

# NEW WORLD REVIEW

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Peace Movement

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# Star Wars: Reaganite Nightmare

**R**onald Reagan's "Star Wars" program poses a colossal threat to all humanity, including the people of the United States. It seeks to extend the nuclear arms race to outer space where it may even be impossible to control the weapons of mass destruction.

The US has consistently taken the initiative in introducing new types of nuclear arms. In the resulting situation of increasing danger a fragile peace has been maintained mainly through the existence of military parity and through US-Soviet agreements limiting nuclear armaments.

In its attempts to gain military superiority over the USSR and other socialist states, the Reagan administration has taken measures to destabilize the military equilibrium, and to weaken the US-Soviet agreements on the limitation of nuclear arms. It deployed first-strike weapons — cruise missiles and Pershing IIs — in Western Europe, thereby wrecking the Geneva talks and compelling the Soviet Union to take "reply measures." It has embarked on programs which contemplate violations of US-Soviet nuclear agreements.

The most notorious of these, the "Star Wars" program, envisions the deployment of orbital stations into near Earth space, equipped with laser and beam weapons, and involving reusable shuttle type spacecraft.

Its real object is to enable the US to conduct nuclear aggression from space. This violates the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which forbids the deployment of anti-missile weapons in space, and the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly sought measures to bolster the treaties prohibiting the militarization of space. In 1983 it submitted a draft resolution on this matter to the UN General Assembly. The same year, it assumed a "unilateral commitment" not to deploy anti-satellite weapons in space.

On June 29th the USSR made yet another effort to prevent the militarization of space. It proposed US-USSR talks in Vienna beginning in September, and aimed, among other things, toward an agreement on the prohibition of the following: deployment of any weapons in space; development and testing of such weapons; the use of force from space against earth and from earth to space. It also proposed a moratorium on the testing and deployment of such weapons effective as of the beginning of the talks.

Washington effectively rejected the Soviet proposal by placing the precondition that talks on medium range and intercontinental missiles be included. It also did not accept a moratorium on the testing of anti-satellite weapons.

The Reagan administration knew such a response would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. The Soviet leaders have consistently stated that the USSR will not resume the Geneva negotiations on medium range and intercontinental missiles until the cruise and Pershing IIs are removed from Western Europe.

Soviet leaders categorically rejected the response of the Reagan administration as one which only pretends to favor arms negotiations. In late July Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko told former Senator George McGovern that even now the Reagan administration wants "no agreements" but only "the appearance of negotiations."

Not only the socialist community, but also many of the US' allies, are gravely concerned about Reagan's "Star Wars" plan, which they know would only enhance the likelihood of nuclear war. (Their concern is no doubt heightened by Reagan's "off the record" remark of August 11 that he signed "legislation that will outlaw Russia forever" and that "We begin bombing in five minutes.") At the United Nations and other international forums they have objected to this plan and other points in Reagan's nuclear agenda.

The people of the US can do much more to nip the "Star Wars" program in the bud and to avert nuclear holocaust. The first and most urgent step is to retire Ronald Reagan in November!

T.M.

*On June 26, the Day of Soviet Youth, young men and women throughout the USSR carried on a massive peace campaign under the slogan 'I vote for peace'. Photo: Soviet Peace Committee.*

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## Warsaw Treaty States Repeat Appeal for Non-Use of Military Force

The Warsaw treaty states have again appealed to the NATO countries for the conclusion of a treaty on mutual non-use of military force.

The document reiterating this appeal was adopted at the Budapest meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw treaty states. It was handed to the ambassadors of the NATO countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian People's Republic on the 7th of May 1984.

The Warsaw Pact proposed that the two political-military groupings would commit themselves to non-use of military force, whether nuclear or conventional. The proposed treaty could also provide for a "similar commitment to the non-use of force" by Warsaw and NATO states against third countries.

It would bind the signatory states to refrain from threatening "the security of international sea, air and cosmic lanes passing through spaces to which nobody's national jurisdiction applies."

The appeal stated that the treaty may "record" the commitment of the signatories to the cause of reducing the arms race, both in the nuclear and conventional arenas, preventing "the danger of sudden attack," and increasing "the effectiveness of the United Nations."

Its main significance lies in its central objective to strengthen the legal quality of the principle of non-use of force in international relations.

The US and its NATO allies have insisted they must "analyze the proposal . . . most thoroughly." As in many other instances, this professed need for a thorough analysis is being used as a delaying tactic. It is meant to hamper the conclusion of an agreement.

Some in the NATO circles purport to question the need for the treaty, saying the UN Charter provides for the non-use of force by the member states. The Warsaw Treaty states believe, however, that "additional efforts" are required to lessen world tensions. They note that the provisions of the UN Charter notwithstanding, treaties have been concluded between several states stipulating the commitments of the signatories to non-use of force.

Some NATO countries have even contended there is no need for a contractual or treaty stipulation of non-use of force. They argue that unilateral declarations are enough for this purpose. However, a unilateral declaration has no international legal force; it imposes "no clear and identical legal obligations" on the parties involved. At best, it can only be a statement of intent.

By issuing the Appeal the USSR and other socialist states have expressed their willingness to observe the non-use of force in international relations. The NATO countries claim they are in favor of the same policy of peace. It is up to them to support their claim by responding positively to the Warsaw Pact's call for a treaty.

T.M.

## One More Chance: Luncheon Alternative Date Extended

If you haven't yet participated in NWR's Great Luncheon Alternative, you have one more chance!

The drawing for the Lucky Number prizes has been postponed to November 15, 1984. We must receive all forms by November 1.

You may use the envelope included in this issue to send in your "reservation."

Readers will remember that this year we decided it was time to save the high cost of our usual yearly hotel luncheon, and to give all our readers around the country the opportunity to participate in NWR's main annual fund-raising event.

That's why we decided on the Great Luncheon Alternative.

You've already received the "program." It was featured in the special May-June issue, *US Intervention — The World As "Our Oyster."*

But you can still make your "reservation," and help yourself at the same time as you help NEW WORLD REVIEW.

With the purchase of "reservations" for \$25 or more, you will receive Lucky Number tickets for three valuable prizes:

- *Panorama*, by Anthony Toney — oil on canvas; magnificent painting of a New York City vista by an internationally acclaimed contemporary US artist.

- Hand-crafted imported Bohemian cut lead crystal vase.

- Hand-embroidered linen tablecloth with ten napkins.

Contributors of \$10 to \$24 will receive Lucky Number tickets for:

- AM-FM clock radio with built-in telephone.

- Ecologizer® room air treatment system.

No contribution is needed to send for your Lucky Numbers.

All you have to do is fill out the form on the envelope in this issue, and send it in TODAY!

*Official Rules:* No contribution is necessary for entry in either drawing. Send in the enclosed form by November 1, 1984. Winners will be chosen by random drawing at a reception November 15, 1984. You need not be present to win. Participation is open to residents of the USA. Employees of New World Review and members of their immediate families are not eligible. Drawing is subject to all federal, state and local laws and regulations and is void wherever prohibited by law.



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# Opinions of Note

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## A Reagan Second Term

*"But just 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be."*

It might well be Ronald Reagan's campaign theme. All of a sudden, he has made 180-degree turns in rhetoric. All of a sudden, he talks as if he were "good" to the Russians, "good" to arms control, "good" to human rights, "good" to diplomacy, "good" — God help us — to the environment.

Like the little boy in Eugene Fields' poem, he must be good as he can be until "Christmas," which this year happens to fall on November 6. After that, no holds barred.

Soothing as President Reagan's pre-Christmas campaign rhetoric may be, the logic of his first-term policies leads, in a second term, to nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, a continuing arms race, undeviating contempt for human and civil rights, massive environmental degradation, deficit-induced reinflation and depression — and "local" wars in Central America.

John B. Oakes  
Former Senior Editor, *The New York Times*  
*The New York Times*, July 9, 1984

## More of the Same In Central America

The striking feature about current United States policy in Central America is . . . the dramatic continuity with United States policies of the past 90 years.

. . . Before giving in to ideological alarmism about the "Soviet and Cuban influence" in Central America, we would do well to re-examine the roots and patterns of our policy in that region — our long effort to control its military, economic and cultural life through aid, advisers, direct ownership, trade and credit.

When will the United States begin to accept the idea that the people in these small nations also have a right to choose sovereignty?

Saul Landau  
Senior Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies  
*The New York Times*, August 7, 1984

## Of Euromissiles and Arms Talks

Sometimes it is said: Would it not be better to ignore the American missiles in Western Europe and sit down at the negotiating table? This appears to sound all right. But still one cannot accept such a position. What sort of talks would these be? In fact the topic at them would be not the reduction of arms but the "rearmament" of NATO — how many American missiles and where should they be deployed in Western Europe. The possibility of reducing strategic arms would remain blocked as well. For in conditions when the channel for the building up of American forward-based nuclear weapons along the perimeter of the socialist countries remains open, it would be at least imprudent — from the point of view of the security of the socialist community — to reduce our own armaments. In short, talks in conditions of the deployment of American missiles would only generate in people an illusion of security and would give a free hand to the exponents of the arms race.

But there exists a road to create proper conditions for constructive talks. What is necessary for this? It is necessary to remove the direct threat to peace that originated with the appearance of American missiles on European soil. It is necessary to discard the claims to superiority that to this day are clouding the heads of American politicians and which manifested themselves so patently in the proposals of the United States at the Geneva talks.

Konstantin U. Chernenko  
General Secretary, Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
*Pravda*, June 5, 1984

## Worldwide Community of Interests

In the years since the Second World War, the entire world has been drawn into this new community as nuclear weapons and new delivery systems have made it clear that all humanity is now a member of the same fraternity of risk.

In a terrible caprice of fate, the vulnerability that all the world has come to share has, for the first time in history, created a true world community, with a common condition (the threat of the bomb), a common interest (avoiding the holocaust) and common resources (the moral and political vision necessary to do so).

Robert Karl Manoff  
Managing editor, *Harper's Magazine* (on leave)  
*The New York Times*, August 6, 1984

# News Briefs

## Andrey Gromyko Calls Need For Alliance Greater than Ever

In early July the British Secretary of State, Geoffrey Howe, visited the Soviet Union on the official invitation of its government.

At a luncheon in Howe's honor, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko recalled the joint effort of the two countries in the struggle against fascism. He noted that this and other joint efforts for peace were in the interests of the peoples of both countries. "Every time our countries succeeded in merging efforts in the development of peaceful relations," he declared, "this benefited our and other peoples."

In spite of recent "stagnation" and even "deterioration" in British-Soviet relations, the Foreign Minister said, there are still Soviet-British ties, particularly trade and economic ties, which are mutually useful. These ties, he added, "have confirmed their viability . . . despite the icy winds of all sorts of 'sanctions' and other discriminatory measures resorted to by those who do not like first one thing, then some other thing in our policy of peace."

Gromyko emphasized that the issue of the deployment of new US missiles in Western Europe is "the most urgent matter today." He reiterated that such deployments "cannot bring security," and that, on the contrary, they "increase the danger" especially for those states which have accepted them. In this connection, he stressed the readiness of the USSR for a solution "through talks on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security."

The Soviet Foreign Minister also discussed the most recent USSR proposal for talks to prevent the militarization of space. He regretfully noted that the Reagan administration in effect rejected the Soviet proposal by insisting that the space talks be combined with talks on medium range nuclear systems in Europe.

He stressed that today there is even greater need than forty years ago for an alliance to save humanity: "We must do everything we can to eliminate the threat of nuclear catastrophe. We are convinced that this is desired by all people in both our countries and in the whole world."

## US-USSR Trade Bars Damage US Companies

The Reagan administration's sharp increase in restrictions on trade relations with the USSR, and its attempts to deny the Soviets access to much of American technology, have had damaging effects on US companies, as reported in *The New York Times* of May 25, 1984. They are costing US companies \$10 billion a year, according to C. William Verity, Jr. Verity, who is chairman of the executive committee of Armco, Inc., is co-chairman of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council, a private organization comprised of 220 US companies and 125 Soviet enterprises of foreign trade.

Mr. Verity made the remark in a news conference and interview at the end of the Council meeting held in New York on May 23 and 24, 1984.

The USSR was represented by a high-level delegation headed by Vladimir Sushkov, deputy minister of foreign trade. Sushkov is also co-chairman of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council.

The US business leaders attending the meeting reacted angrily to a remark by Robie M. Palmer, deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs in his address to the Council. Palmer blamed the Soviet Union for the deterioration of Soviet-American relations. Verity characterized the remark as "very poor judgment."

Verity noted that the trade restrictions did not seriously affect the Soviet Union, which was able to buy the technology elsewhere including from Japan and France and other Western European countries. In 1983 the Soviet Union purchased goods worth \$40 billion from Western Europe and Japan.

The extremely low level of US-USSR trade relations, particularly in areas outside agriculture, was noted. According to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin, who attended the meeting, Soviet imports of non-agricultural goods from the US in 1983 were worth only \$500 million, which represents about the same level as US trade relations with Trinidad and Tobago.

## Saving Money With a Nuclear Freeze

According to a study by the Council on Economic Priorities, reported in *The Washington Post* on May 7, a nuclear weapons freeze would save at least \$98 billion in federal funds over a period of five years.

## People of the FRG Oppose New US Missiles

According to a nation-wide poll released June 25, 88 per cent of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany oppose deployment of new US medium-range missiles on their territory. The poll was reported in *The Daily World*, June 27.

## Guest Editorial **Crusade in a New Package**

By V. Kortunov

As the US Presidential election campaign gathers momentum, there is more talk in Washington about the so-called "new" foreign policy line of President Reagan.

Mr. Reagan's election team is trying to convince everyone that today's Reagan is no longer the Reagan who announced a "crusade" against socialism two years ago, promising to consign it to the ash heap of history. New approaches to world problems are now alleged to have gained the upper hand among the ruling circles of the Republican Administration. Its primary concern is supposedly peace; it is showing its "good will" and is allegedly prepared to start talks with the USSR at any time, in any place or on any issue. In making all these claims Washington laments that Moscow refuses to see this metamorphosis, treats Washington's peace overtures with distrust and does not show reciprocal flexibility.

There is, however, a simple way to introduce clarity in the real state of affairs. Let us turn to hard facts for this purpose. What has actually changed in the position of the Reagan Administration besides phraseology, and even there only to a minor extent? There can be only one answer to this question, unfortunately, and this answer is — absolutely nothing.

The US Administration still refuses to follow the Soviet example and take a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. It remains deaf to the Soviet proposal for endorsing rules of behavior for states possessing nuclear weapons. It also rejects the proposal of the heads of state and government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden for a nuclear arms freeze and reduction. Since the nuclear arms talks were derailed because of the obstructive position of the US, there have been no changes in its position.

At the same time, the US is building up its first-strike potential on an unprecedented scale and in all possible directions. There is a rush program under way to modernize the whole strategic triad of the Pentagon, or mostly its offensive land-, sea- and air-launched systems. And now the American strategists have set out to extend this arms race to space, too. It is common knowledge that as much as two trillion dollars are to be allocated for Reagan's comprehensive program to "rearm America," designed for the period between 1985 and 1989. American Pershing and Tomahawk missiles are being hurriedly deployed in Western Europe. And finally, cruise missiles with nuclear warheads are being mounted on board ships of the US Pacific Fleet, too.

"Psychological warfare" against the Soviet Union and other socialist states (even without any more direct allusions to

the infamous "crusade" to destroy the "evil empire") is being waged by all possible means, too. The anti-Soviet rhetoric in which US officials are indulging is clearly meant to sow mistrust and hatred of the Soviet Union in the world, to prevent mutual understanding between the USSR and the US and, consequently, to obstruct the dialogue between the two countries, which President Reagan has been talking so much about recently.

It seems the White House is all for such dialogue and is inviting Moscow to the negotiating table practically every day. But as soon as the Soviet Union suggested a specific agenda for this dialogue (I refer to the problem of preventing the militarization of space), the Reagan Administration started dodging, with the clear aim of compounding this highly important and urgent problem. It began to be linked with the talks on the limitation and reduction of nuclear armaments, talks which Washington itself had recently put into a deadlock. The American Administration must certainly know that the Soviet Union cannot accept these terms. So what did it actually count on: evading the talks, imposing its own agenda or gaining time?

An inter-agency working group in Washington is now (late July — Ed.) discussing a new wording for a reply to the Soviet proposal. Let us hope that it will have a more earnest and businesslike character than the first one. Judging by the information which leaks into the American press, however, one gets alarmed by the fact that the present Administration is most concerned about blocking the accomplishment of the perfectly concrete and separate task of preventing the establishment of a potential for waging war in and from space. Instead, it makes other problems seem more important and is trying to maintain a pseudo-peaceful mien until the end of the election year instead of looking for a constructive approach to the talks.

The world public will have it proved to them once again that "Reagan the Crusader" and "Reagan the Peacemaker" are one and the same person. □



V. Kortunov is a Novosti Press Agency political analyst.

# Schools for the 21st Century: the USSR's 1984 School Reform

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By Dora M. Perks

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The Soviet Union has embarked on a long-range program to reform and upgrade its entire school system. "Guidelines for the Reform of General and Vocational Schools" was approved on April 10, 1984, by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and on April 12 by the USSR Supreme Soviet. For the preceding three months the country had been converted into a virtual nationwide "pedsoviet" (pedagogical council) meeting to discuss the initial draft of the Guidelines, published in major newspapers in the fifteen Soviet Republics at the beginning of the year.

In presenting the results of the public discussion to the Supreme Soviet, Geidar Aliyev, first vice chairman of the Council of Ministers, observed that 120 million people had participated in discussions at their places of work and in meetings of public organizations, as well as on radio and television programs. The Education Commission of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee, as well as local Party committees and soviets, and the press, radio and television were deluged with letters commenting on various proposals and suggesting changes and additions to the 40 Guidelines in the Draft.

This is the third time that the Soviet Union has made a major, thorough-going improvement in its educational system. Immediately after the October Revolution, it concentrated on wiping out adult illiteracy. By 1930 compulsory education for children was introduced. A nationwide system of vocational training was established for the training of skilled labor so necessary for its vast industrialization program. Universal secondary education was introduced in the 1970s.

Now, under the new Guidelines, general secondary education is being increased from ten to eleven years to enable students to master the vastly increased knowledge needed in today's world. The scientific and technological revolution re-

quires that even blue-collar workers today have a high level of general education and vocational training, especially in such occupations as machine-building and metallurgy.

In the course of the next ten years the Soviet school system will make the necessary changes in its structure to prepare the younger generation for the immediate future and for the world of the 21st century. An integrated nationwide system of vocational guidance, with "hands-on" experience, will help students make informed career choices and will provide them with the necessary skills, if they choose to go to work upon completing secondary schools.

## The Scope of the Reform

The school reform is scheduled to be carried out in stages from 1984 to 1990. It touches on every problem of the teaching and learning process — types of schools, curricula, teaching materials and textbooks, class size, vocational guidance, teachers' welfare, and the role of parents, trade unions, public organizations, school administrators and ministries. The Guidelines that provoked major discussion were those calling for major changes in the school system:

- To extend general secondary education to eleven years, with children starting school at age six, a year earlier than at present.
- To reorganize the different types of vocational schools to form one type of educational institution, the vocational secondary school, where a student who has completed the ninth grade will have the opportunity to study a trade and complete his general secondary education.
- To improve radically the organization of labor education and training, and vocational guidance in the general school, and to carry out a transition to universal vocational education of young people before they start an active working life on their own.
- To require that every school be associated for training with an enterprise which by law would be required to set up workshops, production training centers, permanent field stations for student work teams, and holiday work camps.
- To require that students spend half their summer vacation period in practical field work.

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*DORA M. PERKS is a writer and editor of publications in the field of education. She holds a teaching certificate in the Russian language and follows Soviet publications in both Russian and English.*

- To lower the age limits for a number of trades, in accord with the wishes of young people, their parents, and work collectives.

- To require that every secondary school graduate be fluent in the Russian language as a medium of education and communication among the peoples of the USSR.

- To develop a Marxist-Leninist world outlook, with sound materialist concepts and an ability to interpret phenomena in nature and society correctly.

- To develop in students greater responsibility for the quality of their school work and for observing school, labor and social discipline.

- To improve curricula, textbooks and teaching aids, and methods of teaching, to eliminate unduly complex presentation of subject matter.

- To improve the style and methods of the work of educational administrative bodies, to reduce the paperwork and other duties that distract the teaching staff from the creative work of educating pupils.

- To increase the social prestige of teachers, improve their material and living conditions, raise their pay, and seek to increase the number of young men enrolled in teacher training institutes.

- To pay particular attention to rural schools, whose condition and level of work substantially influence the social development of the countryside, the willingness of young people to settle down there, the cultural standard of the rural population, and the solution of the demographic problems of the countryside.

- To require greater responsibility of parents for the quality of their children's upbringing and for active involvement in educational work.

The process of extending general secondary education from ten to eleven years by admitting children to school at age six will be carried out gradually over a period of years, starting in 1986, as some schools are remodeled, more schools built, and more teachers trained, with due account taken of the wishes of parents, the level of the child's development, and local conditions.

### **Vocational/Technical Education: Key to the Reform**

Vocational and technical education in the Soviet Union is the most important source for supplying the national economy with skilled workers. Geidar Aliyev reflected on the basic principle of Soviet society when he commented in his report to the Supreme Soviet:

No matter how talented a pupil may be and no matter what he wants to be, a collective farmer or a cosmonaut, a builder or a painter, a steel worker or a physician, work is the only way for him to realize his ambition . . . . Under socialism, which is a society of working people, it is work, physical or mental, that is the sole gauge of the honor, dignity and status of its citizens.

In the same vein, Konstantin Chernenko, speaking at a meeting with voters who had nominated him their candidate for election to the USSR Supreme Soviet, commented:

Work will never be fun or entertainment. Even under communism it will remain, as Marx put it, "a damn serious thing". . . . Some parents are tempted to protect their children from difficulties. Only socially useful

work makes man's life meaningful. So we must teach our children not what is easy — they will cope with that by themselves — but what is difficult. One of the major tasks of education is to instill in schoolchildren love of work and to use to the full extent the force of productive work in the education process.

"We Invite You to Join the Working Class" was the headline in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on January 25 for a letter from N. Isayev, Hero of Socialist Labor and Master of Production Training, and V. Shevchenko, Director of Professional-Technical School No. 12 in the city of Sumi.

We want to explain in detail why the draft on school reform gives us a feeling of satisfaction. In recent years, we, workers in the system of professional-technical education, have been uneasy because of the complicated situation in the selection of pupils. This "selection" starts already in the fourth to fifth classes of the middle school, when pupils are already divided into "excellent," "good," and "candidates for Professional-Technical Education." A disdainful attitude to the last category of children is shown not only by their peers, but even by their teachers. Two years ago, because of family circumstances, Lenya Melnikov, a sixth-grade pupil, came from the Mogilev district to Sumi. About the level of his knowledge you can judge by the fact that he did not really know the multiplication table. He entered the seventh grade already designated as a candidate for the Professional-Technical School. Rarely, maybe once or twice a month, he was called to the blackboard, and at the end of the year was simply given the standard "three" in all subjects. From such teaching his knowledge did not improve.

So such children, deprived of attention, like Lenya, come to the PTS. How they are transformed before our eyes! From simple human concern, from the fact that our teachers and master workmen seek in each one of them their strong points, abilities, and talents, the adolescents basically change their attitude to study. Look — 15 to 20 per cent of our graduates become outstanding workers, and these are former failures. . . . Doesn't it mean that with a will it will be possible to wake in them the good, and "to sow the seeds of reason," to give substantial knowledge for professional growth? . . . In the draft of the school reform we have seen the prospect of the resolution of these problems, which have vital meaning for the younger generation of the country.

Concerning the requirement that every school be attached to a basic enterprise, A. A. Serbe, Director of the Petrozavod School No. 28, commented in an interview in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on January 5:

We are on friendly terms with a housebuilding combine and a bread factory. If the schoolchildren only see how adults bake bread or build houses for them, this would not be enough today, utterly inadequate. It is a different matter when the workers of the factory, for example, understand that during the summer vacation they are responsible to a certain extent for our senior students, who would substitute for them in the shops. Here, in a special brigade, the children find out in practice what present-



day production means — and what it really is — work, bread, plan, a mutually helping hand. . . . It is difficult to assess who receives more from such mutual working together, the school or the factory. Everybody stands to gain, but mainly the children, who now have as instructors not only the teachers but also the workers, brigade leaders, the Komsomol organizer, the director.

### Part-Time Work for Students

Considerable attention was given in the newspapers to letters from readers about the need to lower the age requirement for work in some professions. The editorial staff of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* wrote on January 18 that one of the main problems of today's school is to accustom young people to work. There are types of socially useful jobs to which it is possible to attract even schoolchildren, according to readers of this newspaper. Some of their remarks follow. "If my son is not sitting at the table," writes one parent, "then he is lying on the sofa. He doesn't know another physical position. He is already past playing hockey, and he is not yet staying out late at night, but for him there is no work."

"A paradoxical situation has been created," writes Valentina Andreyevna from Leningrad. "Everywhere there is a shortage of work forces. . . . and at the same time millions of city adolescents are not being drawn into socially useful

work." She proposes that there be introduced a required work period for senior students and that this be noted on their school-leaving certificates, with payment according to the current norm.

"Part-time worker — such a working profession has not really been developed by us," writes Khorokhorin from Orel, "and yet this is a means of additional earnings for many adolescents and for people on a pension, but especially for young people who feel strong enough to work."

### A Comprehensive Vocational Guidance System

Section VI of the Guidelines provides for the kind of comprehensive nationwide system of vocational guidance that would be the envy of every guidance worker in the United States. It calls for experimental guidance centers to be set up in a number of schools in urban and rural districts to organize work with schools, students and their parents. These centers are to rely on inter-school production training centers, vocational guidance staff at general and vocational schools and at factories. They must introduce students to modern trades and professions, inform them about the needs of the national economy for personnel, bring out their abilities and inclinations for certain types of work, and make practical recommendations based on their findings.

The goal is to prepare students, by the time they finish

*A Russian lesson in a Moscow elementary school.*



Novosti Press Agency

secondary school, to make a well-thought-out choice of occupation and of the institution where they should continue their education.

The proposal to enlarge the system of vocational guidance was applauded in many letters to the newspapers, among them one written by M. Musatova, director of School No. 58 in Kuibyshev, which was printed in *Izvestiya* on January 14:

I love to talk to former students who visit the school . . . . I always try to find out exactly what has stood them in good stead from their schooling, and what we failed to give the children entrusted to us. For what are former students thankful? For basic learning, for the justified demands of teachers, for open discussion on moral and ethical issues. What did they not receive from the school? Work habits, specific professional orientation. You listen, and you unwittingly sympathize with the people who had to change workplaces several times after leaving school. . . they are not guilty. The school is. For this reason I was glad to read in the draft about the basic improvement of work training and professional orientation of school children. So far this process has been taking place very unevenly.

### The Status of Teachers

Considerable attention was paid to the role and status of the teacher, both in the general schools and in the professional-technical establishments. Many teachers urged that there be recognition in the Guidelines of the need to specify that their duties should be limited to the basic job of teaching. A. Tsokolov, head of a technical school in the city of Armavir, was quoted in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on February 1:

The doctor's work is also difficult, but all the same in his list of professional obligations there is not included the washing of floors in the office, the painting of panels, searching for a lock for the closet, analyzing the history of an illness at home in the evening, etc., things which are constantly demanded of teachers. . . . School is a creative laboratory, in which the education of each group of children is the concern of the pedagogical collective — the subject teachers, the psychologist, doctor, lawyer, art teacher, etc. As is rightly stated in the draft of the school reform — it is necessary to protect the teacher's time.

What to teach and what kind of textbooks and teaching materials should be used were discussed at great length by scholars, writers and teachers. In *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on December 14, just before the Draft Guidelines were published, V. Maksakovski, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, wrote:

It seems to me that in the school of the 21st century there ought to be a sharply strengthened role of theory in relation to facts. Facts in the textbook are necessary not for themselves, but only in connection with something more essential. When the discussion touches on school subjects, "packed to the top with facts," geography is frequently brought in as an example. . . .

Is it really important to know the seven types of climate in Australia? That in the kainozoic period in place of the Altai Mountains there was a plateau? That in Ros-

tov-on-Don there is a factory, "Red Aksai," that produces cultivators, or that factories of black metallurgy in Italy are located in Milan and Turin? Who can show that learning all this is productive mental labor for a school-child?

### Increasing Pupils' Responsibility

Provisions in the Guidelines for developing greater responsibility in students for their school work, for disciplined behavior in all their activities, and for living by the values of a communist society produced an enthusiastic response from the public.

The schools were called upon to correct their attitude towards children if they hope to develop conscientious citizens with initiative and a sense of responsibility. G. Bikson, a teacher from Riga, Latvia, in a letter in *Izvestiya* on January 20 wrote about the school's failure to meet its obligations to pupils:

Publications highlight complaints about the fact that the present level of socialization of the adolescent generation is far from satisfactory, that young men and women at times do not show enough responsibility in deciding one or another of life's problems, or the ability or desire to answer for themselves or for others.

The result of a hothouse education, in my opinion, shows up in what I would call "the armchair syndrome." Life is like a large, soft armchair — the important thing is to settle oneself in it as comfortably as possible.

Not long ago I asked my students to think about the essence of human happiness. Their writings, naturally, turned out to be quite varied. Reading some of them, I confess, I shriveled up: "In our time, money rules over people, their feelings, and their affairs. If you have a great deal of money, you have friends and a loved one and everything you want."

What are these — just damaging thoughts? I am afraid that they are a life attitude, and although such writings were not many, they cannot fail to puzzle one. This "wised-up practicality," this inability to distinguish real values from imaginary ones — also on the border of infantilism — is incompatible with the values of a socially responsible person.

The need to allow children latitude for independent action was also emphasized by I. Kon, a professor from Leningrad, in a letter to *Pravda* on January 16:

Today's school regulations regard the student only as an object of pedagogical activity. The older the student, the more his dependence on teachers. And "student self-government" and the Komsomol are in direct dependence on the director of the school and on the teachers. But if the student is assigned only designated functions ("do this which previously was planned for you by others, the adults") should there be surprise at the lack of initiative of many senior students? We can't suggest to the child that he will master the road ahead and at the same time not permit him to walk on that road. . . .

Among the many letters *Pravda* received approving of the



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*Students in a Moscow class room.*

need for increased family responsibility for the upbringing of children, was one printed January 15, from the Kornilovs, husband and wife, both workers at the Machine Tool Production Combine in Ivanovo:

We strongly approve and support the proposal in the draft about the necessity of increasing the responsibility of the family for the upbringing of their children. One of us, a representative of the parents' committee, constantly works with the parents of children with low grades or disciplinary problems. One mother, in answer to us, complained, "It's O.K. for somebody to talk, but I have two children, and I work, and I have no time to be involved with education." Such parents practically forget that their children belong to them. They buy fashionable jeans for their last kopeck — this is the manifestation of their parental love and concern, for which they find time and money. . . . Ideological work in the school is the business of everybody without exception — teachers, patrons, parents. For this we must have enough strength and persistence and time.

When the report on the Guidelines for the Reform of the General and Vocational Schools was presented to the CPSU Central Committee on April 11, a resolution was passed to approve them in principle, "as amended with due regard for the suggestions and comments made in the course of the national debate."

Plans for implementing the school reform in the next five-year plan include construction of new schools for seven million pupils, twice as many as in the current five-year plan, and also construction of eight hundred vocational centers and many extramural educational facilities. Eleven billion rubles will be allotted from the State Budget to fund the school reform, with three and one-half billion of this to raise the salaries of six million teachers and other educational workers in a step-by-step increase beginning in September 1984.

As the resolution approving the Guidelines stated: "Carrying out the Reform of General Education and Vocational Training will become a vital cause of the whole Party and of all the people, and will contribute to the further improvement of the training and communist education of the rising generations, and to the acceleration of our society's economic and social progress. □"

# Education Reform— USSR, USA

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By Anna Nikolayeva

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**T**he education reform recently adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR after a two-month nationwide discussion will be introduced in the Soviet Union beginning on September 1, 1984. During the discussion the Soviet people had many critical things to say about their secondary schools.

Interestingly enough, President Reagan, in his remarks to the annual convention of the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals in early February, spoke of the merits of the Soviet educational system.

The preparation for the reform in the Soviet Union coincided with debates concerning the reform of the educational system in the United States. It is natural that the reforms differ substantially because of the differences between the educational systems of the two countries.

Why did the US President, who has no particular love for the Soviet Union, publicly recognize Soviet achievements in this specific area? The answer is simple: because of the results the two school systems have to show on the eve of the reform.

The basic principles of the Soviet school — democratism and accessibility of education, above all — have remained the same since the day Soviet government was established. In the USSR education is financed wholly by the state, and allocations are constantly increasing. The reform is another step on the way to a better general education system.

As for the system of free public education in the USA, it is on the verge of bankruptcy. In April last year, the President himself pointed out that the American system of education was currently going through a crisis.

It would be incorrect to say that the leaders of the USA ignore the problem of school education. When he was running for the presidency in 1980, Reagan promised his electors to improve the situation in education but he has not kept his promises. Preparing to run for another term, he is speaking about the problem again.

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Though the USA is second only to Japan in the development of education in the capitalist world, President Reagan declared that in the Eighties the US school has shown itself incapable of giving all children an adequate education. For instance, about 13 per cent of all 17-year olds in the USA read and write with difficulty, while 40 per cent of young people from oppressed minorities are illiterate. As a result, 23,000,000 people are completely illiterate in a country where 70 per cent of children and teenagers went to school as early as the late 19th century. The US President, meantime, appeals to college students to combat illiteracy among the adult population, despite the fact that two-thirds of US universities and colleges have special courses to teach their students to read and write.

In the Soviet Union, where more than 80 per cent of the population could neither read nor write on the eve of the October 1917 Socialist Revolution, illiteracy was eradicated in a space of 15 years. Today, Soviet teachers find there is cause for anxiety when children do not read sufficiently well by the time they finish elementary school, that is, when they reach the age of ten. A general compulsory secondary (10-year) education was introduced in the country several years ago. There are three ways of acquiring this education after finishing eight forms (nine forms under the reform): by continuing to study at school, by attending a vocational school, or a specialized secondary educational establishment. A certificate of graduation from secondary school, no matter where it was acquired, gives the graduate the right to enroll at any institute or university anywhere in the country.

The following facts illustrate the difference in the quality of education in Soviet and US schools: in 1980 35 states required only one year of math for graduation and it was the same with the natural sciences in 36 states.

In the Soviet Union all schools without exception require math throughout the ten years. Youngsters begin to study the rudiments of algebra and geometry in elementary school. The secondary school curriculum also requires five years of physics and four years of chemistry. Additional opportunities for a deeper study of these subjects (in specialized schools and classes, boarding schools and even correspondence schools under the guidance of experts) enable youngsters even in the most remote parts of the country to study these subjects seriously. It



*Triplet sisters from Yaroslavl, a regional center of the European USSR, sharing the excitement of the beginning of the school year.*

was not just luck that Volodya Titenko, member of the Soviet team at the international mathematics competition in Budapest, received a bronze medal and a special prize for his original solution of a very difficult problem. Volodya is a graduate of an ordinary secondary school in a Byelorussian village. He made a special study of mathematics through a correspondence course at Leningrad State University.

### **A Different Approach to the School Curriculum**

It is known that US schools do not have a uniform, nation-wide curriculum or educational standard. US education theorists maintain that mental capacities are 80 per cent hereditary. It is obvious that a well-to-do family has greater opportunities for the mental development of its children, and very often this preliminary preparation is taken for an indication of higher capacities, while children from poor families are considered incapable of coping with their studies.

Soviet educators proceed from another premise. Though they take into account a youngster's inherent abilities, they believe that, given the necessary conditions, practically any child can cope with a serious curriculum. That is why all Soviet schools — a Moscow school with 800 students or a village school with 20 students — have a uniform curriculum with a total of 20 required subjects. Such a system gives everyone a chance to receive an education and, what is very important, guarantees a definite standard of knowledge for every person.

Progress in school depends to a large degree on the language in which instruction is conducted. Though the English language is not the mother tongue for millions of children and teenagers in the USA, most instruction in schools is conducted in English.

In the Soviet Union instruction in secondary and higher schools in all the 15 republics is conducted in the native language which enables the various nationalities to retain their language and develop their culture. There are more than a hundred nations and nationalities residing in the USSR while teaching is conducted in 54 languages. The numerically small ethnic groups are taught in the languages of the larger groups

among whom they live. For instance, only 500 people speak the Ishkashim language in Tadzhikistan (Central Asia), and so instruction for them is conducted in Tadzhik. In addition, they study their native language at school. Depending on how widely it is used and also on the number of students, instruction in the native language lasts from three to ten years.

Textbooks are necessarily written in scores of languages spoken in the USSR and so are papers, magazines, fiction and popular science literature. Incidentally, fifty ethnic groups received alphabets of their own for the first time after the October 1917 Revolution.

### **Vocational Training**

One would think that a system under which the mental capacities of students are considered to be hereditary (thus consolidating social inequality between the children of the haves and have-nots) should at least give students good vocational training. Yet, judging by what the September 1983 issue of *Fortune* says, public schools are unable to cope with the job because they do not have the money to equip school workshops.

All the President does regarding the problem is appeal to private corporations and local communities to take patronage over the schools and help them with equipment and instructors.

In the Soviet Union manual training and professional guidance constitute one of the main aspects of the new reform. Industrial enterprises and collective farms are now legally required to set up school workshops and provide them with equipment, tools and materials. These enterprises will plan the students' production activities and appoint professionals to train them. What is more, these enterprises and collective farms are to pay the students for their work.

In the Soviet Union the first vocational training schools appeared in the Twenties. Today the country has 7,500 schools training workers for 1,400 professions, from operators of numerically controlled machines to window-dressers, bakers and tailors. These schools have a total student body of about 4,000,000. Today, most of these vocational training schools are secondary schools, i.e., upon graduation the young man or woman receives a certificate of full secondary education in addition to vocational preparation. After the reform is introduced everywhere, vocational training schools will all become full secondary schools. Education authorities are now working to produce more balanced curricula in all subjects. General education subjects form an essential basis for the technical subjects.

The standard of training in Soviet vocational schools is close to that of the American two-year technical colleges. For instance, according to the new curriculum, technicians in vocational schools will have 372 hours of higher mathematics, 280 hours of physics, 222 hours of descriptive geometry and mechanical drawing, 192 hours of theoretical mechanics and strength of materials, and 500 hours of humanities and economics. Teenagers enter vocational training schools after finishing the basic (8-year) secondary school or after completing the full (10-year) secondary education. In the first case, they go to vocational school for three years while in the second case only one or two years.

Another important aspect of the Soviet school reform is that teachers and others working in the public education system will get a step by step salary raise of 30-35 per cent as of September 1, 1984. The government has allocated three and a half billion rubles out of the state budget for the purpose. □

# The Soviet Peace Movement: Some Observations from the Field

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By Marilyn Bechtel

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## Part I

**O**ne image I will remember all my life: a pair of eyes. Too far away to reveal their color; close enough to pierce with their intensity. They belonged to a woman in a crowd — a short, plain, middle-aged woman in working clothes, a kerchief covering her hair, her whole face vibrant with the concentration of her attention.

The crowd itself was special: workers packing the shop floor at the Old Kramatorsk Engineering Factory, in the Donbas industrial region of the Ukraine. They had come straight from their machine tools to surround the truck bed which served as platform for the lunch-hour rally, part of peace week activities marking the 43rd anniversary of the Nazi invasion during World War II.

The woman stood in the second row, just in front of the platform. So short she stood on tiptoe just to peer between two shoulders, she listened raptly to the words of her fellow rank-and-file workers, the head of the shop, the chairpeople of the

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*Together with two other US journalists, Marilyn Bechtel spent three weeks in the USSR in June, studying the Soviet peace movement. The group visited Moscow, Ashkabad (the capital of Turkmenia), Tbilisi (the capital of Georgia), and Kiev, Poltava, Donetsk and nearby cities in the Ukraine.*

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*This is the first of three articles. Succeeding installments will highlight activities of various organizations which are part of the Soviet peace movement, and describe the role and functioning of the Soviet Peace Committee and the Soviet Peace Fund.*

trade union, Communist Party organization and Young Communist League, and virtually the first three visitors from the US ever to come to Kramatorsk. The tears which flooded her eyes from time to time failed to dim their glowing intensity.

I wondered what lay behind that intensity: thoughts of relatives killed or crippled by war and occupation? childhood memories of terror and deprivation? worry about new US European nuclear missiles a few minutes' flight time away? visions of unspeakable destruction in a nuclear war?

Perhaps all of the above. For if a theme pervaded every human contact in the Ukraine, it was the fusion of bitter memories from forty years ago and grave concern over the world situation today. Conversations on subjects far removed from war and peace could trigger associations so immediate and vivid as to shift the subject abruptly to memories — personal or absorbed from older generations — and urgent pleas for disarmament and peace.

Though their expression seemed particularly intense in the Ukraine, the feelings were the same in Moscow, in Ashkabad, in Tbilisi.

The Ukraine was entirely occupied by the Nazis, and one out of every seven people died as a result of the war. In the capital city, Kiev, some 940 public buildings, 6,000 dwellings and over 800 factories were demolished. Its beloved and beautiful main thoroughfare, the Kreshchatik, was completely rebuilt after the war by the volunteer labor of thousands of Kievans. Many cities, including Poltava, suffered destruction of as much as 80 per cent of their housing and public buildings. Donetsk, capital of the Donbas industrial region, was devastated. The coal mines of the Donbas were flooded. Mining equipment and facilities, including the power supply, had to be completely restored.

That history ran like a thread through every discussion, as did a counterpoint: warm recollections by veterans of meetings with people from the US, and friendly feelings generally toward the people of our country.

Dr. Vladimir A. Delva, director of Poltava's Institute of Medicine and Stomatology, has been head of the Poltava Region's Peace Committee for ten years. During World War II he fought all the way to Berlin as a rank-and-file soldier. He told us his meetings with US soldiers there were among the most vivid of his wartime experiences. A large, well-built man now

probably in his mid-60s, Dr. Delva's kind, sensitive face radiated warmth and concern as he recalled those days. "We and the ordinary US soldiers understood each other very well," he said. "When we met anywhere, we promised to oppose all future wars, as our pledge to those who died, and to future generations. But soon the cold war began and great tension developed. We understood then that we must fight to save peace, and that understanding led me to where I am now."

Another Poltava Region Peace Committee activist, air force veteran Ivan Babak, is a Hero of the Soviet Union, the USSR's highest military award. He recalled his experiences as a member of a Soviet crew which flew a US-made plane, shooting down 37 Nazi aircraft. During the war he, too, met US fliers. "Then, we found a lot in common," he said. "Now, alas, much of that is forgotten. My greatest wish is that my three sons and their families will never see the horrors of war as we did."

Ivan V. Ropovka, chairman of the Lenin Collective Farm, 30 miles from Poltava, recalled that when the Nazis were driven out, the farm was completely ruined. "In the winter of 1943-44," he told us, "people lived in dugouts because no materials were available to build anything better. We were left with a dozen cows and a few horses. In the spring the old men, women and children — the only ones still left on the farm — plowed with the help of the cows."

Gesturing with evident pride to the now prosperous farm's sturdy and capacious buildings and ample modern equipment, Ropovka exclaimed, "How can anyone speak about war, when we had to build all over again from scratch? There is so much for all of us to do to make life beautiful — it is a crime to speak of war!"

The chairman indicated a woman standing nearby, her strong, weathered face and wiry frame telling of many years of outdoor work. Olga Denisova and her husband were sent away to Germany as slave laborers and were freed by US troops, he told us. When they returned they helped rebuild the farm. Denisova, leader of a team of vegetable growers, holds the USSR's highest civilian award, the title of Hero of Socialist Labor. Though at 64 she is long past retirement age (55 for women), she continues to work full-time.

Adele Litvinenko, metal worker, deputy to the City Soviet of the industrial city of Makeyevka, near Donetsk — war hero and member of the local peace committee — told us she believes educating children in the spirit of peace is one of the most important activities. She described the total destruction of Makayevka during the war. "We were winners twice here," she said, "during the war and after the reconstruction." She has visited the United States: "There I saw that despite all the anti-Soviet propaganda and the distortions, the truth about our way of life still comes through sometimes." She said people in the community were distressed recently when a local woman whose son had been killed in World War II wrote to President Reagan urging peaceful relations between our two countries, and received no answer.

Evgeny A. Matsegora, director of the New Kramatorsk Machine Building Plant, told us his father was killed during the war, and his older brother, who was wounded, took part in the first meeting of US and Soviet troops at the Elbe River. A teenager himself, he stayed in Kramatorsk during the occupation. He began his working life as a turner at the plant and as is common among Soviet managerial personnel, he rose through the ranks to his present position. He keeps in very close touch

with the workers. "Everywhere you can feel the fear Soviet people have about war," he said. "Each Monday any worker at the plant can visit me to talk about anything — personal problems, wages, housing, or any other issue. Our people are very well informed about both domestic and international developments, and I can tell from all these discussions how deeply they are concerned about peace."

## World War II and Current Soviet Thinking

The constant references to World War II by Soviets sometimes seem hard for US people to understand. Many people in this country, even those old enough to remember it clearly, seem to regard the war as "ancient history." It is sometimes even said that the emphasis on World War II demonstrates the "militarism" of Soviet society. It became clear to me, however, that keeping the memory of the war alive is a very important aspect of peace education.

The wartime experiences of the two nations were fundamentally different. The continental US was never attacked, and war deaths totaled about half a million. The Soviets lost 20 million people. They suffered the destruction of 1,700 cities and more than 70,000 towns and villages, the devastation of a large part of their industry and agriculture.

The events of 40 years ago continue to bear directly on contemporary life. The phrase, "Every Soviet family is affected," is not just a cliché. People think of the father, the grandfather, the uncles and aunts they never knew. Premature deaths continue among people who were wounded or suffered extreme deprivation, including those who were children during the war.

Losses of this magnitude seem to have brought about a profound change in people's thinking, providing a sort of "anti-war inoculation," a vivid consciousness on the part of everybody one meets that action is urgent to avoid a nuclear war, which would probably destroy human life itself. The continuing education about World War II serves as "booster shots" to reinforce that psychological immunization.

The result is a variety of activities both practical and educational in nature, by individuals and by groups.

## The Things People Do

The week we spent in the Ukraine — June 21 through 27 — was a period of heightened peace activities commemorating the anniversary of the Nazi invasion. In three such activities we were participants, speaking at lunch-hour rallies held right among the machines on the shop floor. These took place at Poltava's Electric Motor Plant and at two Donbas enterprises — the Khartsisk Pipe Plant (which makes pipes for the famed Urengoi natural gas pipeline to Western Europe), and the Old Kramatorsk Heavy Machinery Plant.

In each case the crowd numbered several hundred (though apparently not everyone, for a sprinkling of workers could be seen wandering around the edges). The mood was sober and intent; we were greeted with solemn curiosity which was transformed into warm applause following our remarks. In Kramatorsk the crowd surrounded us all the way to the parking lot, with individual workers making a point of asking us to convey to their US counterparts their fervent wishes for peace and friendship between our two peoples.

We found activities as varied as the people who engaged in them; many were related to people's work interests.

The physicians and medical students at the Poltava Insti-

tute of Medicine and Stomatology, like those at Donetsk's Institute of Trauma and Orthopedic Medicine, had helped gather signatures on the Appeal of Physicians Against Nuclear War, which were then sent to the Fourth Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, in Helsinki last May. Students at the Poltava Institute meet regularly with World War II veterans because, as graduating senior Nick Litvinenko told us, "Only by learning about their experiences can we really appreciate peace. When the veterans are gone, we young people must carry this information on."

Litvinenko said that last year and this year, the entire graduating class had voted to put in a week's work at a nearby collective farm and donate their wages to the Soviet Peace Fund. "We hope this will become a tradition," he said, "and we're urging graduating classes at other institutes to do similar things."

Dr. Sergey Radlinsky, a recent graduate who is now on the faculty, heads the Institute's Komsomol (Young Communist League) branch. He added that the students have sponsored protest meetings and marches and sent postcards to heads of state of countries where the new US nuclear missiles in Europe are deployed. "We try to turn each student into a peace activist," he said. "A physician or any health worker must be an internationalist first of all."

According to Ivan Ropovka, members of the Lenin Collective Farm take part in all of the Regional Peace Committee's activities. "Every family gives something to the Peace Fund and some people give quite a lot," he said. At the farm's schools, he told us, teachers assign students to make drawings for peace. The library puts on exhibits of books about peace, and the movie theater shows films devoted to peace. "We have our own lecturers on international affairs here on the farm," he said, "and speakers from the Regional Peace Committee come here often, too."

### Raising Money for Peace Activities

Svetlana Nekrasova, Executive Secretary of the Donetsk Regional Peace Committee, said one of the most popular and widespread forms of participation, the "shift of peace and friendship," in which workers contribute their wages from a specified period to the Peace Fund, originated in Donetsk.

In the nearby industrial city of Makeyevka we met one of the prime movers of this idea, metallurgical engineer Gennady Zarichnye, a Hero of Socialist Labor and two-time recipient of the Order of Lenin. In addition to the peace shifts, Zarichnye's team has done something which has become increasingly popular among work teams in the USSR. They have decided to include as team members a man from Makeyevka who was killed in World War II, and another who died saving his workmates after an accident. In addition to the work assigned each of its members, the team performs the work quotas which would be assigned to these two men if they were living, and gives their wages to the Peace Fund.

From the beginning of 1984 through June, workers at the Donetsk Textile Factory had given some 40,000 rubles to the Peace Fund. On May 23, the plant's young workers donated their wages to the fund, and the day before our visit, the students at the nearby secondary school decided at their graduation party to volunteer to work for three days at the plant and give their earnings to the fund. Director Gennady Kisarov said proudly that the factory is famous throughout the USSR for its

peace initiatives as well as its products, and that it has received a special award from the Soviet Peace Fund.

All these varied local activities contribute to the fabric of republic-wide activities described by the outstanding Ukrainian novelist Oles Gonchar, president of the Ukrainian Peace Committee. In the last several years, he said, activities have centered around support for the UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, and the Prague World Assembly for Peace and Life in 1983. Among the especially troubling issues at present are the new US medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe and the Reagan administration's "star wars" plans to militarize space.

*An international contingent in the USSR: Peace March '82, Stoc...*





During 1983, Gonchar said, there were 40 million participants in peace actions in the Ukraine (population: 50.5 million). In May of this year there were some 170,000 actions including a demonstration by a quarter of a million in Kiev on May 5. Children's participation, including essay contests, sidewalk murals and other artistic activities, was so prominent it drew the attention of the USSR Minister of Education and his staff, who spent considerable time talking with the youngsters so the experience could be shared around the country. It is the Peace Fund, with its republican, regional, community and factory branches primarily staffed by volunteers, which provides the support which makes all these activities possible.

grad-Moscow-Minsk.



Soviet Peace Committee

"People here have their own plans which need peace for their realization, and their own concept of life having nothing to do with war," Gonchar said. "We consider it extremely important to educate people from childhood in a spirit of peace and friendship." Asked about his own work as a novelist, Gonchar observed that there can be no more important role for any Soviet writer than to speak for peace and to help people understand each other.

Understanding is also the prime objective of the Ukrainian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations, whose president, Vasil Osnach, described its main work as exchange of information. The society has relations with some 50 US organizations including the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Citizens' Exchange Council, Friendship Force and others. Osnach noted ruefully that since the worsening of US-USSR relations under the Reagan administration, the number of visitors from the US has declined steadily, from 1,200 in 1982 to 1,000 in 1983 to 176 in the first half of 1984. Each year the society sends several groups to the US.

One radiantly sunny summer afternoon, we climbed to the monument to Soviet soldiers killed in World War II, which crowns a soaring hillside at Saur Mogila (Saur Grave), southeast of Donetsk. The long, gradually steepening ascent is marked at intervals with memorials to various categories of troops: artillery, infantry, tank troops, air force — each memorialized in sculpture. Name after name is engraved in each base. Near the top, a dead tree stands exposed to the wind, its limbs wound round and round with red scarves of Young Pioneers, members of the organization of children ages 10 to 15.

Saur Mogila rises from a vast sweep of beautiful countryside stretching far into the haze of distance. Peaceful and still, blanketed in the lush green and gold of meadows, cropland and ripening wheat when we were there, this region was the site of an enormous battle at the same time as the great tank battle at Kursk in the summer of 1943. Every step of our ascent intensified the sense of contrast between the bitter memories of those days and the gentle, productive calm of the present day. The people of the region remember — on May 9, our hosts told us, 300,000 people from the Donbas, the Voroshilovgrad region and other nearby areas gathered on the broad plains to commemorate Victory Day.

"This is a sacred place for us," said Zinaida Panieva, volunteer head of the local Peace Fund branch at the nearby town of Sniezhnoye. "After the war everything here was in ruins. Even now farmers and children find traces of the battle from time to time.

"The papers here tell us about your peace movement," she continued. "We see your demonstrations on TV. I think the common efforts of the people of our two countries will make it possible to win peace."

Her thought was picked up by Alexander Zak, another veteran honored as a Hero of the Soviet Union: "The losses we suffered in those days taught us that we must seek friendship with other peoples. We are doing all we can to build such friendship with the people of the United States. You say most people in your country are for peace. I hope your war veterans share these views. Our desire for peace is not a show. It is our very soul — we have shed too much blood for it to be any other way."

They say the eyes are the mirror of the soul. The eyes I saw tell me the soul is in earnest. □

# So Who's Better Off?

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By Dorothy R. Steffens

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**A**s the 1984 election campaign moves into high gear, there are reminders of Reagan's famous 1980 query, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" That question, perhaps more than any other election-year gimmick, helped focus the voters' frustration. In November 1980, Americans were troubled and angry about a lot of problems — growing unemployment, escalating interest rates, foreign policy blunders, environmental hazards — to name a few. And hovering over all of us was the long dark shadow of a possible nuclear war, by design or by chance, but deadly to all life in either case.

Now, after almost four years of the affable Ronald Reagan, the question is worth asking again. Reagan says sure we're better off, claiming lower unemployment and higher business profits. But like most of this administration's statements, these claims represent half-truths at best.

It's true that people are again buying cars, houses and other large consumer items. Economists say, however, that this is not due to Supply-Side economics, but rather to the classic "recovery" phase of the business cycle.

What should be borne in mind about the "recovery" is that it is very fragile. Most of the buying surge of recent months has been on credit which means that we are already beginning to see a new surge in interest rates. Here we go again, to use another telling Reagan-phrase from his 1980 campaign, with high interest rates, inflation, boom and bust cycle with the "bust" part not much farther down the road than the months immediately following the 1984 election.

*Unemployment.* It is also true that unemployment has dropped 3 per cent from its December 1982 high of 11 per cent. There are now *only* 9 million officially jobless. Some of the 3-plus million newly-reemployed found jobs building the new homes, cars, computers and other durable goods people are buying again. Manufactured goods inventories were used up when factories closed down during the Reagan recession.

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The enormous increase in spending for new military hardware also provided some new jobs.

It is well to remember, however, that the Administration introduced a new way to figure the unemployment index — a statistical trick which lets the BLS count more people among the employed. For the first time, members of the armed forces are counted as having jobs. This overstates employment and lowers the unemployment index so Reagan can say, "See how good my policies are." The BLS index also leaves out (that is, forgets to count) the approximately one and one-half million "discouraged" workers. They are no longer counted as unemployed because they've given up searching for jobs that weren't there. There are another five million part-time workers who say they would prefer to work full-time if there were enough work. Even the government's statisticians admit that if they counted all the workers who want to work if there were enough full-time jobs, the unemployment index might be nearer 12 per cent than the current 7.8 per cent.

Above all, we must not forget that the seemingly rosy employment picture is not only a limited upturn, but that unemployment is still far higher than when Reagan took office. This is true both for the rate of unemployment (the index) and for the total number of unemployed. In other words, we're better off than we were in the darkest days of Reagan's Supply-Side Depression, but the country is still not back to where we were in November 1980 when the official rate was an already-too-high 7.2 per cent and there were "only" 8 million jobless. Far from improving the job picture, Reaganomics still struggles to catch up with the last dismal Carter days.

Another, even more significant and more dangerous unemployment statistic is the scandalously high rate of Black unemployment. Minorities have benefited hardly at all from the current cyclical upswing. The official Black unemployment rate continues to hover around 20 per cent, but that's conceded to be grossly understated, particularly for inner-city youth whose jobless rate is well over 50 per cent! A large percentage of minority workers are more or less permanently out of the labor market and while Reagan and his crew pat themselves on the back about the good times they've brought back, they continue to ignore this festering sore which has, in fact, been exacerbated by Reagan social policies and spending cuts.

*Higher Profits for Business* is an accomplishment of

which Free-Enterprise Reagan may well be proud. If we ignore the thousands of small businessmen who lost their life's savings in the Reagan Recession of 1981-'83, (31,300 small business failures in 1983 alone) the profit outlook is great. Business profits, for Big Business that is, went up almost 50 per cent in the last year. It is annoying, of course, that most of these businesses failed to follow the Supply-Side scenario and did not invest these after-tax profits in new factories or modernizing old ones. Instead, they took the money and ran — ran to conglomerate by buying up other businesses or ran to invest in production facilities in low-wage foreign countries. Instead of providing new jobs for US workers which would have given some solid base to the recovery, both by way of increased employment and modernized, more competitive factories, Big Business chose another direction. What characterizes the profit run-up of the 1980s is the pell-mell rush to buy out competition or to build an empire of unrelated conglomerates, thereby enriching stock speculators, bankers, lawyers and accountants but doing no good at all for workers or for consumers. Most of the buy-outs have had the blessing of the Administration, which sees no apparent conflict between lip-service to "free-enterprise" and increased monopoly control of the free market.

There are other, even less appealing aspects of the Reagan Administration's economic policies which should be considered before we answer the question, "Are you better off. . . .?"

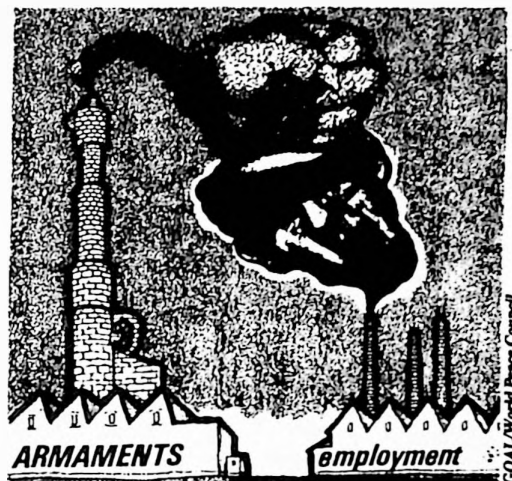
*More people are homeless today* than at any time since the Great Depression (of 1929, for you youngsters out there). The phenomenon of people fighting for sleeping space on sidewalk grates, in hidden subway passages and waiting-room benches became all too familiar during the bitter winter of 1983-84, and almost every large northern city had its share of deaths by freezing as the unluckier or less aggressive homeless tried to shelter in doorways or were evicted from bus terminals.

*More people are hungry today* than in 1980. More children are malnourished. More babies die at birth or during their first year. The Congressional Black Caucus reports that between 1981 and 1982, infant death rates of white and Black infants increased in 13 states and that Black infants are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday as white infants. The report by Congressman Julian Dixon attributes most of the increase in infant mortality to the increase in poverty and points out that this Administration has made cuts in maternal and child health programs, migrant health programs and Medicaid which have intensified the effects of increased poverty.

A House Committee reports that the number of poor children increased by 2 million between 1980 and 1982 alone: "Today, one out of five children and one out of two Black children live in poverty. . . ."

The Census Bureau tells us that 15 per cent of the total population, or more than 34 million Americans now live below the official poverty line of \$682 for a family of four. As with all "official" figures, this one grossly understates poverty despite the fact that it represents a 25 per cent jump in the ranks of the officially poor since 1980. Because of serious flaws in the way the poverty index is computed, going back to before Reagan, we might add, the actual number of families you and I would call poor is much higher.

*More money is going into arms* today than ever before in



the nation's history, including wartime. As a result, this Administration has to take responsibility for a national deficit greater than that left by all previous administrations, from Washington to Carter combined. It doesn't take a knowledge of high finance to recognize that when the government borrows billions of dollars to finance this massive arms buildup, interest rates zoom and other borrowers are pushed out of the borrowing market, and prices rise. This begins the inflation/recession spiral all over again, and indeed we are already seeing the effects in higher interest rates. Wall Street's edginess is seen as a reaction to the federal deficit.

The recent Washington play-acting about reducing the deficit is not fooling anyone. The only proposals for deficit reduction Reagan will agree to merely project possible future savings. He absolutely refuses to consider any cutback in arms spending which alone is responsible for much of the deficit. In the face of Reagan's insistence on increased military outlays, Congressman Markey (D-Mass) points out that ". . . one-fifth of the Reagan arms buildup would pay for Social Security."

*More people are afraid that nuclear war could happen soon.* The Reagan foreign policy has heightened the risk of nuclear war and heightened international tensions and has succeeded in terrifying not only our so-called "enemies", but also our allies and most of the American people.

Let's go back now to consider the question Mr. Reagan asked us on the eve of the 1980 election: "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" The answer depends on whether you are one of the few who are rich and got richer or whether you are one of the multitude who are suffering from the last three years of government for the wealthy. Whether you are an unemployed worker or one who had to take a pay cut to keep working, whether you are watching your retirement pension and nest egg shrink while your expenses rise, whether you are a single parent struggling to survive benefit cuts, a homeless street person hoping to make it through another cold winter, a student scrambling for a smaller pool of aid funds, a middle-income taxpayer looking for the "beef" in your tiny federal tax cut while paying out more for local social programs. And last, but not least, whether as a citizen, you see no good coming out of the widening chasm between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in our society.

Are you better off? In economic terms, yes if you were well off before Reagan took office. No, if you weren't. But rich or poor, you are far worse off if you are concerned for the future survival of humanity. □

# An Assault on Olympic Ideals

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By Hy Wallach

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A total of 140 countries — a new record — are taking part in the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles. However, some of the most important nations in the sporting world are not participating. This includes the two leading nations, the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. In 1983, in world championships and cup tournaments encompassing Olympic events, Soviet athletes won 62 first places, the German Democratic Republic won 44 gold medals while the United States attained 28.

The Soviet Union and 13 other socialist countries have withdrawn for the following reasons:

1. Lack of security for athletes.
2. Olympic Charter violations by the organizers.
3. Overall hostile environment.

There is talk in the mass media of a "Moscow boycott" and "revenge for 1980." Nothing could be further from the truth. The Olympic Games belong neither to the city nor to the country where they are held. They belong to the whole world, presided over by the International Olympic Committee. A country which hosts an international sports forum is required to facilitate the participation of all who can and wish to take part. This is generally recognized.

## Withdrawal Is Not A Boycott

Nor is the withdrawal, in any sense, a violation of the Olympic Charter. Every National Olympic Committee has the right to take part or not to take part in the Games.

The Soviet Union did not ask any other country not to participate in the Olympics. One country belonging to the Warsaw Pact — Rumania — decided to take part. Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the International Olympic Committee, said he detected no signs of pressure on Rumania not to participate. Haralambie Alexa, president of Rumania's Olympic Committee, was quoted as saying, "I'd like you to know there have been no pressures on us." Mr. Alexa reiterated this in an interview with *The New York Times*.

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In contrast, the boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games, which former President Carter called for and which was supported by the president now in office, included political pressure on the governments of some countries and a whole series of economic sanctions aimed at wrecking the work of organization of the Moscow Games. The US authorities ordered some firms not to supply equipment which they had undertaken to do under contracts signed earlier. The enterprises of the USSR which have business contracts with the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee will meet all their commitments.

"The USSR is supplying the Los Angeles Games with equipment worth 4 million rubles (about \$5.5 million official rate) free of charge," said Marat Gramov, chairman of the USSR National Olympic Committee.

All the countries that are not participating have sent officials — referees, judges, linemen — and journalists to Los Angeles. The Soviet Union has sent more than 100. The United States did not send anyone to Moscow in 1980.

I.O.C. President Samaranch, while expressing regret at the decision of the USSR National Olympic Committee not to participate, at the same time observed that the decision had nothing in common with the United States stand with regard to the Moscow Olympics.

Soviet athletes were looking forward to the Olympics in Los Angeles and were preparing intensely. Nearly 700 took part in the pre-Olympic meetings held on the site of the future Games. The Soviet Union also took the initiative in expanding Soviet-American sporting links. In 1982, the Soviet Union sent 433 athletes to the United States while 250 sportsmen visited the USSR. In 1983, 439 sportsmen went from the Soviet Union to the United States and 282 athletes from the United States came to the USSR. In the first months of 1984, the Soviet Union sent 106 sportsmen to the United States and played host to 80 Americans. The guests from the United States were warmly received in the Soviet Union while American spectators applauded the successes of Soviet champions on their soil.

But certain quarters in the United States were alarmed by the achievements of Soviet athletes. In March 1983, during President Reagan's meeting with President of the United States Olympic Committee, William Simon, Executive Director Don Miller and President of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing

Committee, Peter Ueberroth, it was made clear that the United States wanted victory at any cost. A possible defeat of the Americans on their own soil was therefore inflated before the fact to the dimensions of a national tragedy. To avoid this, any means would do. The Olympic Games are regarded as one of the key propaganda measures aimed at securing President Reagan's reelection.

### US Violations of Olympic Rules

The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee refused to invite foreign referees to the Games (much less pay for their stay) evidently relying only on its own judges. Several National Olympic Committees protested strongly so that on this occasion, the International Olympic Committee took a decision to provide maintenance for 1,006 referees from various countries. As Chairman of the Soviet Olympic Committee, Marat Gramov, emphasized, this deprived the hosts of the Games of a powerful device designed to achieve "victory at any cost."

Rule 59 of the Olympic Charter clearly states: "The Olympic Identity Card establishes the identity of its holder and constitutes the document authorizing entry into the country in which the city organizing the Olympic Games is situated."

It looks as if the organizers of the 1984 Games did not mean this provision to be applied to the Olympic delegates of the socialist countries. On March 15, 1984 the US embassy in Moscow sent a note to the National Organizing Committee of the USSR requiring lists of the names of the members of the Soviet Olympic delegation for the purpose of issuing visas. Judging by the note, the embassy took upon itself the right to refuse a visa, or entry to the United States, to any member of the Soviet delegation. This was a violation of the Olympic rules.

Only after Moscow declared that it was impossible for Soviet athletes to take part in the 1984 Games, did Washington make belated promises to resolve the question of visa-free entry. Experience has shown, however, that the words of the US Administration are often at variance with its deeds. Take, for instance, the situation on the eve of the 1980 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid. The entire Olympic community was outraged when a visa régime was imposed almost at the last moment when it was too late to do anything about it. It is true that this took place under President Carter for whose actions the present Administration is not responsible. But here are some developments during the Reagan administration

- In December, 1983 Yuri Ustimenko, Tass correspondent in the United States, was not allowed to attend a press conference held in Los Angeles by Marat Gramov, chairman of the NOC of the USSR in connection with his talks with the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee.

- In March of this year the State Department refused to issue an entry visa to the United States to Soviet Olympic attaché Oleg Yermishkin whom it declared "undesirable." Yermishkin's appointment had been agreed with the LAOOC. The protest of the President of the Organizing Committee, Peter Ueberroth, was unanswered and unheeded.

The main task, however, for psychological pressure, provocations and unequal conditions for Soviet athletes and the athletes from socialist countries was left to "private organizations." Militants from the "Young Americans For Freedom" made no secret of their plans to kidnap Soviet athletes during the Games. But the chief "private" organization was "Ban The Soviets From The Olympic Games Of 1984" — a coal-

ition of 165 ultra-right groups. This grouping comprises, among others, criminals, ex-Nazis and emigrés from the Soviet Union who have betrayed their country. It also incorporates "Omega 7," a terrorist organization of Cuban counter-revolutionaries. This coalition boasted of its task: to unleash terror against athletes from the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community. The idea was to prevent athletes from the USSR and other socialist countries from attending the Los Angeles Olympics or at least to put them at a disadvantage as compared with other participants in the Games.

President Samaranch of the International Olympic Committee stated that "The extremists in California have done enormous harm to the Olympic movement and, of course, to the country that is organizing the Olympic Games. It was their intention — and in this they seem to have succeeded — to insure the non-participation of some of the most important nations in the sporting world. It is hardly a matter for congratulations that they have achieved their goal."

The Reagan Administration is involved with these "California extremists." *The Los Angeles Times* reported that the leaders of the "Ban The Soviets" had received a letter from Michael Deaver, a high ranking White House official, who had assured them that the Administration sympathized with the actions of the coalition. David Balsinger, the leader of the coalition, said on receiving this blessing, that "acts of violence against Soviet athletes and tourists were not excluded."

*Ninety-four year old Ivan S. Dmitriyev leading his physical fitness group on the running track of Luzhniki Stadium.*



Novosti Press Agency



Seven and eight year old girls from Moscow running a 14 kilometer race on Sept. 12, 1982, the All Union Racers' Day in the USSR.

As recently as March 17, members of "Ban The Soviets" coalition were received by Eliot Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles and, according to a *Washington Post* story, secured his backing. It is ironic indeed that a man responsible for human rights in the US State Department should meet with those who intend to violate these rights and who make no secret of their intentions.

A State Department spokesman, John Hughes, in one of his statements, rejected any proposal that the US Administration should take special measures to restrict the activities of the extremist groups. US Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam, speaking on television flatly refused to publicly condemn the bandit-like schemes of fascist-type groups ready to carry out acts of violence against athletes and fans from socialist countries.

The pathological spy hysteria has been taking on Olympic coloring in the last months before the Games. FBI director William Webster has said publicly that the FBI will pay special attention to searching for spies among athletes from socialist countries. Heard over US radio and television is the declaration that terrorist units trained in the USSR are to destroy cruise missiles and Air Force bases and that such units include Olympic athletes.

The story has been taken up by the *New Solidarity* newspaper in New York City. It says that all Soviet sport teams of international class, including nearly the whole of the USSR Olympic squad are made up of career officers from special force units whose job is to assassinate American political and military leaders.

The climate of psychosis, hatred and hostility created around the Los Angeles Olympics is part of the "crusade" against communism proclaimed by President Reagan.

As a West Berlin newspaper has observed, the anti-Soviet, anti-communist hysteria raging in Los Angeles and indeed throughout the state of California in the period preceding the opening of the Games has assumed pathological proportions.

Ashwini Kumar of India, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee went to Los Angeles on instructions from IOC President Juan Samaranch to check on security measures at the Olympic facilities. He described his impressions in an interview with a Tass correspondent as follows:

That the atmosphere in Los Angeles is one of outright

psychological war against the Soviet Union. The attitude of the US press is extremely hostile. Such an atmosphere encourages violence on the part of all kinds of criminal elements. But it is the activities of a group of anti-Soviet organizations that particularly give cause for concern. Mr. Kumar agreed with many athletes and sports officials who say that one feels insecure in Los Angeles. In this connection, the psychological war against the Soviet Union unleashed there and the "Kill a Russian" appeals sound sinister indeed. Apparently Washington stands behind all that, the IOC Vice-President said in conclusion.

In 1980 the authorities of the United States, to promote their political ambitions, deprived their athletes of the joy of competing in the Olympic Games. This time they are again punishing athletes. Some of them, after years of intensive training have been denied the opportunity of displaying their skills in the Olympic events. Others, including US athletes, are experiencing doubt and disappointment, prevented from competing with outstanding masters of modern sport in the Olympic stadiums.

On May 8, the plenary meeting of the USSR National Olympic Committee, attended by heads of all the twenty-nine national federations of different Olympic sports, unanimously passed a decision saying that it would be impossible for Soviet athletes to take part in the summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

It is significant that IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, IOC Vice-President Alexander Siperco, IOC Director Monique Berlioux, ANOC President Mario Vazquez Rana and President of the Union of Federations of Summer Olympic Sports Primo Nebiolo joined all the delegations at the Prague meeting in expressing unanimous confidence that the National Olympic Committees of socialist countries would, as before, efficiently cooperate with the International Olympic Committee, the Association of National Olympic Committees and the international sports federations and work in every way to strengthen the unity of the Olympic movement. No one doubted the sincerity of the motives of the National Olympic Committees of socialist countries nor the fact that they are for the Olympic movement, for the Games, but against the conditions in which Los Angeles is holding the Olympic Games entrusted to it. The sportsmen of socialist countries, who have trained intensively for the 1984 Summer Olympics, but who

# I, Hibakusha

— Howard L. Parsons

*I, Hibakusha.  
Ghost of the holocaust.  
When a red dragonfly flew past  
and settled on a fence before me  
and I reached out to catch it —  
I, the sky falling,  
I, vermilion fire and gray ashes,  
the purple robe of heat,  
white crown of thorns of radiation,  
the triumph, the crucifixion.*

*I, cauterized eyelids of love,  
soul seared in the prison of body,  
in the body of cinders and aching.  
Water! I cry,  
I, the scorched wind, the dried river,  
the sweet flesh of air cremated,  
the deep-red sunset of burns  
on the morning faces of babies,  
eyeballs by the blast protruding,  
aghast at the doom and frozen:  
I, the death's-head of the living.*

*The flash in rainbow colors,  
black rain, moaning wounds,  
springs of blood,  
the girl in the white middy blouse,  
a choir lowly sobbing  
in the stunned railway station,*

*charred children, some at the breast,  
the bones of the little ones sleeping  
in the arms of the playground rubble.  
Granite melting,  
skin stripped and dangling like rags,  
faint print of shadows on the walls,  
heads, limbs, bowels  
strewn here and there,  
the fetid smell of blood,  
and all the oleanders gone.*

*I, the child blind old age weeping.  
I, longest grief, briefest day.  
I, orphan in the home of Hiroshima,  
forlorn under one million suns.  
I, shadow aflame in the center  
of the agony of Nagasaki's desolation,  
the shame, the dark side of our glory.*

*I, the globe exploded to nothing,  
here where the black hole of the present  
sucks up our past river and future,  
and all the hands of the clocks  
are stopped —  
the sunlit river of Jordan  
and the pool of dead sea waters  
of the deep, O bottomless dark abyss.*

*Mankind negated into nothing  
join the spectral light of Hiroshima,  
in the noonday night of Nagasaki.  
Heir of life here and time's matter,  
I, the end of all the beginnings,  
and the end that is no beginning.  
I, the genes without generation.*

*I, Cain strangling brother and sister,  
I, Greek stabbing father and mother,  
I, Herod putting sword to the infants,  
I, the blossom of Alamogordo —  
I, suicide; I, genocide; I, omnicide.  
I, destroyer of Alpha;  
I, Omega.*

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to NWR.*

*Love and hate.  
Life and death.  
Ever — never.  
I, all hope; I, eternal despair;  
I, a universe that makes and unmakes;  
I, the victor twisted into victim;  
I, the ruler, I also the ruins.  
I, all, become nothing,  
here and now, in the atom of Hiroshima,  
in the whirling shells of that world  
where creation circles destruction,  
in the nucleus of Nagasaki,  
in the seeds of darkness and light.*

*I have eaten of the fruit of knowledge,  
it explodes as if split like an atom,  
it falls from my hands, divided,  
mine eyes are now opened, good and evil  
are my burden, I've become like the gods.  
I am naked in this light and this darkness,  
my universe rests in my hands,  
and for me there can be no more resting.*

*I, Hibakusha,  
in my living death I've become one  
with all the living and dead,  
with all history and all time.  
I cry to all my kindred,  
Hibakusha in all the Hiroshimas,  
naked seared ones in all the Nagasakis,  
in the shelterless cities of the world! —*

*Remember the unborn children,  
these your self, very body-and-soul,  
prophecy for the dear dead,  
with a love so compassionate  
nevermore malignant night  
shall parch the throat of the soul,  
nor blind the eyes of the young,  
nor benumb the old to forget;  
this final death shall die  
and the morning dawn forever.*

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will be unable to compete in Los Angeles because of the anti-socialist campaign unleashed in the United States, will take part in major international competitions mostly in the second half of August, not during the Games. The competition will be held in nine socialist countries: Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, the Korean Democratic People's Republic, Mongolia, Poland and the Soviet Union.

This decision was taken at the conference of the sports committees and National Olympic Committees of the socialist countries held in Prague in May, which laid down the main principles of these competitions. It was stressed that these competitions which are traditionally held in socialist countries, are not alternative 23rd Olympic Games. The competitions are

open: Sportsmen and judges from other countries will be able to take part in them. Leaders of the IOC, of international sports associations, of National Olympic Committees and foreign journalists will be invited. These competitions will be held in an atmosphere of friendship and hospitality.

The Soviet and other socialist countries will continue to support the efforts of the IOC and other sports organizations aimed at strengthening the international Olympic movement and will work to preserve its purity and unity.

The Olympic ideals are everlasting and any attempt to flout them are doomed to failure.

We are certain that the Olympics will be restored to normal conditions with the participation of all countries in peace and friendship. □

# "The Threat": What It Is, What It Isn't

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By J. J. Joseph

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Ever since 1917 there have been two approaches to western propaganda about the Soviet Union. One holds that the Soviet Union is very strong. It has more manpower, more tanks, more missiles, more natural resources than the United States. Moreover, it is very aggressive and does not hesitate to use its military power. It is out to bury us. It is out to conquer the world.

The other approach maintains that the Soviet Union is very weak. Its economy does not work. It has to import grain to feed its people. The system incurs long queues waiting to buy shoddy goods, no freedom, anti-Semitism, no initiatives, ethnic antagonisms, and, in general, a miserable life for its citizens alleviated in large part by drunkenness.

For capitalism, this dual propaganda attack on the Soviet Union serves a dual purpose. The threat approach is essential in order to obtain military appropriations. The weakness approach demonstrates that socialism doesn't work.

## Degrading the Soviet Military Machine

Andrew Cockburn's book is a sophisticated application of these contradictory themes as they relate to the Soviet Armed Forces. It is difficult to tell from his account of the Soviet which is worse — the soldiers or the machines. Very little good is said about either. The men are poorly trained. They eat inadequate amounts of poor food. Their toilet facilities are dreadful. Their sleeping quarters are coffin-size. They steal. Almost above all, they get drunk. "We can only guess at the precise effect of the epidemic of alcoholism on the Soviet's ability to fight. The men who fought their way across Europe, from the Volga to Berlin were accompanied not by field kitchens. . . but field stills. . ." (pp. 40-41) They engage in crime. Veterans haze and harass new recruits. Their morale is desperately low. Inefficiency is everywhere. The recruiting of draftees under its conscription system is sloppy and haphazard.

Life is just as difficult for officers. "Let's face it," says a dissident, sitting in his smart northwest Washington apart-

ment, 'for anyone under the rank of general, life is pretty miserable. Even colonels lead a dog's life, since they are continually in terror of their superiors.' " (p. 55) Andrei Sakharov is the hero to this emigré (who never served in the army).

If the situation is outrageous among personnel, the equipment is equally disastrous. The tanks are poorly designed, crudely built, suffer frequent breakdowns and are difficult to repair. So are personnel carriers and armored vehicles. Soviet Air Force planes have all kinds of problems — inadequate speed, maneuverability and combat time. These difficulties apply to every service. The "navy comes equipped with noisy submarines, ships that breakdown after a few days of intensive operations and a limited supply of easily neutralized missiles. . ." (p. 263) Missiles are poor copies of the U.S. versions; many still have liquid fuel systems, others are inoperable.

All is confusion. All is disharmony. There is no unity between the military and the civilian; between senior enlisted men and recruits; between officers and rank; between ethnic groups; between services.

Cockburn affirms that his "book has emphasized the differences between the Soviet armed forces as they really are and as they are portrayed by the military bureaucracy and its allies abroad. The difference can be accounted for by a deliberate and continuous inflation of the threat by the American military." (p. 275)

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*The Threat: Inside The Soviet Military Machine*, by Andrew Cockburn. Random House, New York, 1983, 338 pp., \$16.95.

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But Cockburn is no fool. He knows that it would seem absurd to portray the Red Army as that incompetent and yet not have to account for the obvious. After all, Soviet soldiers did not fail in World War II. Soviet weapons did not fail in Vietnam. Soviet satellites, tracked daily by the U.S., function perfectly well. So at the end of every deluge of deprecation, Cockburn adds an escape clause. For example, at the end of a long exposition on the weaknesses of the Soviet soldiers, he writes,

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“... while this may be true it leaves much unexplained. The Soviet soldier was the ultimate conqueror of Hitler’s legions. The wartime Red Army could produce men who would call down Russian artillery fire on their own positions as they were being overrun by the enemy.” (p. 50) And again, in the chapter on the Soviet system for the mobilization of reserves, Cockburn goes on for page after page about the inefficiencies, the poor training, incompetence, mismanagement and corruption. Only then does he insert two reluctant sentences. “Creaky though it is, the organization does exist. . . In 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union the country did mobilize 5,500,000 men in 8 days.” (p. 116)

The rub is the weight of the words. To the description of how miserable the Soviet soldiers are he devotes 19 pages, more than ten thousand words. In equivocation, he acknowledges one paragraph of 80 words. (Chapter 3, “The Unfortunates,” (pp. 31-51)

Cockburn is quite realistic in his treatment of nuclear missiles. He decries the build-up of overkill on both sides. He ridicules Pentagon plans for war-fighting. He unmasks the “hawk” Caspar Weinberger. He then proceeds to undo all this by equating the nuclear policy of the United States and the Soviet Union and winds up in the display of technical knowledge about the uncertainties and deficiencies of various nuclear weapons. He makes no distinction between the U.S. and Soviet positions on the freeze, nuclear-free zones, first strike, and anti-satellite weapons.

Cockburn is a member of that fraternity of scholar-journalists whose expertise is in military matters. Like his fellow defense analysts, he can hold forth on the advantages of a 105mm grooved tank gun over the larger 125mm smooth bore gun, or the contrasting specifications of a MiG 21 vs. a MiG 23, or the effects of gravitational anomalies on the inertial guidance system of an ICBM flight. A contributing editor of *Defense Week*, he has specialized in military matters for many years.

At the end of Cockburn’s book there are 41 pages of

“notes” which include more than 500 source references and further comments. This section provides the appearance of rigorous scholarship and authenticity. Many reviewers have commented on Cockburn’s scholarship and his “assiduous research,” (*Publisher’s Weekly*, April 29, 1983, p.43), and “strong evidence.” (*Newsweek*, May 16, 1983).

### Gaps in the Research

The praise and the notes, however, merit closer inspection. Cockburn says that “The Soviets publish a deluge of information about their own military affairs. There are 11 military journals and newspapers, a host of minor and more specialized publications, and as many as 500 books on the subject issued every year” (p. 22). Yet he rarely pays any attention to these sources and scarcely refers to the 18 or more volumes of the *Soviet Military Thought* series translated and published under the auspices of the United States Air Force and available from the U.S. Government Printing Office. In H. F. Scott and W. F. Scott’s *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (1981) the bibliography includes four Soviet newspapers, 14 Russian journals and 175 books — more than 95 per cent in the Russian language. In 1982, Myron J. Smith published a 551 page guide to sources in English on the Soviet Army to which Cockburn makes no reference.

When Cockburn refers to the U.S. Armed Forces, he uses government sources from the Department of Defense, Congressional Hearings and Congressional Committee Reports. On the other hand, much of this book about the Soviet armed forces is based on interviews with Soviet emigrés who had done their two-year hitch under Soviet conscription laws. Thus, the most frequent reference in the notes is “personal interview” or “personal communication” or “personal interview conducted under the auspices of the Defense Department.” Cockburn is not the first. In 1980, Richard A. Gabriel wrote *The New Red Legions, an Attitudinal Portrait of the Soviet Soldier*. This was the first large study based on questionnaires and interviews with emigrés who had served in the Soviet Armed Forces. Gabriel acknowledges that “this fact alone implies a high degree of social alienation that would. . . bias their views” (Gabriel, p. 13). Like Gabriel, Cockburn also goes to considerable lengths to defend this obviously prejudiced source of information. Since the Soviet Union has universal conscription from the ages of 18 to 20, he reasoned emigrés would provide a first-hand description of life in the armed forces, a much closer view than could be obtained from other intelligence methods.

The reader interested in the source of a particular statement is left with the decision to turn to the “Notes” section, where the reference may or may not be found. For some statements which are practically tautological the sources are carefully provided. For others which cry out for documentation, proof is nowhere to be found. Sometimes Cockburn converts allegations (in the notes) to facts (in the text) (compare for example pp. 256 and 321).

Not all of Cockburn’s sources are available to the ordinary reader (e.g. Rand Corporation Paper, R-278, Boeing Corporation Research Paper DG-33551-025-2R or Tactical Technology Center Ref. No. FY 7615-78-05106.) On occasion Cockburn quotes himself as a source (his TV documentary). Sometimes to make a point he uses far-out-of-date material. For example: In demonstrating that even the Russians have pointed out that U.S. estimates of Soviet military strength are

really exaggerated, he quotes Defense Minister Zhukov saying to General Nathan F. Twining, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "I think you have the reports too high in estimating our strength." (pp. 275-276) This conversation took place in 1956.

### A False Equation

Cockburn discusses at length the Soviet "military-industrial complex" (p. 78 ff). David Holloway, a leading expert on Soviet military power and author of *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (Yale University Press, 1983) questions the very existence of a military-industrial complex there. "Military power has been of central importance for the Soviet State and its survival, but this has not given the armed forces or the defense industry a political position of commensurate significance" (Holloway, p. 156). In point of fact, there is no military-industrial complex, as we understand it, in the Soviet Union.

Cockburn reveals his bias with misleading insinuations: "Although it is hard to find examples of scientists and engineers actually being executed for failure to perform. . ." (p. 84).

Beyond the main theme of belittling Soviet military capacity Cockburn's book contains two interconnected themes: (a) equating the United States and the Soviet Union and (b) antagonism against all military establishments — Soviet and American.

Cockburn's joint antipathy to matters military and matters Soviet is sprinkled throughout. On military matters in both countries he writes, "The desire for the new weapon or a longer production line comes first; only afterward is the threat discovered that the weapon is supposed to meet." (pp. 14 and 16) But "The two sides have more in common than the way they produce weapons." (p. 95) ". . . behind these immensely destructive weapons, there lie organizations both in Russia and America, which foul up on schedules, make fraudulent claims to their governments and incur cost overruns." (p. 88) Ever the anti-military zealot, Cockburn writes, "Military doctrine tends to evolve in response to demands from generals for an excuse to justify whatever they happen to be interested in spending money on, and the Soviet marshals and generals are no exception." (p. 239)

Part of the book is devoted to frequent criticisms of the U.S. military, particularly inter-service rivalry and methods of procurement. (See p. 150 ff) Standing alone these portions of the book are informative and useful. He writes that the "mystique surrounding modern high technology, defense hardware. . . makes it difficult for the lay person to question whether the Emperor has, in reality, any clothes. Look-down radar, all-weather bombing systems, or beyond-visual-range missiles appear to embody such arcane concepts (not to mention terminology) that the claims advanced for them by their military and commercial proponents all too often go unchallenged." (p. 156)

Cockburn employs the strange logic of showing up the Pentagon to make clear how deplorable conditions are in the Red Army. If the T 64 tank is inoperable, then just look at the M 1. If officers in the Red Army are promoted through bureaucratic maneuvers rather than military merit, then just look at the career of Alexander Haig. (p. 64) If Soviet soldiers are often alcoholics, then just look at the drug addiction of U.S. GIs.

In order to further prove his point that the two systems are the same, he quotes Pierre M. Sprey, former Pentagon official, "If you stop to think about it, you'll realize that our defense department buys weapons by almost the same system that the Soviets do. That is, we have a very large state bureaucracy that buys weapons from another state bureaucracy. For in most respects, Lockheed, Raytheon, Westinghouse, Boeing and Northrop are extensions of the state." (pp. 94-95)

Cockburn is such a staunch critic of the waste and foibles of the Pentagon, that he cannot imagine the Soviet Union's military machine to be otherwise in orientation or performance. Thus he constantly produces the phenomenon of the mirror image. If we have a military-industrial complex, so must they. Above all, if we have an aggressive military policy — first-strike nuclear weapons, a Rapid Deployment Force, overseas bases, so must they be aggressive.

Cockburn does not address the question of foreign policy at all. "For the sake of argument," he writes in the absence of evidence, "it might be useful to disregard the vexed matter of Soviet intentions and to assume, instead, that the Soviets are indeed bent on world domination through forcible means." (pp. 6-7) Nowhere is there a reference to scores of Soviet peace initiatives, or to the substantial evidence of the defensive character of the Soviet forces.

This is not to detract from the merit of Cockburn's exposé of threat inflation and debunking of Pentagon propaganda. One right-wing critic of *The Threat* even states that "the real agenda of this book is an attack not on the Soviet but on the American military establishment." (*Commentary*, July 1983, p. 80.)

### Wrong Priorities

Cockburn's preoccupation with military efficiency puts a priority of means over ends, of tactics over strategy, of battles over wars, of generals over people, of form over content. He quotes favorably a Nazi general: "At Budapest (in January 1945) I attacked 45 Russian divisions with about 7 to 9 of my divisions. It worked pretty well. If I had had two more armored divisions I could have cleaned up the whole Budapest area." (p. 169) That quote is reminiscent of General Westmoreland asking for another 200,000 troops for Vietnam. It also puts to mind the final triumphant sentence of the U.S. Air Force Monograph on the Vietnam war: "Air supremacy had been achieved!" (Vol. I, p. 188) For all the world as though the Wehrmacht was not routed by the Red Army in 1945 or the last U.S. soldiers, diplomats and CIA civilians were not lifted from the roof of the Saigon Embassy by helicopter thirty years later. It is important to know about the interior of gun barrels but it is more important to know about the politics behind all weapons. There is no mention of the classic maxim of Clausewitz, let alone the peace precepts of our "foe" — the Soviet Union.

Is it possible for a book to be anti-militarist and yet not pro-peace? *The Threat* demonstrates how this can be the case. Cockburn's book does no service to the cause of peace. His technical competence in matters military is nullified by his bias in matters historical. His polemical talents are neutralized by his transparent prejudice in politics. A great pity. □

## IMPRESSIONS & COMMUNICATIONS



# Thoughts on Hunger

By Bryan Johns

It was not the White House cynicism about charity soup kitchens that brought back the memories. Like barracks language, when you hear it for a few years, you get used to it. What did it was Baloney Joe's appeal, which intruded on my consciousness at 7:00 A.M., when the clock radio gets me up. Please help us, said the man from the famous shelter on Burnside Street. He described an everyday scene, an old woman pushing a grocery cart under the bridge, trying to survive another night in the subfreezing air.

Sailors who come to Portland know about this because often their ships pass under the bridges. Russian seamen are reminded of the Nazi invasion, when people lived in dugouts with little to eat. Once I gave a Soviet English teacher a tour of the Washington Park area, with its tennis courts and beautiful rose gardens. She glowed with admiration at the fine houses that Americans have. But I didn't show you, I told her, the people who live on the street and sleep under the bridges. I was not prepared for the reaction: she cried out like a creature wounded, and looked at me in horror. How can that be possible? Why is it permitted? It's true, I said. She turned to a Soviet first mate, a man who knows this port well, and questioned him rapidly in Russian. He smiled sadly and nodded in affirmation.

Baloney Joe reminds me of the men who came to our house when I was a boy. We lived just off Route 66 in Southern California. Even then it was a

four-lane highway. Along it passed a stream of refugees from the foreclosures and bankruptcy courts of the Great Depression. Some came in ancient cars, some on foot carrying boxes or bundles. Among them were veterans of the First World War, who learned through their organizations about Dad's little disability pension. From time to time a hungry ex-soldier would be at the door. Mother fed them, always asking Dad's permission. But if our meals got skimpy, Dad was hard to find when the man came to the door. We had a few goats and chickens, but the milk and eggs stretched only so far.

I never knew hunger until I was a teenager seeking work in a strange city. That frightening experience was mercifully brief. But the Second World War produced indelible memories. At one cadet training base the cooks were former hotel chefs. Never before had I tasted such wonderful food.

Later, with a bomb group training for combat, the food at the officers' mess became virtually inedible — tough stringy meat and tasteless vegetables of poor quality. The restaurants in town were too far away for more than an occasional visit. But there was a flight crew mess, open 24 hours a day to accommodate returning crews. The entire menu was toast, coffee, and fried eggs. I had them over easy, over hard, sunny side up, and scrambled. But the mess officer and the top administrative officers of the base ate like royalty in a specially partitioned area. This continued

to the end of our training. By that time someone had got word to the Inspector General, and as we left for the staging base the investigators arrived, arrested the mess officer and his cronies and scheduled the courts-martial. As for us, we were quite healthy. My daughter, a health worker, tells me that the egg has all the vitamins except C. But for two years after the war I could not look at another one.

A few weeks' training in Cuba was a welcome break in the fried egg regimen. But when we visited Havana, our eyes fell on scenes of deprivation and misery that we had not witnessed even in the depths of our recent depression. Imagine our astonishment when people told us that the country was enjoying its greatest prosperity in many years. The pay for risking our necks was pretty good for that day, and the doors of Havana's expensive hotels, restaurants and night clubs opened for us. But quickly we came upon doors that did not open. We sought to visit Varadero Beach, the famous beauty spot of that beautiful country. Forget it, said the brass, it's for important people. Today, I hear, the beach is owned by the public, and the palatial homes of American millionaires are places of rest for working people.

We were airplane GIs, and our place was the city. Each block seemed to be the territory of another pimp, another group of beggars, another assortment of street salesmen. It must have been the shame and anger at seeing their women sold to foreigners that produced, ten years later, the remarkable bravery of the bearded soldiers led by the modern Alexander Nevsky, Fidel Castro.

As we finished training in the States my brother returned from Europe. He had flown in every major battle on the Western front, and after the German surrender he found himself transporting former prisoners and slave laborers of the Nazis back to their homes. Food relief was not well organized, and often his passengers were famished. He formed the habit of loading his rucksack with chocolate bars and other snacks at the PX and the commissary — his First Lieutenant's salary would stand that — and distributing the food to his passengers before he climbed into the cockpit. Toward the end of our brief visit the radio told us that we had entered the world of nuclear fission, and 100,000

souls at Hiroshima had left that world.

o

A year ago I visited a museum in Kiev. One of the exhibits was a group photo of the most decorated Soviet generals of the Second World War. Our companion and interpreter, Natalya Semnikhina, pointed proudly to the figure of her father, Pavel Batov, whose 65th Army "slammed the door" at Stalin-grad, trapping Hitler's 6th Army. The names of the famous generals began to come back to me. Which one is Chui-kov? Here. And Bagramyan? Here. And this must be Zhukov. Yes. The name reminded me of two documents I was carrying in my pocket. I handed them to Natasha and she read to the little group:

The further waging of war is only possible if the entire Wehr-

macht is to be fed. At Russia's expense. When this is done several million people will, of course, die of starvation, because we will get everything we need from the country. Hermann Goering, 1941.

o

Supplies of milk for children up to the age of 8 must be organized. Order Maj.-Gen. Zhizhin to set 25 lorries aside for the central Berlin dairy plant for transporting milk to Berlin. Every 5 days the progress of this order must be reported to the Military Council of the Front. G. Zhukov, Commanding, First Byelorussian Front. May 1945.

Natasha seemed quite matter-of-fact about it. The drama that we hear in Baloney Joe's message was absent.

That may seem strange to my fellow Americans. In the dog-eat-dog struggle for survival that we call free enterprise, gifts to charity for food and shelter usually come from people torn between conscience and fear of the future. They are little miracles for which the charity workers must daily beg. They beg to save lives, and in the cruel winter of 1984 many have not been saved.

To Soviet people, food and shelter are simply the products of good will and common sense, of organization and work. The children of Berlin must have milk. Secure the necessary supplies from the dairies, and see that they are properly distributed. What is extraordinary about that? □

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## Soviet Agriculture: Fact vs. Fiction

By Lem Harris

*Prospects for Soviet Agriculture in the 1980s*, by D. Gale Johnson and Karen M. Brooks. Indiana University Press, 1983.

This study is described in its preface as being "the culmination of three decades of research on the economics of Soviet agriculture" by the Department of Economics of the University of Chicago. Such prolonged research may have been going on, but the material in this volume depends heavily on recent reports printed in the Soviet

press. Those familiar with Soviet newspapers know that their reportage is remarkably candid, in fact replete with critical articles reflecting the rough spots of an expanding economy. The greater part of Johnson and Brooks' study expands on these problems with but passing mention of major achievements.

The opening chapter sets the book's tone. Johnson describes an incident which occurred during his visit to Central Asia in 1981. Near Alma Ata, his group was taken for a picnic in the

countryside. There had been rain, and the group's bus got stuck in the mud on a dirt road. From this he concludes that "The Soviet rural road system can only be described as a disgrace, the result of decades of socialist neglect." A sweeping conclusion from one incident.

On this point, the authors might better have used material on rural roads which appeared in the Soviet press. The authors were familiar with the article, since they quoted other portions of it. It states that all-weather roads serving the farms are a basic factor in resolving rural economic and social problems. "As the road network expands, the need... for cultural and service facilities in every rural community disappears." The article adds that there is a national program which encourages every collective and state farm to improve 8 to 12 kilometres of interfarm roads each year. The 10th Five Year Plan, 1981-85, calls for the building of 12,200 kilometres of hard-surfaced roads serving farms in the Non-Black Earth region alone. This hardly sounds like "socialist neglect."

As mentioned, the study does a pretty thorough job of delineating the areas of Soviet agriculture that call for improvement. The list is formidable!

Item: Substantial waste of fertilizer between factory and field due to lack of rail hoppers, trucks with tight bodies, and, most important, a lack of storage

buildings. The problem is very well known to the Soviet authorities and currently large expenditures are being made for improvement of transport and storage.

Item: The hay crop. Hay of course is a major forage crop for cattle in northern climates. The authors cite figures taken from both US and USSR sources which compare hay tonnage per hectare of three Canadian provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta with the Central Non-Black Earth region. Climatic and rainfall averages are fairly similar. Results for tame (cultivated) hay are given as 3.81 tons for the provinces and 2.04 tons for the Non-Black Earth region.

Item: Summer fallow. Both countries make extensive use of this cropping method in areas of low rainfall. It consists of planting a grain crop on a given field every other year. In the alternate years, the land is kept bare, leaving trash and clods on the surface to prevent wind erosion, and thus gaining most of the rainfall of two years for a single crop. This is the practice in the virgin lands of Kazakhstan where rainfall can be as low as ten inches in a year. The authors state that only 11 per cent of the Soviet dry grain area is put to fallow whereas their best known agronomist, T. Maltsev, has recommended that 20 to 25 per cent of such cropland should be fallowed.

The authors make a big splash about small collective farms which they say are designated by Soviet authorities as "futureless." Their account is hair-raising.

"In recent years nearly 350,000 small rural communities have been designated as 'futureless.' Their population numbers more than 15 million. . . . Apparently all settlements with less than 200 residents are futureless, and some with a larger population may also be cast into limbo. . . . How much loyalty, dedication, and hard work can a society expect when it washes its hands of 350,000 communities?"

Here again, a fuller quotation from the same Soviet press source tells an entirely different story.

Under the heading *How Should Rural Areas Be Reconstructed?*, the article reports a survey of 2,828 communities with fewer than 20 households each. Of 17,000 households polled, 6,200 — or 39 per cent — expressed a desire to move to a community slated for devel-

opment. At least this percentage did not fear the authors' "limbo." It is of interest that most expressed a desire for new individual housing.

The article states that the resettlement of many thousands of families in larger communities where modern conveniences are more available is proceeding apace. It adds that it is not considered advisable "at present or in the near future to concentrate the entire populations of collective or state farms in single settlements."

"The elimination of 'futureless' communities. . . does not necessarily mean that the old villages will disappear. . . . In suburban areas it would be a good idea to turn over some of these villages, with accompanying plots of land, to the dacha or orchard cooperatives of industrial enterprises and state institutions." It seems fair to say that Johnson and Brooks' handling of the "futureless" communities indicates that their anti-Soviet slip is showing.

The authors decry the deliberate Soviet policy of setting prices paid farmers for their products at a higher level than their costs. Likewise they criticize consumer food prices for being held for decades at price levels considerably below costs to the state. Certainly American farmers would dearly love a government policy which maintained farm commodity prices at parity levels, that is above the costs of well-run farms. American consumers, too, would not be unhappy to find prices in supermarkets kept stable and far below current inflated levels. As an example, a kilo of dark bread in the Soviet Union costs the equivalent of about 30 cents, and that price has not changed for the past 30 years.

But the authors complain that stable food prices accompanied by rising consumer incomes result in too many empty store shelves as shoppers buy out available stocks. They also criticize collective farmers for taking advantage of shortages by charging higher prices in the supplementary public markets where products from their individual plots are on sale. "Soviet agriculture is high cost agriculture," they say. "In 1981, consumers paid no more than half the cost of their meat and milk. . . ." They estimated that this policy cost the state "approximately \$50 billion at the official rate of exchange."

Far from evidence of bad fiscal policy, stable farm and consumer prices in-

dicating the advantage of a managed, socialist economy. A state that owns all means of production, all transportation, all distribution services, can elect to subsidize popular needs with the earnings of all the industries, railroads, mines, etc.

Though emphasizing that the performance of Soviet agriculture has in recent years been lower than projected levels, the book does indicate that Soviet grain production has been fully adequate for all human consumption needs. The shortage has been confined to needs for feeding growing herds of cattle. They report that some crops have exceeded the state plan, notably cotton from the irrigated lands of Central Asia, and enormous increases in egg production.

The authors make no mention of the significant change in national diet that has been occurring. During the last two decades, the national per capita consumption of bread and potatoes has fallen sharply. Sugar has remained level. But vegetables, melons, fruit, meat, milk and eggs have risen sharply. Accepting all the weaknesses of Soviet agriculture of which the Soviet leadership is fully aware, this significant improvement in the national diet is evidence that farm production even at present levels is meeting the basic needs of the people.

As to the quality of life in rural communities, which the book terms "stark," there is no evidence that the authors personally visited such communities. Tours of Americans in recent years to collective and state farms have been eye-openers. Most American visitors have been astonished to find the educational, medical and recreational facilities available on all collective farm communities. Far from being "stark," life in these communities has reached the point where the cultural side of life approaches that offered by the cities. Even income of collective farm members is now roughly the same as industrial workers. Everyone has vacations, often spent in travel to seaside and mountain resorts.

This book fails to reflect the actualities of life in the Soviet countryside. □

*LEM HARRIS is a writer and expert on agriculture, who contributes frequently to the pages of New World Review.*

# The Afghan Struggle Reflected in Literature

By Leon Baya

*A Tree in the Center of Kabul*, by Alexander Prokhanov. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1983. 294 pp., paper. (Available in the US in an abridged version, published in *Soviet Literature* magazine, Issue 7, 1983.)

What society other than a socialist-humanist one, in the midst of a fierce counter-revolution, would profoundly concern itself with the daily hunger, the cold and flimsy shacks, the illnesses, and the tattered clothing of the long-oppressed poor? What society other than a socialist-humanist one would immediately provide free bread, decent shelter and heat, medical aid? What other society would distribute land to the tenants of a feudal regime, or initiate, as well, a literacy campaign to enlighten the 85 percent or so who could neither read nor write? Contrast these solid achievements begun by the Afghan revolution, aided by the Soviet Union, for example with the brutal invasion of tiny Grenada — a nation that had begun to bring the same kinds of benefits for its masses — and you have the difference between socialism and capitalism — imperialism “writ large”!

In addition to describing realistic war scenes and the rallying of the people to a recognition of their enemy's goals, Prokhanov weaves in a wholly believable love story between the journalist-narrator, alienated from his former wife whose love had turned to apathy, and a dedicated Russian secretary-translator. When they gradually fall in love, they agree to meet again, assuming he will survive his front-line assignments — highly doubtful — very near a tree in the center of Kabul. This tree and its location — in the heart of the city — is the author's symbol of the staunchness and the solidity of their love and of the irreversibility of the Afghan revolution.

The novel begins symbolically as

well. Two dozen tractors built by Soviet workers as a token of friendship, are to be transported to a remote village in Afghanistan, where plows and oxen have been used for farming for generations, and where land has been given to the peasants, land taken from runaway landlords. The perilous and long journey over mountains and valleys provides the symbolic thread of friendship. On the way, the tractor caravan is attacked by traitors posing as “merchants,” but the tractors arrive, although several are ruined.

Volkov, the narrator, wants to probe why some poor peasants fight for their oppressors; he is interested in their psychology. When he interviews them, he understands why: The misguided peasant is “illiterate. . . ever since childhood he has received his bread from his feudal lord, and he has been grateful to him as to God.” Furthermore, he has been lied to: he will be summarily executed when captured. Thus, he is “the landlord's slave, the landlord's shadow.” Volkov finds a similarity of this unthinking illiterate to those often better educated servicemen, who “work on atomic-powered aircraft carriers, sending dive bombers over the smooth surface of the Persian Gulf, and (manning) Pershing missile sites in Europe.” These soldiers have been infected with a constant, daily dose of anti-Soviet venom. Our task, it seems to me, is to expose this kind of brainwashing, just as has been done so well in Afghanistan.

Volkov describes the distribution of land to the landless: “They wept, pressed the stamped papers to their lips, ran with the surveyor's chains to measure their new allotments, fell down and kissed the furrows.”

The author, from personal experience, for this is basically a true war story, documents the criminal role played by our CIA in the counter-revolution. Initially, their “fifth column”

traitors tried to create confusion through massive noise-making machines, through the spread of rumors and lies, by carrying out vicious attacks and bombings. The author describes the horror of seeing the newly-built but burnt schools in the outskirts, with teachers tortured and killed, of women being attacked and raped for choosing to adopt modern dress, of threats to mul-lahs who remained, in the majority, loyal to the government.

When Babrak Karmal called upon the Soviet Union for aid, as he was entitled to do under the terms of their mutual defense treaty, he did so because CIA-controlled Amin tried to reverse the revolution begun so hopefully in April 1979.

Today, Afghan fighters provide the main support of the people's army and defense system. Just as the US imperialists suffered a grievous defeat in Vietnam and in Cuba, they are facing the same ignoble fate here. For Afghanistan is a land of optimistic people, a land freed from feudal lords, profit-mad merchants and a theocracy; today religion is able to operate freely.

This fine novel will make you acutely aware of the initial problems, the struggles, the heroism of both Afghan and Soviet fighters in the field, in their firm resolution to retain and expand their revolution. It is also an extremely absorbing story on the human level.

This book deserves a wide readership for its truth and its deep, valid emotions. Prokhanov is a masterful writer. □

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LEON BAYA, college teacher and labor activist, has contributed many book reviews to *NWR's* pages.

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