an independent experience with a more evolved socialism having a positive influence on the democratic evolution of the kinds of socialism that exist today."

Above all else, Eurocommunism is no phenomenon of the moment. Its substance has always been a part of Western thinking. In his chapter: "The Historic Roots of Eurocommunism," Carrillo takes the lid off the box, suggesting, for example, that the concept of the Popular Front was the independent creation of the Spanish and French parties. French Communist differences with the monolith of the Comintern were basic to the

question of whether the French CP should participate in the government it had been instrumental in creating in the 1930s. The Comintern said no, thereby hamstringing the French CP's potential throughout the length of the Spanish struggle, the critical period of Munich, and the eve of World War II.

Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the British CP, defined WWII as an anti-fascist war from the first moments. The Comintern defined it as an imperialist war—until the Soviet Union itself was attacked. Pollitt lost his job.

In the post-war '50s, immediately following the apostasy of Yugoslavia choosing the road of independence, the English, still unbowed, devised a program with a transition to socialism in conditions of democracy. *Nyet!*

And, though Carrillo doesn't mention it, the CPUSA was also confronted at the time by Eugene Dennis and others of the Central Committee who projected the idea of replacing the party with a United Mass Party of Socialism whose doctrinal basis would necessarily have been broader than the existent apparatus. *Nyet!* was the word from the USSR, through Jacques Duclos of the French CP, and thousands who had dreamed of a party based upon American realities left the party, never to return.

The book is rich in exactly the kind of data that should have been made public over the years. It was not Comintern hegemony that prevented any open dialogue. Centralism was both the excuse and the weapon for the cover-up of a multitude of sins.

The aftermath of WWII, Stalin's death, the 20th Congress and Krushchev's "revelations," the apostasy of Tito, the risings in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the schisms in western parties as a reaction to Soviet interference all forced a reexamination of the Soviet political system.

Eurocommunism is one result. A return to the logic of dialogue and discussion, a return to socialist sanity. Carrillo's book just might be the Marxist primer for the '70s. No one who presumes to speak for socialism should be without it. Indeed, as time will surely prove, if there is to be a future this book will forge a part of it.

Carrillo himself sums it up. "The question that confronts the Marxist revolutionaries of the '70s," he writes, "is this: Shall we tackle our tasks in order to develop the socialist revolution, making it worldwide, with a scientific criterion, on the basis of a concrete analysis of concrete reality, or shall we tackle them with ideological oversimplification, with an intellectual laziness comparable with that of those people who repeat elsewhere: 'God made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh'?"

Herman Rosenstein and Arthur H. Landis are both veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Manure

Continued from page 24.

On a dairy in Lafayette, Colo., Bio-Gas decided a methane digester didn't make financial sense yet, however. The 400-milker farm was able to get cheaper (interstate) natural gas than the Clovis farmer, who was buying intrastate gas.

A 6,000 gallon tank mounted on the methane powered truck was designed to handle the dairy's wastes. The tank was able to produce enough gas to power the operation, but it would have taken 20 years to pay for itself in natural gas saved. To be considered a good investment the payback period would have to shrink to ten years, Varani says.

Varani has concluded that digesters make sense for people using propane or intrastate natural gas—but not interstate gas, unless the price continues to climb. If someone wanted to build a digester himself, however, costs could be cut by one-half and even the interstate gas customer would profit by switching to the generation of his own gas.

Varani freely admits the Bio-Gas had trouble with the truck. They built a "portable swamp" and nature did not want this as a portable process," he says.

At each stop on the truck's tour, technicians discovered that the vibrations of travel had plugged up pipes in the system. To the amusement of townspeople all over the Southwest, when they tried to take the pipes apart, they were showered by manure.

"It's worse than a dam breaking because you know what's behind it—manure," Varani says.

Despite problems, the truck was an overall success. "You can drive down the road, put in some manure, and it will keep on generating," Varani says.

This year the truck is spending a sedentary summer "feeding algae" with the fertilizer it produces at a research lab 40 miles south of Albuquerque.

The truck is a big research step beyond the 55 gallon drum Bio-Gas first held up to financiers. Now the firm has even more to show—a 400 gallon "pilot plant" at its office and lab and the digester it designed to heat a large commercial greenhouse now under construction in Cheyenne, Wyo.

But the firm's main interest this year is the Lamar power plant. The town, with a population of approximately 7,500, has 40,000 cows at or near the city limits. It has manure available at \$1.50 a ton and a manure-hauling industry already established that could take on the task of haul-

ing wastes from the methane digester back to the farmers' fields.

Lamar's power plant, run by the Arkansas Valley Power Authority, has a once-through cooling system that produces 110 degree water at the rate of 15,000 gallons per minute. Now they pour that water back into the river. Varani sees the water as "a perfect heat source for the digester," taking obvious delight in the technological neatness of the scheme.

"Suddenly instead of buying coal from you in Wyoming, Lamar is finding fuel in their backyards. And the money for that fuel goes to their neighbor—the guy

Solution to last week's puzzle:

A	B	E	T	S	S	M	U	T	A	U	S	T
L	A	T	H	E	D	A	R	Y	I	S	E	E
F	A	R	A	N	D	W	I	D	E	A	S	T
S	L	E	E	R	E	D	S	E	N	O	R	S
L	I	S	T	E	N	R	E	B				
D	S	M	S	O	N	E	A	O	A	S	S	
R	I	A	L	S								
B	O	N	N	E	T	S						
S	I	G	N									
H	T	S										
O	A	R										
H	O	U	S	E	S							
I	N	T	H	E	D	A	W	N	S	L	I	G
R	E	T	E									
E	R	O	S									

who owns the feedlot—who spends it in town."

"This is self-sufficiency on a city-wide level. I'm really happy with the concept," he says.

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