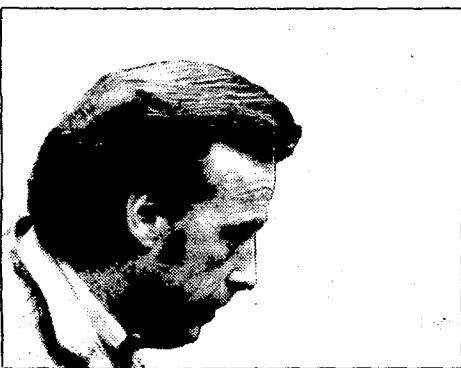


HANS KONING

American Arrogance: When will it ever end?

WE LIVE IN FAST AND faddy times. We have brief flirtations with new and unused attitudes and countries, but as a rule we quickly return to our traditional emotional starting points or as near to them as makes little difference. World events or rather the way in which these are reported and interpreted, help us to the snug feeling that we aren't so bad after all, are in fact the nearest to perfection among very imperfect nations.

Thus that slight and only spotty moral hangover from our ten years of war in and on Indochina was conveniently chased by the discovery that after our departure the natives went on fighting their own wars. The uncomfortable realization that our Shah wasn't considered as much of a prince by his own people as by us, is cured by the reports of the drumhead trials there which show us that those Iranians make a benighted country anyway. (In the self-same way the Havana trials twenty years ago helped us get rid of the worrisome idea that Castro was a better man than our Cuban Shah, Batista).



Our vague guilt about the misery of the Third World in general seems to have got lost by the wayside when crude oil went over \$14 the barrel, and that North-South dialogue we heard so much of has once more changed into the monologue of our self-righteousness. In New York, Freedom House (a non-profit organization, naturally) is listing the countries of the world on how free they are, that is to say, how much like us, and is flunking most of them.

As we restart our now semi-permanent election campaigns, the vote-getting ticket is reportedly going to be, let's be tougher, in fact let's be heroic, with the ginks and gooks of this world who deserve all they

get. Columnist Joseph Kraft informs us that the leaders of the advanced nations are too weak for our good because they listen to too many opinions, and William Pfaff invites Asians to visit Switzerland for a salutary lesson on how to shape up.

In fact, we once more measure the wide world with our own standards, and with sublime if not criminal arrogance, with that hubris that may doom people and peoples, we forget not only that those standards are somewhat motley, but also that we reached them (such as they are) after centuries of atrocities and greed perpetrated against that greater part of the world we now so coolly sit in judgment upon.

Starting with our primal hero Columbus who drove whole nations of Caribbeans to suicide and strung up the Arawak Indians over slow fires in rows of thirteen (this in honor of Christ and his twelve apostles) down to General Westmoreland who if he didn't get Indochina quite back into the Stone Age cannot be faulted for not trying, we—the western christian civilization of which we are heir, part, and now leader—have through history seldom shown either mercy or decency except when it didn't cost us anything.

In the Congo (now Zaire) the crimes of King Leopold I of democratic little Belgium easily match those of Pol Pot, and the number of Leopold's victims in his need for more and more rubber is said to have reached ten million. Parliamentary, free, Britain built much of her industry on the capital from the Liverpool slave trade, systematically destroyed the textile factories of Bengal, and created a series of famines there right up to the year 1943.

France, bulwark of humanistic life and thought, had tens of thousands of Algeri-

ans shot when they rose up in 1945 and killed a million of them in the ensuing war of independence—this, by the way, after the Allies had just liberated France from the German occupation, an event that led to the executions or lynchings of thousands of French collaborators by their countrymen.

The lesser breeds and creeds on this planet, now more politely called the Third World, are assuredly not better than we are. They can match us nicely in cruelty and greed, though not in the logic, iron determination and, of late, subtlety, with which we bring these to bear. That we gave them modern medicine and more recently television and computers, does not change the reality of history: They didn't descend upon us but we on them, and we destroyed, and if we have the chance and the need, go on destroying, their social fabric.

And as those poor ignorant heathen, or fanatical Moslems, superstitious Buddhists, or crass Materialists, tottering from centuries of exploitation, try to pull themselves together, try to shake off the various tyrants foisted on them by us or by contagions from their diseased past, as they try to shape a history of their own after a centuries' long blackout, we are greatly perturbed that they don't seem to have our spotless systems of justice and democracy at the ready.

And we wonder, do they really want to do whatever they're doing or did Moscow maybe put them up to it and shouldn't we in that case send in the troops and restore stability? But if we don't, why can't they at least for Chrissakes go to Switzerland and learn how to run a country? ■

Hans Koning is a New York writer. His latest novel, America Made Me, is due for publication this fall.

GOLDSMITH, WEISS, & WILMOTH

Socialism comes at last to urban planning in U.S.

WITHIN THE COMING YEAR A NEW ITEM MAY BE added to the socialist lexicon: an organization of socialist planners. The decision to form such an organization was made at a conference on radical planning theory and practice held at Cornell University on April 26-29. Attended by 280 academics, planning students, professional planners, and community activists, the conference voted unanimously to work toward the formation of an ongoing, left-wing planners' organization. The choice planners face between regressive streamlining and progressive provision of services to meet social needs has come up frequently in the history of American planning.

Who are "planners" in the American context? Generally they are people with backgrounds in economics, law, architecture, engineering, social work, public administration, public health, and other fields. They draw up plans, regulations, and evaluations for land-use controls and real estate development, for environmental protection, housing, neighborhood organization, and health care administration. They also plan regional development, tourism and transportation.

In the past planners have been concerned primarily with physical and technical problems of the community, but in recent years political and social issues have become more important. At the same time a growing minority of planners have become aware of the need for programs and organizing strategies which support the struggles of working people, women, and minorities so that their economic and social needs can be met.

Historically, planning has served mostly to benefit local, regional, and national business groups. It began in the late 19th century in the U.S., in response to mushrooming urban problems, as part of a larger movement to reform city governments and take graft out of the hands of city hall, and in reaction to the publicity

Jacob Riis gave to slums and urban decay. Early city planning was also influenced by the Beaux Arts atmosphere that surrounded the Chicago Exposition of 1899. The early dominant figures in planning for over half a century were interested in cleaning, beautifying and rationalizing American cities.

This kind of planning, this view of the city as a physical mechanism with mechanical needs, was best suited to benefit downtown merchants, land developers, auto makers, and the construction industry. The best example of this planning was the dismantling of literally scores of profitable and popular municipal street-car systems, making way for the more profitable motor vehicle industries.

The market-serving nature of planning, through massive subsidies for highway construction, suburbanization of industry and housing, and renewal of downtown business property, has been constant ever since. With the advertised recession that is expected shortly, planners will be called upon even more to forge weapons to serve private interests, to protect property and privileged neighborhoods.

Sponsorship by powerful corporate interests has meant that policies such as urban renewal often are harmful to the interests of less advantaged groups in the society. Planners wishing to assist these people in meeting their needs have found it difficult to do so within the established

professional structures and have moved to work more actively with the community to build political pressure and alternative centers of power.

During the 1960s and the great upheaval in our nation's ghetto communities, progressive city planners urged their colleagues to resist the large financial interests that dominate urban development, and instead become advocates for the oppressed. Local groups, often staffed by "advocate planners" who either diverted time away from city hall or found federal funds available to neighborhoods, sprang up in cities to fight against housing demolition, highway construction, and inadequate programs for residential relocation. At the national level, met largely with hostility or stony silence, the progressives walked out of an American Institute of Planners convention in the mid-60s and formed an organization called Planners for Equal Opportunity. PEO officially disbanded in 1976, but many of its members participated in the formation of a new group, the Planners Network, in the summer of 1975.

A small conference at Rutgers University in 1977 was followed a year later by a somewhat larger gathering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. At VPI the participants became enthusiastic about the prospect of building a broader base among radical planners. Their efforts in organizing the 1979 conference succeeded in attracting four times as many

people to Cornell.

The theme of the Cornell conference was emerging citizen/labor coalitions and progressive planning roles in the context of budget cutbacks and rising inflation and unemployment. This stimulated a great deal of discussion about what could be done to fight the "cutback planning" trend and support the growth of left and socialist alternatives.

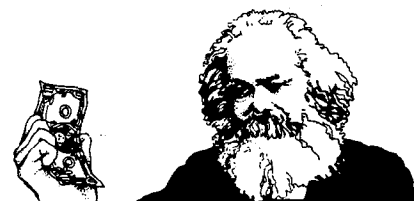
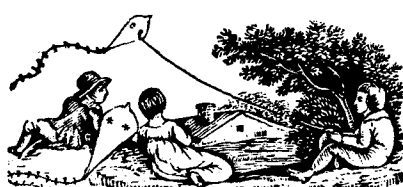
Cornell conferees concluded that one solution was to form an organization, with a strong commitment to participation by women and non-white planning activists, to pool our skills and enhance our ability to conduct educational work and link up with community services. Both within the universities and within the ranks of the various professional associations, they will attempt to broaden our base and increase their numbers by offering planners a concrete, practical alternative to planning within the constraints and guidelines set by corporate domination.

For more information, contact Chester Hartman, 360 Elizabeth Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, or William Goldsmith, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

William W. Goldsmith is professor of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. Marc Weiss and David Wilmoth are members of the National Urban Policy Collective at Berkeley, California.

SUMMER VACATION!

In These Times will not publish the last week of July and the first week in August. Our issue dated July 18-24 will be followed by the issue dated August 8-14.



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MODERN TIMES
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PERSPECTIVES

New era for socialism: beyond double standard

By Bogdan Denitch

THE ATTEMPT TO RECONSTITUTE A BROAD DEMOCRATIC socialist movement in the United States occurs under peculiar circumstances. The fragments of the previous old and new left movements still remain, with the political heritage they bring to contemporary politics. Broadly speaking, the most significant old left formation in the United States since the 1930's has been the Communist Party-USA, which at its peak organized over 120,000 members in its ranks and held sway over a variety of organizations involving perhaps as many as a million members. It was also by far the most significant organized explicitly radical organization operating within the American trade union movement.

Compared with the CP, the other organizations since World War II have not grown beyond the size of a sect although some, like the Socialist Party USA, had historic claims to being the representative of the broad democratic left. At no point since World War II did any non-CP socialist organization reach as many as 10,000 members.

The effect of this relationship of forces was to make the CP and its periphery the most massive source of recruitment for all progressive and radical activities in the years after World War II, and for the CP heritage, sometimes in attenuated form, to be the most significant usable past available to new activists in the student anti-war movement.

Of course, by the time the new left developed, the CP was organizationally shattered, and while retaining the largest of the organizations, was merely a shadow of its old self. Nevertheless, it had left behind a tradition and certain norms with which, in one way or another, some kind of a reckoning had to be made.

Archaic fascination

A part of this heritage consisted of a hostility to the social democracies in advanced countries and a general unfocused sympathy with various Third World regimes that claim to be socialist. This sentiment continues to be present today even among those new left activists who have nothing in common with the CP and who are quite critical of the practice and reality of Soviet-style socialism. Somehow it is as if the "real" socialism and the "real" parties are those which come out of the Communist tradition, while the parties of the Socialist International are almost beyond the pale.

This can be seen in the preoccupation of much of the American left with internal disputes within the Communist movement, the fascination with Eurocommunism combined with the mild hostility toward or contempt for European socialism, the repeated searching for a "real" socialist country or experience, ranging as it did from the Soviet Union to Cuba, to China and, for some, even to Cambodia and Albania and North Vietnam, but always within the orbit of the parties and movements that come out of the Leninist tradition (however modified).

Even as broad a journal as **IN THESE TIMES** gives more detailed coverage to the developments within the Communist movements of Europe than to those within the much larger and more significant Socialist parties, and devotes what seems an inordinate amount of attention to the debates between China and Vietnam, and Vietnam and Cambodia.

There is something peculiarly archaic about this fascination because, whatever one's assessment of the situation in the

Third World or Western Europe, it seems reasonably clear that a sentimental preoccupation with or attachment to a Communist past and a Third World present, are both inapplicable to the present strategic problems facing the American Left.

The problem in the United States hardly seems to be one that can be expressed in terms of the old dichotomy between reformist and revolutionary socialism, or for that matter, between one-party regimes calling themselves socialist and advanced welfare states governed by socialist or social democratic parties. One of the burdens that the American left has is precisely this gap between the real possibilities and the desire of many of the remaining activists of the new left.

The basic questions

The question we have to ask is, What would or should a broad democratic socialist movement in the United States look like? What would be its closest organizational and political analogies? What are the political tasks which it would have, and how would it relate to other movements in advanced industrial countries?

My own argument is that, with appropriate modifications flowing from the American political tradition and with a sensitivity to the specific traditions from which many thousands of activists and participants in such a movement would come, that movement in the United States would belong within the framework of the present Socialist International.

This is not to say that it would be uncritical of the failures of social democracy when it dealt with theoretical questions, and that it would not seek to stress themes and demands which are characteristic of left rather than right-wing socialists in Europe, but simply to locate the range of politics and, therefore, sympathies of such a movement within what is broadly conceived of as democratic socialism.

Now, it is true, in specific cases in Europe, that the democratic socialist tradition may well be represented by a Communist party as well as if not better than by the local Socialist Party. I personally regard the Communist parties of Italy and Spain as being democratic mass workers organizations, whose specific historical tradition alone justifies those parties' self-exclusion from the Socialist International.

Socialist International

But, even there, in these exceptional cases, one can note that the Italian Communist trade unions have broken with the Communist international trade union federation and operate as a part of the socialist-dominated Western European trade union grouping. In point of fact, on most matters of general strategy, the Italian and Spanish Communists are indistinguishable from currents which exist within the Socialist International already.

The specific historical experience that leads these parties to maintain an independent existence is in part due to the

special role and regard that those parties have in their own societies, and not to a desire to maintain a separate existence for the sake of positing a movement in competition or as an alternative to the existing parties of the Socialist International. In Spain, for that matter, the stated goal of the CP is to move toward the formation of a Spanish party of labor, which would be affiliated with the Socialist International and which would include both of the present mass workers parties.

The Socialist International and its parties organize at this time the vast majority of the European working class, as well as the vast majority of middle class technicians and young people who regard themselves as socialists. Within that framework are found both right- and left-wing socialist views and, more to the point, it is within that framework that most of the more novel strategic and theoretical analysis is occurring. It is, after all, in those parties, not the CPs, that a socialism based on decentralization, workers control, and an attack on the central state bureaucracies exists.

This fact has been noted not only by traditional apologists for social democracy but in most European countries by groupings, parties and individuals of the revolutionary Marxist left who find the broad, loose and democratic life of the Socialist party far more congenial to internal debate and the development of new strategies than the CPs. The European analog of community activists, feminists, anti-war militants, and fighters for the democratization of the overbureaucratized centralized states, when organized by the left, is found in the Socialist and not the Communist parties.

Old splits obsolete

It is precisely the absence of a tradition of a total world view and a detailed worked-out program within the Socialist parties that is an asset today. To put it in a slightly different way, what makes a party Marxist is not whether or not it has that in its constitution and bylaws, but is

determined by the activities, program and the social base of those parties.

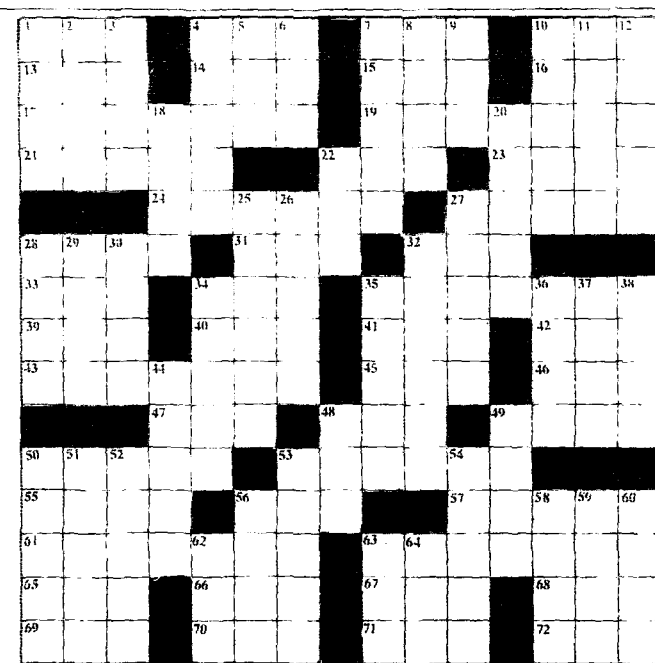
Given the realities of modern industrial societies, the whole issue of reform and revolution has been changed beyond recognition. The present issue within the mass working class parties of Europe is not whether the party calls itself "revolutionary" or "reformist." It is, rather, whether the party is committed to a fundamental transformation, no matter how gradually, of its society and economy to socialism, or merely to administering an advanced welfare state with no further goals beyond minor incremental changes in the direction of egalitarianism.

The problem with many of the social democratic parties is not that they are reformist but rather that they have ceased to be even reformist. Thus, much of what passes for the "left" wing of the British Labour Party or the German social democracy represents traditional socialist reformism, while the right wing has even given up those aspirations.

This dichotomy within Socialist politics is the cause of the crisis of present-day European socialism and leads to the present immobility of European societies. It is probably also the reason that, despite the enormous opportunities that have opened up in Europe in the past half decade, the left has not been able to advance but has, on the contrary, on some places even suffered setbacks.

The stale, old program of classic post-World War II European social democracy neither inspires the activists nor reaches out to the masses of the new, better educated workers entering the work force. As a consequence, a new revival of left-wing energies and programs is occurring within these parties, pushing them steadily to the left.

This is the first of a two-part series. Bogdan Denitch, a professor of sociology specializing in international affairs at the Graduate School, City University of New York, is the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee's representative to the Socialist International for 1979.



'78 Newspaper Strike

By David Mermelstein

ACROSS

- 1 Hotel
- 4 Literary initials
- 7 Small child
- 10 Supreme being
- 13 Louis XIV, e.g.
- 14 Linden or March
- 15 de France
- 16 Precedes dos
- 17 Pressman's president
- 19 More powdery
- 21 Winter weather forecast
- 22 Hugo's Miserables
- 23 Gymnast Korbet
- 24 Gives lip to
- 27 Bike component
- 28 Struck!
- 31 Pub drink
- 32 Exxon product
- 33 Abner
- 34 Greek letter
- 35 Sociologist Talcott
- 39 Peer Gynt's mother
- 40 McGovern did it in 1972
- 41 Deceased Greek, familiarly
- 42 Chinese Communist

DOWN

- 2 Xmas carol
- 3 Baseball team
- 4 Greek letter
- 5 Dejected
- 6 Bridge player, Culbertson
- 7 Struck!
- 8 Spanish cheers
- 9 Drink
- 10 28 Across was also struck by newspaper
- 11 Soviet lake
- 12 N.Y. hotel: site of negotiations
- 18 Eggs sometimes found here
- 20 Yellowish deposit
- 22 Confederate general
- 25 African desert
- 26 Move furtively
- 27 City of glamour
- 28 Conception
- 29 River flowing to the Seine
- 30 Seattle
- 32 Parking area
- 34 Angry
- 35 Diminishes
- 36 German king
- 37 Struck!
- 38 Something put
- 44 Canadian territory
- 48 Considered mightier than a sword
- 49 Alight
- 50 Variety of coffee
- 51 Orally
- 52 Wisconsin Representative
- 53 Airplane personage
- 54 "Give me your _____, your poor..."
- 56 Red with meat, white with fish
- 58 Mayor of 43 Across
- 59 Resound
- 60 Korean tyrant
- 62 Coquettish
- 63 Alfred E. Neuman's magazine
- 64 AP competitor

Solution to previous puzzle:

