

Nature, Society, and Thought

**NST**

---

**a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism**

---

EDITOR: Erwin Marquit (physics, Univ. of Minnesota)

MANUSCRIPT EDITOR: Leo Auerbach (English education, retired,  
Jersey City State College)

EDITORIAL STAFF: Gerald M. Erickson, April Ane Knutson, Doris  
Grieser Marquit (BOOK REVIEW EDITOR)

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

Jan Carew (African American studies, Northwestern Univ.)

Gerald M. Erickson (classical studies, Univ. of Minnesota)

Morton H. Frank (physiology)

Viktoria Hertling (German exile & Holocaust literature, Univ. of  
Nevada, Reno)

Gerald Horne (African American studies, Univ. of North Carolina)

Leola A. Johnson (communications, Macalester College)

April Ane Knutson (French literature, Univ. of Minnesota)

Prasad Venugopal (physics, Univ. of Detroit Mercy)

James Lawler (philosophy, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo)

Sara Fletcher Luther (political sociology)

Doris Grieser Marquit (literature, women's studies)

Michael Parenti (political science)

Epifanio San Juan Jr. (cultural studies, Philippines Cultural Studies  
Center, Storrs, CT)

José A. Soler (labor education, Univ. of Massachusetts, Dartmouth)

Ethel Tobach (comparative psychology, City Univ. of New York)

VOL. 17, NO. 4 (OCTOBER 2004) Sent to press February 26, 2005

Copyright © Marxist Educational Press

All rights reserved

Cover design by Prockat

*NST: NATURE, SOCIETY, AND THOUGHT* (ISSN 0890-6130). Published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by MEP Publications, University of Minnesota, Physics Building, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *NST: Nature, Society, and Thought*, University of Minnesota, Physics Building, 116 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112.

*Subscriptions.* U.S.A., one year, individuals \$15, institutions \$28; two years, individuals \$28, institutions \$56. Other countries, add \$5 for postage for each year. Single copies (postpaid): individuals \$6.50, institutions \$11.50.

Subscription and editorial address: *NST*, University of Minnesota, Physics Building, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112 (tel. 612-922-7993).

Contents are indexed in *Sociological Abstracts* and *Alternative Press Index*. A complete index of all articles ever published in *Nature, Society, and Thought* is given on <http://www.umn.edu/home/marqu002>.

### Information for Contributors

*Nature, Society, and Thought* welcomes contributions representing the creative application of methods of dialectical and historical materialism to all fields of study. We also welcome contributions not explicitly employing this methodology if the content or subject matter is in an area of special importance to our readers. Submissions will be reviewed in accordance with refereeing procedures established by the Editorial Board. Manuscripts will be acknowledged on receipt, but cannot be returned. Proposals for special issues or sections are also welcomed.

Submit articles, with a 100-word abstract, in word-processor format to [marqu002@tc.umn.edu](mailto:marqu002@tc.umn.edu) or on disk. Please also send one hard copy to *NST*, University of Minnesota, Physics Building, 116 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112. Normal length of articles is between 3,000 and 10,000 words. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the MEP Publications Documentation Style Guide (see <http://www.umn.edu/home/marqu002/mepstyle.htm>). Citations should follow the author-date system, with limited use of endnotes for discursive matter, as specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition.

Unless otherwise arranged, manuscripts should be submitted with the understanding that upon acceptance for publication the authors will transfer the copyright to *NST*, while retaining the right to include the submission in books under their authorship.

# CONTENTS

## Vol. 17, No. 4 (2004)

### ARTICLES

*David Schweickart*, Successor-System Theory as an  
Orienting Device: Trying to Understand China 389

*Jeffrey Surovell*, Russia after the Fall of the Soviet Union:  
A Case of Capitalist Dependency 413

### MARXIST FORUM 449

Presentation by the Iraqi Communist Party at the  
International Meeting of Communist and Workers  
Parties, Athens, 8–10 October 2004 451

*Li Shenming*, Socialism over a Century: Retrospect and  
Prospect 459

*Vladimiro Giacché*, War against the Truth 481

Visit of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to Cuba,  
12–13 December 2004 497

### BOOK REVIEWS

April A. Knutson, *Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin  
America and the Caribbean*, edited by Jennifer  
Browdy de Hernandez 501

AUTHOR AND TITLE INDEX TO VOLUME 17 506

ABSTRACTS (in English and French) 509



# Successor-System Theory as an Orienting Device: Trying to Understand China

David Schweickart

## *Background*

My interest in China was rekindled several years ago by an invitation to a conference, “Modernization, Globalization and China’s Path to Economic Development,” held in Hangzhou, July 2002. The conference was organized by Cao Tian Yu, a philosopher of science at Boston University and his wife, Lin Chun of the London School of Economics—both deeply concerned about the future of China. It was attended by a number of Western leftists (Samir Amin, Perry Anderson, Robin Blackburn, and I); by China specialist Joseph Fewsmith; by representatives from Singapore, Taiwan, and India; by representatives from China’s developing “New Left” (among them Wang Hui, whose book *China’s New Order* was recently published by Harvard University Press [2003]); by the president of Hangzhou College of Commerce (where the event was held); and by three retired prominent government officials, among them Du Runsheng, a principal architect of China’s agricultural reform of the late 70s and early 80s.

Uppermost in the minds of most of the participants, at least those from outside China, was the capitalism or socialism question. Does “socialism with Chinese characteristics” designate a legitimate form of socialism, or is it merely a phrase to cloak a capitalist restoration? Opinions on this issue were decidedly

mixed. A surprisingly large number of Chinese participants (surprising to me at least) held to the latter view.

I am not so sure. I cannot claim to be an expert on China. The Hangzhou conference was my first and only visit to that country. But the research I have done since the conference, from the perspective of successor-system theory, makes me hesitate to join the chorus.

I have long been interested in China. Like so many other Western New Leftists in the early 70s, I became fascinated by the Cultural Revolution, which seemed at the time to represent a heroic attempt to break from the Soviet model of economic development and from the bureaucratic structures of the Communist Party. Although set in motion by Mao, this was primarily a movement of youth, full of moral outrage and impatient with slow transformation—as were we in those days. With “politics in command”—not economics—an attempt was underway to create a radically new, deeply egalitarian society, which, among other things, was to break down the division between town and country, break down the division between intellectual and manual labor, and put the masses in charge of their own destiny. For those of us in the antiwar movement, who hated state bureaucracy as much as capitalism, and who were as young and energetic and impatient as our Chinese counterparts, the Cultural Revolution was a siren song.

For me, however, there was cognitive dissonance. For the research I was doing on economically viable, morally desirable alternatives to capitalism pointed in a different direction. I was becoming increasingly convinced that markets were not, *per se*, antithetical to socialism, and that, on the contrary, a viable socialism would have to be a form of market socialism. Despite the moral appeal, Maoist economics did not look promising.

So I had decidedly mixed feelings when Deng Xiaoping and his allies wrested control from the “Gang of Four,” then launched a dramatic series of reforms, breaking up the rural communes, instituting in their place the “household responsibility system,” and gradually giving more and more prominence to market mechanisms and incentives, particularly in rural China, where tens of thousands of village and township enterprises soon blossomed.

These reforms were, in my judgment, a stunning success. Never before in human history have so many people been lifted out of dire poverty so quickly. (Between 1979 and 1986 the number of rural Chinese living in poverty declined from more than 200 million to 70 million (Dréze and Sen 1989, 216) Moreover, since the major beneficiaries of the early reforms were peasants, the income gap between town and country narrowed, and China—despite the emergence of some rich peasants—became even more egalitarian than before.

In my view, the results of this unprecedented experiment constituted exceedingly impressive evidence in support of market socialism. The reforms were clearly socialist. The land, for example, remained public land. Plots were merely leased long-term to families. Hence rich peasants could not buy out poorer ones and consolidate their holdings. Village and township enterprises, which were so important to rural economic growth, were also public enterprises—albeit structured differently from the state-owned enterprises that provided virtually all the employment in urban areas. Unlike state-owned enterprises, the township and village enterprises operated in a market environment. They were profit-making enterprises, the proceeds of which belonged to the communities.

These reforms did not go beyond the basic parameters of socialism (unless one insists dogmatically that market socialism is an oxymoron). And they worked. However, as both critics and supporters of market reforms had predicted, the reforms did not stop with township and village enterprises and the household responsibility system. In the mid-80s, market reforms were extended to urban areas, and “socialist” strictures were relaxed: foreign capital was invited in, some capitalist businesses were permitted, some state-owned enterprises were privatized, and Chinese millionaires began to make their appearance. Inequalities began to worsen, as did unemployment and corruption. In the wake of a nasty bout of inflation, a student prodemocracy movement was joined by increasingly discontented workers, provoking the bloody events of 4 June 1989.

After Tiananmen, the Western Left pretty much lost interest in China. Today, in the minds of most, China is just another brutal,

exploitative, authoritarian regime.<sup>1</sup> Call it state capitalist. Call it Stalinist. Call it Stalinist-capitalist. You can even call it “socialism with Chinese characteristics” if you wish—if you put scare quotes around “socialism.” Who cares?

And yet—history did not stop in 1989, in China or elsewhere. The countries of Eastern Europe broke away from the Soviet Union, and saw their economies collapse. The Soviet Union proceeded to disintegrate. China did not. Far from it. In 2002, the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) managed a peaceful change of leadership, transferring power to a fourth generation of leaders.<sup>2</sup> As Hu Jintao, Wen Jibao, and the other new leaders survey their country now, what do they see? What do we see?

We—Westerners in general, and Western leftists in particular—see a lot of negatives. (I am not thinking here of Western businessmen, who see boundless opportunities, and who are now investing in China in record amounts.)

*Obscenely conspicuous consumption on the part of Chinese nouveaux riches*

In Hangzhou, for example, where the “Globalization and China’s Path” conference was held, Huang Qiuling, forty-five-year-old founder of a Chinese tourism empire, has constructed for himself a private house—a \$10 million replica of the White House, which includes an Oval Office, in which every detail has been immaculately reproduced, from the \$60,000 baroque sofa to the U.S. presidential seal (Beech 2002).<sup>3</sup>

*Legions of sweatshops*

The *Washington Post* reports the case of Wang Xiao, who worked in a Taiwanese sneaker factory set up on the mainland:

I started at 7:30 a.m. and took an hour break for lunch at noon. At 6 we had another hour for dinner, and after that there were the night shifts. It was such an exhausting job. I worked until 2 or 3 in the morning. If the next day was a holiday, we would work till 4 a.m. (Pan 2002)



Moreover, the fumes from the glue she was using were toxic—slowly destroying her nervous system. She is now confined to her bed—and has accumulated medical bills that have knocked her family back into debt and destitution.

*Large and growing income inequality*

Following an initial narrowing of the income gap between town and country, the overall trend toward greater equality has been reversed. Inequalities have been increasing rapidly—between rural and urban residents, among regions, between men and women, among the citizenry generally. Yukon Huang, former director of the World Bank's China Programme, reports that China's Gini coefficient, which is used to measure overall inequality, used to be much better than Asian levels, but "it has doubled over the last ten or fifteen years. No country has changed that magnitude of inequality so quickly" (cited in Xu Binglan 2004).<sup>4</sup>

China has many other unattractive features, well known to all of us:

- Widespread use of the death penalty (although not, it should be noted, for political crimes).
- Serious environmental degradation.<sup>5</sup>
- Tight control of all media, mass or otherwise.
- Very little of what we think of as civil society: independent trade unions, environmental organizations, religious groups, etc.<sup>6</sup>

These are the negatives. The Chinese leadership is more likely to accentuate the positive.

First of all, they can point to a period of political and social stability that has been anything but normal for China. We should recall that the twentieth century began in China with the Boxer Rebellion against foreign rule and privilege, which led to the occupation and looting of Peking by foreign troops. The first half of the century witnessed warlordism, the Shanghai massacre and other anti-Communist extermination campaigns, the Japanese

occupation, the Rape of Nanking, civil war, then revolution. During the second half of the century, with the CPC in control, there occurred:

- The violent repression of counterrevolutionaries in the aftermath of the revolution, which claimed the lives of as many as two million people—a repression provoked in no small measure by the U. S. decision to intervene in the Korean civil war, which itself claimed staggering numbers of Chinese casualties (among them Mao Zedong’s own son).
- A “Great Leap Forward” in the 1950s that was at least partially responsible for one of the worst famines in human history. Deaths have been estimated to be as many as ten million.
- A Cultural Revolution from 1965 to 1975 that threw the country into turmoil. Again death and destruction (although on not on the scale of the earlier catastrophes).
- An unsettling power struggle in the late seventies that saw the Maoist “Gang of Four” deposed and Deng Xiaoping—Mao’s long-time antagonist—come to power.
- In 1989, on Deng’s orders, the Tiananmen massacre.

It is no small thing, if you happen to be living there, that China has been peaceful since then. Not entirely peaceful. There have been many strikes and worker demonstrations—but none provoking a massive crackdown. (The Chinese media report that some 58,000 incidents of social unrest occurred in 2003.<sup>7</sup>) And as the tourist handbooks all point out, China has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, and the fewest policemen per capita.

In addition to political and social stability, the Chinese leaders can (and do) point to an impressive list of economic accomplishments:

- Since the reform process began in 1978, the Chinese economy has grown at a rate of more than nine percent per year. Its GDP has doubled, then doubled again, then doubled

again. China is now the sixth largest economy in the world, and remains the most dynamic.

- China's per capita income, which was \$168 in 1979, has now reached \$1000.
- Some 400 million people have been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1981. Indeed, since the opening of its economy in 1978, China has accounted for three-quarters of all the people of the world moving out of poverty (Watts 2004).
- Life expectancy has increased since 1990 from 68.5 to 71.8, seven years above the developing-country world average. India's life expectancy, by contrast, is 63.3.
- In 1986 the central government mandated free education through grade nine. While the mandate has not been fully implemented, 85 percent of Chinese teenagers, aged 12–14 now attend junior high school, 80 percent of whom graduate. The number of students enrolled in college has more than quadrupled since 1990, and is now more than 2.6 million.<sup>8</sup>
- China now has the health profile of a middle-income country. Skilled professionals now exist in virtually every county hospital. These professionals, in conjunction with a domestic pharmaceutical industry, allow China to immunize more than 95 percent of the children against the full range of infectious childhood diseases.

To be sure, the figures cited above may not be wholly accurate. Statistics issued by the Chinese government are not always reliable.<sup>9</sup> Still, few observers deny that life has improved for hundreds of millions of people over the past two decades. Yale sociologist Deborah Davis notes:

Twenty years ago, 80 per cent of the Chinese population survived on less than \$1 a day. Rural families saved for a year to buy a pair of rubber boots, and urban families needed ration coupons to purchase cooking oil, sugar and coal. Today

rationing has disappeared, and consumer goods that were once luxuries for the elite are now routine purchases. Last year, more than half of rural families owned a color television set, while some 230 million mobile phone accounts have made China Motorola's number one market. (2003)

Moreover, the Chinese leadership will remind us that China has nearly five times the population of the United States, and roughly a third as much arable land, and that at the time of their revolution, barely a half century ago, theirs was one of the poorest countries on earth, far less technologically developed, less industrialized, and less urban even than Russia on the eve of its revolution forty-two years earlier. (Life expectancy in China in 1949 is estimated to have been 35.)

Can one fault the leadership for proclaiming that "China's success has astonished the world"? The prominent journalist Ren Zhongping is not altogether wrong to effuse:

Marx, the greatest thinker in human history, said during the last millennium that the destiny of those people who are the first to throw themselves vigorously into new life is enviable. History has chosen us, and we are creating new history. . . . Recalling the past and comparing it with the present, 20 years ago, who would have thought that our life today could be so happy and splendid, and that our motherland could be so prosperous, rich and strong today? (2004)<sup>10</sup>

***Trying to make sense of China: Successor-system theory as an orienting device***

It is clear that the Chinese leadership can point to some stunning, life-affirming accomplishments. It is equally clear that China is no workers' paradise. Can the accomplishments be attributed to socialism—or to capitalism? Are the worrisome trends likely to become worse, or might they be ameliorated? What exactly *is* China today? And where is it heading?

I contend that it is fruitful to look at China through the lens of what I have termed *successor-system theory*. Let me begin with a sketch of this theory.<sup>11</sup>

Successor-system theory centers on the question: what, if anything, will come after capitalism? It may be regarded as a component of historical materialism, defined here broadly as a theory of human nature and human development based on three premises:

- Human beings are creative, pragmatic beings who try to solve the pressing difficulties of material and social life. We, individually and collectively, are capable of striking out in new directions and of learning from our mistakes and from the successes and failures of others.
- Over time, we have reshaped the world so as to make it more productive, more rational, and more congenial to species solidarity. Thus it is possible to speak of progress in human history.
- Although there is no guarantee of success, since we are now capable of committing species suicide, there is reason to be hopeful about the future. As Marx put it, “Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself only arises when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.” (1987, 263)

The successor-system-theory component of historical materialism asserts that we can now see quite clearly, not only that the economic system that has come to dominate the world over the past five hundred years is deeply and irredeemably flawed, but also that a viable alternative to capitalism exists that would eliminate most of the current system’s inequities and irrationalities. It further asserts that there are objective forces in the world, responding to felt difficulties, pushing in the direction of this post-capitalist future.

Successor-system theory holds that the driving force of the present era is the democratic impulse—itsself the product of a long period of socioeconomic development. It is a hugely important, *contingent* fact that democracy works. As unwieldy as it might seem, it actually works better, in general and over the long run, than authoritarian alternatives. There are many forces resisting the extension of

democracy and in subverting its substance where it formally exists, but the democratic impulse seems far from exhausted.

Successor-system theory claims that there are two pressing “democratic deficits” currently impinging on the lives of millions of people in modern capitalist economies and elsewhere.

- There is little democracy at work. The workplace under capitalism remains feudal. Owners, often absentee (i.e., stockholders), exercise ultimate authority over the workplace.
- Society has little democratic control over its rate and direction of development, since these are determined by investment, and, in a capitalist society, investors are largely free to invest their private savings as they see fit.

It should be noted that there is little discontent with “the market.” Few organized or spontaneous forces of any significance in the world today demand the wholesale abolition of the market. Indeed, the market is itself—as conservatives love to stress—a kind of democracy, since production responds to consumer demand.<sup>12</sup>

If these democratic deficits are recognized as the fundamental source of capitalism’s deepest irrationalities, then it is not hard to see what a viable successor-system to capitalism should look like: a competitive market economy with workplace democracy and social control of investment.

The first measure is straightforward enough: workers should control their enterprises, typically through an elected council that appoints management. Ultimate authority over the enterprise should rest with the workers, one-person/one-vote. That democratic workplaces “work,”—at least as well and usually better than comparable capitalist workplaces—is an empirical fact well confirmed by scores of studies on thousands of experiments.<sup>13</sup> (This is not to say that democratic workplaces *always* work. They do not. Democratic enterprises sometimes fail. But the evidence is strong that once established, democratic enterprises are as efficient and innovative as their capitalist counterparts.)

The second feature, social control of investment, involves two components. Where do investment funds come from? Where do

they go? So as to give full legitimacy to public control of investment, the funds for investment should come from taxation, not (primarily) from private savings.<sup>14</sup> As to their disbursement, all these funds should be plowed back into the economy via a network of *public*, not *private* banks. As public institutions dispensing public funds, such banks are thus subject to democratic control.

In essence, this successor-system to capitalism—which I call *Economic Democracy*—is an economic system that retains the market for commodities and services, but drastically curtails the labor and capital markets by replacing them with democratic institutions.

This is not the place to rehearse the arguments in favor of Economic Democracy. I have done so elsewhere (2002).<sup>15</sup> Here I maintain that the arguments in support of Economic Democracy as the optimal alternative to capitalism at this stage of our historical development have some general implications relevant to the understanding of China:

*The market is an essential component  
of a viable, desirable socialism*

At this stage in the development of our productive forces, faced as we are with a real scarcity of goods, resources, and satisfying jobs, there is no better mechanism for generating appropriate incentives for efficient, innovative production than competitive markets. To be sure, these markets need to be regulated, and they should not embrace the whole of the economy, but markets have a large and important role to play in any desirable socialism that is workable today.

*Economic equality is not, nor should it be,  
the most fundamental socialist value*

No serious socialist, certainly not Marx, has insisted on absolute equality. When the socialist tradition asserts, correctly, that economic equality is a value, it is asserting that inequalities need to be *justified*—justified by appealing to other, more fundamental socialist values.

There will still be inequality under Economic Democracy—less than under capitalism, but significant nonetheless. Economic

Democracy is a form of market socialism. Inequality is a necessary concomitant of a market society. More efficient firms do better than their inefficient competitors. Innovation sometimes results in super-profits. Skills are rewarded differentially. Luck plays a significant role. Wealth in the midst of poverty—especially extreme, ostentatious wealth—should give a socialist pause, but if this wealth is a by-product of policies that decrease rather than increase the number of people living in poverty, it should not be condemned.

*It is possible, perhaps even desirable, to have capitalists in a socialist society*

There is a role for capitalists in Economic Democracy, particularly in its early stages of development. This conclusion follows from two premises, one theoretical, the other empirical. The theoretical premise: there is an important difference between the *entrepreneurial* function of a capitalist, which is exercised by only a small minority of actually existing capitalists in an advanced capitalist society, and the *capitalist* function per se, i.e., supplying capital. The empirical premise: entrepreneurial talent is a scarce resource—the talent of a “petty entrepreneur” who opens a new restaurant or repair shop or a small retail store, as well as the talent of a “grand entrepreneur” whose creative energies bring into being new products, new technologies, even new industries.<sup>16</sup>

Since Economic Democracy generates its investment fund publicly, through taxation, it does not need capitalists to supply capital. But it may well need them (a number of them) to play an entrepreneurial role that would otherwise be insufficiently filled. Of course there is a danger that this class will become the dominant class, as it is under capitalism, but such a development is not inevitable.

Let us now address the basic question: how does China look when viewed through the lens of successor-system theory? First, some negative conclusions, or rather, double-negatives:

- The fact that China has given a large scope to the market in its economy does not mean that China is not a socialist society.



- The fact that there is considerable inequality in China does not mean that China is not a socialist society.
- The fact that there are some very rich capitalists in China does not mean that China is not a socialist society.<sup>17</sup>

Positive considerations exist as well. Successor-system theory directs our attention in two directions. We look for signs of workplace democracy. We look for signs of social control of investment. Let us first consider workplace democracy.

Anyone looking at enterprise organization in China cannot fail to be struck by the large number of experiments going on there right now, as China gropes for an appropriate organizational form—or forms. There are large state-owned enterprises (191 “flagship firms” are being groomed to be world-class enterprises; these and other state-owned enterprises employ about a third of the nonrural workforce). There are native-capitalist firms—some two million, employing some thirty million workers. (Most of these firms are small; the average number of employees in a capitalist firm in China is fifteen.) Twenty-four million owner-operated businesses employ a few workers each, employing forty-five million workers altogether. There are large numbers of foreign firms in China, most of them joint ventures, often with state-owned enterprises. There are vast numbers of township and village enterprises, all formerly collectively owned, most now fully or partially privatized, often with workers holding all or some of shares in the firms, and managers holding a controlling interest. There are large numbers of cooperative firms, with many experiments underway to determine the optimal structure of voting and income rights. (At a forum on cooperatives, Yang Rudai, a high-ranking government official, declared, “Over the past century cooperatives have developed continuously to maturity, becoming a significant trend in the development of the global economy. . . . Therefore, we should thoroughly understand the importance and urgency of developing a cooperative economy” (Li Keyong 2002).

As China experiments with ownership forms, it is concerned, at least in its official pronouncements, to make enterprises more accountable to their workers. Consider two recent documents.

On 3 June 2002 the Central Committee of the CPC issued a “Circular on the In-Depth Implementation of the Factory Affairs Disclosure System in State-Owned, Collective, and State and Collective-Controlled Enterprises,” which states in part:

It is an important characteristic and superiority of China’s enterprise management to allow large numbers of workers to participate in enterprises’ democratic policymaking, democratic management and democratic supervision. . . . Enterprises should publicize the important decisions to be made, give heed to the opinions of workers, and submit them to workers’ congresses for discussion. . . . According to the stipulations of laws and regulations, workers’ congresses have the right to decide and veto, and decisions not publicized and approved by workers’ congresses shall be considered invalid. . . . Higher level managerial departments should handle leading persons of state-owned enterprises who are found to have lost the support of the majority of workers. (*Xinhua Domestic Service*, 3 June 2002)

An unnamed “special commentator” (meaning, typically, a high-ranking government official) wrote an article of support of this circular, published the same day: “The essence of factory affairs disclosure is to strengthen the democratic supervision by employees. The workers’ congresses is a basic system whereby the workforce in China can take part in democratic decision-making, democratic management and democratic supervision” (Implementing Factory Affairs 2002).

Several months later, Politburo member Wei Jianxing, having inspected the democratic management work done by *nonpublic* enterprises in Hebei province, proclaimed:

To organize the staff and workers to take part in the democratic management of an enterprise . . . is a provision clearly stipulated in the law of China that applies to all non-public enterprises without exception. . . . With regard to the form of the organization, uniformity is not demanded. Some may practice the system of workers’ congresses, others may adopt other forms that fit in with the reality of the

respective non-public enterprises. However, whatever they may be, all forms of organization must be conducive to developing democracy, giving voice fully to the workers' ideas and demands and absorbing the workers to take part in their enterprises' democratic management. (Wang Jintao 2002)

Although official regulations are by no means universally adhered to in China—to put it mildly<sup>18</sup>—the fact that such regulations are now being promulgated and publicized is not without significance. The government is presumably under some pressure to express support for workplace democracy—in contrast to the capitalist countries, where the governments are under no such pressure.

Whatever the actual rate of compliance nationwide, such official pronouncements should encourage the establishment of democratic practices in at least some industries.<sup>19</sup> If these practices succeed in enhancing both worker satisfaction and productivity—as successor-system theory predicts they will—they are likely to spread.

What about the other key component of Economic Democracy—social control of investment? Here are three relevant considerations:

- The banking system in China is publicly controlled. As has been frequently noted, the system is much in need of reform. (The Chinese have a very high rate of private savings, yet enterprises often have a hard time obtaining loans.) An intelligent reform—as opposed to an IMF-dictated one—could have quite positive consequences. (There have been no IMF loans to China, so the IMF will not be a player in the reform process.) Although Economic Democracy allows for a nonpublic network of savings-and-loan associations, geared to home mortgages and consumer loans, successor-system theory suggests strongly that banks—particularly those that make loans to enterprises—should remain public institutions.
- Investment in China is far more controlled than in capitalist countries. Not only are banks public institutions, but the

profits of state-owned enterprises revert to the state (as do losses).<sup>20</sup>

- Moreover, as a recent Reuters dispatch points out, “The government retains rigid controls on corporate investment despite twenty-five years of economic reform. Key industrial projects are subject to approval, and private funds are virtually barred from entering sectors such as power, railway, telecoms and banking” (China Pushes New Reforms 2004).<sup>21</sup> Foreign companies are so eager to establish a beachhead in the vast Chinese market that China has leverage that few other poor countries do. China can—and does—insist on significant technology transfer. Virtually all foreign investment is direct investment. There is no “hot money” flowing into—or out of—China.
- The Chinese government is still very much committed to planning. This planning far exceeds the reluctant, uncoordinated planning sometimes attempted in the United States, and the feeble “indicative planning” once fashionable in Western Europe. Long-term goals are regularly announced, with completion dates attached. Large numbers of proposals aimed at advancing these goals are implemented—often experimentally, in a particular city or region, then, if successful, more broadly.

### ***Conclusion***

Let us think for a moment about historical materialism and its relation to moral critique. The Left has always been animated by a sense of moral indignation, as well it should be. The world is permeated with injustice. Something needs to be done. Marx, however, offers us a paradigm for social change that emphasizes something else—not a discourse free of moral fervor, but one that relegates the causal efficacy of morality to a decidedly lower tier than we so often implicitly assume.

Historical materialism posits that groups of individuals who in fact bring about decisive historical change are largely motivated by class interest. This interest is always couched in

moralizing universals, since the initiating group needs to garner widespread support, but it is not the moral appeals that are ultimately decisive.

This is not to say that appeals to morality are always, or even mostly, cynical. People often believe quite fervently in their ideals, and these beliefs often motivate them, sometimes to heroic action. But historical progress occurs when the interests of a group capable of initiating change are such that the structural transformations that promote those interests are brought about, and do, as a matter of fact, make society as a whole more productive and better able to realize the real, humane possibilities that are latent in the present.

Therefore, from a historical-materialist perspective, as supplemented by successor-system theory, the fundamental questions concerning China are these:

- What are the real possibilities latent in the present?
- Can these possibilities best be realized by some form of capitalism or by a form of socialism?
- Whose interests, apart from their own, does the Chinese political establishment represent?

Let us consider briefly each of these points.

What are the possibilities latent in the present? At the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1987, the CPC proclaimed that China was at the primary stage of socialism. At this stage, given China's circumstances, the fundamental task was judged to be a rapid increase in the country's productive forces so as to lay the basis for a "prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally-advanced and modern socialist state" (Ushering in a New Stage 2004). No one can dispute the fact that impressive gains have been made since then in developing these productive forces. But China, for all its accomplishments, faces daunting challenges in the near future. To name several of the most fundamental:<sup>22</sup>

- What to do with 600 million peasants—the vast majority working tiny plots of land? Are there technologies available that would allow for a significant increase in agricultural

productivity—and hence peasant incomes—while keeping most of these peasants “down on the farm”?

- What to do about the millions of new jobs that need to be created—for young people entering the labor market, for the millions displaced as their enterprises become more efficient, as well as for the millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, of peasants who want to move from their rural environment to an urban one?
- What to do about the severe ecological consequences of the country’s breathtaking economic growth?

It should be clear to any rational being that *capitalism* cannot resolve either of the first two problems. Introducing capitalist property relations can certainly force hundreds of millions of peasants off the land—but there is no chance whatsoever that private enterprise will generate sufficient employment opportunities for these displaced persons, not even if they were willing to submit to the most horrendous conditions of contemporary sweatshops. We know what unrestrained capitalism will do.

The Chinese know this also. It is an important fact that for all its problems, China does not yet have its urban areas blighted by teeming shanty towns—vast seas of poverty surrounding islands of glitz and gated communities that typify much of the Third World. The leadership does not want China’s cities to become like that.

Successor-system theory points to “social control of investment” as the key to any possible solution—but this is an abstract injunction. The Chinese government retains such control. Whether it will be able to use this control creatively enough to resolve a problem that verges on the insoluble remains to be seen.

A similar point can be made about constraining and reversing environmental damage. It is difficult to imagine an unrestrained capitalism being up to the task, or even a capitalism somewhat constrained. At present, the Chinese government possesses regulatory tools that capitalist governments generally lack. Can these tools be wielded effectively? There is much discussion in China these days, from the highest levels on down, about the need to change the hitherto dominant paradigm that emphasizes

growth above all else to a “scientific concept of development,” one that takes environmental and resource costs into account, as well as such social issues as widening income inequalities.<sup>23</sup> The State Statistical Bureau and the State Environmental Protection Administration are working jointly on the criteria for a “green GDP” that can be used to evaluate and guide development (China to Establish Green GDP 2004). Whether effective solutions will be implemented (assuming they exist), time alone will tell.

Much depends on the Chinese leadership—and the interests they serve. Whose interests are in fact represented by the leadership of the CPC, which includes some 68 million members? As with any institution, the CPC has an interest in self-preservation and in enhancing the well-being of its members. But does it serve any larger interests? It is certainly *not* a party for which capitalist financial interests set the basic agenda—as is the case with the major political parties in the United States and the rest of the capitalist world. The capitalist class in China, such as it is, is very small and consists largely of entrepreneurial elements. However much procapitalist, neoliberal ideology has penetrated the ranks of party officials and the intelligentsia, the party remains resolutely pragmatic. “Seek truth from the facts” is the watchword.

And the facts of contemporary capitalism are not particularly inspiring these days. Japan has been in the doldrums for more than a decade. Europe cannot get a grip on its unemployment problem. The Asian tigers have taken a beating. Neoliberalism’s Latin American poster-child, Argentina, has collapsed. The U.S. economy with its “jobless recovery” and burgeoning debt is not much of a model. And of course those experiments in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with “shock therapy” have been ruinous. Capitalism’s dazzle has dimmed of late.

In following the debates and discussions in the Chinese press, one is struck by the open acknowledgment of the degree to which all the problems that we on the Left predict will intensify if China tries to make itself into a fully capitalist society—unemployment, inequality, the immiseration of the most vulnerable, environmental degradation, etc. I think there is reason for (guarded) optimism. It seems to me that objective conditions will compel the CPC to

address the real needs of the Chinese people, who are overwhelmingly workers and peasants. Ideologically, of course, the Party is committed to doing so, but as a Marxist (and a realist), I do not think ideology is determining. (It certainly was not in the Soviet Union.) But the Chinese rulers are haunted by the specter of instability—they are haunted in ways that Western rulers are not. Our ruling classes do not have to pay attention to the poor, who have been wholly marginalized. Our poor do not vote; they do not cause trouble, except among themselves. Chinese workers and peasants are by no means marginal. Their critical mass is too great—and they have an ideology at their disposal with which to press their demands (as U.S. workers and the U.S. poor do not). Class struggle goes on in China, as it does everywhere. In China, the balance of forces may well favor the working class.

Needless to say, successor-system theory cannot predict the future. It is possible that China will go covertly capitalist, while keeping worker-peasant discontent contained—although this scenario seems to me unlikely. It is possible that reforms democratizing both the political process and the economy will be attempted and will fail. The real problems facing China are immense and admit of no easy solution. But we should hold out hope for a third alternative: that the CPC will be creative enough to implement reforms that will address these real problems and at least partially resolve them. Such reforms will, I think, move China in the direction of Economic Democracy.

When I think of China today—and all the problems it faces—the words of Du Runsheng at the Hangzhou conference come back to me. Many of us—the non-Chinese contingent in particular—had been for some time speechifying about the dangers facing China if it continues down the capitalist road, particularly in light of its accession to the WTO. After listening for a long while, the octogenarian architect of China's agricultural reforms spoke up. He was not too worried, he said. "The problems we face now," he said, "are nothing compared to the problems we've had to face in the past."

Perhaps overly optimistic. But when one thinks about what Du himself has seen and lived through—war with Japan, civil war, the Korean War, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural



Revolution—and one reflects on China’s astonishing record of development over the past fifty years—one can understand the basis of his optimism.

*Department of Philosophy  
Loyola University, Chicago*

## NOTES

1. For a typical example, see the cover story, “Human Rights in China,” in *In These Times*, 28 October 2002, the accompanying report on Hong Kong, and the reviews of two books on the Tiananmen generation. Not a word appears in any of these pieces about China’s genuine accomplishments in the face of extraordinary obstacles. Martin Hart-Landsberg and Paul Burkett’s “China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle,” in the *Monthly Review* (2004) to be published by Monthly Review Press as a book in 2005) is not quite so oblivious to China’s accomplishments, but remains overwhelmingly critical of the Chinese reform process.

2. One of the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping was abolition of lifetime tenure for senior government and party officials. Top officials now have finite terms.

3. Curiously, no one at the conference mentioned this structure. I learned about it subsequently from *Time*. Interesting too—Huang grew up in an impoverished farming village. As was the custom then, his family would receive a colorful calendar each New Years from the state, which he would stare at for hours. One year that calendar featured the marvels of American grandeur, including Mt. Rushmore—and the White House, a picture which, Haung says, he never forgot.

4. Interview in *China Daily*, 21 June 2004. He adds that China’s current level is normal for many Asian countries, and less than some in Latin America. Several days after the Huang interview, the *China Daily* reported that the gap between men and women’s income grew 7.4%, from 100:77.5 to 100:70.1 (Daniels 2004).

I should note here my indebtedness to Al Sargis for this and many of the subsequent references, which have been gleaned from the invaluable clipping service he provides, free of charge, to anyone interested in staying abreast of developments in China. If one subscribes to his distribution list, one receives five to ten items a day, mostly from English-language editions of Chinese newspapers, all selected for a progressive readership. For more information, contact [albertsargis@comcast.net](mailto:albertsargis@comcast.net).

5. For a particularly disturbing portrait, see Economy 2004.

6. Our own conference was very nearly canceled the night before it began. The sponsoring institution, the Hangzhou College of Commerce, read some of

the papers, and had second thoughts. After a bout of intense negotiation, the conference was allowed to proceed on condition that certain topics, such as Tiananmen, not be discussed.

7. “China’s Economic Reform Causing Social Unrest and Crime—Report,” AFX, 9 June 2004, commenting on a report released by China’s state-run *Outlook Weekly*.

8. The information in this paragraph and the next is from Davis 2003.

9. This view is not confined to outsiders. Cf. “Funny Figures: Data Gathering Reforms Sorely Needed,” published in the PRC journal *Caijing*, 5 August.

10. As the title of the article, “Do It for Another Twenty Years,” indicates, Ren does not think that everything has been accomplished. The article is an exhortation to “forge ahead along this brilliant, great road” for another twenty years.

11. Successor-system theory is elaborated more fully in chapter 1 of my *After Capitalism* (Schweickart 2002).

12. That consumer demand is massively manipulated under capitalism should not blind us to the democratic dimension of the market, any more that the voter manipulation under capitalism should make us cynical about the value of political democracy.

13. For a sampling of the evidence with references, see Schweickart 2002, 60–62.

14. For both ethical and economic reasons, it makes sense to generate the investment fund by means of a capital-assets tax, but this detail need not concern us here.

15. See also Schweickart 1993 for a more theoretical defense.

16. It is one thing to democratize an existing enterprise—itself not always an easy task. It is quite another to create a democratic enterprise from scratch. “Cooperative entrepreneurs” must have the business skills of their capitalist counterparts, and also the interpersonal skills to create a harmonious collective enterprise.

17. According to the 2004 World Wealth Report, 236,000 individuals in China have financial assets of at least \$1 million. This compares with 2,270,000 in the United States (Merrill Lynch and Capgemini 2004). Capitalists are now eligible for membership in the Communist Party of China. This is not unreasonable. If a socialist society at a certain stage of development requires entrepreneurial capitalists, it is fitting that they be accorded the same rights as other citizens. To be sure, the danger of undue influence arises, but this is true whether or not capitalists are fully integrated into society.

18. Getting local authorities to comply with central government directives is an enduring problem in China, which is hardly surprising, given the size, complexity, and history of the country.

19. Some empirical evidence exists that the directives have had effect. A recent study by a team of U.S. and PRC researchers of fifty-five enterprises in eastern Shandong, many of which had been converted from state-owned enterprises to employee-owned enterprises, found that almost all had either worker congresses (composed of elected employee representatives), worker

assemblies (composed of all employees), or stockholder assemblies (Tseo et al. 2004).

20. The fact that losses are absorbed by the national and local governments is an important reason behind the drive to privatize so many state-owned enterprises. A recent survey of 670 township enterprises in Jiangsu and Zhejiang found that, although 90 percent of the firms had been wholly or partially privatized, 85 percent of the townships experienced a rise in revenue (Li Hongbin and Rozelle 2003).

21. "China Pushes New Reforms, Looks to Market," Reuters, 23 July 2004. The article points out the government plans to relax some of current restrictions gradually. In fact, keeping administrative control over key elements of investment has been central to the government's quite successful macro-management of the economy. For a fascinating, detailed account of this and related procedures in action, see Brahm 2002.

22. I am not listing here one fundamental challenge that would seem to have little to do with the choice among economic structures, but which is nevertheless extremely important, namely the challenge of gender equality. As noted in note 4, the income gap between men and women has worsened in recent years. Moreover, a striking disparity exists in China between the number of boys born each year and the number of girls. One wonders how seriously these issues will be addressed without far more recruitment of women into the Party itself, which is currently more than 80 percent male.

23. See, for example, the remarks by Premier Wen Jiabao at the seminar on the scientific concept of development held at the Party School of the Central Committee, 21 February 2004 (Scientific Concept of Development 2004).

## REFERENCE LIST

- Beech, Hannah. 2002. Flush with the Spoils of Capitalism, China's Fledgling Multimillionaires are Living Large. *Time*, 23 September.
- Brahm, Laurence. 2002. *Zhu Rongji and the Transformation of Modern China*. New York: Wiley.
- China Pushes New Reforms, Looks to Market. 2004. Reuters, 23 July.
- China to Establish 'Green GDP' Index System. 2004. *Beijing Xinhau in English*, 25 June.
- Daniels, Dwight. 2004. Equality for Women Begins in the Workplace. *China Daily*, 2 July.
- Davis, Deborah. 2003. China's Human Software Will Keep Economy Humming. *Strait Times Interactive* (Singapore), 19 September.
- Dréze, Jean, and Amartya Sen. 1989. *Hunger and Public Action*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Economy, Elizabeth C. 2004. *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Hart-Landsberg, Martin, and Paul Burkett. 2004. China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle. *Monthly Review* (July-August): 7–123.

- Implementing Factory Affairs Disclosure System in Greater Depth: Push Forward the Construction of Grassroots Democracy. 2002. *Xinhua Domestic Service*, 23 June.
- Li Keyong. 2002. Cooperative Economy is Effective Organizational Form of Promoting Development of Market Economy. *Xinhua Domestic Service*, 5 July.
- Li Hongbin and Scott Rozelle. 2003. Privatizing Rural China: Insider Privatization, Innovative Contracts and the Performance of Township Enterprises. *China Quarterly* 176: 987–1005.
- Marx, Karl. 1987. Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. In vol. 29 of *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, 261–65. New York: International Publishers.
- Merrill Lynch and Capgemini Report Sharp Increase in Wealthy North American and Asian Investors. 2004. *World Wealth Report*. Capgemini Press Release, 15 June. [http://www.us.capgemini.com/news/current\\_news.asp?ID=394](http://www.us.capgemini.com/news/current_news.asp?ID=394).
- Pan, Philip P. 2002. Poisoned Back Into Poverty: As China Lifts Industry Curbs, Hazards to Workers Rise. *Washington Post*, 4 August.
- Ren Zhongping. 2004. Do It for Another Twenty Years—On the Crucial Period in China's Reforms and Development. *Renmin Ribao*, 12 July.
- Schweickart, David. 1993. *Against Capitalism* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- . 2002. *After Capitalism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Scientific Concept of Development Crucial to China's Future Growth—Premier. 2004. *People's Daily Online*, 1 March. [http://english.people.com.cn/200403/01/eng20040301\\_136173.shtml](http://english.people.com.cn/200403/01/eng20040301_136173.shtml).
- Tseo, George, Hou Gui Sheng, Zhang Pen-zhu, and Zhang Lihai. 2004. Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing as Positive Factors in the Reform of Chinese State-Owned Enterprises. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 25 (1).
- Ushering in a New Stage. 2004. *Beijing Portal*, 9 July. <http://www.beijingportal.com.cn/7838/2004/07/09/1380@2154551.htm>.
- Wang Hui. 2003. *China's New Order: Society, Politics and Economy in Transition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Wang Jintao. 2002. Wei Jiangxing Speaks on Democratic Management of Non-Public Enterprises during Inspection in Hebei. *Xinhua Domestic Service*, 29 September.
- Watts, Jonathan. 2004. Chinese Lesson in How to Put Food in the Mouths of Millions. *Guardian* (UK), 27 May.
- Xu Binglan. 2004. "Unique" China Defies World's Predictions. *China Daily*, 21 June. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-06/21/content\\_41059.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-06/21/content_41059.htm).

# Russia after the Fall of the Soviet Union: A Case of Capitalist Dependency

Jeffrey Surovell

With the stroke of a pen, leaders of Soviet republics signed the 1991 Belovezh Agreement officially disbanding the USSR and consigning humanity's first socialist society to history. Even if the many mistakes made by Soviet leaders throughout the USSR's seventy-five-year history are acknowledged, the USSR's disbandment, it is argued here, was a grievous loss for left and liberation movements and working people the world over. Given that the USSR was the world's first socialist state, heart of the socialist bloc, and a global superpower, what has happened to that country since its downfall is surely of interest to all—and especially to those on the left. Yet misconceptions about Russia, the USSR's principal successor state, abound on the political right and, sadly, on the left. This study attempts to remedy this situation by clearing up at least some of the misconceptions.

The leaders of the USSR's successor state, the Russian Federation, have jettisoned its socialist institutions, but questions remain as to what system replaced it. One of the most articulate challenges to the prevailing view that Russia is capitalist has come from the Marxist economist David Kotz, who has advanced the thesis that Russia has a noncapitalist “predatory/extractive” system (2001, 2002). Kotz does not dispute that system's exploitative essence, however.

There has been apparent uncertainty with respect to Russia's international allegiances as well. It has been widely assumed—including and perhaps especially by some on the left—that Russia is somehow an ally of the advanced capitalist countries (ACCs) and at the same time an international maverick that has “stood up to” the often-aggressive policies of those ACCs. By so doing, those on the left consciously or unconsciously refer to Lenin's dictum that a fierce struggle continuously rages between imperialist powers (1964). Russia's “opposition” to the ACCs, they argue, is reflective of such a struggle. Post-Soviet Russia, in other words, is both a part of the capitalist world and at the same time a major opponent of the ACCs and their policies. Such a perspective seems to confirm the words of Domenico Losurdo, who points out that the Left has come to “assimilate the worldview of the oppressor” (2000, 457).

Those holding such a view point to a number of policies adopted by Moscow since the collapse of the USSR: its “opposition” to NATO, especially its eastward expansion; its supposed siding with Belgrade against NATO; its support for Iraq, etc. (for examples of left analyses that adopt this view, see TN 2001a, 20; WWSW 1999a, b, c; PWW 2002). To be sure, Russia's often-ambiguous foreign (and domestic) policies have aggravated the confusion.

In fact, until about 2001, Western analysts got post-Soviet Russia's policy orientation consistently wrong. In the wake of Russia's 1996 presidential election, for example, it was widely expected among Western analysts that Moscow was poised to move in a “more anti-Western and anti-reform direction” and would display “extreme aggressiveness” toward Western “democracies” (Stavrakis 1996, 16, 20; Dunlop 1996, 34). This confusion surfaced among left-wing analyses as well, including one that argued just prior to 9/11 that Russia “may be weak as a result of years of disinvestment, but . . . will never again be as compliant [toward Western dictates] as was Yeltsin's Russia this past decade” (TN 2001a, 20; 2001b, 7; 2001c, 22).

The latter prediction proved, of course, stunningly wrong. The reverse actually occurred as the Putin leadership especially

(but not exclusively) after 9/11 accommodated, with an eagerness that seemed to border on relish, Western (above all U.S.) interests on an array of major issues: U.S. establishment of military bases in Central Asia, U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty, U.S. troop deployment in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, NATO's second round of expansion, and the unilateral withdrawal by Moscow from its own military bases in Cuba and Vietnam, to name but a few.

The whole picture of Russian foreign-policy analysis is, to be sure, far from simple. Until about 2001, the mainstream Western analysis accepted that post-Soviet Russia was moving in a "unilateralist and frequently anti-Western" direction (the term *Western* refers to the bloc of advanced capitalist countries, above all, the United States, the major West European powers, and others) (Lynch 2001, 7–8). Recently, however, a number of analysts (who happen not to be on the political left) have tended to get it right in their conclusion that Russian foreign policy has, since its inception, been largely pro-Western (Lynch 2001, 11; Light 2003)—although, to be sure, they continue to attribute to Russia's leaders an inordinate degree of resistance to the dictates of the ACCs.

This more accurate assessment has evidently not been embraced by most left analyses—even though one might expect greater analytical insight from the latter on the grounds of their (presumably) more insightful (left) analytical perspective. The Left, in other words, seems mired in the old—essentially inaccurate—approach that places overwhelming emphasis on "opposition" of Russia's leaders to ACC policies.

One can accurately comprehend the dynamics of Russia's system, and the policies its leaders carry out, only by placing them in the proper context, i.e., Russia's place in the world capitalist system more broadly. The fact is that Russia's elites are conjoined to their ACC counterparts in a "cabal" whose overriding objective has been to install a form of capitalism that maintains Russia as a "colonial" supplier of natural resources—above all, oil and natural gas, to the ACCs. It also aims to extirpate all traces of Soviet socialism so as to insure it never again rears its head in the former land of the Soviets.

Russian Presidents Yeltsin and Putin and the entire Russian ruling class have been willing agents in international capitalism's expansionist plans in the former Soviet Union, especially the seizure of that region's vast natural resources. As one analyst noted in May 2004, Russia has conformed to "Washington's hit-list of geopolitical targets" by helping to retire leaders from the former socialist bloc that the United States opposed, including those from the USSR, and installing in power those the U.S. ruling class favored. Step-by-step, "Russia's significance as an independent actor in the world of natural resources is being cut back, with the whole of the southern Caucasus within U.S. grasp and U.S. garrisons pockmarking Central Asia, Russia's energy resources and export routes for oil and gas are falling under the shadow of US power" (MT 2004).

For their part, Russia's capitalists, with their seemingly endless thirst for material enrichment, are interested primarily in exporting natural resources to ACCs markets. In return, the ACCs provide markets for such goods, offer political support as a reward for Russia's defense of the imperialist agenda, and also toss aid and credits Russia's way. As one Western analysis put it in a parody of the oft-repeated phrase that mocked labor "indiscipline" and the correspondingly low wages in the USSR, Russian officials "pretend to be creating a law-based, market-friendly liberal democracy. We Westerners pretend to believe [them] and what's more, we pay [them] for it" (Gaddy and Ickes 1998).

The above implies a resort to pretense. "Pretense" is indeed an accurate characterization of post-Soviet Russia's policies vis-à-vis advanced capitalism—and it is a central theme of this paper.

### ***Laying the foundation: Russian capitalism and dependency***

Almost immediately after the USSR's disbandment, Russia's leaders, aided by the capitalist West, undertook the privatization of Soviet socialist property "with a furious rapidity bordering on desperation to dismantle the Soviet institutional structure and undo the accomplishments of the Soviet period," a process conducted "wildly, spontaneously, and often on a criminal basis" (RG 1996b, 27–8; Surovell 2000, 28).



The manner in which this process broadly unfolded was almost preordained, given that the Russian system today is directly linked to its *capitalist past*: “many of the same geographical, ethnic, and cultural patterns that underlay the tsarist autocracy persist today.” For this reason, a comprehensive analysis of contemporary Russia must “proceed from an understanding of the functioning of capitalist institutions in the late Russian empire” (Roosa 1997, vii–viii). The parallels between tsarist Russia and today’s post-Soviet Russia are indeed striking. Russia had by 1914 become a “semi-colony” of European powers, an exporter of primarily agricultural products and raw materials and an importer of finished goods (Roosa 1997, 113–14; Livshin 1961, 143–44). Between 1880 and 1914, Europeans gained control of Russia’s key industries (Livshin 1961; Lokshin 1956; Guroff and Carstenson 1983; Crisp 1976). Pre-Soviet Russia had become, in short, a dependency of the capitalist West (Livshin 1961, 261–62; Pipes 1977, 205–6).

Russia’s wild ride towards capitalism since the USSR’s demise has thus been conditioned by the legacy of tsarist capitalism, many of whose features and patterns have been revived in Russia. Most important for this paper, present-day Russia’s dependence on the advanced capitalist West differs from that of its tsarist predecessor in its relative lack of foreign investment (although as the following discussion demonstrates, this latter factor does not by itself determine Russia’s status as a dependent state). Present-day Russia, it is argued here, is likewise a dependency of advanced capitalism.

Because Russia is a dependent state, its relations with the countries of advanced capitalism—and their international organizations (NATO, the IMF, the European Union, etc.)—can be explained only by dependency theory, which is employed in this study as an adjunct to the core theoretical approach, Marxist class analysis.

To be sure, the application of both these approaches dredges up certain problems. Marxism, for its part, has been marginalized in the (bourgeois Western) social sciences (Manley 2003, 9–10)—and this applies a fortiori to Soviet and Russian studies, for two reasons. First, the field of Russian studies—whether in the United States or other capitalist countries, and including Russia—tends

to be right-wing, a legacy of Sovietology, its ultraconservative Cold War predecessor (Cohen 1985). Even in Russia, only a small number of left-wing specialists on Russian affairs, such as Boris Kagarlitsky and Aleksandr Buzgalin, are widely known today.

The second, related reason impacts Russian studies probably more than any other—namely, the collapse of the socialist bloc, which “strengthened doubts about Marx’s contemporary relevance” (Manley 2003, 32). Indeed, there have been precious few Marxist—let alone, dependency—analyses of post-Soviet Russian society (Surovell 2000 combines both in one analysis; Reddaway and Glinskii 1999 also make a reference to Russia’s dependency, but only in passing).

It is argued here that Marxist class analysis remains as valid and as relevant today as ever (Manley 2003). One cannot, in fact, accurately analyze Russian policy—domestic and foreign—without applying Marxist analysis.

That said, the widely held assumption that Russia is capitalist has been challenged in a powerful study by David Kotz, who argues that Russia does not have a capitalist system but rather one that is “predatory/extractive” (2001; 2002). For Kotz, “superficial features of a capitalist system” may be present in Russia, including private ownership, securities markets, and a “sort of market system,” but certain “key defining characteristics of capitalism have not yet emerged” (2001, 159). Kotz’s arguments are so telling that they merit examination.

It is around the “defining characteristics” that the debate over Russian capitalism revolves. The main bone of contention is Kotz’s assertion that the income of Russia’s “propertied class” does not derive “mainly as a surplus appropriated from the current labor of the population.” Kotz cites two reasons for this: first, the principal source of the surplus value appropriated by Russia’s capitalists is *external*, in the form of rental value of natural—primarily energy—resources from the world market, and second, Russian capitalists also derive surplus value from the accumulated surplus value produced in the past by Soviet workers (see Kotz 2001, 163; Surovell 2000, 27; Holmstrom and Smith 2000).

It is argued here that, contrary to Kotz, Russia fits the Marxist criteria for a capitalist system. While it is true that the two sources of

surplus value cited by Kotz are the principal sources of appropriation of surplus value by Russia's owners of the means of production, Marx did not say that capitalists must necessarily appropriate surplus value *solely* or *primarily* from formations within the national boundaries of their nation-state. This is underscored by the current globalization phase of capitalism, which points to the need to focus on the capitalists' appropriation of surplus value at the international level. It is thus precisely on the basis of Russia's integration into world capitalism—as a state *dependent on* the ACCs—that Russia's capitalists derive the lion's share of their appropriated surplus value. Russia's external relations—that is, those carried out within the framework of international capitalism—are therefore the *sine qua non* for Russia's "capitalist" designation.

Nor did Marx assert that surplus value had to be realized in the same sector in which it is produced. In the concept of the equalization of the rate of profit, surplus value can be transferred from the sector where it is produced to another sector where it is realized through the price mechanism. Marx also makes it clear that value can be realized as rent even though there is no production of land, including natural resources (1998, chap. 37).<sup>1</sup>

Post-Soviet Russia is thus accepted here as capitalist, and its policies will be analyzed on the basis of two theories: Marxism and dependency theory.

Two basic precepts of Marxism are most relevant here: that the capitalist ruling class is motivated above all by the desire to acquire profit, and that the capitalist state is representative of its ruling (capitalist) class. The celebrated "relative autonomy of the state" thesis is rejected here on the grounds that it overstates the degree of a state's autonomy. As Marx argued in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, even in the highly unusual case where a capitalist state appears to be independent of the economically dominant class, the modus operandi of such a state is to promote the interests of that class (1979, 194; see also Sayer and Corrigan 1983, 85; for a fuller elaboration of Marxist theory and its application to Russian policy, see Surovell 2000).

For those readers who may be familiar with Marxist theory but less with dependency theory, the following is a brief summary of the basic postulates of dependency theory. Dependency

theory originated from several theoretical streams, among them Marxism and the writings of Raul Prebisch, a member of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, and was crystallized in the 1960s in the work of Andre Gunder Frank and Teodoro dos Santos, among others, who sought to refute the more mainstream capitalist theories of “development” and offer a noncapitalist, left alternative.

The classical case of dependency can be briefly defined as a situation in which the poorer (peripheral) countries of capitalism are conditioned by the development of the wealthier (core) countries that dominate them economically, politically, and militarily. Dependency compels the periphery to retain the primacy of its traditional export sector and perpetuates backward production relations. Politically, the dependent state implements antidemocratic policies on orders, or at least with the complicity, of the ACCs (Cardoso and Falletto 1969; dos Santos 1970; Cockroft, Frank, and Johnson 1972).

In light of the foregoing discussion, Russia is here designated a *dependent capitalist state*—albeit one with peculiarly Russian features. Marxism and dependency theory therefore merge in this study’s explanation of Russia’s foreign policy: Marxism posits that policymakers, representatives of their country’s capitalist ruling class, conduct foreign policies that serve the interests of that class by satisfying above all the need for the appropriation of surplus value. In conformity with dependency theory, which holds that all dependent capitalist states “exhibit foreign policy compliance with the preferences of dominant countries” due to the latter’s asymmetric control (Hey 1995; Evans 1987; Armstrong 1981, 422–23), it is accepted here that a dependent country’s foreign-policy agenda is essentially set by the ruling classes of the ACCs. Russia’s capitalists depend on the ACCs for their very existence, and Russia’s policy—foreign and domestic—follows the lead of the ACC ruling classes.

To be sure, recent assessments of dependency theory have acknowledged a more nuanced relationship between dependent and core states characterized by consensus and shared interests—although the assumption that dependent states as a rule follow the lead of the core has been retained (Mora and Hey

2003, 3–4). The dynamic between them is thus fundamentally structural, *compelling* Russia's leaders to acquiesce to the dictates of the ACCs. While foreign-policy decision makers in the dependent states have policy options, the impact of their subjective volition on the foreign-policy process is significantly narrowed. Finally, while it is difficult to measure with any precision the extent to which a dependent state acquiesces to or resists the core ACCs, in certain instances it can and will defy the dictates of the latter.

As the world socialist system went into decline in the 1980s, serious doubts arose about the theory's validity. Nevertheless, I concur with those studies that assert that dependency theory has "withstood the test," its premises borne out by developments in contemporary international relations (Mahler 1980, 147; Packenham 1992, 120–23). I accept that dependency theory continues to be a valid and valuable tool of analysis.

### *Some considerations and qualifications of Russian dependency*

Russia's procapitalist "reformers" (given their reactionary role, they should more appropriately be called "deformers"<sup>2</sup>) erected an economic edifice—and the obligatory bourgeois "democratic" political accompaniment, with all its antidemocratic overtones—that is reflective, as is their foreign policy, of their dependence on the ACCs. To be sure, Russia departs from the classical image of dependency in that foreign investment, scared away by Russia's general chaos and incoherent legal system, is still minimal at best (Laibman 2002, 382).

Dependency theorists recognize that there are no universal truths that cut across all states; rather, state-level factors, including a country's size, its colonial history, the nature of foreign penetration, and other factors condition the effects of dependence (Hey 1995, 224, 269). While studies employing the "dependency approach" have by and large focused on relatively small, poor, and militarily weak states in primarily Latin America and Africa and to a lesser extent in Asia, post-Soviet Russia shares a number of features of dependent states and meets the criteria for a dependent state: it is primarily an exporter of raw materials, has huge

and rising inequalities of wealth, lacks real democracy, has experienced a significant “brain drain,” etc.

Nevertheless, when considering Russia as a dependent state, we must qualify the nature of that dependency in light of certain unique features. Above all, Russia’s significantly higher social development sets it apart from most dependent states (Kagarlitsky 1995a, 217).

In addition, the Russian state is unique because its predecessor state, the USSR, had: (a) the most entrenched state-run command economy of any socialist society; (b) little historical experience (during tsarist times) with capitalism or what has been termed Western-style “democracy”; (c) virtually no foreign investment; (d) a socialist system that was the longest lasting and the most legitimized and institutionalized of all the European (and indeed the world) socialist states. The USSR also (e) lacked a societal consensus in favor of Western democracy or capitalism; (f) differed from all other societies in that it experienced no introduction of capitalism entailing the destruction of precapitalist structures to make way for modernization. In addition, (g) many of Russia’s old economic structures are technologically and organizationally on a far higher level than the new, post-Soviet ones (Kagarlitsky 1995b, 88); (h) post-Soviet Russia’s predecessor state was almost totally autonomous from the capitalist core and was unwavering in its opposition, ideological and otherwise, to capitalism; (i) unlike most third world societies, where only a small minority of workers are employed regularly in wage labor (and where an even smaller percentage are members of trade unions) (Randall and Theobald 1985, 182), the USSR had a large, well-defined, and well-organized working class.

The USSR was the heart of an entire world system, the socialist bloc. As such, it was a superpower in its own right whose military might was on a par with the United States. This, plus its vast size and large population and the aforementioned extended isolation from the West, imbued post-Soviet Russia with certain features more common to a core than to a dependent state, and have made it possible for Russia’s elites to blunt somewhat the leverage exerted by the core ACCs (McFaul 1993, 92–93).

This is particularly manifest in post-Soviet arms transfers, which remain extensive. According to traditional dependency theory, the advanced core powers transfer arms to the poorer and weaker peripheral states. The USSR, a core state, was one of the world's leading arms suppliers, and Russia has gone to great lengths to retain this advantage (Stone 1997, 85–86).

Analysis of Russia's dependency on the West must therefore be modified in light of the above. There are yet other considerations to be borne in mind, including:

1) A distinct, albeit asymmetrical, mutuality characterizes the relationship between Russia and the West. The West needs not only Russia's Westernizing leadership as an anti-Communist bulwark to carry out procapitalist policies, but also Russia's oil and natural gas, which are vital resources for the ACCs—increasingly so with the heightened emphasis on diversifying sources away from the Middle East. As much as fifteen percent of West Europe's oil and natural gas comes from Russia.

For their part, Russian leaders need the West to give legitimacy to them and to their policies—not to speak of Russia's need for international moral, political, and above all financial support. Russia's dependence derives more from (immediately) political than economic factors;<sup>3</sup> this is manifested in the Russian government's exaggeration, even during Russia's early years in the 1990s, of the scale of its financial dependence on the West. It simply did not need such aid, given its highly favorable external trade balance, which in 1996 amounted to more than \$10 billion (not including the hundreds of billions of dollars in capital flight), even as the IMF approved a \$10.3 billion loan that year (RG 1996b, 27; Weir 1996, 40). The Russian leadership exploited its relations with the IMF to plunder the state. Others have noted this, pointing out that Western money dispensed just prior to the 1996 election was to be used only temporarily to increase social spending, and thereby to bolster Yeltsin's shaky political position. (Weir 1996, 40–41; see also Boycko et al. 1995, 143).

2) Pre-Soviet tsarist Russia was highly dependent on Western capital until World War I, but foreign finance capital could not complete Russia's "enslavement" without the aid and support of Russian finance capital itself, without the transformation of the

big Russian bourgeoisie into a comprador class. But tsarist Russia was an imperialist power in its own right, with its own system of financial-monopoly capital and its own imperialist interests (Livshin 1961, 261–62), and on occasion it insisted on pursuing its own foreign policy, even if that meant contradicting the dominant Western powers.

This dual nature of Russian power reemerged in the 1990s, especially since 1993, when the Russian leadership has sought, within its overall dependent status, to stand up—albeit only to a minimal degree—in defense of the interests of Russia’s economic and political elites.

3) Until Putin came to power, mass opposition to the Russian Westernizers’ program grew in proportion to the societal devastation caused by the failed “reforms” of the Yeltsin regime. One response of the Russian leadership was to assuage popular unrest with a show of assertiveness on the international arena—generally rhetorically and within the limited confines of its dependency. Russia has, to be sure, resisted, however minimally and infrequently, the dictates of the West.

While open and total acquiescence to the West by Russia’s Westernizers would be a political kiss of death and help to foment a feared popular explosion,<sup>4</sup> Russia’s leadership has since 9/11 used the pretext of international terrorism to align more closely to the West. Aided immeasurably by the astronomical rise in gas prices and the resulting Russian economic boom, they have been far more brazen about this capitulation to the West.

Representatives of the Western ruling class have been largely tolerant of Russia’s leaders on the relatively few occasions that the latter have displayed a seeming bellicosity on certain issues. Leaders in the ACCs realize that this is the price they must pay for appeasing anti-Westernism in Russia. They know that doing so forestalls the far more serious danger of instability in Russia and a return to the “bad old Soviet times.”

Russia set about restoring economic ties with states termed “pariahs” by the U.S. ruling class (Iran and Iraq, for example) as early as late 1992, motivated not by ideology but by economics. Shut out from Western markets, it has been forced to return to its



traditional markets—mostly poor states unable to afford Western products, especially technology, making Russia's lower-priced goods attractive to them. Even Western analysts have acknowledged that Russia often has observed UN sanctions against such "pariahs" (MT 1995).

Dependency theorists have also posited that dependency can be as much political as economic. As Peter Evans has noted with respect to South Korea, substantial foreign investment is not a necessary condition of dependency, in that foreign economic ties—largely in the form of aid from the advanced capitalist countries (ACCs)—have had less to do with transnational corporations and more with the preservation of the domestic political status quo and support of the dependent state's (generally right-wing) leadership as a bulwark against the "Communist threat" (Evans 1987, 206–11). Russia's relations with the ACCs approximate those of South Korea in the above sense, and both are therefore considered here to be dependent states.

### ***The nature of Russian dependence on the ACCs***

The West's largess to Russia's elites is a reward for their compliance with ACCs dictates. Russia, as noted above, has long depended on the ACCs for loans and credits (to be sure, with its recent economic "boom," Russia succeeded, at least temporarily, in ending its loan dependence on the West), for a secure destination for Russian capital flight and, above all, as a market for Russia's natural resources. Russia's financial oligarchs want Western financial institutions to be engaged in Russia's economic "reforms" so—among other reasons—they do not have to pay for them. This means that transfers from the IMF to help close the budget deficit make it possible for the oligarchs to pay that much less in taxes: "it would be irrational," Michael McFaul has written, for them "to reject such free money (1997/98, 25).

Western aid to Russia has taken many forms, including the notorious U.S. contribution of \$500 million to President Yeltsin's 1996 reelection campaign (in violation of a Russian law banning the donation of foreign money to candidates) (*Moskovskii komsomolets*, 1 February 1998, 3). And just prior to the 1996

election, the IMF agreed to lend Russia the unusually hefty sum of \$10.3 billion, an obvious ploy to help Yeltsin defeat his popular opponent, Gennadi Zyuganov, leader and presidential candidate of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) (RG 1996b, 27).

In another instance—and one thoroughly suffused with deception—Western political support for Russia's deformed took on tragicomic overtones when a team of secretly hired U.S. consultants from the Republican Party designed "aggressive anti-Communist strategies" for Yeltsin's 1996 presidential campaign (this incident was later made into a television movie comedy). Among other things, the consultants orchestrated an April 1996 summit between Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton that was literally devoid of any agenda and whose purpose was solely to provide a forum for Yeltsin to "sound tough on the West . . . without sparking a rebuttal from Clinton." Yeltsin's feigned toughness toward the West was aimed at coopting the popular campaign theme of anti-Westernism effectively used by the CPRF. The U.S. advisers disclosed afterward that they feared operating openly because disclosure of their true role would have buttressed the charge that Yeltsin and his deformed were "American tools." This had a special salience in light of the fact that the campaign crafted for Yeltsin turned out to be, in the advisers' own words, "nonsense . . . a lie" (MT 1996, 4).

Most fundamentally for Russia, "each sector of [Russia's] economy [is oriented] toward dependence on the world [capitalist] market." Russia depends so much on Western markets as a source of export for its raw materials that it has become a virtual raw-materials appendage of the ACCs (Surovell 2000, 43). Russian exports of raw materials and semifinished goods to the major ACCs rose from 84 percent of its total exports in 1992 to 90 percent in 1996, while finished products fell from 16 percent to 10 percent of total exports, and despite a major increase in deliveries of arms and equipment (NG 1992, 4; EIZ 2002, 26). The share of Russia's exports to West Europe increased from 27.6 percent to 48 percent of the total between 1985 and 1995, while the proportion of machinery, equipment, and means of transportation, as a share

of Russia's exports, declined from 13.6 percent in 1985 to 5 percent in the first half of 1995 (RG 1996a, 7–8).

In the early 1990s, the export of oil and gas alone generated fully 40 percent of total Russian budget revenues and over half of its export revenues (Khripinov and Matthews 1996, 39–41; Kotz 2001, 165–8), while in early 1998, one-third of the West's natural-gas reserves came from Russia's Gazprom (*U.S. News & World Report*, 16 February 1998, 53). The share of net oil exports to countries outside the former Soviet Union rose from 53 percent in 1992 to 86 percent in 2001 as the share to former socialist countries plummeted. In 2003, Russia's natural-gas exports to Europe alone accounted for approximately 65 percent of Russia's total natural-gas exports (Russianoil.ru 2003). No wonder one 2003 analysis called Russia an "oil state" because petroleum exports provided an astounding 25 percent of its GDP (Medvedev 2003, 24).

The control exerted by capitalist financial organizations over the policies of Russia's leaders is so all-encompassing that the former have come to play a "large . . . role . . . in providing the expertise and policy guidance for [Russia's] economic stabilization and institutional development." By 1998, Russia had become "fundamentally dependent" for its financial stability on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which funded over one-quarter of Russian government expenditures (MT 1998).

To be sure, unlike most dependent countries, Russia has been able, at least after Putin came to power in 2000 and as oil prices have skyrocketed, to service its foreign debt with relative ease and has stopped borrowing from the West. This is an apparent anomaly, however, a temporary blessing fortuitously bestowed on President Putin and his Westernizing colleagues by freakishly high oil prices. More importantly, Russia's leaders have failed to develop "the rest of the economy," such that Russia's economic fundamentals remain "worrisome" on account of its being "prone to the same sort of volatility that has plagued many other oil-producing nations" (Poloz 2003). Indeed, by late 2004, the pace of Russian economic growth was slowing markedly.

In their construction of a "market" economy, Russian leaders have willingly followed Western guidance by erecting an

elaborate capitalist veneer cobbled together from various forms of capitalist relations (privatization, workers' salaries, a flat income tax, as well as a political system with Western-style elements—see Kotz 2001), all of which conceals their failure to create a dynamic capitalism that invests in productive capital. This veneer is all based on deception, a term that captures the essence of Russia's foreign policy as well.

Russia's deformers have obeyed the prescriptions of the IMF, including its proposed "reform" for Russia's military, in reality a plan by the advanced capitalist countries to eviscerate the mighty military created by the Soviet state and to prevent a return to socialism. Accordingly, in 1992 alone, Russia's military budget was slashed a staggering 80 percent, part of a stipulation of an IMF agreement imposing "stiff conditions" on Russia's defense (FT 1992, 6). The deterioration of Russia's military has been far more drastic since then.

In his very first economic policy statement as Russia's president, Yeltsin made clear that he was willing to knuckle under to IMF dictates when he pledged his government's readiness to cooperate with "foreign specialists" and to accept the basic principles of the IMF. He appealed to the IMF, the World Bank, and other international organizations to elaborate a plan to guide Russia's economic "reforms" (Surovell 2000, 48–49).

In March 1992, the IMF formally endorsed Russia's economic "reform" package, thus making Russia eligible to borrow from the Fund. Henceforth, Russia's deformers would implement neoliberal policies in conjunction with the IMF and other entities in order to destroy the socialist economy and to force the economic remnants—especially natural resources—into dependency on the West. This strategy was revealed in a 1993 IMF memorandum that detailed the West's aims: to force Russia's internationally competitive industries into bankruptcy and sever its economic ties with the states of the former Soviet Union. Another memorandum baldly charged that that organization was being used by "certain intelligence circles and by some Western media" to insure that "any weakness of Russia is advantageous to the West" (Surovell 2000, 49–50).

***Dependency and Russian foreign policy***

As has been noted above, at least until 2001 and to some extent even today, the perception has been widespread, including and especially on the left, that Russia's leaders have somehow been opponents of the ACCs. This is rather curious in light of the analysis noted earlier. The source of the misconception surely originates within ruling circles of the ACCs, who seek to help Russia's leaders politically by promoting the idea that Russia is "standing up" to an aggressive West.

Although such behavior by the leaders of the ACCs may at first glance seem somewhat contradictory, even self-defeating, in fact they act out of self-interest. They join in the game of deception either by making concessions to Russia or by resorting to rhetoric—openly "objecting to" and "challenging" Russia's declared policies. But any such "opposition" is in actuality part of a particularly convoluted charade played by Western elites who pretend to oppose Russia's "anti-Western hard-liners" in order to give the latter political cover—in effect, to protect them against the politically dangerous charge that they are selling Russia out to Western interests.

This grand charade was epitomized in the bewilderment of one observer who at the November 1999 Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Istanbul wondered why Russian President Yeltsin talked "so tough, when a few hours later his negotiators made potentially significant concessions on the international agreements under discussion at the summit." The answer, he noted, was given by Western analysts: Yeltsin's performance was "theatrics aimed at his domestic audience. But while playing to the gallery at home, he also likes to maintain some support in the West. Hence the concessions made by the Russian negotiators" (FT 1999, 10).

This policy, which might be called "MAD" (mutual assured deception), was unmasked by none other than former conservative U.S. official Helmut Sonnenfeldt, who shrugged off Russia's occasional acts of "disobedience" as efforts by its leaders to make it *appear* that they disassociate themselves from the West in order to create the impression that Russia's *overall* policy orientation is not subservient to the ACCs (R/RN 1997).

To be sure, recent writings by dependency theorists posit that the dynamic between the core and dependent state is not so much one of dictation as shared consensus (Mora and Hey 2003). This suggests that Russian officials follow the lead of the West, but in the final analysis it is the Russians themselves who make the determination as to whether and how they will follow the script presented to them by ACCs. And while they have acquiesced on a large majority of issues—with the awareness that they must not bite the hand that feeds them—Russia's leaders *have* defied Western dictates in some instances, motivated by, among other things, economic (not ideological) considerations. Contradictions that do exist between Russia and the ACCs (such as the issue of control of Caspian oil) are not fundamental in nature, but rather arise in connection with disputes over the size of the share of the capitalist spoils proffered by the ACCs to Russia's capitalists.

One might conclude, then, that Russia's leaders fear no mass opposition to their pro-Western policies. This is not the case, for beneath the surface of the political apathy of Russia's masses—who have endured tremendous blows over the years, causing them largely to withdraw from politics—lies the potential for the proverbial “social explosion.” Russia's leaders engage in a delicate balancing act as they comply with the dictates of the ACCs while at the same time seeking to obtain a modicum of legitimacy at home and abroad by creating at least a façade of opposition to the West. In any case, they grant just enough concessions to prevent the masses from getting out of control. Their task is made immeasurably easier, moreover, by the fact that the Russian masses have focused almost exclusively on day-to-day bread-and-butter issues and displayed little or no concern for foreign policy.

The Russian parliament, at least until the last (2004) election, which pushed the CPRF out of first place in number of seats (it had held the most seats in the Duma since 1995), had also been an opponent of the policies of the Yeltsin and Putin administrations. But Russia's constitution gives the lion's share of power to the president, leaving the Duma comparatively impotent and compelling it to resort to toothless resolutions that are as a rule

ignored by the president. Indeed, the president can even go so far as to disband parliament if it resists his or her wishes, as Yeltsin did in October 1993 with the Congress of People's Deputies. Nevertheless, parliament tends to be a barometer of the sentiments of the people, and for this reason alone, the president has had to reckon with it, at least until 2004, when the majority of Russia's parliament for the first time sided with the president.

***Russian "anti-Westernism" before and after 9/11***

Russia's anti-Western rhetoric was especially pronounced during the eight years from September 1993 to 11 September 2001. During this time, Russia's foreign-policy making dynamics could be encapsulated in one word: deception. The origins of this deception date back to late August 1993, when President Yeltsin made a momentous concession to NATO by sanctioning its eastward expansion. This magnanimity toward Moscow's capitalist partners was so obvious and far-reaching a giveaway—the expansion of NATO threatened Russia's very security—that Russia's leaders were compelled to devise a campaign hurriedly to head off the inevitable political backlash: they would pretend to oppose the capitalist West even as (I argue here) they approved of and went along with the West's agenda. This applied above all to NATO expansion, for Russia, the most critical foreign-policy issue of the 1990s.

After 11 September 2001, Russia continued to resort to deception, but had far less need and therefore did so less often. Since that date, one has heard Russia's leaders and their supporters in the analytical community frequently *approving* of actions by Western governments and of NATO—including NATO expansion, which would in the past have been roundly condemned by most in Russia. The fact is that the events of 9/11 presented Russian President Vladimir Putin with the perfect pretext to justify sweeping and unprecedented concessions toward the capitalist West. Russia's leaders clearly felt that they now had sufficient warrant—working as a supposed partner of the United States in its war against “international terrorism”—to say and do openly what previous Russian leaders had only been able to do by deception. In

this way, Putin has conceded substantially more to the West than Yeltsin ever did.

In the following section, I examine NATO expansion, probably the most momentous issue on which Russia caved in to the West, as a case study illustrating the deceptive nature of Russia's policy toward and dependency on the ACCs. Space limitations prevent an in-depth recounting of this policy here; a detailed analysis can be found in my full-length analysis of Russia's policy toward the capitalist West from 1991–2000 (Surovell 2000).

### ***Russian dependency and NATO expansion***

As noted above, analysts after about 2001 more or less correctly understood that Russian foreign policy was pro- and not anti-Western—although they continued to posit an unwarranted degree of Russian “resistance” to the West. Anyone familiar with the field of Russian studies, however, heard (and still hears) *ad nauseam* the mantra that went something like this: opposition to NATO expansion is the one issue around which Russia's leaders have *always* maintained a consensus. If Russia's leaders have gone along with NATO expansion, it is argued, they have done so reluctantly, not because they have favored expansion on principle, but because they have had no choice given Russia's exceeding weakness after the collapse of the USSR.

The foregoing conventional wisdom is in reality a dubious proposition whose validity is easily disposed of by the following question: if the “opposition” had been so fierce prior to 9/11, how could such a momentous policy *démarche* as the Putin government's open capitulation to the West after 9/11 (including its open acceptance of NATO expansion) be implemented so easily and with virtually no opposition from within Russia's ruling circles—which included the very people who had supposedly opposed such a move for years and whose interests would presumably have been threatened by such a step?

Logic dictates that the virtual absence of opposition indicated that Russia's leaders had all along *supported* NATO's agenda, or at a minimum never really strongly opposed it. The following examination of the history of Russia's policy vis-à-vis NATO expansion



will demonstrate that Russia's Westernizing leaders have not in practice opposed NATO expansion. It strongly suggests that they, consciously or unconsciously, *favor* NATO—the military organization of the ACCs led by the U.S. ruling class—and its expansion.

An answer to the question posed above was contained in a remarkable Western analysis noting in February 2002 that only a short while before 9/11,

Russia-watchers were warning that if NATO expanded . . . the Russian reaction would be severe. . . . And yet the past several years have seen not only NATO enlargement to Central Europe but a whole range of U.S.-led policies that would supposedly lead to a backlash in Russia: NATO's intervention in Kosovo, Washington's abrogation of the [ABM] Treaty, NATO's announced plans to enlarge further even to the Baltic states, and the recent establishment of what could be permanent U.S. bases in former Soviet Central Asian states. The result? President Vladimir Putin has accepted all of this. . . . What is going on? (IHT 2002, 6)

The answer, the analysis rightly concluded in a paraphrase of the dependency argument, is that Putin chose to subordinate Russia's "former foreign policy aspirations to the need to get along with the West."

It is argued here that the conventional wisdom in the West, among both left and nonleft analysts, which holds that Russians at least until 9/11 were united *along the entire political spectrum* in opposition to NATO expansion, proves to be imaginary. In fact, alongside whatever traditionally negative assessment of NATO has dwelt within the Russian body politic, a powerful tendency exists *supporting* NATO expansion as a "guarantee for the strengthening of democracy in Russia and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe" (Ivanov and Khalosha 1997, 18; see also Surovell 2000, x). Even so influential a politician as the former prime minister and foreign minister Evgenii Primakov acknowledged that, until his appointment as Russian foreign minister in January 1996, members of the ministry who *opposed* NATO expansion were in the minority (1999, 230).

I take this point even further, arguing, as I have argued elsewhere (Surovell 2000), that Russia's pro-Western (and therefore ultimately pro-NATO) top leaders *generally* have in their heart of hearts not really opposed NATO expansion. Whether or not any may have felt any "anti-NATO" sentiment, they faced in any case a stark choice: either to oppose NATO expansion and the West and thereby deprive themselves of Western support, especially monetary, or to acquiesce to the West so as to remain on good terms with it and receive such benefits. At the end of the day, there is little doubt that they will choose, and have chosen, the latter. Expanding the capitalist world's military bulwark, in short, serves the interests of Russia's would-be capitalists, safeguarding their class interests by insuring against a return to working-class power and socialism in Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union.. It goes without saying that this is also in the interests of the ruling classes of the ACCs.

To be sure, while extreme pro-Western and pro-NATO sentiment has been omnipresent at the top echelons of the Russian hierarchy, it has been far less so at lower levels. This difference became manifest in late 2001 when, after having made unprecedented concessions to the West following the events of 9/11, Russian leaders found it necessary to purge the Defense Ministry of "the most consistent and diehard opponents" of NATO. Those who favored preserving the strategic missile forces as the core of Russia's strategic nuclear forces were transferred by department heads to remote posts, while military commanders who remained were made to understand that "any criticism of foreign policy initiatives would mean automatic immediate discharge." The upshot of this housecleaning, orchestrated in the highest echelons, was the creation of a military whose attitude was "respectful . . . toward NATO and which discerns no threats to its own country" in NATO's activities (NG 2002).

The prospect of even the slightest lower-level obstructionism thus removed, Russia's leaders felt it safe to go ahead with the signing of the Rome Declaration, a treaty signed at the May 2002 NATO-Russia summit that signaled Moscow's "effective abandonment of its former doctrinal stand on the unacceptability" of

NATO expansion to include former Soviet states—the Baltics—for the first time (NG 2002).

Still, Moscow's *official* position on NATO has evolved with time. From the last few years before the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 until late 1993, Russian analysts and leaders were generally openly pro-Western and pro-NATO, a sharp contrast to the hostility to NATO that pervaded the Soviet period. This represented a political sea change within the USSR—and indeed the entire socialist bloc—that transformed the image of NATO as archenemy to ally of and model for that soon-to-be-ended bloc. In the process, the USSR and its socialist system were widely condemned during its last years by many within the Soviet political and analytical community for, among other things, having promoted the “tenacious political stereotype” that NATO was an “aggressive” organization (Alexeyev 1992, 45–51; Rurikov 1994, 138).

Such open and extreme pro-Westernism and pro-NATO-ism persisted for the next few years until 25 August 1993, when, during a visit to Warsaw, President Yeltsin bestowed his blessing on Polish membership in NATO.

Russian and Western analysts have tried to explain Yeltsin's seemingly baffling move as a mere gaffe by a leader whose drinking habits deprived him of full control of his faculties. But this simply strains credulity, especially in light of the fact that within days President Yeltsin reiterated his approval of NATO membership for the Czech and Slovak Republics while on a visit to the capitals of those East European countries; Foreign Minister Kozyrev did the same in Warsaw and Prague (Surovell 2000, chap. 4).

This was the action of a leader, a representative of the Russian comprador bourgeoisie eager to sell out his country's interests in the interests of the ACCs and the Russian ruling classes, who was aware of what he was doing. That Yeltsin was in no way *forced* to act as he did is evidenced by the fact that well before 25 August 1993, NATO had made abundantly clear its desire to expand eastward to include members of the former socialist bloc—and Yeltsin was clearly aware of this. Stymied in its expansion objective by Russia's lack of consent, NATO welcomed Yeltsin's Warsaw *démarche*. His move was, it is here argued, a gratuitous gift by

Russia's pro-Western leaders, who sought to ingratiate themselves with their capitalist allies.

Another often-heard argument, that Russia has had no choice but to go along with NATO expansion because of its debilitated state, is actually a confirmation of the dependency thesis in that it acknowledges Russia's extreme weakness and Moscow's policy-makers' resulting acquiescence to Western policies such as NATO expansion. All of this was directly or indirectly brought about by the policies of Russia's Westernizing leaders themselves. Thus it is clear that, in the implementation of policy, the views of individuals working in the Russian government are merely subsumed within Russia's dependency and concomitant pro-Western foreign-policy thrust.

If they are willing to give in to NATO expansion in the furtherance of their essentially pecuniary interests, in other words, then the members of the Russian comprador ruling class *favor* expansion. In the final analysis, there simply is no opposition.

Russia's leaders realized immediately after Yeltsin's Warsaw *démarche* that his pro-Westernism had gone too far; he had let the cat out of the bag, given away the store to NATO, and placed Russia's security under threat. This was especially dangerous in light of the devastation wrought by ongoing Western-style "reforms," which made any policy that even smacked of being openly pro-Western highly risky—all the more so because it faced the wrath of the organized Communist bloc in parliament.

More insidiously, Russian leaders devised a campaign to make it seem as if they were attempting to counter vigorously an aggressive, expanding NATO—even though, it is argued here, *they did not and would not really oppose expansion*. They would, in fact, work with NATO to promote it.

The campaign to "oppose" NATO expansion was set in motion in late September 1993 in the form of a letter from President Yeltsin to the four leading capitalist governments that laid out Russia's "security concerns" about and "opposition" to NATO expansion (Mihalka 1994, 3; *Izvestiia* 1993, 4). Having thus begun the grand deception, Russia would over the years huff and puff over what was essentially a NATO fait accompli. As the

campaign snowballed, Russia's leaders resorted to threats, warnings, and other devices—merely rhetorical and lacking in any genuine anti-NATO or anti-Western intent—to demonstrate that they meant business in their opposition to NATO expansion.

The first sign that Russia would openly capitulate to NATO's designs came in late February 1995, when Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mamedov informed U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott that Russia was willing to negotiate NATO expansion—in direct contradiction to Moscow's "ironclad" pledge that it would never do so. Within a few months, Foreign Minister Kozyrev continued the cave-in by affirming that Moscow did not oppose expansion. President Yeltsin promptly "chastised" Kozyrev, Mamedov's superior, for his subordinate's behavior, even as he (Yeltsin) denied that he had approved it, and even suggested that Kozyrev, as head of the Foreign Ministry, renounce his ministry's actions (Mihalka 1995, 38; Pushkov 1995, 2).

This suspiciously mild reproach by Yeltsin for such an extreme *démarche* underscored just how much he did protest. In fact, it was widely reported that Yeltsin had not only known of the move in advance, but had approved it. No wonder when Kozyrev in early May repeated his reassurance that NATO expansion was acceptable, observers pointed out that Yeltsin now openly approved it, although he displayed "far less opposition [to NATO expansion] in public than he does in private." And his frequent public tirades against the Western alliance were dismissed as "90 percent for domestic consumption" (Surovell 2000, 158)—that is, aimed at putting on a false front of Russian opposition to expansion.

In March 1996, the recently named Foreign Minister, Evgenii Primakov (a purportedly hard-line "anti-Westerner" who had repeatedly "warned" against NATO expansion), agreed to begin negotiations on expansion with NATO, although he attached certain unrealistic and therefore irrelevant conditions. In December 1996, Russia gave its formal consent to NATO expansion, this time without any of its previous "conditions."

In May of the following year, Russia and NATO signed the historic Founding Act, which contained a charter formally enshrining Russian assent to NATO expansion. This was a flagrant

capitulation to the West, especially since Russia got virtually nothing in return for its acquiescence, and even pro-Western Russian commentators angrily accused Moscow officials of being “so eager to clinch economic and financial rewards from the West . . . that they are ready to sign any vague ‘Charter.’” In another manifestation of his eagerness to appease his Western overlords, Yeltsin accommodated NATO by agreeing to its demand that the signing date be moved up by several weeks so as to dispose of the issue well in advance of NATO’s July 1997 meeting, which was slated to invite the new members officially (Surovell 2000, chaps. 7 and 8).

The 1997 signing of the Founding Act—a document that explicitly called for NATO expansion—must be viewed as a landmark in Russian-NATO relations and in Russia’s policy of capitulation to the capitalist West. Even after the signing, however, Russian officials continued to feign opposition to NATO expansion, especially with respect to NATO’s next objective, expansion to the Baltics. As they had previously, Russian officials, including Foreign Minister Primakov, gave signs that they would not oppose it by conspicuously minimizing its danger for Russia (*Pravda*-5 1997, 1; *Izvestiia* 1997, 3; Surovell 2000, 229).

The three republics on the Baltic Sea—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—had been part of the Soviet Union until its disbandment. Yet an article in the *Wall Street Journal* in April 2000 noted that Russia’s “propaganda assault” against the Baltics no longer contained hints of military countermeasures if they joined NATO and omitted earlier references to the “red line” around the Baltics that NATO must not cross, all of which indicated that Russia might slowly be coming to terms with NATO expansion to the Baltics, “just as official Moscow ultimately accepted the enlargement of the alliance into the now-defunct Soviet sphere of influence in Central Europe” (BNS 2000).

On New Year’s Eve 1999, President Yeltsin named his successor, Vladimir Putin, who quickly gained notoriety in the West for espousing supposedly “anti-U.S.” and “anti-Western” views. Indeed, Putin’s accession to power was almost immediately followed by a spate of “anti-Western” incidents, including the

Hanssen spy case and the March 2000 expulsion of fifty Russians by the United States in retaliation, and a resumption of arms sales to Iran—all of which were thought to presage a new surge in Russian-Western tensions.

But Putin has always been bent on promoting procapitalist policies at home and abroad. He thus pushed, even early on, such policies as the promarket “land-reform” bill to allow sale of private land on the open market, something which had long been resisted during Yeltsin’s tenure. And in a 5 March 2000 interview, Putin refused to rule out future NATO membership for Russia, immediately prompting widespread accusations within Russia that he was tacitly legitimizing “unrestricted NATO expansion.” “How can Russia object to Baltic membership when Putin himself says Russia may join?” one pro-Western Russian commentator asked with alarm (Surovell 2002). Putin’s was the wrong statement at the wrong time, and it prompted widespread and inevitable comparisons with Yeltsin’s August 1993 Warsaw capitulation, which had led, one noted Russian analyst observed, “to the start of NATO expansion. . . . [Putin] has decided to support and follow Yeltsin’s undertaking” (Surovell 2000, 259; AFP 2000).

The next stage in NATO’s expansion campaign entailed the admission of still more East European countries from the former socialist bloc. On 8 June 2001, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov and U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld held talks on foreign-policy issues that were described as “strikingly non-confrontational” because they conspicuously excluded the issue of NATO expansion. Such a willingness by Russia not to discuss the issue was seen as evidence that it would not obstruct further NATO expansion (AFP 2001).

This prediction turned out to be accurate. Indeed, the Putin regime’s accommodation to NATO expansion reached its logical conclusion when Putin declared the following October that Russia had taken “an entirely new look at NATO expansion”—meaning that Russia would not oppose it even rhetorically. Not surprisingly, then, when NATO officials affirmed on 12 October 2001 that President Bush remained committed to expansion, NATO officials

“detected signs that perhaps [Russia was] coming to terms” with it (Reuters 2001).

By late November 2002, Moscow faced the induction of the newest NATO members “with equanimity,” and made sure it did not complain “too loudly” about it. As one Russian leader put it, “the problem of NATO is no longer an issue [for Russia]. NATO expansion . . . has generally been viewed as Putin’s concession for good economic relations with the United States” (just how Russia’s minimal economic relations with the United States squared with the term “good” was not made clear) (AFP 2002; R/R 2002).

Russia’s reaction to the November 2002 NATO summit in Prague, which formally approved the induction of the new NATO members, was far more muted than during the previous round of NATO expansion a few years earlier. This time, the highest echelons of Moscow’s political and military establishment demonstrated that they had “overcome [their] NATO syndrome” when they insisted that Russia’s security was “not coming from [the West],” but from “terrorism” from the “south” (ITAR-TASS 2003; AFP 2002). Support for NATO expansion by Russia’s leaders reached a kind of apogee in their overt *championing* of NATO expansion as *good* for Russia on the highly dubious grounds that “the more NATO expands, the more useless [and unwieldy] it becomes” (AFP 2002).

A more detailed theoretical justification for the Moscow leadership’s unapologetic acquiescence to NATO expansion appeared in a 2003 article that underscored that Putin’s post-9/11 concessions to the capitalist West, including and in particular acquiescence to the second wave of NATO expansion, were so momentous as to be “previously unimaginable.” Unlike in the past, the author argued, expansion and other vital foreign-policy issues were viewed by the current Putin leadership as “not presenting a threat to Russia’s security” (Medvedev 2003, 28).

The crux of the argument lay in the fact that, in contrast with the “territorial paradigm,” which sees “strategic losses” for Moscow in NATO expansion, Western bases in Central Asia, etc., Moscow officials now regarded Russian “territory” as a “tactical resource” to be used in the “strategic game” (i.e., Russia made



trade-offs by giving up strategic advantages, including territory) for the sake of its ultimate “strategic goal,” alliance with the West. Moscow’s ultimate objective, according to this new strategy, is thus *not* power and control over territory, but “domestic reform, the nation’s *economic power*, and the state’s effectiveness” (Medvedev 2003, 27–29; emphasis added). Such “reform,” it goes without saying, is above all in the interests of Russia’s capitalists.

One left-wing analysis put it in more stark terms: it pointed out that while Russia’s ruling elite has at best expressed “concern” about NATO’s April 2004 expansion, in fact Putin pointedly did not officially react to the event until four days after the ceremony officially admitting the seven new countries to the alliance. Declaring that Moscow was “*not worried* about NATO enlargement,” Putin also issued an empty warning that the “approach of the NATO military machine toward our borders is being carefully studied by our military specialists.” “It doesn’t take a rocket scientist,” the analysis noted, “to see that a ring of U.S. bases is being tightened around Russia. Putin knows all this. He is merely trying to put a good face on things” (*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 6 April 2004, 3; emphasis added), to pretend that Moscow’s leaders will “stand up” against NATO’s aggressive behavior. By so doing, he merely continues Russia’s grand deception.

Just prior to a NATO summit in Turkey in late June 2004, Russia warned the alliance to respect Moscow’s security interests and expressed its displeasure over NATO’s stepped-up activity in the Caucasus and Central Asia by sending Foreign Minister Ivanov to the NATO summit instead of President Putin. Moscow also made it clear it was unhappy with NATO’s refusal to ratify the 1999-adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) until Russia withdrew its military forces from Georgia and Moldova (*Hindu* 2004; RIA Novosti 2004a, b).

As usual, however, Moscow’s actions vis-à-vis NATO and the capitalist West would soon belie such “belligerent” rhetoric. “Torgau 2004,” a joint Russian-American and Russian-NATO exercise, was successfully conducted in 2004, part of a list of such exercises that got longer each year as Moscow’s interaction with

NATO progressively deepened. Indeed, March 2004 witnessed the first joint exercise between Russian and U.S. military forces involving theater missile defenses (*Vremia novostei*, 17 May 2004).

In an interview with a British newspaper in early September 2004, President Putin, like his predecessor, “vigorously opposed” NATO’s eastward expansion. But the tired old anti-NATO protestations rang hollow in light of Putin’s real views, shown in the “relaxed” position he adopted toward the “traditional bugbear, NATO.” According to Putin, the North Atlantic alliance was “prone to irrelevance and internal decay” but at the same time “broadly positive. . . . We no longer regard NATO as an enemy,” he assured his capitalist allies (*Guardian* 2004, 16; see also O’Loughlin et al. 2004, 26).

As the above analysis has attempted to show, Russian policy toward NATO and expansion has come full circle: it metamorphosed from its early support for and even worship of NATO in the early 1990s into a deceptive “opposition” to NATO expansion from 1993 to 2001, only to revert in the period following 9/11 back to a form of open acceptance of NATO as a “friend” and to overt support for and legitimation of NATO’s expansion, as had been characteristic of the first stage. Russian “opposition” to NATO expansion indeed!

*Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology*  
*New York*

#### NOTES

1. I wish to thank Duncan Foley for his input on this point.

2. The term *reform*, widely used to describe the policies of post-Soviet Russia, was actually introduced by procapitalist proponents of those “reforms” who clearly made a deliberate decision to give them a positive cachet in order to promote them as positive. It is thus not accidental that virtually all the variants of the definition of “reform” in *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam, 1964), p. 1909, assert some form of *positive* change in something, that is, from “bad” to “good,” a “correction,” etc.

3. Personal correspondence from Stanislav Menshikov.

4. Yeltsin was forced to replace his foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, with Evgenii Primakov in 1996 not because he disagreed with Kozyrev’s policies—as

Coit Blacker points out, Kozyrev “faithfully exercised the strategy that he and Yeltsin . . . developed jointly”—but because his foreign policy, like his domestic policies, “had become deeply unpopular with a Russian electorate disillusioned with reform.” See Blacker 1998, 188.

#### PERIODICAL SOURCES

AFP	Agence France Presse
BNS	Baltic News Service
EIZ	<i>Ekonomika i zhizn'</i>
FT	<i>Financial Times</i> (London)
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
MT	<i>Moscow Times</i>
NG	<i>Nezavisimaia gazeta</i>
PWW	<i>People's Weekly World</i>
RG	<i>Rossiiskaia gazeta</i>
R/R	<i>RFE/RL</i> ( <a href="http://www.rferl.org/">http://www.rferl.org/</a> )
R/RN	<i>RFE/RL Newsline</i> ( <a href="http://www.rferl.org/newsline/">http://www.rferl.org/newsline/</a> )
TN	<i>Nation</i>
WSWS	World Socialist Web Site ( <a href="http://www.wsws.org">http://www.wsws.org</a> )

#### REFERENCE LIST

- AFP. 2000. 6 March.  
 ——. 2001. 9 June.  
 ——. 2002. 18 November.
- Alexeyev, Alexander. 1992. The New Dimension of NATO. *International Affairs* (Moscow) 2 (February): 45–52.
- Armstrong, Adrienne. 1981. The Political Consequences of Economic Dependence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25 (September): 401–28.
- Baltic News Service. 2000. 17 April.
- Blacker, Coit. 1998. Russia and the West. In *The New Russian Foreign Policy*, by Michael Mandelbaum, 167–93. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Boycko, Maxim, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny. 1995. *Privatizing Russia*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cardoso, Fernando Henrique, and Enzo Falletto. 1969. *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.
- Cockroft, James D., Andre Gunder Frank, and Dale L. Johnson, eds. 1972. *Dependence and Underdevelopment: Latin America's Political Economy*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Cohen, Stephen. 1985. *Rethinking the Soviet Experience*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Crisp, Olga. 1976. *Studies in the Russian Economy before 1914*. London: Macmillan.

- Dunlop, John B. 1996. The "Party of War" and Russian Imperial Nationalism. *Problems of Post-Communism* 43 (March/April): 29–34.
- EIZ. 2002. 4 February.
- Evans, Peter. 1987. Class, State, and Dependence in East Asia: Lessons for Latin Americanists. In *The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism*, edited by Frederick C. Deyo, 203–26. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press.
- FT. 1992. 23 January.
- . 1999. 2 November.
- Gaddy, Clifford, G., and Barry W. Ickes. 1998. Russia's Virtual Economy. *Foreign Affairs* 77 (September/October): 53–67.
- Guroff, Gregory, and Fred V. Carstenson, eds. 1983. *Entrepreneurship in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Guardian*. 2004. 8 September. Foreign pages, 16.
- Hey, Jeanne A. K. 1995. *Theories of Dependent Foreign Policy and the Case of Ecuador in the 1980s*. Athens, OH: Ohio Univ. Press.
- Hindu*. 2004. 28 June.
- Holmstrom, Nancy, and Richard Smith. 2000. The Necessity of Gangster Capitalism. *Monthly Review* 51 (February): 1–15.
- IHT. 2002. 14 February.
- ITAR-TASS. 2003. 30 January.
- Ivanov, P., and B. Khalosha. 1997. Rossiia-NATO: Evropeiskaia besopasnost' na rubezhe stoletii. *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 8 (August): 17–31.
- Izvestiia*. 1993. 2 October.
- . 1997. 23 December.
- Kagarlitsky, Boris. 1995a. *The Mirage of Modernization*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- . 1995b. *Restoration in Russia: Why Capitalism Failed*. London: Verso.
- Khripinov, Igor, and Mary M. Matthews. 1996. Russia's Oil and Gas Interest Group and Its Foreign Policy Agenda. *Problems of Post-Communism* 43 (May/June): 38–48.
- Kotz, David M. 2001. Is Russia Becoming Capitalist? *Science & Society* 65 (summer): 157–81.
- . 2002. "Is Russia Becoming Capitalist? Reply." *Science & Society* 66 (fall): 388–93.
- Laibman, David. 2002. Is Russia Becoming Capitalist? Comment. *Science & Society* 66 (fall): 381–88.
- Lenin, Vladimir I. 1964. *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. In vol. 22 of *V. I. Lenin: Collected Works*, 185–304. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Light, Margot. 2003. In Search of an Identity: Russian Foreign Policy and the End of Ideology. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19 (September): 42–59.
- Livshin, IAKov. 1961. *Monopolii v ekonomike Rossii: ekonomicheskie organizatsii i politika monopolicheskogo kapitala*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury.

- Lokshin, E. 1956. *Ocherk istorii promyshlennosti SSSR, 1917–40*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury.
- Losurdo, Domenico. 2000. Flight from History? The Communist Movement between Self-Criticism and Self-Contempt. *Nature, Society, and Thought* 13 (4): 457–511.
- Lynch, Allen C. 2001. “The Realism of Russia’s Foreign Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies* 53: (1) 7–31.
- Mahler, Vincent A. 1980. *Dependency Approaches to International Political Economy: A Cross-National Study*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Manley, John F. 2003. Marx in America: The New Deal. *Science & Society* 67 (spring): 9–38.
- Marx, Karl. 1979. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. In vol. 11 of *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, 99–197. New York: International Publishers.
- . 1998. *Capital, Vol. 3*. Vol. 37 of *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works*. New York: International Publishers.
- Medvedev, Sergei. 2003. Rossii: vneshniaia politika, bezopasnost', identichnost'. *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 7 (July): 22–30.
- Mihalka, Michael. 1994. Squaring the Circle; NATO’s Offer to the East. *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, no. 12 (25 March): 1–9.
- . 1995. Continued Resistance to NATO Expansion. *Transition* 14 (11 August): 38.
- Mora, Frank O., and Jeanne A. K. Hey. 2003. The Theoretical Challenge to Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Policy Studies. In *Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Policy*, edited by Frank O. Mora and Jeanne A. K. Hey, 1–9. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield.
- MT. 1995. 20 May.
- . 1996. 9 July.
- . 1998. 19 February.
- . 2004. 12 May.
- NG. 1992. 6 March.
- . 2002. 29 May.
- O’Loughlin, John, Gearóid Ó Tuathail, and Vladimir Kolossov. 2004. A Risky Westward Turn? Putin’s 9-11 Script and Ordinary Russians. *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (1): 3–34.
- Packenham, Robert. 1992. *The Dependency Movement: Scholarship and Politics in Development Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Pipes, Richard. 1977. *Russia under the Old Regime*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin.
- Poloz, Stephen S. 2003. Is Russia Really a Better Risk than Brazil? Export Development Canada, 5 November. [http://www.edc.ca/docs/ereports/commentary/weekly\\_commentary\\_e\\_1813.htm](http://www.edc.ca/docs/ereports/commentary/weekly_commentary_e_1813.htm).
- Pravda*-5. 1997. 4 March.
- Primakov, Evgenii. 1999. *Gody v bol'shoi politike*. Moscow: Sovershenno Sekretno.
- Pushkov, Alexei. 1995. *Moscow News*, 2 March, 2.
- PWW. 2002. 23 February, 12.

- Randall, Vicky, and Robin Theobald. 1985. *Political Change and Underdevelopment: A Critical Introduction to Third World Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
- Reddaway, Peter, and Dmitri Glinski. 1999. What Went Wrong in Russia? *Journal of Democracy* 10 (2): 19–34.
- Reuters. 2001. 12 February.
- RG. 1996a. 30 March.
- . 1996b. 29 November. Weekend edition.
- RIA Novosti. 2004a. 14 July. <http://en.rian.ru/rian/index.cfm>.
- . 2004b. 25 May.
- Roosa, Ruth A. 1997. *Russian Industrialists in an Era of Revolution: The Association of Industry and Trade, 1906–1917*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- R/R. 2002. 19 November.
- R/RN. 1997. Part 1, 21 November.
- Rurikov, Dmitri. 1994. How It All Began: An Essay on New Russia's Foreign Policy. In *Russian Security After the Cold War: Seven Views from Moscow*, edited by Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E. Miller, 125–63. Washington, DC: Brassey's.
- Russianoil.ru.—Oil and Gas Industrial Information Resource. 2003. 25 February.
- Sayer, Derek, and Philip Corrigan. 1983. Late Marx: Continuity, Contradiction, and Learning. In *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the "Peripheries of Capitalism,"* edited by Teodor Shanin, 77–93. London: Routledge.
- Shleifer, Andrei. 1995. Introduction to *Privatizing Russia*, by Maxim Boycko, Andrei Shliefer, and Robert Vishny. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Stavrakis, Peter J. 1996. Russia after the Elections: Democracy or Parliamentary Byzantium? *Problems of Post-Communism* 43 (March/April): 13–20.
- Stone, David R. 1997. Rosvooruzhenie and Russia's Return to the World Arms Market. In *Perspectives on Political and Economic Transitions after Communism*, edited by John MicGiel, 77–90. New York: Institute on Eastern Central Europe, Columbia Univ.
- Surovell, Jeffrey. 2000. *Capitalist Russia and the West*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- . 2002. Russia's Relations with the West after 9/11: Strategic Partners or Strange Bedfellows? Paper presented at ASN Conference, Forli, Italy. June.
- TN. 2001a. 15 October.
- . 2001b. 5 November.
- . 2001c. 20 November.
- Weir, Fred. 1996. Betting on Boris: The West Antes Up for the Russian Elections. *CovertAction Quarterly* 57 (summer): 38–41.
- WSWS. 1999a. 8 May.
- . 1999b. 15 June.
- . 1999c. 11 December.

# THE RED CRITIQUE

MARXIST THEORY AND CRITIQUE OF THE CONTEMPORARY

9

Fall/Winter 2003

**Class and Casualties**  
Editorial

**Merely Reading:**  
**Cultural Criticism as the Erasure of Labor**  
Robert Faivre

**The Pedagogy of Totality**  
Mas'ud Zavarzadeh

**Family Labor: Caring for Capitalism**  
Julie Tarrant

**Video Games and the (De)Skilling of Labor**  
Rob Wilkie

**Humanities and the City of Labor**  
Kimberly DeFazio

**redcritique.org**

*Subscribe to*

**the minnesota review**

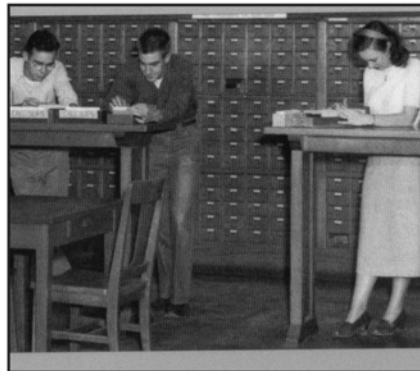
a journal of committed writing

**Smart Kids**

Poetry of the Absurd  
Academics of Publishing Revisited

Featuring:

Renny Christopher  
Kirstin Dinnall Hoyte  
Dianne Kendig  
John Kirk  
Carolyn Whitson  
Jeffrey J. Williams



Interviews with:

Jennifer Crewe  
Michael Hardt  
John Guillory  
Willis Regier  
Slavoj Zizek

Jeffrey J. Williams  
*the minnesota review*  
Dept. of English  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

<http://theminnesotareview.org>



## MARXIST FORUM

The Marxist Forum items in this issue deal with responses from different countries to a variety of issues. The Iraqi Communist Party, which opposed the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, explains why it took part in the interim government and presented candidates for the January 2005 elections. The remarks by Vice President Li Shenming of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences are of particular interest because they reflect a commitment to the spirit of revolutionary Marxism that has not been voiced by leading figures in China for many years. An Italian Marxist gives numerous examples of the various ways political leaders and bourgeois ideologues distort the truth. The final item is a report of the political and ideological bonds between Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro that were displayed during Chavez's visit to Cuba in October 2004.



**Presentation by the Iraqi Communist  
Party at the International Meeting of  
Communist and Workers Parties, Athens,  
8–10 October 2004**

I convey to you the warmest greetings of the Iraqi Communist Party and its best wishes for the success of this International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties. Allow me also to join other speakers in thanking the comrades of the fraternal Communist Party of Greece for hosting this important meeting and for their consistent efforts to sustain this event as a forum for open and free exchange of views about the urgent issues and challenges facing Communists all over the world. We believe that seminars and workshops, focusing on more specific topics, with more in-depth analysis and discussions, and aiming to develop joint political initiatives, on both regional and international levels, can complement these meetings.

We seize this occasion to express our high appreciation for the internationalist support and solidarity extended by the Communist Party of Greece and fraternal parties, over many decades, against dictatorship and fascist campaigns of terror, mass executions and physical liquidation against Iraqi Communists and democrats, especially under Saddam's dictatorship. While continuing the fight today, under extremely difficult and complex conditions, to end the American-British occupation, restore national sovereignty and independence, and build a democratic Iraq, we look forward to your continued support and solidarity. Iraqi Communists know only too well, from their own bitter experience, who their true and

tested friends are: those who share their values and lofty aims of freedom, democracy, human rights, peace, and socialism.

International solidarity with the Iraqi people and democratic forces, including our Communist Party, has acquired special and exceptional significance in these difficult and challenging times. We therefore look upon progressive forces and broad mass movements opposed to the war and warmongering policies as allies in our battle, not only in bringing about a speedy end to occupation but also in providing concrete support for building democracy and peace. For only truly democratic regimes expressing the free will of their people can stand up to imperialism and its aggressive policies for domination and hegemony.

It is now one year and a half since the war and the occupation of Iraq. Our country has witnessed exceptional developments during this period, giving rise to a totally new situation. It is extremely complex, and fraught with enormous dangers, as well as holding real potential for leading our country out of its prolonged ordeal, and moving forward toward independence and the democratic alternative to which our people aspire.

We had been fully convinced, long before the war, that there was no way out of the comprehensive crisis engulfing our country and people, no end to catastrophes and tragedies, and no hope for any reconstruction, except through achieving internal change and getting rid of Saddam's dictatorial regime.

But our Party rejected the war, considering it to be the worst alternative, exposing its real objectives as part of the strategy of the U.S. administration to extend and consolidate its hegemony through a doctrine of preemption, using the events of 11 September as a pretext to wage an endless "war on terror."

While joining in the worldwide antiwar movement, Iraqi Communists stressed the need for distinguishing between the Iraqi people and Saddam's regime, warning against one-sided positions which overlooked the regime's responsibility for the dangers and tragedies suffered by our people. Thus we called for clarity in positions and slogans, as well as pressures on the dictatorial regime to avert war through dealing in a responsible manner with its international obligations and by opening up to the people and releasing democratic freedoms.

When war loomed and became the most probable outcome, as a result of Saddam's utter disregard for the fate of the people and country, and also the determination by the U.S. administration to pursue its policy, our Party called upon democratic and progressive forces, and the peace movement, to support the alternative we favored most. It was a national democratic and patriotic alternative, which relies on the struggle of the Iraqi people and their armed forces, as well as the unity of patriotic opposition forces, backed by legitimate international support. Such an alternative, supported by pressures to force the dictator to step down, would have averted war and its tragic consequences.

The outcome of the war, the speedy collapse of Saddam's military institution, and even the whole Iraqi state, exposed the bankruptcy of the dictatorship and its hollow claims. Furthermore, all this revealed our people's overwhelming desire to get rid of the regime. Thus, in an unprecedented development of enormous significance for Iraq and the region, the people chose to stand aside, watching a fight between an imperialist power, which they knew only too well, and a deeply hated regime. The 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, the day when the dictatorship eventually collapsed, has come to embody the complexities and contradictions of the new situation. A brutal dictatorship had gone, but it was replaced with occupation.

The overwhelming majority of our people were overjoyed at the regime's shameful collapse. But it did not bring about the emergence of the democratic alternative they desired. A dangerous political and security vacuum resulted, with serious political, economic, and social consequences that are still with us today. Tackling this situation was, and continues to be, a top priority.

It is important to point out that our people, despite rejoicing at the fall of Saddam's regime, did not embrace the occupation forces or receive them with flowers (as some had expected).

The developments over the past one and a half years have vindicated our Party's rejection of war, invasion, and occupation.

The country has faced, since 9 April 2003, a host of urgent and interconnected tasks, the essence of which is creating the conditions for ending the occupation and putting Iraq on the path of national and democratic development.

Throughout these difficult and challenging times, our Party has made a vital contribution to efforts aimed at building broad national unity against occupation, foiling plots and maneuvers to divide and rule, while working at the same time to rebuild the democratic movement, including independent trade unions, women, students, and human rights organizations. Work continues to prepare for the elections by the end January 2005 as part of the first phase of the transition period. Significant progress has been achieved, but the difficulties are enormous. Meanwhile, the Iraqi Communist Party has reemerged, despite losing thousands of comrades and supporters under decades of fascist rule, as a major political force, as the best organized democratic force in the country. Its organizations are now active all over Iraq, with more than eighty-five Party offices in provinces and districts. But the relentless work continues to address shortcomings, to raise the level of cadres, as well as the level of political awareness among the people, to fight not only against the occupiers but also for fundamental basic human, democratic, and social rights. Important battles have been fought, and won, such as that against the attempt to abolish a law upholding fundamental women's rights. Such battles are continuing, along with the national battle against the occupation, for sovereignty and independence. This is why it is of fundamental importance to understand the close interconnection between the national and democratic levels of the fight which is now being waged in Iraq. A one-sided approach will not help to understand the present complex situation and how best to provide concrete support to progressive and democratic forces on the ground, inside Iraq.

The difficult situation which now prevails is due to the fact that we are now facing both the legacy of dictatorship and the legacy of occupation: three catastrophic wars, twelve years of U.S.-imposed international sanctions, which led to fragmenting the social fabric of society, the lack of democratic traditions, and absence of normal political life. This situation was aggravated by the consequences of the war and invasion, the collapse of the whole Iraqi state, the resulting power vacuum, the policy

of the occupation authority and blatant violations by its armed forces numbering 140,000 troops. There is also the scandalous “reconstruction” effort, with more than \$8 billion of Iraqi money squandered by the occupation authority during the first year of occupation.

Conferring international legitimacy on occupation through UN Security Council Resolution 1484 in late May 2003, instead of handing over power to a broad Iraqi coalition government, as all political forces, including our Party, had demanded, created further serious obstacles. The setting up of the Governing Council, with limited but important powers, and with the participation of all major political parties at the time, was therefore a compromise, reached with active mediation by the UN.

Our Party stressed that the Council was only one arena and one platform, among others, for our struggle to achieve national sovereignty and independence. We always emphasized the need to continuously combine our work within the Council and in the present interim government with our efforts of a mass character, as well as strengthening relations with all forces that want to achieve the transition to end the occupation and build a united federal democratic Iraq.

Resisting occupation is a right enshrined by the UN Charter. The Iraqi people, therefore, have a legitimate right to resort to various forms of struggle to end the occupation and restore national sovereignty. But resisting occupation is not limited to employing violent means in struggle, but rather includes various forms of political struggle. The lessons of history teach us that peoples only resort to armed struggle when they are forced to do so after exhausting political means.

As a matter of fact, armed operations carried out by shadowy groups, whether extremist Islamist or supporters of Saddam’s regime, inflict harm on the desired aim: to get rid of the occupation as soon as possible. Such operations actually provide the pretext for the occupying forces to prolong their presence, as well as perpetuating the state of tension, concern, and fear among the people. Terrorist acts targeting innocent civilians, such as criminal car bombs, kidnappings, and killings, as well as sabotage

against basic services, electricity networks, and oil pipelines only aggravate the suffering of the people and further alienate them. The victims were thousands of innocent people dead and wounded. These terrorist acts have been strongly condemned by the Iraqi people.

There is also a patriotic element. Violations and blatant acts of aggression against the people by the occupying forces have led to violent reactions, giving rise on many occasions to spontaneous armed operations targeting these forces. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between groups and forces that carry out such operations.

On many occasions in recent months, such as last April in Faluja, the American occupation forces resorted to oppressive measures, such as the excessive use of force and collective punishment, which were strongly condemned by our Party. The biggest losers in this confrontation were innocent civilians, with more than 600 people killed, including women and children. A similar situation developed in Najaf, but was later contained through peaceful political initiatives that were widely welcomed.

The forces behind the deteriorating security situation are mainly supporters of the previous regime and antipeople terrorist forces of various shades. Saddam's fascist security organization was left untouched. Through subversive and criminal activities, these elements want to assert themselves as a power on the political scene. It is worth mentioning that some forces in the U.S. administration want to deal with and accommodate these elements in order to contain the current complicated situation.

Tackling the security situation requires urgent political, economic, and social measures. First and foremost, prerequisites must be provided for a speedy handover of power to the Iraqi people, empowering them to decide their own political future and social system, with their own free will, through free and fair elections.

The future of Iraq, stability and peace in the Middle East, the defeat of imperialist and Zionist aggressive schemes, and the triumph of the just cause of the Palestinian people, depend to a



large extent on the outcome of the ongoing political process in our country.

The voice of the Iraqi people must be heard. They demand full control on all internal and external affairs of the Iraqi state, including control of security, military matters, and control over financial and economic resources—i.e., the restoration of full sovereignty and independence—and an end to occupation and foreign military presence.

In this multifaceted and complex political process, your continued support and solidarity, along with all progressive and peace-loving forces in the world, will be essential in helping to achieve the legitimate aspirations of our people and their democratic forces: ending the occupation, eliminating the legacy of dictatorship, and building a free unified democratic and federal Iraq.

We look forward to strengthening and developing further the fraternal ties among our Communist and Workers parties in the joint international struggle against imperialism and the onslaught of capitalist globalism; for freedom, democracy, social progress, peace, and socialism.

# ARENA *journal*

A twice-yearly, internationally oriented scholarly periodical, *Arena Journal* will continue a commitment of the first series of *Arena* to publishing material which reflects on a renewed left critical practice. It is a place for theoretically and ethically concerned discussion on the prospects for co-operation within contemporary life.

*Arena Journal* will respond to the challenges of the last twenty years to the 'classical' accounts of social life which have emerged from theories of subjectivity and the sign, challenges which have affected the status of figures such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim, as well as post-classical theorists such as Habermas and Giddens. A central focus of the *Journal* is upon the interpretive and technical intellectual practices and their relation to the reconstruction of social processes: class relations, forms of selfhood and community life.

## ARENA *journal* No. 22, 2004

### Middle East Perspectives

Beyond Right and Wrong There is a Field - I'll  
Meet You there Dvir Abramovick

Israeli Apartheids Lorenzo Veracini

### Articles

Postmodern Museums: History, fiction  
and Anthropological Dialogue John Morton

Displaying the *Enola Gay*, Hiding Hiroshima Timothy Luke

Ambiguous Nationalism — A Reply to  
Joan Cocks Tom Nairn

Ironic Reversal: Writing Cultural  
Ambivalence Kathryn Lay-Chenchabi

The Bible and the *Beekeeper's Manual* Roland Boer

And Much More

### Subscribe to *Arena Journal*

Rates (in Australian dollars please)

	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs
Individuals	-	40	57
Organization	66	121	176

Overseas: add \$14 (air only)

Send to:  
*Arena Journal*  
PO Box 18  
North Carlton  
Australia 3054  
Telephone: 61-3-9416 0232  
Fax: 61-3-9416 0684  
Email [amanda@arena.org.au](mailto:amanda@arena.org.au)

# **Socialism over a Century: Retrospect and Prospect**

**Li Shenming, Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**

Speech at the opening ceremony of the International Academic Symposium on World Socialism in the Twenty-First Century, Beijing, October 2002

Ladies and gentlemen; fellow representatives and comrades:

Beijing in October brims with the pleasant autumnal tints and fragrance of chrysanthemums. So, in this royal season, is it not a grand occasion in the international academic circle of Marxists to have so many experts and scholars here in Beijing who are concerned with the fate of socialism and committed to the study of Marxist theories? First of all, please allow me, on behalf of the sponsor for the symposium and of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to extend a warm welcome to all the foreign friends who have come a long way and those here at home who are devoted to theoretical studies.

Bidding farewell to the twentieth century, we entered a new century and millennium. In the past century, humankind has witnessed not only a series of breakthroughs made in the perception and transformation of nature and the development of science and technology, thereby creating achievements in civilization hardly conceivable in any of the past centuries, but also epoch-making

accomplishments in the perception and transformation of society and the reformation of social institutions. The rise of socialism, in particular, has turned over a new page for human society. Today we have every reason to say that the socialist revolutions, construction, and reforms have struck the strongest voice in the twentieth century, and marked the most important progress in that century. At the threshold of the new century and millennium, it is a historical topic for socialists all over the world to look back correctly on the historical course of the twentieth century and sum up its experience and lessons, and to explore in depth the major issues and prospects of the twenty-first century. This symposium, I hope, will proceed with the interpretation of the topic of the times. Next, in view of joint exploration with colleagues and friends at home and abroad, I would like to share with you a few opinions on the history of socialism in the twentieth century and prospects for socialism in the twenty-first century.

***Part one: Historical course of socialism in the twentieth century***

At the beginning of the twentieth century, socialism arrested world attention with the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, while at the end of the same century, socialism equally confused the world with the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Socialism, as a brand-new social system, has witnessed repeated leaps, setbacks, and twists before it came to eighty-five years of age. And in looking back on the historical course of socialism, different people with different positions and outlooks may arrive at different understandings. Personally, I think at least the following are thought-provoking and memorable.

*The birth of socialism has opened up a new era for human history*

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, capitalism developed from free competition to monopoly. Under the new historical circumstances, Lenin was shrewd to observe the law of unbalanced politicoeconomic development of imperialism. After

a scientific analysis of the internal and external contradictions of imperialist countries, Lenin creatively drew a new conclusion that socialism might first succeed in a few capitalist countries or even a sole country. He went on to point out that so long as the revolutionary situation and social forces were all ready, revolution might also first break out and succeed in Russia, the weak link in the imperialist chain of rule, where capitalist industries developed more slowly. Lenin's "theory of victory in one country" provides a scientific theoretical basis for some relatively underdeveloped countries in the twentieth century to launch socialist revolution and set up a socialist system.

In October 1917 (according to the Russian calendar), the Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, took advantage of the revolutionary situation in the wake of the World War I and led the proletarians and laborers in Russia to overthrow the rule of the czar and set up the political power of the people. In a short time, by defeating the armed interventions and attacks of international monopoly capitalism, they achieved and reinforced the great victory of the October Revolution, thereby establishing the first socialist country in the world. The peals of gun rumbles from the cruiser *Aurora* shattered the exclusive rule of capitalism, aroused the enslaved all over the world, and heralded in a new era. As noted poignantly by Mao Zedong, "Socialist Revolution in October has opened up a new era not only for Russian history, but for world history." It pointed out the direction for the liberation of all humanity.

The victory of the October Revolution brought socialism to reality, enabling it to take another historical leap forward since its evolution from utopianism to science in the midnineteenth century. With this as the starting point and landmark, the flames of proletarian revolution soon swept many other countries and regions in the world. The world socialist movement hailed its first wave in the twentieth century. Socialism, at the same time, speeded up the awakening of the colonial nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and brought together the socialist movements and national-liberation movements into rolling torrents lashing away at international monopoly capitalism.

*The development and rapid growth of socialism have changed the world pattern and historical course*

In the 1940s, fascist Germany staged a surprise attack on, and full-scale invasion of, the Soviet Union. The newborn socialism faced another grim test. At this vital moment, the Soviet people brought into full play the advantages of socialism and won the great victory on the Soviet-German battlefield. The great Soviet contribution to the war against fascism greatly affected the course of world history, strengthened the socialist position, and precluded the second wave of the world socialist movement in the twentieth century.

Based on the antifascist victory and inspired by the achievements of socialist construction in Russia, a number of countries in the world, one after another, won the victory of the people's democratic revolution and set on the socialist road. The victories of socialist revolution in China, Korea, and Vietnam, in particular, broke through the imperialist front in the East, and promoted the world socialist cause. The subsequent establishment of socialism in Cuba further expanded the socialist position from the eastern hemisphere to the western one. The historical progress of socialism from one country to multiple countries vehemently shook capitalist rule over the world. Thus, the fifteen socialist countries, accounting for one-third of the world's population and one-quarter of the world's territory, formed the socialist camp and resisted capitalist rule. Hence the international situation was marked by the coexistence of and competition between the two social systems.

Socialism made tremendous contributions to maintaining world peace and facilitating national-liberation movements. Socialist countries, along with the oppressed nations and peoples, undertook unremitting anti-imperialist and anticolonial struggles and smashed the colonial ruling system of imperialism, enabling nearly a hundred colonial and semicolonial countries and regions to attain national independence and liberation. The development and rapid growth of socialist forces effectively prevented the outbreak of a new world war, maintained peace and stability, and promoted the development and progress of the world.

All in all, the rise and development of socialism has changed the nature of the world landscape and played a great part in the promotion of human civilization.

*The brilliant achievements of socialism have displayed its vibrant vitality*

The vitality of socialism lies ultimately in its opening up of a broad space for the liberation and development of social productivity. In their earlier practices, the socialist countries did show superiority unsurpassed by capitalist ones. No class exploitation, dark political oppression, or seasonal economic crisis was ever found in the new socialist countries. Hundreds of thousands of unprivileged slaves, once liberated to be the masters of society, instantly burst out with rising enthusiasm and ingenuity for labor. Led by the working-class party, and united in a common purpose, they managed to create a series of wonders of industrial development, and keynotes of triumph in socialist construction, in defiance of their backward economy and culture. In its initial first and second decades, the Soviet Union achieved successful industrialization to become the second strongest economic power in the world. New China, under the guidance of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and through self-reliance and painstaking struggle, also broke away from the plight of a century's poverty and decline, and set up an independent and relatively complete system of industrial foundation and national economy. Other socialist countries also made remarkable progress and achievements in politics, economy, and culture. Despite all their practical blunders and detours, as well as their institutional problems and defects, these countries altered their fate of dependence on developed capitalist countries, and began to explore and embark on a noncapitalist path of development enabling underdeveloped countries to achieve industrialization and modernization all by themselves.

The establishment of socialism marks the birth of a new social form and civilization higher and more advanced than capitalism. It enables laborers under centuries of exploitation and oppression to master, for the first time, their own fates. And the ongoing perfection of socialism, along with its visible superiority, produced

a strong impact on capitalism, compelling the Western monopoly bourgeoisie to carry out reforms and improvements of the capitalist system, and to make concessions to the working class and other laborers, thereby improving and raising the living conditions of the laboring classes. This, to a degree, has promoted the progress of human society.

*The temporary setbacks of socialism cannot stop its progress*

The development of socialism, like any other newborn thing, cannot be as smooth and straight as Neva Street. After World War II, the new situation featured a rapid advance in science and technology, and the fierce competition between the two systems posed grave challenges to socialism. With a view of eliminating former institutional defects, the socialist countries introduced a series of reforms. Reforms became the theme of the development of socialist countries in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the 1950s, the Tito leadership of Communists in the former Yugoslavia brought forth the theory of socialist autonomy, and took the lead in exploring the model of the socialist system. In the almost thirty years that followed, from the 1950s to the 1970s, such countries as the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia began in succession to reform their original economic and political institutions and made repeated advances in theory and policy. Though they achieved some success, no remarkable progress was made owing to grievous mistakes.

The 1980s saw the Soviet Union and East Europe step up their reforms. Because of some blunders made by the Communist parties in their guiding rule and decision making, however, the reforms resulted in a deviation from the socialist course. In addition, the "Peaceful Evolution" strategy pursued by the West also contributed to the chain of sudden changes in 1989–1991 in the political scene of the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe. One by one, these countries distinctly turned from socialism to capitalism. And by the end of 1991, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of ninety-three years' standing, had disbanded, and the Soviet Union, of seventy years' existence, had disintegrated. The countries that split off also distinctly disengaged themselves from the socialist track.



The radical changes in East Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union dealt a heavy blow to the socialist cause. The world socialist movement reached its low ebb. However, the general trend of the winding advance of socialism and its ultimate replacement of capitalism will not be changed henceforth.

Even now, the scientific socialist cause has made, or is making, substantial progress. China, based on the earlier explorations made in Chairman Mao's era, has made great achievements in reform and its opening-up and modernization drive. Integrating theory with practice, the Chinese Communists have initially answered and solved the essential question of how to build socialism, and how to sustain and develop socialism in a country such as China, where the economy and culture are less developed. Socialism has not only taken root in China, but has bloomed with vigor and vitality. Socialism in China has been sustained and developed. The "Doi Moi" (Renovation) cause in Vietnam has borne sweet fruit; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea follows up the socialist path under the guidance of the "Juche Idea"; Laos is getting along steadfastly with its reforms; and Cuba is towering undauntedly in the Caribbean.

Following the radical changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the working classes and their Communist organizations in other countries have not only withstood political blows and kept on their feet, but have given thought to the international Communist movement, the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the Soviet model of socialism. They more or less have made adjustments and responses in theory and policy, both in light of the new changes in economy, politics, and ideology of contemporary capitalism and of the practical conditions of their own countries. Gradually, they are turning the corner and even beginning to see some recovery and development. The working-class parties even in the Western developed countries are mostly restoring and increasing their political influence. In Japan, France, Portugal, Italy, Spain, and Greece, in particular, the working-class parties continue to play an important part in political life. And the working-class parties in some developing countries, such as the Communist parties in India and South Africa, exert important

political influences on their countries. Again, the Communist parties and left organizations in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, after all the turbulence, splitting, and reshuffling, have risen up and are emerging as an increasingly important socio-political force there.

Undergoing a series of trials and tests of historical detours, the world socialist movement has surely suffered from some loss and shrinkage, to call a spade a spade. At the same time, the socialist forces have been rendered more capable and militant.

At present, despite the grim situation that hangs on, the world socialist movement is edging upward from the nadir. In reality, the assertion of the utter failure of socialism made by the strategists and predictors of Western monopoly capitalism has proved bankrupt.

***Part two: Basic experience of socialism in the twentieth century***

Tried and tested by wars and revolutions, construction and reforms, and victories and setbacks, the world socialist movement in the twentieth century has accumulated rich experience in this regard. These experiences and lessons, positive or negative, all came down as the treasure of the world socialist cause. In view of a smooth development of socialism in the twentieth century, it is of great significance to sum up and utilize experience in line with practical development, and to deepen the understanding of the governing law of the Communist parties, the law of socialist construction, and the law of development of human society. Here, I would like to analyze and outline briefly some general and universal issues in the socialist revolutions, construction, and reforms in the twentieth century.

*Integrating the cardinal principles of Marxism with particular local practices so as to explore the socialist path suitable for local conditions*

Marxism is not only the compact and scientific ideological system of the working class, but a potent ideological weapon of proletarians and laborers to perceive and transform the world. All

revolutions, construction, or reforms must be undertaken under the direction of Marxism. This is where the vitality of socialism lies, and must not be neglected. The three generations of CPC core leadership, from Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin, have all stressed in explicit terms that this legacy should never be lost. The loss of Marxism will rip us from our ground and lead us astray. The changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are evidence of this. Nevertheless, Marxism must be integrated with local practices. The Communists of all countries must, starting from Marxist positions, ideas, and approaches, solve innovatively such practical issues as revolution, construction, and reform in line with their national conditions. Mere abstract talk of Marxism makes no sense without local practices. Either the dogmatization or simple copying of Marxism will incur blunders or setbacks to the socialist cause. History has shown that the basic principles of Marxism should be rooted in special practices producing Marxist theories in accordance with national culture and style. Marxism as such is dynamic and vigorous.

The integration of the fundamental principles of Marxism with national practices is anything but easy. Rather, it is a historical process of repeated experiments and arduous explorations. In these explorations and understandings, the international proletarians and Communists have learnt from the experience of successes and have drawn lessons from the frustrations, advancing their self-consciousness in summing up experiences and lessons. The experience of the CPC tells us that real integration requires a scientific attitude toward Marxism and a sensitive grasp of basic national conditions—that is, we must handle properly the dialectical relationship between the fundamental principles of Marxism and special socialist practices, between the universality and particularity of socialism. Failure to do so prior to China's reform and opening-up policy was one of the underlying reasons for the blunders in our Chinese reality—that is, in the primary stage of socialism. The ideological guideline of “emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts” was reestablished. The national component of the primary stage of socialism is given precedence. In so doing, we have not only avoided the radical ideas and policies transcending the primary stage, but have resisted

erroneous views that forsake the basic socialist system, thus blazing a trail of development of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

*“Advancing with the times” as ultimately required by Marxism, and sustaining, developing, and improving Marxism self-consciously*

The particular practices of socialism in all countries, as embedded in some international background and context, are without exception affected and restricted by different conditions in time. Identifying the changes in the international scene and adapting to the development trends of the times have always constituted the prerequisite for Marxist parties to formulate correct guidelines and strategies, and to win victory in the socialist cause. As put accurately by Marx and Engels in the 1872 preface to the German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, “The general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. . . . The practical application of the principles will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the existing historical conditions.”

Innovation and development are the inexhaustible motive powers of socialism; Marxism inherently requires that it advance with the times. Rigidity and stagnation lead us nowhere. In this regard, Engels put it well, “The so-called socialism is never invariable, but should be taken as much a variable and reformatory society as any other social system.” The last century has seen great and rapid changes taking place in the world. Among them, the three scientific and technological revolutions and the emerging wave of economic globalization, in particular, have immensely changed, and will continue to change, the world landscape and human life. This must be taken seriously by the socialists of all countries. Only after years of tortuous explorations did it dawn on the CPC that peace and development should become the theme of the contemporary world. Reforms are the motive power for the self-improvement and development of socialism, and opening-up is the basic national policy in the construction of socialism. If

socialism stands still and refuses to reform and open up, it will be unable to respond to the challenges posed by the new scientific and technological revolution and the wave of economic globalization. In other words, it will be discarded by time and history, and be brought to a dead end.

The integration of the fundamental principles of Marxism with the characteristics of our times requires a correct perception and grasp of the intrinsic characteristics and major issues of the times. This calls for the Communists of all countries, particularly those in socialist countries, to possess a wide vision, broad mind, dialectical way of thinking, and profound strategic insight. They must set down proper development strategies in light of the changing trends of the times, gain a correct understanding of the historical correlation and underlying difference between capitalism and socialism, bravely draw on and benefit from the achievements of human civilization and make full use of all possible internal and external resources, so as to boost the strength and advantages of socialism, and strengthen, improve, and develop the basic socialist system by reform and opening-up.

*Giving priority to economic construction, and viewing the development of social productivity as the top task*

Productivity, as the most active and revolutionary element, ultimately determines social development. The objective foundation for socialist revolution is the elimination of the contradiction between socialized production and private ownership of the means of production, the shaking off of the shackles of the relations of production over productivity, and the promotion of the development of social productivity. Not until social productivity is developed on a full scale after the establishment of socialism can the comprehensive national strength be enhanced, people's livelihood improved, and the basic socialist system consolidated, thereby laying a solid foundation of materials and technologies for the forthcoming communism. As noted earlier by Marx, a greatly increased and highly developed productivity constitutes an "absolutely necessary and practical prerequisite" for socialism. He was echoed by Lenin, "Labor productivity is ultimately

the most important and primary thing for the victory of the new social system,” and “after the proletariat takes office in a country, its most primary and essential task is to increase the quantity of goods so as to increase social productivity to a large extent.” These elucidations still serve as an important guiding rule in our socialist construction.

Generally speaking, all countries are confronted with the task of developing social productivity as soon as possible and consolidating the socialist system. Specifically speaking, it seems more pressing and important for a country that is backward in economy and culture to build socialism—i.e., to focus itself on the liberation and development of social productivity and to promote the political and cultural progress of socialism through economic development. As history shows, the working class gives continual priority to economic construction and takes the development of productivity as its fundamental task. Without the development of social productivity, the fortification of the socialist system and national stabilization will encounter great difficulties, and the superiority of socialism will be deprived of its ultimate economic source. Therefore, it is the ultimate embodiment and demand of the proletarian party and the socialist countries to have a quick grasp of the tendencies and requirements for the development of social productivity, to formulate and implement correct guidelines and policies, and to promote the development of social productivity with a view to stand ahead of the times and bring into full play the superiority of socialism.

*Practicing socialist democratic politics and improving the socialist legal system*

Socialism must be coupled with a high degree of democracy. Without democracy, there will be no socialism. The democracy of the majority of people, instead of the monopoly of a few, is the essential requirement of the socialist system alone, and the ultimate distinction of socialist democracy from capitalist democracy. Indeed, it was an unprecedentedly great step to social democracy from capitalism for the working class and other working people to rise to power in the twentieth century. Restricted, however, by

the level of the economic, political, and cultural development, the new sociopolitical system of socialist democracy is far from mature and leaves much to be desired. This must be properly understood and dealt with. We must steadily and enthusiastically achieve progress on the one hand and watch out for rash and precipitant jumps on the other.

To build socialism in a country backward in economy and culture, the construction of a democratic legal system is a fundamental and lengthy task, since the traditions of feudal dictatorship in these countries are relatively deep-rooted while those of the democratic legal system are relatively weak. Although the establishment of socialist democracy in the twentieth century proved to be a great historical feat, inexperience and even aberrations affected the implementation of democracy, such as democratic procedures, democratic elections, democratic management, democratic decision making and democratic supervision, as well as the treatment of the relationships between democracy and dictatorship, democracy and centralization, and democracy and the legal system. These problems directly affected the development of the socialist system, and even caused the loss of state power in some socialist countries. Hence, the upholding of democracy inside the Party, the active enhancement of people's democracy, and the proper handling of the leadership of the Communist Party and people's democracy and rule by law remain crucial subjects of socialist practice in the twenty-first century.

*Improving the leadership of the working-class party and maintaining the advanced element of the Communists*

The Communist Party lies at the core leadership of the socialist cause, and plays a decisive role in the rise and decline, successes and failures of socialist revolutions, construction, and reforms. Without the correct leadership of the working-class party, there would not have been the victory of socialist revolution, to say nothing of the success of socialist construction and reform. For a period of time, the Communist and workers parties in the Soviet Union and East Europe remained chaotic in theory, lost in faith, loose in organization, and ineffective in regard to the mechanism

of democratic supervision. All these, together with rampant bureaucratism, resulted in the degeneration and transmutation of the Party, thus seriously damaging the Party's popularity with the masses and rendering the Party vulnerable or even defenseless under the attacks of hostile forces. According to opinion polls undertaken in the Soviet Union prior to its disintegration, only 17 percent of the people thought the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stood for the interests of the people, whereas 80 percent thought it stood for the interests of the privileged and "cadres of leading bodies at different levels." As an ancient Chinese saying goes, "He wins the world who wins the people, and he loses the world who loses the people." Once divorced from the people, the Communist Party is doomed to collapse. This is a great lesson to be borne in mind.

Since the greatest danger for a Communist Party in power lies in its divorce from the masses, the Party's first and foremost task is, therefore, to improve its leadership. This is because after the working class assumes power, its living and governing conditions will change dramatically, and easily give rise to the phenomena of bureaucratism and corruption. As pointed out by President Jiang at the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the Party, "the CPC shall stand, as ever, ahead of the times and lead the people from victory to victory. To sum up, our Party must represent the development needs of China's advanced social productive forces, represent the onward direction of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the largest number of the Chinese people." This is the most important conclusion drawn from the eighty-year struggle and basic experience of the CPC. In order to implement the requirements of the "Three Represents," our party must improve its leadership with the guideline of "supervision over the Party by society and public opinion" and "constraint on the Party by law," enlarge its class basis, expand its basis in the masses, and boost its social influence. The important thought of the "Three Represents" has evolved in a continuity from Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory. It is a great project to improve the leadership of the Party, and an ideological weapon for boosting the leadership and governance of the Party, curbing corruption, and resisting risks.



*Handling properly the relationship between socialism and capitalism—i.e., drawing on the achievements of capitalist civilization and resolutely resisting corrosion by retrograde capitalist ideology*

The replacement of capitalism by socialism is not merely the general trend of the historical development of society, but a long-term and arduous historical process. There is as much cooperation as contention between socialism and capitalism. Even today, capitalism still retains some vigor and holds much room for development. The long-standing contest between socialism and capitalism in the twentieth century tells us that we should neither underestimate capitalism nor discount the difficulty of the socialist cause. Instead, we should develop a strategic insight for long-term coexistence, cooperation, competition, and contention.

In order to gain comparable advantages over capitalism, socialism must undauntedly draw on and benefit from the achievements of all civilizations, including the sciences, technologies, and management methodologies. This will determine to a large degree the prosperity and success of socialism.

We must perceive the variable and invariable nature of the struggle between capitalism and socialism. In the twentieth century, the capitalist countries employed a number of means, such as armed intervention, economic blockade, and cultural infiltration, to check and even overthrow the socialist countries. At present, in particular, we must on guard for attempts by hostile forces in the West to “Westernize,” “split up,” and “undermine.” This calls for us to persist in reform and opening-up on the one hand, and to resist firmly the perversion and corrosion of the stale ideology of the Western bourgeoisie on the other. We must spare no effort to promote the cultural progress of socialism. Otherwise, blunders might occur.

A proper treatment of capitalism must be based on the correct understanding of capitalism. Capitalism is a complex system of internal and external contradictions. As for the former, despite the adjustment and alleviation of the contradiction between socialized production and the private ownership of the means of production and between the working class and the bourgeoisie

in the developed Western countries in the last few decades, the contradiction remains insoluble, and increasingly aggravated. As for the latter, intricate and complicated relationships and contradictions between developed capitalist countries and underdeveloped ones, and between developed capitalist countries in different areas have always existed. Among them, the “North-South” contradiction particularly stands out. Socialism must be able to handle its relationship with capitalism, adhering to the expansion of its scope of activity and room for maneuver. This is both the important experience drawn from the struggle between socialism and capitalism in the twentieth century, but also an important prerequisite for the revival of the socialist cause in the twenty-first century.

***Part three: Prospects for the development of socialism in the twenty-first century***

While we look back on and sum up the history, our goal is not merely to remember the past, but to look into the future. What, then, will be the prospects for socialism in the twenty-first century? Can socialism turn the corner and rise up again? I think the answer should be in the positive.

*Marxism remains the beacon guiding humanity its onward march*

In face of temporary setbacks toward the end of the twentieth century, some people declared the victory of capitalism over socialism in the contention between of the two systems and that this would determine the trend of world history in the twenty-first century. Others asserted that Marxism was the greatest “Utopianism” in the twentieth century, that the socialist movement had come to a dead end, and that the history of human society had reached its end.

In fact, such voices have never ceased ever since the birth of Marxism one hundred and fifty years ago and the initial evolution of the theory of socialism, Nevertheless, at the end of the twentieth century, two news items spread abroad from the home of capitalism: polls taken by the BBC and Reuters respectively asking

who was the “Millennium’s Greatest Man” and the “Millennium’s Greatest Thinker” placed Karl Marx at the top.

Again, history has shown itself as an objective and fair judge. Social theories have flourished and world-famous thinkers mushroomed ever since the origin of human society. None, however, has ever proved so profound, has armed so many generations of the international working class and other working people, and has changed so greatly the course of world history as Marxism. Marxism, as the universal truth to disclose the laws of social development, has been validated by a century-and-a-half’s social practice, both positive and negative. The reason why Marxism enjoys such a high position rests with its scientific world outlook and methodology, the consistency of its ultimate stand with the interests of the majority of the world, and in its correct revelation of the general tendencies of the laws of social development and history. The setbacks for the moment do not amount to the failure of Marxism. Although some of them could not be averted in social practice, others resulted from the abandonment of the tenets of Marxism.

Today, looking around the world, we have every reason to conclude that the socialist schools of thought, theories, movements, and systems are far from dying, but have been reemerging in the last few years. And the conversion of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries from the fundamental principles of Marxism to the path of privatization has not brought forth an economic boom as expected. On the contrary, they have relapsed into the mire of long-standing economic depression and social upheaval. Meanwhile, in the Western world, the United States came down from its throne of the “leading goat” of capitalism. Economic scandals poured out, and the bubble of the “New Economy” burst. Japan, as the second power in the capitalist economy, has found itself in economic depression ever since the 1990s, and sees no way out. Moreover, the countries of western and northern Europe, the cradle of capitalism, had to adjust their economic policies, in turn, if only to achieve a small improvement. And in the developing capitalist countries, the neoliberal policies imposed on them have not healed the economic tumor, but have produced economic turbulence and social crises. A glance at the

international economic trends reveals that a few countries such as socialist China and Vietnam are retaining good momentum for development. All these facts are the historical condition and basic evidence for the revival of socialist schools of thought and theories in the last few years. Again, these facts have shown that Marx's basic ideas on capitalism and socialism are far from being outmoded, and continue to gleam with the light of truth. In reality, it is because such global problems as the intensification of the underlying contradiction of society, the intensity of hegemony and unilateralism, and the aggravation of global ecology cannot be solved by capitalism itself, so that progressive scholars begin to turn their attention to Marxism and socialism.

We believe that the historical trend of social progress will not be stopped. Nor will the advanced forces of humanity yearning for brightness and beauty be frustrated by the temporary setbacks and stop their advance. They will, instead, under the guidance of the ideological beacon of Marxism, rally together, steer clear of the wrong direction, and march on undauntedly. It is predictable that the indisputable Marxist truths remain a potent ideological weapon for us to launch the just cause and revive the theoretical foundations of socialism in this century.

*Economic globalization cannot change the historical doom of capitalism*

At the turn of the century, in contrast to the ebb of the socialist movement, capitalist forces reached their highest summit since World War II. The developed Western countries profited from their historical advantage of technology, economy, and military affairs and spared no effort in the pursuit of neoliberal policies, in an attempt to open up more room for expansion. The double-edged sword of economic globalization, however, is not all bliss to capitalism. With the deepening of capital's global rule, a large number of developing countries will be further marginalized, and the increasing polarization between the rich and poor in the world will continue to make itself felt. This tends to intensify the intrinsic contradictions between production and consumption, the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletarians and other working

people, between developed countries and developing ones, and among developed countries themselves.

In the twentieth century, capitalism underwent a number of stages of development, such as privately owned monopoly, state monopoly, and transnational monopoly. Although capitalism has taken on various new features related to these changes, it has not, up to now, transcended in nature Lenin's analytical framework of imperialism, nor has it eliminated the intrinsic contradictions of capitalism. Indeed, its global economic expansion could, to some degree, shift and ease the intrinsic contradictions of capitalism, but it can never eliminate them, and therefore never save capitalism from its historical doom. With the progress of economic globalization and the expansion of capitalism, these intrinsic contradictions are bound to evolve from a single country into worldwide social opposition and conflicts. And in spite of the vanishing of the rivalry between the two poles after changes in the Soviet Union and East Europe, why is the world in deep trouble and turbulence, and why are regional conflicts frequent? Even the United States cannot keep itself above water. Do not these conflicts and events embody the intrinsic contradictions of capitalism in the context of economic globalization?

However capitalism tries to gear economic globalization, and however hard the Western bourgeoisie adjusts its internal and external policies, the outcome of economic globalization will never yield to their subjective intentions. Instead, it will move on in its own course and prepare the necessary material and social conditions for the birth of the new socialist system. In the vision of Marx and Engels, communism itself is a historical cause worldwide. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels noted explicitly that only as a worldwide historical existence can communism generally be achieved. Communism is neither narrow nor regional; it must be based on the development of productivity at large, internationally as well. In this aspect, socialism and communism are inherently consistent, no contradiction arising between them. Economic globalization is bound to expedite the historical process of the replacement of capitalism by a more advanced social form, which will account for the inevitable resurgence of socialism in the twenty-first century.

*The great revival of socialism is sure to come true in tortuous development*

The socialist system has produced a series of splendid achievements in its eighty years of travel, which amounts to only a short moment in the long history of the social development of humanity. Even compared with the four or five centuries of the history of capitalism, socialism seems pretty puerile and tender. In this sense, the socialist movement in the last century was only a prelude to the whole historical course of socialism. We have a firm belief in the irreversibility of the replacement of capitalism by socialism. While at the same time, we must also take into full account the long-standing, arduous, and intricate struggle between socialism and capitalism. This was the case with the replacement of slavery by feudalism and feudalism by capitalism. Similarly, socialism, as the most profound social transformation, could not replace capitalism in one battle. "Struggle, struggle, and struggle again" is a necessity in the progress of socialism; and "climax, decline, and climax again" is the objective tendency followed by socialist movement. The fact that capitalism rises while socialism falls at the turn of the new century is temporary. Setbacks will be transformed into successes, and disadvantages into advantages, so long as socialists are good at drawing lessons from their experience and adjusting the reforms. This is where the confidence of contemporary socialists rests and the meaning of this symposium lies.

We believe that the prospects for socialism in the twenty-first century are great. This is not a simple inference, but is supported by the de facto evidence.

This is because an underlying contradiction between the socialized production inherent in the capitalist means of production and private ownership of the means of production exists and remains insoluble; the nature of the exploitation and oppression of the working class and other working people in capitalist countries has not changed; the polarization between a large number of developing countries and a few developed countries is intensified; and many other global issues, such as the ecological crisis, are all endangering the sustained development of human society and

the historical progress of society. All these fundamental problems threatening the future and fate of humanity cannot be completely solved under the capitalist framework. This is because the problems and contradictions all arise from the social system, or are related to the social system. Hence, in accordance with the laws of social development, not until the increasingly obsolescent capitalism is replaced by the more advanced social system of socialism can these contradictions find ultimate solution, and thus open up even brighter prospects for humanity.

We are not pessimistic, therefore, when looking back on the historical course of socialism in the twentieth century, and are more convinced by the prospects of development for socialism in the twenty-first century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, socialists should be optimistic in the long run. And our basic conclusion remains: The way ahead is full of twists and turns, but the future is bright.

Toward the end of my speech, I would like to brief on you how the situation stands with China. Ever since the founding of New China, particularly carrying out the reform and opening-up policy, China has made headway in almost every field of the socialist cause. Economic construction, for example, is developing rapidly, political construction is going on steadfastly, and cultural progress is thriving. In a word, material civilization, political civilization, and cultural and ethnic progress are developing in harmony in order to achieve all-round development. At present, the preparation for the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC is in full swing. The congress will set the pace for the modernization drive and reform and opening-up in the early twenty-first century. We believe that a new round of development of socialist construction with Chinese characteristics will occur under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with President Jiang at the core. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as a research institution of the humanities and social sciences under the direct leadership of the CPC Central Committee, will on the one hand continue to evaluate new experience and explore new fields in the construction and reform of China's socialism, and on the other hand, enhance cooperation and exchange with international academe,

with a view to exploring jointly the development of Marxism and facilitating the revival of socialism. I sincerely hope and believe that, with the starting point of this international symposium, our academic exchanges and cooperation will see a new climax.

Finally, let me wish the international academic symposium a complete success.

*Slightly abridged and edited from the translation by Gao Jingyu Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing*



# War against the Truth

Vladimiro Giacché

*Truths can die.* .  
—George Steiner .

Depending on one's point of view, one might consider dealing with the attack on truth to be either wrong or superfluous. Those who adhere to "postmodern" philosophy and for this reason consider even the term *truth* to be an obsolete and basically totalitarian philosophical encumbrance will believe it would be wrong to deal with this problem. On the other hand, those who are more aware of current events and have followed the turning and twisting by the United States and its lackeys in their attempt to find reasons for attacking Iraq might consider such an approach to be superfluous, because rarely have lies been as obvious as in this case.

To the former we can respond that even if "truth" does not exist, at least lies do (as even Popper realized). To the latter we can say: the deviousness of the contemporary attack on truth lies exactly in the fact that, except in extreme cases, it does not appear as a simple lie. Generally the strategies of the attack on truth are more subtle. We will attempt to show a few examples of these strategies, since they also tend to reveal something about the kind of society that produces them, and what "sounds wrong" in the given society.

*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2004)

***The mutilated truth***

Nietzsche said, “We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn,” an often-quoted and often-misunderstood statement. We also want to misunderstand it and paraphrase it thus: truth does not remain truth when its context is withdrawn—that which surrounds it, both literally and figuratively.

The fall of Saddam Hussein’s statue in Baghdad, for example, has become an icon, but the way it was filmed does not reveal that the square was practically empty and the “celebrating masses” consisted of a few dozen Iraqis. In this case, truth has been mutilated by the use of image detail concealing the real scope of the event and therefore creating a false impression.

But the context is not only the space that *surrounds* a specific scene. It is also the *circumstances* under which an event takes place, as well as the *before* and *after*. Mention of circumstances is on the way to becoming a taboo. As Le Carré observed regarding the 9/11 attacks, “It is as if we had entered a new Orwellian world, where our personal integrity as allies depends on our inclination to bring past history into current events. Any hint that the latest attacks occur in a historical context is seen as justification” (2001). But let us examine the formal aspect of this procedure.

The transformation of processes into snapshots, the attention on detailed singularities at the cost of the context, the *myth of the beginning*, the *never-before-occurred*, where in reality there is a connection of determined events—all of these permit the creation of a deliberate story, where there is one event (9/11, or the hostage taking in Ossetian) that can only be put into the category of *absolute* horror (detached from any preceding events and any intelligible process), a horror that can only be explained by invoking the category of evil. That is how the game works: *mutilations of truth and war propaganda are one and the same*. In this way, the enemy is created, fleeting and incomprehensible (while “to comprehend” means “to look at an event in its context”).

*The myth of the never-before-occurred, horror, evil, and the enemy*: these are today’s Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. We can observe their work daily in regard to the Palestinian tragedy. The “incomprehensible” horror of Palestinian suicide bombings

would be much less incomprehensible if they were not presented each time as “new, never-before-occurred” examples of unspeakable “horror,” but put in the context of humiliation, misery, and death that characterize the day-to-day life of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Incidentally, or maybe not so incidentally, it is interesting to see that the “templars of the never-before-occurred” never want to remember the circumstances of the first suicide attack on Israeli territory. It happened on 4 April 1994, forty days after the Hebron massacre, where Baruch Goldstein used a machine gun to kill twenty-nine Muslims during prayer.

But, as historian Enzo Collotti observes, basically the shameful creation of a memorial day for the “martyrs of the Foibe”<sup>1</sup> has become possible only because “for the protagonists of such activities *history began in 1945*” (2004). And indeed the raids, the burning down of entire villages, the tortures, and the executions by the fascists under the command of General Mario Robotti have disappeared completely from the debate, even though back in the 1980s a BBC documentary showed plenty of evidence of the atrocities committed by the troops of fascist Italy in Yugoslavia.

### ***The forgotten truth***

*The spectacle virtuously ensures ignorance of that which follows, and immediately afterwards forgetting of anything we could learn in spite of it.*

—Guy Debord, *Commentari sulla società dello spettacolo*, 1988, § VI

Napoleon was the first to state explicitly the intent “to guide the force of memory in a monarchist way,” and he suggested using history as *instrumentum regni*. The most highly developed manifestation of this plan can be observed today in the seeming paradox of *negation and destruction of the past*. In essence, this is the negation of the past as objective reality, a reality that cannot be deliberately shaped through presentation.

“*Plasticine-*” or “*Disneyland-history*” is triumphant. It fulfills a threefold apologetic function. First, and closest to Napoleon’s “monarchist history,” is the attempt to find in history confirmation

of the image that today's society (more accurately, its ruling classes) wants to present of itself and its own "superiority." Contradictions, conflicts, and anything else that is daily being removed from today's reality are also being erased, or considered garbage, where the past is concerned.

At the same time, presentation of the past emphasizes the "eternally human" aspects, formed by elementary passions and contrasting pairs of the feuilleton: hatred/love, virtue/perfidy, etc., as well as attitudes that are supposedly universally human, but are in reality bourgeois, domesticated, and "politically correct"—tolerance, up to a certain point; love of justice; industriousness; societal order, etc. This newly invented history is the eternal repetition of the same; one could describe it as an essentially anti-historical history. And this is precisely the third and determining apologetic function of this presentation of history: the *destruction of the reality of the past*, as long as the past shows traits that cannot be translated into contemporary clichés.

This affects the remote past. Regarding the more recent past, it is not always possible to get away with this approach. Another strategy is available, with two complementary traits. On the one hand, peaceful intellectuals—who are probably especially peaceful since, like Paolo Mieli, they used to be involved in *Potere Operaio*<sup>2</sup>—are promoting the strategy of "forgive and forget," including the crimes of Pinochet in Chile and Videla in Argentina. Mieli has said, "I think, even though I am disgusted by the actions of Pinochet and Videla, a certain amount of forgetting is indispensable in order to restore balance in countries that have gone through a civil war" (*Corriere della sera*, 8 September 2003). He blithely talks about "civil war" instead of "brutal dictatorship." This is one of the main aspects of the strategy of "forgive and forget": it wants to unite victims and torturers, murderers and their victims, in one history where one can find no difference between justice and injustice.

Indeed, at the same time as it was promoted by Mieli, this strategy found an illustrious advocate in Pinochet's son: "Chile has to forget; it would be useless for my father to apologize" (*la Stampa*, 11 September 2003). It is understandable for the son of

a bloody dictator and thief to think like this, but we prefer the opposite point of view, which was even mentioned in an editorial in the *International Herald Tribune* stating that reconciliation is impossible on the basis of forgetting: “Reconciliation demands the exact opposite. . . . True reconciliation arises from those aspects the guilty want to avoid: complete information, compensation for past wrongs, and justice.”

These simple truths are being completely ignored in Italy, with sometimes grotesque results. For example, the mayor of Piana degli Albanesi, Gaetano Caramonno (of *Forza Italia*), cited “reconciliation” to justify a plan to erect a church at the site of the bloodbath of Portella delle Ginestre, where the bandit Salvatore Giuliano in 1947 massacred communist and socialist day laborers with a machine gun. Does this not justify the bewildered question, “What do you mean by reconciliation? Our victims were killed by the Mafia; do we need reconciliation with the Mafia?” But *this* is exactly what the motto “reconciliation” wants to accomplish: even in memory injustice shall prevail; the symbols of previous struggles, the memory of crimes and the dead shall be erased.

Another aspect of the strategy of overcoming memory that has been used during the past few years indicates that this is the real objective of the calls for “reconciliation between fascists and antifascists.” This is the (direct or indirect) rehabilitation of fascism and its symbols. The strategy of forgetting that is being suggested to antifascists is being supplemented for public consumption by a *strategy of falsification*. It includes denial of the struggle of the partisans; dozens of streets carry names of fascist functionaries such as Giorgio Almirante;<sup>3</sup> fascist veterans of the Spanish Civil War can (accompanied by an MP of the *Alleanze Nazionali*) demonstrate before the altar of the fatherland and use the “Roman salute” with impunity. To top it all, we have a prime minister who engages in rehabilitation of fascism, mocks the remembrance of jailed and murdered dissidents, and cuts the funding 55 percent in 2004 (after a previous 10 percent cut) for organizations that keep alive the memory of the struggle of the partisans. Benjamin was right: “Even the dead will not be safe from the victorious enemy. And this enemy has not stopped winning.”

**The staged truth**

*We are looking not for truth but for effect.*

—Joseph Goebbels

*Holt: “Have we made war glamorous?”*

*Ventura: “It reminds me a lot of the Superbowl.”*

—MSNBC anchor Lester Holt interviewing  
former Minnesota governor and wrestler  
Jesse Ventura, 26 March 2003

The claim that truth is being staged these days is correct in more than one sense.

It is correct in the sense that events are being organized according to their media impact and projection. For example, the 1986 U.S. air strike against Libya was planned to coincide with the main television news. The attack against the “twin towers” as well was so clearly planned to ensure maximum media attention that one might think it had been carried out *primarily* for its media value (Žižek 2002). And the UN representative in Iraq, Sergio de Mello, was killed during one of his press conferences. Let us also consider the hostage takings in Iraq, filmed and distributed in such a way as to have maximal impact in the target countries. In all these instances, “the media production,” as Derrida would say, is “an integral part of the event and one of its main determinants” (2003).

But it is also true that important political events today are being staged as a spectacle. The U.S. party conventions come immediately to mind. But they are not the most characteristic example, because their theatrical staging is *presented* as a spectacle, and not hiding their construed character lessens their effect somewhat. We have to find other examples—for example Colin Powell’s appearance in front of the UN Security Council on “Saddam’s chemical weapons.” One could argue that the spectacle was only half successful, since Powell’s speech convinced hardly any of his UN colleagues, but the effect on public opinion in the United States (the real target audience) was different. This shows, incidentally, how the rules of communication in the context of the spectacle lead to a characteristic distortion of the event: its original audience (in this case the Security Council) is not the real target and its

members turn into actors and parts of the drama that is really directed toward that which used to be called “public opinion” and now is called the “citizen-spectators.” The same is true for television broadcasts of our parliament. An even more blatant example is the landing of the jet piloted by Bush Jr. on the aircraft carrier *Lincoln* and the president’s speech. Some details are especially interesting. To prevent the ship’s arrival at the harbor before the television news broadcast, it was ordered to putter along the San Diego coastline, taking twenty hours for a distance it could normally cover in one hour. Its speed was also throttled to avoid any wind noises that could have interfered with Bush’s speech. And the ship was positioned in such a way that the television cameras showed the nearby coastline.

The *Washington Post*’s television critic Tom Sales was justified in commenting: “This is not only a speech, but a *patriotic spectacle*; the ship and its crew form the necessary scenery for Bush’s words—exactly what he needs to *delight the American public* and to *emphasise Bush’s dramatic role* as Commander-in-Chief.” The added emphasis illustrates that it is not a metaphor to speak about a “spectacle,” but an accurate description of the event. For the American television viewer, this CNN show was *not* a spectacle but a televised speech by the president.

Finally there are directly staged events, downright productions. The whole history of the “war on terror” is riddled with such cases. It is enough to remember Jose Padilla and his “dirty bomb,” staged by U.S. Attorney General Ashcroft in June 2002 with great fanfare. The administration was in deep trouble at the time because of continuous exposures of secret-service failures regarding 9/11. The “dirty bomb” found an enormous echo (and was even featured on the front cover of the *Economist* in a way that could be seen as the model for media treatment of terrorism: Padilla’s face superimposed on a mushroom cloud). Today we know that all these accusations were baseless (without an *Economist* front cover about this circumstance), and the case has caused considerable embarrassment for the United States. But the action had the advantage of distracting attention from much more embarrassing topics, and the result was a net positive balance for the U.S. government.

The other side of a production is exactly what is happening behind the scenes. The importance of a spotlight often lies not in what it illuminates but what it leaves in the dark. To a loudly proclaimed and staged truth, there is *always* a corresponding secret and suppressed truth.

***The suppressed truth***

*If we really want to understand the role of images in today's world, we should compile a list of that what is not being shown to us.*

—M. Augé, “Immagini di guerra, una nuova pornografia,”  
interview by G. Durante, *Il manifesto*, 6 May 2004

The *suppression of truth* does not always have a metaphorical character. For example, the staging of the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece required the killing of hundreds of stray dogs and the deportation of a large portion of the 11,000 homeless people who used to live in Athens. Furthermore, during the first six months of 2004, 13,700 immigrants were arrested in Greece, and over 6,000 deported. Obviously, however, what remains in the memories of billions of television viewers are the glamorous images of the opening and closing ceremonies. Things are no better in Italy, as illustrated by an order of the mayor of Vicenza banning beggars from access to the city core. In both cases, annoyance and discomfort to citizens and tourists are being dealt with in the fastest way possible: not the origins but the *images* of discomfort are being suppressed. Who could forget that Rumsfeld's first response to the exposure of the torture scandals in Iraq was to forbid soldiers the use of digital cameras! A benevolent eye would see this as treatment of symptoms, but in reality we are dealing as well with repression in the Freudian sense, and we know repression is useless in dealing with neuroses.

Suppressed truth is the same as *negated* truth. Basically this is the same action expressed in Golda Meir's famous statement of 15 June 1969: “There is no such thing as a Palestinian people. . . . It is not as if we came and threw them out and took their country. They didn't exist.” This attitude inspires all Israeli politics—with the



result that some Palestinians use rather noisy and bloody methods to prove their existence.

Truth can also be veiled, again not only metaphorically, as in the case of the huge tapestry depicting Picasso's *Guernica* on the first floor of the UN building in New York. For the occasion of Colin Powell's address on the Iraq war, the tapestry was covered with a dark cloth, which only resulted in an even stronger emphasis on the monstrosity of the event. Nothing could have served better to inform the world about the true character of the war in preparation. Just as in *Guernica*, the object was the bombing of civilians and the slaughter of thousands of defenceless people.

***The inverted truth***

*Part of the mechanism of government  
is to forbid the acknowledgement  
of the suffering it produces.*

—Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 1944

As we have seen, simple suppression of truth poses a danger for those who practice it: this attitude can easily be directed against them. This is crystal clear in the most extreme case, censorship. Censorship, if discovered, reveals more important and characteristic information about those who censor than about the content of the censored message. When the United States “disappeared” a significant part of the UN inspectors' report on Iraq, the entanglement of U.S. businesses with Saddam Hussein was proven in no uncertain terms. A way to avoid censorship is to be satisfied with distortion. This can lead to complete misrepresentation of the truth and is one of the tasks the press is fulfilling especially eagerly in times of war, as shown, with regard to World War I, on almost every page of Karl Kraus's *Last Days of Humanity*. Ninety years later not much has changed, as shown in the following two headlines from 2002 newspapers.

A 23 September 2002 *Financial Times* first-page article has the headline, “U.S. in pledge to rebuild Iraq.” The article, which summarizes an interview with Condoleeza Rice, talks about the necessity of *war against Iraq*. After the war, Rice promises, the

United States would deal with rebuilding the country (which it would have previously destroyed through war). The headline only reflects the last part of Rice's train of thought. *Those who want war are turned into those who want to rebuild.*

*Il Sole 24 ore* (the organ of the Italian business people's organization) of 12 October 2002 featured the headline "Saddam is preparing a new environmental catastrophe," and the subheading "The dictator is prepared to torch Iraq's oil wells." The body of the article explains that Saddam, in the case of a U.S. attack, could decide to torch the oil wells. The victim of the attack is being turned into the one who threatens. The headline represents the basic distortion of truth that was the basis for the war against Iraq: that the aggressor had to use a preventive strike to defend itself against the victim of the attack. The real aggressors built their game plan on this fraudulent role reversal.

Headlines of this kind distort not only the truth but also the content of the articles they refer to, sometimes in an almost paradoxical way. But there are also cases where the headline underlines the distortion contained in the body of the text. One example should be enough. A Reuters photo of 7 April 2003 went around the world. It showed a twelve-year old Iraqi boy, Ali Ismail Abbas, who had lost his entire family of sixteen as well as both his arms in an air strike. This picture was one of the most passionate condemnations of the Anglo-American aggression and was heavily featured in international daily papers. The left-liberal daily *La Repubblica*, on the other hand, only showed it in a minimized format. This paper put much more emphasis on an article by Enrico Franceschini of 14 October 2003, with the surprising title "Ali's victorious war." Ali's supposed "victory" was the fact that he received prostheses in Queen Mary Hospital in London.

The article is rich in details, such as the fact that the hospital's specialists developed "especially for him two arms that can bend, open, close, and that allow through electronic impulses the use of his hands"; it also talks about the £350,000 collected by readers of the *Daily Mirror*, London's penny press, which holds "exclusive rights on the story of the Iraqi orphan without parents and without arms" (whose article the *Repubblica* reporter therefore

only translated); and it finally presents the most heartwarming part of the story: Ali is “learning English and is a soccer fan,” to the degree that “he has a Manchester United tattoo on one of his artificial arms.” With a nod to realism, Franceschini states it is of course “not exactly a story with a Happy End, but it is proof that people, if they only want, can soothe the sufferings of their fellow man.” We have quoted in so much detail from this sleazy article because it shows how facts can be twisted in such a way to create a moral that is exactly *opposite* to that which any thinking person would draw from the story.

The methods shown here to distort truth are easier to handle than outright repression. It is not necessary to pretend the truth does not exist; it is only necessary to put a different face on it.

***The embellished truth***

*The United States is committed to the worldwide elimination of torture and we are leading this fight by example.*

—George W. Bush, 26 June 2003

*My impression so far is that the are dealing with “abuse,” and in my opinion that is not the same as “torture.”*

—Donald Rumsfeld, at congressional commission on torture at Abu Ghraib, May 2004

There are different ways to change the face of truth. One can use a sledgehammer as in the earlier examples, or one can use a bit of makeup to make it appear less ugly than it is. How can truth be beautified? The main method is the use of euphemisms. Most euphemisms consist of a simple softening change in formulation, which pacifies or defuses the specific phenomenon so it will not elicit hostile reactions (outrage, protest, etc.).

The preferred area for use of euphemisms is war, where the number is considerable; many were invented, and increasingly used, during the 1990s. Most common are: “international police action,” “military operation” (even better, “of the United Nations”),

and a classic such as “force.” Piero Fassino, secretary of the Democrats of the Left, stated in an interview: “We are part of the peace movement, which arises from a variety of cultures and emotions, also in the question on the use of *force*. To be honest, I have the greatest respect for all those who reject the use of *force* a priori, but in thirty years of politics I have learned that there are situations where *force* has to be used as a last resort” (*Il manifesto*, 27 February 2004).

These are not the only euphemisms for war; others are “regime change” (meaning “military invasion”), “preventive strikes” and “preventive defense” (used for “attack on a country that did not attack us”). However, the taboo that used to surround the term *war* has disappeared, and the euphemism now lies in a clarification of the term “war”—for example the “war on terror,” as we used to have “humanitarian war,” with the significant addition that the “war on terror” is being explicitly defined as “permanent war.”

After all, Bush Jr. had the cheek to declare that “the war in Iraq is really a war for peace” (speech of 11 April 2004). That *is* Orwell; “war is peace” is one of the examples of doublethink in his novel *1984*. Not only was Orwell wrong by twenty years (not very significant), but he also thought he was dealing with communism, while this is actually the exact condition of capitalism in the year 2004.

Euphemisms are not always successful. For example, to call Sharon’s wall a “security fence” is widely seen as a trivialization of a construction of steel and concrete several meters high and hundreds of kilometers long. Here is a gap in the mechanism of embellishing of the truth: if the reformulation, the restructuring, of reality is too far from the truth, the euphemism misses its goal. Critical thinking can use such gaps to tear apart the web of lies.

### ***The evaded truth***

*The new American approach to social control is  
... not so much the control of what we think,  
but the control of what we think about.*  
—Brian Eno, “Lessons on How to Lie about  
Iraq,” *Guardian*, 8 August 2003

We have seen that the staged truth has its necessary counterpart in the suppressed truth, which is kept out of the spotlight. This suppression requires effort, can elicit negative responses, can be bloody, and may meet resistance. In effect, it is not even necessary any more, because today we are already at the next level, where truth can be effortlessly evaded or simply ignored.

When the ideological babble is triumphant in asserting its hierarchy of problems; when media information is reduced to entertainment, prattle, and noise that only serve to fuel consumerism; when the political agenda is being shamelessly tampered with by calling upon the bugaboo of “war on terror” and ignoring decisive social and environmental problems—when all this is happening, when this act of force is successful, truth does not need to be forcibly dealt with; because people are busy thinking of other things, it can simply be evaded.

“*Alle reden vom Wetter. Wir nicht.*” (“Everybody talks about the weather. We don’t.”) This was the slogan on one of the best posters of the West German student movement. “We” meant Marx, Engels, and Lenin, who were portrayed in the style of real socialism à la Chinese (stylized portrait on red). It referred to the Socialist German Student Union, which was picking up on an older advertising slogan of the German railroad. This catchphrase responded to levity with seriousness, to emptiness with content, to insignificance with significance, to superficiality with militancy. It was a masterpiece of communication, especially since it pointed to something behind and underneath the direct message, to a political and social project that presented an alternative to the status quo. There is nothing to be added to the fact that this project was defeated, other than to acknowledge it. The *pars destruens* of the poster, the phrase “Everybody talks about the weather,” sounds like a final condemnation of the usual prattle about capitalist society and its problems (and which never considers that the capitalist society itself could be the problem). To read this phrase again today has a very strange effect, because precisely this “talking about the weather” is now considered the highest virtue of communicative entertainment under the banner of effortlessness, levity, endurability, and acceptance. This is true for advertising (the archetype of today’s

communication) as well as for “political” communication—or better put, for the advertising of goods as well as for the advertising of candidates.

An example of political communication serves to illustrate this point: this year’s poster for the national festival of *Unita* has the topic “*Popoli in cammino*” (people on the march). Looked at formally, it is a current interpretation of the famous painting by Pellizza da Volpedo, *The Fourth State*. The proletarians of the original have been replaced by young people in sandals: a young black man (the only one, in the front), a few young women (one, in front, carries a baby wrapped into a peace banner). The impression is that of happy day-trippers, perhaps on their way to a concert. The face of the young black man does not reflect the difficult lives of our exploited immigrants. And there is nothing that could identify any of the people as workers. That is not too surprising; after all, for a number of years now the citizen, really the consumer, has replaced the worker as focus of almost all political forces. Those who address the problems of workers these days often talk about giving back face and voice to the invisible ones. The biggest lie is in the evasion of the topic of labor and the central place of the conflict between labor and capital in our society. The “war on terror” also serves this purpose.

Everybody is talking about the weather, because it is impolite to talk of anything else.

Originally published in *La Contraddizione: bimestrale di marxismo*, no. 104 (September/October, 2004).

Rome

*Translated from the Italian by Herman Kopp, Düsseldorf, Germany, and from the German by Hanne Gidora, Coquitlam, British Columbia.*

## NOTES

1. The Italian right wing calls “martyrs” those compatriots who became victims of oppression in the last days of and immediately after World War II, during

the occupation by Yugoslav partisans of the territory of Trieste (fought over by Yugoslavia and Italy).

2. *Potere Operaio* (“workers’ power”) was a left-radical group that played a role in Italy in the 1970s.

3. Almirante was a high-ranking functionary of the fascist puppet “Republic of Salò,” established by the Nazis; after the war he was chairman of the fascist MSI (today *Alleanza Nazionale*).

*Notes by Hermann Kopp.*

## REFERENCE LIST

- Collotti, Enzo. 2004. La storia dal nulla. *Il manifesto*, 14 February.
- Derrida, Jacques. 2003. *Stati canaglia*. Milan: Cortina.
- Le Carré, John. 2001. Dieser Krieg ist längst verloren. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 October.
- Rampton, Sheldon, and John C. Stauber. 2003. *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 2002. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. London: Verso.



**Add dimension to  
your sociological  
research**

## **sociological abstracts**



*Comprehensive, cost-effective, timely*

Abstracts of articles, books, and conference papers from nearly 2,500 journals published in 35 countries; citations of relevant dissertations as well as books and other media.

Available in print or electronically through the Internet Database Service from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts ([www.csa.com](http://www.csa.com)).

Contact [sales@csa.com](mailto:sales@csa.com) for trial Internet access or a sample issue.

## **sociological abstracts**

*Published by CSA*



### **Cambridge Scientific Abstracts**

7200 Wisconsin Avenue | Tel: +1 301-961-6700 | E-mail: [sales@csa.com](mailto:sales@csa.com)  
Bethesda, Washington | Fax +1 301-961-6720 | Web: [www.csa.com](http://www.csa.com)

---



## Visit of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to Cuba, 12–13 December 2004

Presidents Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro have signed two documents that constitute the highest expression of the unity of the will of both governments to increase the range of cooperation and bilateral relations in general: a joint declaration and a agreement for the application of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA).

The ALBA is the antithesis of the annexationist Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) that the United States is attempting to impose. Instead of pursuing free trade, this agreement's main principles are solidarity, reciprocity, respect for differences, and full integration.

Venezuela and Cuba have been close trading partners since a cooperative agreement was signed between them on 30 October 2000. The new agreement extended their commercial relationship, agreeing that Cuban goods and services will be paid for with Venezuelan products and currency.

It was decided that Venezuela will transfer technology and finance development projects in the agriculture, service, energy, and infrastructure sectors. Cuba, in addition to providing over fifteen thousand medical professionals who participate in *Barrio Adentro*—a social program that provides medical treatment to Venezuelans and trains doctors and specialists—will grant two thousand annual scholarships to Venezuelan students. Also, the agreement commits the two countries to work together with other Latin American countries to fight illiteracy.

The agreement assures that Cuba will continue to receive 53,000 barrels of oil per day, but fixes the price of oil at international prices and guarantees a \$27 per barrel minimum price in the event that international prices fall.

Chavez's visit to Cuba reaffirmed the close bonds of friendship and solidarity between the two nations. Chavez arrived in Cuba on the night of 12 December 2004 with a large delegation of Venezuelan ministers, including Foreign Minister Ali Rodríguez Araque, Minister of Communications Andrés Izarra, and Finance Minister Nelson Merentes.

In a historic event at the Karl Marx Theater, the two presidents recalled the events of ten years ago when the then lieutenant colonel of a parachute battalion traveled to the island. Before decorating Chavez with the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Order, by agreement of the Council of State, Fidel quoted de Céspedes, known as the father of the nation, who, in reference to the great country of Bolívar remarked: "Venezuela, which opened the way of independence to Spanish America and traveled it gloriously until Ayacucho, is our illustrious teacher of freedom."

Chavez gave a speech in which he acknowledged that the Venezuelan Revolution has had the good fortune of following in the footsteps of an older brother, the Cuban Revolution, "a brother that has come to strengthen and reinforce the fight and the achievements that we have modestly accomplished over the past few years."

Chavez stated that "the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution have demonstrated that a better world is not only possible but also is perfectly attainable . . . a different world is essential in order to save life and the planet."

He went on to explain that cooperation between the two nations would help to promote the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), an agreement that he referred to as the only option to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), "the neoliberal project that the United States wanted to impose upon our nations for so many years."

Thanking Fidel and the Cuban people for the decoration and the many "pleasant surprises" that the Cuban leader had arranged

for him, Hugo Chavez affirmed that he hoped to always be worthy of those honors. He also paid tribute to the Cuban patriots who have been or are in Venezuela, and whose labors of solidarity will remain forever in the Venezuelan people's hearts.

Chavez also referred to the Cuban president's speech, emphasizing that anyone who really wants to know who Fidel is should review the last fifty years of Latin American and Caribbean history, where they will find the always-alive and always-worthy history of Fidel Castro.

He added that when he visited Cuba ten years ago, he was full of hopes and with a great commitment ahead of him:

He also spoke of his years as a soldier and an officer, and explained how he gained awareness of the Bolivarian and revolutionary struggle, an awareness enriched by the words of Fidel, and Che's example, the death in combat of Salvador Allende in Chile, and the national processes in Panama and Peru, led by Generals Omar Torrijos and Velasco Alvarado.

"We are in full battle, and this will be long, hard, and difficult," added Chavez, who confirmed that only the fortitude of the Venezuelan people had made it possible to undertake the Bolivarian Revolution.

The Venezuelan president described the Cuban people as one of most honorable of the continent and the world, capable of overcoming half a century of blockade and aggression. He finally stated that the project of Bolivar and Martí has returned to triumph and build the future of our peoples. A world has risen up that is not prepared to accept imperial hegemony, he emphasized.

### ***Dreams come true***

The event, attended by Venezuelan students, patients receiving medical care in Cuba, youth and pioneers from different centers in the capital Havana, combatants and representatives from other sectors, began with the words of Pedro Infante Aparicio, a student from that Bolivarian country. On behalf of another 1,400 youths, he thanked Cuba for the opportunity it offered to them of studying here, and for the "doctors of dignity" who are training at the Latin American School of Medicine.

Brigida Isturis, a Venezuelan who became literate thanks to Mission Robinson and now aspires to reach the sixth grade assured with emotion: "If the Revolution is taking me out of ignorance, then I am a revolutionary."

Another dream come true as part of Cuban-Venezuelan solidarity is how Luis Ramón González described a congenital-cataract operation performed in Cuba that restored his sight. Accompanied by his son Samuel, who has gone through a similar procedure, González stated that "today, everything is lovely, beautiful" and told President Chavez, "Don't stop, go on forward."

The Cuban doctor Lisette Alfonso, who has completed internationalist missions in Guatemala and Venezuela; affirmed that knowing she is part of that large contingent of health workers who have contributed to bring back a smile to a child's face or restore sight to people who have never seen has left an indelible impression on her.

Both leaders presided over official talks between their delegations at the Palace of the Revolution.

President Chavez, accompanied by Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque, also placed a wreath at the monument to the Cuban national hero José Martí, in whose memorial in the Plaza de la Revolución he opened the "Ten Years of Victories" photographic exhibition, which includes unpublished images of the Bolivarian president in the months prior to and during his first visit to Cuba, and meetings with Fidel.

And there, in front of the replica of the sword of the liberator, Simon Bolivar, presented to the Cuban president by Chavez in October 2000, he commented, "That sword is still at war. Two hundred years later we will not lose. *Patria o Muerte!*"

To close the historic event, a large youthful audience, in which Cuban and Venezuelan student faces predominated, gathered on the stairway of the University of Havana to celebrate the presence of President Chavez on the island with the *Ten Years of Victory* concert.

This report is reprinted from *People's Democracy* (India), 26 December 2004, and is based on information taken from *Venezuelanalysis.com* and *Granma International*.

## Book Reviews

---

*Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean*. Edited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003. 250 pages, cloth \$40.00, paper \$18.00.

In her preface to this exciting collection of new writings by women from Latin America and the Caribbean, Elizabeth Martinez calls this a “revolutionary” book, a “collective ‘Declaration of Resistance’ to the power and arrogance of ruling-class, racist, patriarchal domination” (xii). The collection also examines and condemns the crimes of U.S. imperialism pervasive throughout the region, from Chile to Haiti, from Guatemala to Puerto Rico. Three of the writers—Raquel Partnoy, Alicia Partnoy, and Ruth Irupé Sanabria—are grandmother, mother, daughter: three generations of Argentine women who suffered persecution during the “Dirty War” when more than 30,000 people “disappeared.” Emma Sepúlveda writes of watching television coverage of the Vietnam War in Chile, then participating in street demonstrations against that war on the other side of the world. Meanwhile, on another September 11 (1973), “U.S. intervention also found its way to my country, where it quickly eradicated democracy, and surprised us by supporting the oppressive Chilean dictatorship for 17 long years” (61–62).

The editor, Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, acknowledges that this book grew out of teaching separate courses on Latin American and Caribbean women and becoming aware of the “profound thematic, political, and sociocultural connections that exist among women writers in this region, despite its vast geographic span and

amazing linguistic and ethnic diversity” (ix). In her introduction, de Hernandez writes of the dissolution of old categories in this age of globalization, including border crossings and the breakdown of genre boundaries. Her collection’s title terms the contents “essays,” yet many of the selections could also be termed memoirs or *testimonios*. Many of the writings include long poems, most bilingual (Spanish and English). Gloria Anzaldúa’s piece is most notable; composed of lessons learned, poems, journal entries, and anecdotes, it is called “Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Writers.”

The question of language is important for all these writers. For most, English is not their native tongue, but the language of exile. In the case of Raquel Partnoy, granddaughter of Russian Jews who had immigrated to Argentina in 1913, Yiddish was the language spoken at home, Spanish was the language she learned in school, and English is the language she now writes from her current home in the United States. Ruth Behar writes of being born a Jew in Cuba, of immigrating to the United States as a young child, “carrying this doubled sense of identity which would eventually be articulated in an American context in the English language, but always with a longing for the native Spanish that was spoken in my family” (47). Edwidge Danticat writes of her Haitian slave ancestors who spoke the French and Spanish of their colonizers mixed with African languages: “they invented a new language with which to describe their new surroundings, a language from which colorful phrases blossomed to fit the desperate circumstances” (26). One of these phrases is the title Danticat chose for her essay: *Nou lèd, nou la!* (We are ugly, but we are here!) “And here to stay,” Danticat adds. “As Meridel LeSueur often remarked, “Survival is a form of resistance.”

The best-known survivor and resister in this collection is Rigoberta Menchú, who writes a long, rambling essay analyzing the Quincentenary Conference and the Earth Summit of 1992. Mingling critiques of the organizers of these gatherings with her personal observations of the state of the world from her many travels, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate offers many lessons in organizing, beginning with listening to others and being respectful

of other cultures and customs. Yet, she insists, indigenous cultures must also be respected. She is incensed that “people think the indigenous have no body of thought” (122), and she thinks that often people trying to help are speaking a different language, “the language of the expert who comes from, and thinks in terms of, the First World . . . the other is the pragmatic language of local people” (128).

Most of these women writers transcribe this language of common experience. Many address the reader directly with phrases like “Let’s get one thing straight.” They write as if speaking with neighbors on the stoop or family members around the kitchen table. They write of everyday struggles for bread, as well as epic struggles against military coups d’état and police states.

Excerpted here are some of the interviews conducted by Elena Poniatowska in the months following the massacre of students in Mexico City on 2 October 1968. De Hernandez also includes the opening pages of Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place*, a bitter satire of tourism and colonialism in the Caribbean. Kincaid writes in the second person: “If you go to Antigua as a tourist” (147), and “The thing you have always suspected about yourself is true: A tourist is an ugly human being” (154). Ugly in a different sense than the Haitian women, as Kincaid makes clear. U.S. and European tourists are ugly because of ignorance of, yet complicity in, the West’s maldevelopment of the Caribbean. Their arrogant disregard, as they lounge on the beach, of the continuing problems of these former colonies and the suffering of the people also makes them ugly.

The best essay in the collection on the necessity of resistance to U.S. imperialism in Latin America and the Caribbean is Cherríe Moraga’s *Art in América con Acento*. This Chicana poet, playwright, essayist, and activist writes on the one-week anniversary of the “death of the Nicaraguan Revolution.”

I don’t blame the people of Nicaragua. I blame the U.S. government. I blame my complicity as a citizen in a country that, short of an invasion, stole the Nicaraguan revolution that *el pueblo* had forged with their own blood and bones. After hearing the outcome of the elections, I wanted to flee the United States in shame and despair. (101)

But she didn't flee; she stayed to protest in demonstrations and in her teachings and writings, giving us a perspective that challenges the official histories and media pronouncements. She reminds us of the U.S. invasion of Panama and the U.S. conquest of Mexico. She proudly proclaims her choice as an artist to aid in the "creation of 'disloyal' *americanos*."

The most disappointing essay in the collection is Margaret Randall's "One Precious Moment." This legendary "disloyal American" seems to have retreated to a small place of her own in the desert of New Mexico to live and teach what she herself terms "simplistic solutions" of noncooperation with power. She chronicles her participation in building socialist societies in Cuba and Nicaragua, but she seems to think it is no longer important to build movements that directly challenge U.S. military power and economic hegemony. She advocates instead a simple, counterculture life-style, where every living organism is appreciated for its beauty.

Randall's essay can certainly lead to some interesting class discussions. And it is invaluable in chronicling, through the author's own life, the history of the United States from the 1950s to the present and the revolutions in the Caribbean and Latin America during that time.

Taken as a whole, *Women Writing Resistance* is a valuable resource for learning the history of this hemisphere through the experiences of women living throughout the region. De Hernandez could have made it a more precise source by adding notes with the dates that the essays were written and dates of important events mentioned (the invasion of Panama, for example). I can easily envision a course for which this book was the basic text: a women's studies course, a global studies course, a U.S. history course, a Latin American studies course. Students could read the essays and then read longer works by some of the authors: a novel by Edwidge Danticat, a play by Cherríe Moraga, for example. They could also read the whole text of *A Small Place* by Jamaica Kincaid. Most of the pieces in *Women Writing Resistance* are suitable for undergraduate courses or general readers. The one exception is the rather long essay by Alicia Partnoy that takes on the



academic critiques of Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio*. Partnoy, a "disappeared" survivor from Argentina, has written movingly about her own experiences of torture. But what de Hernandez has chosen to present here is an academic paper distinguishing between texts on the semiotic plane and texts of academic discourse. Although Partnoy provides a good case for engendering a discourse of solidarity (and some funny, caustic comments about Accuracy in Academia and the MLA), her essay was obviously not written for the same audience as the rest of the collection.

All in all, this collection of "essays" offers a rich selection of creative, moving writings by women. I encourage teachers, students, and other readers interested in hearing new voices and gaining new perspectives on resistance to U.S. imperialism to read this work.

April A. Knutson  
*Department of French and Italian*  
*University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

## Author and Title Index to Volume 17

- “ABC of Class,” by Teresa L. Ebert and Mas’ud Zavarzadeh, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 133–41
- “Alcohol Is Sublime,” by Robert Faivre, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 203–22
- “America’s Wars,” by The Red Collective, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 175–80
- “Analogies between Aristotle’s Ontology and Biological Ideologies of Human Nature,” by Christos D. Georgiou, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 47–65
- Cotter, Jennifer, “Veil vs. Prada: The Empire’s New Morality,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 153–67
- Ebert, Teresa L., and Mas’ud Zavarzadeh, “ABC of Class,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 133–41
- DeFazio, Kimberly, “IKEA and Democracy as Furniture,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 143–52
- Faivre, Robert, “Alcohol Is Sublime,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 203–22
- Fleischman, Steven E., “Israel, Neocolonialism, and U.S. Hegemony,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 309–36
- “Fundamentalism and Fundamentalisms,” by Domenico Losurdo, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 5–45
- “Is Family Finished?” by Julie Tarrant, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 169–74
- Georgiou, Christos D., “Analogies between Aristotle’s Ontology and Biological Ideologies of Human Nature,” vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 47–65
- Giacché, Vladimiro, “War against the Truth,” vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 481–95
- Godels, Greg, “Revolution without Pain: A Critique of Uri Zilbersheid’s ‘Welfare State and Democracy in Marx’s Theory of Revolution,’” vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 101–8
- Goldstick, Danny, “On Marxist Ethics,” vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 111–17
- “IKEA and Democracy as Furniture,” by Kimberly DeFazio, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 143–52
- Hörz, Herbert, “Quantum Physics and the Shaping of Life: Commentary on Klaus Fuchs’s Critique of Mechanistic Determinism,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 261–83
- “International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Athens, 8–10 October 2004,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 365–71
- “Israel, Neocolonialism, and U.S. Hegemony,” by Steven E. Fleischman, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 309–36

- 
- “Judging the Importance of Religious Teachings: A Reply to Goldstick,” by David S. Pena, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 337–42
- “Just-in-Time Working and the Avant-Garde Cinema,” Amrohini Sahay, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 223–28
- Keeran, Roger, and Thomas Kenny, “A Rejoinder to Erwin Marquit’s Critique of *Socialism Betrayed*,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 343–54
- Knutson, April A, “*Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez: Book Review,” vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 501–5
- “*Law and Philosophy Subversive of Democracy*,” by James W. Syfers: Book Review,” by Kristian Williams, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 377–81
- Li Shenming, “Socialism over a Century: Retrospect and Prospect,” vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 459–80
- Losurdo, Domenico, “Fundamentalism and Fundamentalisms,” vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 5–45
- Marquit, Erwin, “Response to Keeran and Kenny’s Rejoinder,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 355–62
- “Normative Morality and the U.S. Constitution,” by Omar Swartz, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 285–307
- “Oil and War,” by The Red Collective, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 251–55
- “On Marxist Ethics,” by Danny Goldstick, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 111–17
- “On Reappraising Maurice Cornforth,” by Edwin A. Roberts, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 119–23
- Pena, David S., “Judging the Importance of Religious Teachings: A Reply to Goldstick,” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 337–42
- “Presentation by the Communist Party of Iraq at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Athens, 8–10 October 2004,” vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 451–57
- “Presentation by the German Communist Party (DKP),” vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 373–76
- “Quantum Physics and the Shaping of Life: Commentary on Klaus Fuchs’s Critique of Mechanistic Determinism,” by Herbert Hörz, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 261–83
- The Red Collective, “America’s Endless Wars,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 175–80
- , “Oil and War,” vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 251–55
- , ed. “*Turning Culture Right-Side Up Again*,” vol. 17, no. 2 (special issue), pp. 129–256
- “A Rejoinder to Erwin Marquit’s Critique of *Socialism Betrayed*,” by Roger Keeran and Thomas Kenny, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 343–54
- “Reply to Godels,” by Uri Zilbersheid, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 108–10
- “Response to Keeran and Kenny’s Rejoinder,” by Erwin Marquit, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 355–62
- “Revolution without Pain: A Critique of Uri Zilbersheid’s ‘Welfare State and Democracy in Marx’s Theory of Revolution,’” by Greg Godels, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 101–8

- Roberts, Edwin A., "On Reappraising Maurice Cornforth," vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 119–23
- "Russia after the Fall of the Soviet Union: A Case of Capitalist Dependency," by Jeffrey Surovell, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 413–46
- Sahay, Amrohini, "Just-in-Time Working and the Avant-Garde Cinema," vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 223–28
- Schweickart, David, "Successor-System Theory as an Orienting Device: Trying to Understand China," vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 389–412
- "Socialism over a Century: Retrospect and Prospect," by Li Shenming, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 459–80
- "Soft Labor, Hard Work," by Rob Wilkie, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 229–50
- "Stylizing Global Protest: Latin America and the Media," by Stephen Tumino, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 181–201
- "Successor-System Theory as an Orienting Device: Trying to Understand China," by David Schweickart, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 389–412
- Surovell, Jeffrey, "Russia after the Fall of the Soviet Union: A Case of Capitalist Dependency," vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 413–46
- Swartz, Omar, "Normative Morality and the U.S. Constitution," vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 285–307
- Tumino, Stephen, "Stylizing Global Protest: Latin America and the Media," vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 181–201
- Turning Culture Right-Side Up Again*, edited by The Red Collective, vol. 17, no. 2 (special issue), pp. 129–256
- "Veil vs. Prada: The Empire's New Morality," by Jennifer Cotter, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 153–67
- "Visit of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to Cuba, 12–13 December 2004," vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 497–500
- "War against the Truth," by Vladimiro Giacché, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 481–95
- "Welfare State and Democracy in Marx's Theory of Revolution," by Uri Zilbersheid, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 71–100
- Wilkie, Rob, "Soft Labor, Hard Work," vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 229–50
- Williams, Kristian, "*Law and Philosophy Subversive of Democracy*, by James W. Syfers: Book Review," vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 377–81
- Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez: Book Review," by April A. Knutson, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 501–5
- Zavarzadeh, Mas'ud, and Teresa L. Ebert, "ABC of Class," vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 133–41
- Zilbersheid, Uri, "Reply to Godels," vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 108–10
- , "Welfare State and Democracy in Marx's Theory of Revolution," vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 67–100

## ABSTRACTS

**David Schweickart, “Successor-System Theory as an Orienting Device: Trying to Understand China”**—The author discusses the positive and negative consequences of the introduction of market forces in the form of a mixed economy in China. Schweickart sees China experimenting with a variety of forms of internal development that can lead to what he terms a *viable successor-system to capitalism*. Such a system is characterized by a competitive market economy, workplace democracy, and social control of investment. He argues that despite the presence of a capitalist sector in such a system, the key element is social control over investment. In this respect, the Chinese government retains such control as no capitalist country does. As a result, the direction in which China has been developing should not be viewed as leading to the restoration of capitalism but to continuation of the path toward socialist development.

**Jeffrey Surovell, “Russia after the Fall of the Soviet Union: A Case of Capitalist Dependency”**—Ever since about 1993, Russian and Western analysts on the left and right of the political spectrum have tended to characterize the thrust of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy as marked by strong opposition to the policies of the advanced capitalist countries (ACCs). This study, which examines post-Soviet Russia—a country of critical importance yet whose political orientation has been little understood, even on the left—applies Marxist and dependency theories to a case study of Russian policy vis-à-vis NATO expansion. It demonstrates that Russia is a state dependent on the ACCs and thus does not oppose but rather capitulates to the policy dictates of the ACCs.

**“Presentation by the Iraqi Communist Party at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Athens, 8–10 October 2004”**—The Iraqi Communist Party, which opposed the U.S. invasion, presents its analysis of the present complicated situation in the country and explains why the Party, together with other democratic forces, participated in the interim government and the January 2005 elections.

**Li Shenming, “Socialism over a Century: Retrospect and Prospect”**—Li Shenming, vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, outlines his view of the course of socialist development in the twentieth century from the time of the October Revolution in Russia to the collapse of the socialist system toward the end of the century. He then proceeds to outline the present course of socialist development in China under conditions of an ever-present conflict between capitalism and socialism despite the economic cooperation between the two systems. He projects positive prospects worldwide for the development of socialism in the twenty-first century.

**Vladimiro Giacché, “War against the Truth”**—Stimulated by the distortion of the truth by the Bush administration in connection with the war in Iraq, the Italian author discusses the wide variety of forms of the distortion of truth practiced by political leaders and bourgeois ideologues. Among the categories of truth distortion he discusses are the mutilated truth, the forgotten truth, the staged truth, the suppressed truth, the inverted truth, the embellished truth, and the evaded truth.

**“Visit of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to Cuba, 12–13 December 2004”**—This report of President Chavez’s visit to Cuba describes the growing political and ideological bonds that are being formed between President Chavez and President Castro.

---

## ABREGES

**David Schweickart, «La théorie du système-successeur comme moyen d'orientation: essayer de comprendre la Chine»**—L'auteur discute des conséquences positives et négatives de l'introduction des forces du marché sous la forme d'une économie mixte en Chine. Schweickart voit la Chine expérimenter diverses formes de développement interne qui peuvent mener à ce qu'il appelle un *système-successeur au capitalisme* viable. Un tel système se caractérise par une économie de marché concurrentielle, une démocratie sur le lieu de travail, et un contrôle social de l'investissement. Il argumente que malgré la présence d'un secteur capitaliste dans un tel système, l'élément essentiel est le contrôle social de l'investissement. A cet égard, le gouvernement chinois garde un contrôle que n'a aucun pays capitaliste. En conséquence, la direction dans laquelle la Chine s'est développée jusqu'ici ne devrait pas être interprétée comme menant à la restauration du capitalisme mais comme une poursuite du chemin vers le développement socialiste.

**Jeffrey Surovell, «La Russie après la chute de l'Union soviétique: un cas de dépendance capitaliste»**—Depuis environ 1993, les analystes russes et occidentaux de droite et de gauche ont souvent tendance à caractériser la poussée de la politique étrangère russe post-soviétique comme marque d'une forte opposition à la politique des pays capitalistes avancés (ACCs). Cet essai qui examine la Russie post-soviétique—un pays d'une importance critique, mais dont l'orientation politique est difficile à comprendre, même à gauche—applique les théories marxistes et de dépendance à une étude de cas sur la politique russe face à l'expansion d'OTAN. Elle démontre que la Russie est un état dépendant des ACCs et que de ce fait elle ne s'oppose pas mais plutôt capitule devant leurs exigences politiques.

**«L'intervention du Parti communiste iraquien à la conférence internationale des partis communistes et ouvriers, à Athènes, le 8 au 10 octobre 2004»**—Le Parti communiste iraquien, qui s'est opposé à l'invasion des Etats-Unis, présente son analyse

de la situation actuelle compliquée dans son pays et explique pourquoi le Parti a participé, à côté d'autres forces démocratiques, au gouvernement intérimaire et aux élections de janvier 2005.

**Li Shenming, «Le socialisme à travers un siècle : rétrospective et perspective»**—Li Shenming, vice-président de l'Académie Chinoise des sciences sociales, donne un aperçu de ses vues sur le cours du développement socialiste au 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle de la révolution d'octobre en Russie à l'effondrement du système socialiste vers la fin du siècle. Puis il continue de tracer le cours actuel du développement socialiste en Chine sous les conditions d'un conflit toujours présent entre le capitalisme et le socialisme malgré la coopération économique entre les deux systèmes. Il envisage des perspectives positives pour le développement du socialisme au 21<sup>ème</sup> siècle dans le monde entier.

**Vladimiro Giacché, «La guerre contre la vérité»**—Stimulé par le déformation de la vérité par le gouvernement Bush au sujet de la guerre en Irak, l'auteur italien discute des diverses formes de déformation de la vérité pratiquées par les hommes politiques et les idéologues bourgeois. Parmi les catégories de déformation de la vérité qu'il présente on trouvera la vérité mutilée, la vérité oubliée, la vérité théâtrale, la vérité supprimée, la vérité inversée, la vérité embellie, et la vérité évadée.

**«La visite du président Hugo Chavez de Vénézuéla à Cuba, le 12 au 13 décembre 2004»**—Ce compte-rendu de la visite du président Chavez à Cuba décrit les liens politiques et idéologiques grandissants qui se forment entre le président Chavez et le président Castro.