

EDITORIAL



HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT PICTURE HASN'T CHANGED IN TWO DAYS?

Reviving the Cold War may not work

Thirty-five years ago, just one year after the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain had defeated Germany and Japan in World War II, Winston Churchill and Harry S. Truman took the lead in initiating a Cold War against the Russians and Soviet expansionism. It was an immense success. For almost two decades Cold War ideology provided the American corporate elite with a popular mandate to impose its will and extend its control over all of what it euphemistically called the "Free World," while anti-communist witchhunts confounded the left and legitimized government harassment and persecution of militant unionists, civil rights activists, anti-imperialists and civil libertarians.

The extension of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, as a result of the world war, rather than of popular revolution, contributed to the widespread acceptance of scare stories about a world communist conspiracy aimed at the heart of world democracy—the United States and its "free world" allies. So did the rapid growth of Communist parties in France, Italy and Greece, given the monolithic character of the world Communist movement at that time and the proud subservience of national Communist parties, both East and West, to the interests and dictates of the Soviet Union.

But the basic premise of the cold warriors—that the American corporate elite best represented the interests and needs of the people of the world—soon began to be exposed as false at home and abroad. And at the same time the idea of a monolithic world Communist conspiracy crumbled—particularly after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, followed by the Sino-Soviet split.

By the late '60s, the civil rights movement and domestic opposition to the American attempt to keep the people of Vietnam in a colonial status had made it clear to millions of Americans that the corporate elite were not overly concerned with their people's welfare, or that of

the peoples of the rest of the world. And the growth of Eurocommunism, along with the developing differences between and among various Communist nations, made it apparent that world Communism was almost as diverse as world capitalism, though a democratic pluralist communist movement had yet to come to power.

A step too far.

The Vietnam war was the watershed. Having exposed as false the ideological underpinnings of Cold War propaganda, and at the same time having been persecuted by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Senate Internal Security Committee and a greatly expanded FBI and CIA—institutions created in the halcyon days of the Cold War—the anti-war movement not only developed enough momentum to restrict American intervention in some places, but also to do away with HUAC and the Senate Internal Security Committee and to impose limits on FBI and CIA interference with legal political and social activities.

The momentum created by the anti-war movement was enough to win George McGovern the Democratic nomination for president in 1972, but not enough to elect him. Nevertheless, enough of the "lessons of Vietnam" had been internalized so that when Jimmy Carter took office in 1976 he played down American intervention and raised the issue of human rights in an attempt to refurbish the American image among the peoples of the world.

But now we have Reagan and an administration that is as unabashedly pro-corporate and expansionist as any in this century. And along with the new administration we have an attempt to revive the Cold War and its lethal paraphernalia. The promoters of Cold War II are more narrowly based than their predecessors, but just as highly placed. Focused in the right-wing Heritage Foundation, some of Reagan's top intelligence advisors have written a blueprint

that the president and others in his administration seem to be following closely. Its stated premise is that "the threat to the internal security of the republic is greater today than at any time since World War II." Its program starts with repeated presidential speeches on "the nature of the terrorist threat" and the "escalation of Soviet bloc intelligence activities," and calls for a revision of the guidelines for the FBI and CIA set out in President Carter's executive order 12036 in 1978 and the exemption of all intelligence agencies from the Freedom of Information and Privacy acts. The Heritage report also calls for repeal of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which prohibits wiretapping of Americans in the U.S. unless they are suspected of a crime. All of this is done on the assumption that "individual liberties are secondary to the requirements of internal security and civil order."

Making it stick.

Of course, if there is no threat to internal security or civil order it will be difficult to sell a program of restrictions on individual liberties, so the Reagan administration and its allies in the Congress have set out to create such a threat—or at least to convince the American people that one exists. One such step was taken by Reagan on April 15 when he announced his unconditional pardon of W. Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller, two top FBI officials who had been convicted of ordering illegal wiretaps and warrantless searches of the homes of anti-war sympathizers in 1972 and '73. In granting the pardon, Reagan commented that the two men had "acted on high principle to bring an end to the terrorism that was threatening our nation" in those years.

In the Senate, the first attempt to sensitize Americans to the danger of terrorism took place on April 24, when the new Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism opened hearings with Alabama Republican Jeremiah A. Denton in the chair. Denton, a former admiral and naval aviator who was a prisoner of the

North Vietnamese for seven years, egged on witnesses who testified that the Soviet Union was giving material support, training and encouragement to a wide network of terrorist organizations throughout the world. They also testified, in an apparent attempt to intimidate the press, that Soviet intelligence has enjoyed considerable success in deceiving public opinion by manipulating American journalists. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig was taking any and every opportunity to repeat his lines about Soviet terrorists under every rock.

But not even the CIA or the FBI have yet gotten the message. On March 28, perhaps not yet clued in, a CIA draft report concluded that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate administration charges that the Soviet Union is directly helping to foment international terrorism. And four weeks later, on April 26, FBI director William H. Webster allowed as to how there was "no real evidence" to suggest that the Soviet Union was sponsoring terrorist activity in the U.S.

As for the press and the American people, they seem, so far, to be singularly unconvinced, and even in Congress there seems to be little enthusiasm for a new wave of un-American committees. Red-baiting no longer appears to work as a political tactic. In fact, in almost every election where it has been tried in recent years it has failed badly.

But a notable lack of enthusiasm for a new Cold War and the oppressive institutions that accompany it does not mean that there is no danger of warlike hysteria and oppression. Clearly, the proponents of a re-run of the '50s are in ascendancy. The point is that they are far from invincible and look much stronger now than they may in a year or two. There is a good chance, even a very good chance, to stop the new witchhunters, and possibly even the new Cold Warriors, in their tracks. It is, in short, not a time to run for the hills, but to run to the people and to the Congress to take on the administration's disinformation campaign.

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

WORKING IN THE VINEYARDS

IT IS ALWAYS HELPFUL, IN BEATING A dead horse, to make sure the horse is really dead. Richard Lichtman's article on unemployment and health (*ITT*, Feb. 25) detracts from the many valid issues raised by ignoring the large segment of the mental health community that does not practice "orthodox" therapy, is very much aware of social-system factors affecting people's lives, and would be overjoyed if there were a strong political movement fighting for the unemployed.

Lichtman would also do well to study the salaries of the social workers who staff most of the agencies and mental health centers and who do most of the therapy. "Class interest" varies considerably among psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, as well as between community service agency staffs and those in private practice.

When neither the labor movement nor the left have done anything to mount the "significant social struggle" of which Lichtman speaks, it makes little sense to place the major blame on those who deal with the trauma caused by joblessness.

Therapists who do not "blame society's victims" are keenly aware that, in the absence of a movement of and for the unemployed, the physical and psychological disturbances catalogued by Lichtman make self-organization extremely doubtful, let alone "organized rebellion." Many non-orthodox therapists working with unemployed workers individually or in groups are gratified that they have helped to turn rage outward instead of inward, that they are able to interrupt suicide and can "insinuate" themselves into the client's consciousness to plant the seeds of better understanding of the relations between person and society.

—May Hartman
Los Angeles, Calif.

HARRISBURG

AS ONE WHO ATTENDED BOTH THE March 28 demonstration in Harrisburg, Pa., and the Safe Energy and Full Employment Conference in Pittsburgh last October, I was disappointed with Harvey Wasserman's coverage of the event (*ITT*, April 8). Unlike the Pittsburgh gathering, where nearly 1,000 union members were in attendance, the Harrisburg march lacked visible participation by union members. Aside from sizeable contingents from the United Mine Workers and the Steelworkers, there were few other identifiable union contingents. The bulk of the marchers represented anti-nuclear, political and community groups. While 11 international unions may have supported the event they did not turn out their members in any appreciable fashion. Even though "anti-nuke alliances from as far away as California, Minnesota and the Carolinas..." were there, the absence of Harrisburg area unionists was striking.

The demonstration was called by the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment, yet little emphasis was placed on jobs. In contrast, the union members who had attended the Pittsburgh conference spent much of the weekend discussing full employment and political strategies to meet that goal, as well as safe energy.

The March 28 demonstration was an important first step in bringing together diverse groups to fight for a com-

mon program. The lack of involvement of members of the sponsoring unions however bodes poorly for the future. The major task facing the left in this country is the mobilization of vast numbers of working people to oppose the mumbo-jumbo emanating from Reagan, Haig and the supply-siders in Washington. The left has a responsibility to inform and educate the American people as to the reality of what is happening in our society, even at the expense of exposing its own shortcomings. Wasserman's lack of critical analysis of the limitations and shortcomings of the Harrisburg demonstration is an example of the self-protection that leftists must learn to overcome.

—Howard Harris
Pittsburgh, Pa.

CREDIT, WHERE DUE

IN DAVID MOBERG'S ARTICLE ON THE Empire-building of oil companies (*ITT*, April 1), he maintained that the Atlantic Richfield Corporation blamed "the cost of environmental protection" for the closing of its copper smelter in Anaconda, Mont. Although I am not an apologist for the company, I want to defend ARCO on this one point.

When ARCO announced its decision to close the smelter last September, there was a great hue and cry throughout the state that Montana's newly-adopted ambient air quality standards were to blame. The Republican gubernatorial candidate called for a special session of the state legislature to question those standards. To its credit, ARCO explained that the anticipated cost of the new standards was not the reason for the closure. The company did not say so directly, but I suspect the real reason for the closure was exactly as Moberg concluded: the cost of modernization weighed against the opportunity to take a huge tax write-off. (The Republican gubernatorial candidate, incidentally, lost the election.)

ARCO's being honest enough not to blame environmental standards has proved helpful in defeating a bill that would have gutted the air quality standards during the current session of the Montana legislature.

—Jim Deutsch
Billings, Mont.

WHY BCA LOST

I READ *ITT* BECAUSE I LIKE BEING informed by extensive, in-depth coverage of complex situations. But, my confidence was eroded by the April 8 run-down of the issues in the Berkeley municipal election. From my on-the-spot, worm's-eye view, your coverage looks pretty crummy—to use the same kind of superficial language and off-the-wall judgments you accepted from your local stringer. Even taking into account his understandable bias (and yours), I would have expected a more serious examination of the *real* issue in this election: how well and honestly do socialists use power when they get it?

So landlords and rent control were the one and only issue, were they? So 100 landlords have been peddling their politics door to door? More than three times that number walked precincts to oppose the BCA and most of them aren't landlords. As an owner of rental property I myself have been defensive and outnumbered within a campaign mounted by people of widely divergent views, united only by the affront to social justice and common sense repre-

sented by the BCA.

So there are 4,500 landlords in Berkeley? They can't be very large scumbags then, can they? Yes, as a female provider of rental housing I'm offended by the persistent use of that feudal term, "landlord." Of course, being redefined as a scumbag by the weekly propaganda sheet subsidized out of my tax money and in non-compliance with housing and zoning regulations by the BCA-dominated city government doesn't satisfy me, either. Naturally, as someone who never knew what it was to be able to afford to rent a place with a bathroom until she was 18 years old, I do realize how perverted a view of the class struggle it is to suggest that the real working class, in Berkeley at least, are the landlords—er, pardon me, the scumbags—who saved their pay and bought houses to rent to the deviant bourgeoisie that now reviles them.

—Kathleen Casey
Berkeley, Calif.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

JOSEPH R. EGAN'S ARTICLE "THE Mischief Syndrome" (*ITT*, April 15) rightly raises a long-ignored aspect of nuclear power, i.e., the threat to safety of labor-management tensions. But his presentation reveals an unsubstantiated faith in technology shared by many technical and professional workers. Egan maintains that it is the "social structure, not the mechanical structure" of nuclear plants which is the cause of potentially devastating mishaps. Specifically, he states that "defects in the machine or the regulatory structure...could be cured by a little money flowing in the right places."

Technology is not neutral. Technology is social relations. That is, the social relations of production of the past created today's technology. Thus the machinery of our nuclear plants contains within it the same contradictions as "the labor-management structure of production." Egan is misleading to suggest that the two can be separated.

Getting nuclear engineers into the same union as other nuclear workers is no solution. Even "people's control" of nuclear power plants is no solution because the technology of nuclear power, as presently constituted, is not amenable to people's control. Thus real people's control of nuclear power will necessarily transform (and perhaps abolish) that technology, subjecting it to principles appropriate to human advancement—production for human needs, non-alienating, creative work, organization on a human scale, respect for nature.

—Jim Schlosser
Chicago

"LENINISM"

IN HIS REVIEW OF TWO RECENT LEFT works on Eurocommunism (*ITT*, April 8) Jeff Frieden concludes, rhetorically: "Is a non-Leninist approach to socialist transformation compatible with a belief in the self-liberating potential of the working class, when the most important politically active segment of this class is staunchly Leninist?" I doubt this formulation is helpful in explaining either the contradictions of Eurocommunism or the current political reality in France, Italy and Spain.

The dynamics of working-class political socialization in southern Europe and elsewhere are more complex than Frieden suggests. To be sure, many Communist workers still identify with "Leninism," but does this mean they believe the PCI for example should arm the workers and "seize state power" in Italy? Or that parliamentary democracy is merely a "tool" of the ruling class? As far as I know, only a small part of the Communists' base holds such views, and probably not very firmly.

It Italy, these include many older workers who fought in the Resistance and were probably sympathetic to the *Volante Rosso* (Red Flying Squads) that

formed after Togliatti refused to organize an insurrection at the end of World War II. Many younger workers associate "Leninism" with the more consistent and coherent oppositional politics the party practiced prior to Eurocommunism, when its organizational practices were, in fact, already out of step with Bolshevism. Likewise, many of these workers identify Eurocommunism with support for government austerity and mass demobilization. It seems that a more militant "left" Eurocommunist posture would enjoy wide support among Communist workers.

—Terry James
Washington, D.C.

THE LAST WORD?

I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO CLOSE THE discussion on the Jewish question with your arrogant and contemptuous summary (*ITT*, April 15). Anti-Semitism is a deep-rooted and subtle phenomenon in European culture, and no gentile escapes this tradition without a conscious struggle. You have clearly not made much of a struggle.

1. The Holocaust, though the most dreadful, is scarcely unique in the history of the Jews. My great-grandmother protected her children from Cossack sabres with her own body in a pogrom in which during a single week 35,000 Jews were massacred, far more than the most extreme estimates given of the lynchings of Blacks in this country over three and a half centuries.

2. Ever since the Jewish Christians separated themselves from other Jews in order "heroically" to avoid the wrath of the Emperor Hadrian against the stubborn liberty-loving Jews of the second century, the Jews have suffered the "loving charity" of their neighbors, when these neighbors found a respite in slaughtering each other over petty questions of dogma. The Crusaders practiced on Jews before taking on the Saracens. Not only Spain, but England, France and petty principalities throughout Europe periodically expelled the Jews.

3. Anti-Semitism has been and continues to be a weapon of established power for diverting the wrath of the oppressed from the establishment.

4. Curbed and harassed, the Jews suffered a constant near-extinction resulting perhaps in the survival only of the fittest, and they learned to protect themselves by intellectual attainment, particularly after their spirit of aggressive defense was broken in horrible massacres in 17th-century Poland. In recent years when the U.S. has regularly won about half of the Nobel prizes, half of these have gone to American Jews.

The above background pertains to no other Americans, including the blacks and Hispanics. It is a tale of 2000 years that continues to leave a trauma on the mind of every conscious Jew, whether left or right, and it is a trauma caused by terrors not of our making. The Jewish question is not our question, it is the problem of the gentiles. They can avoid it by blaming the Jews for their own troubles. I can remember the time when the Jews were almost the only significant defenders of civil rights and liberties for all minorities in this country. Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois, both of whom I knew very well, recognized this and were appreciative of Jewish heroism and devotion in the struggles of the blacks in this country.

—Arthur D. Kahn
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Editor's note: What, me gentile?

CORRECTION

The cover photo of *In These Times*, April 29, was credited incorrectly. Credit and thanks are due to Africa News.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may 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.