

## OTHER NATIONS

sometimes subcontracted to union officials at the state-owned oil monopoly, PEMEX, that most of the union's other privileges were left intact. The government did succeed, in 1986, in closing the Fundidora Monterrey steel mill. This move saved millions in subsidies but cost 8,000 workers their jobs. Union leaders' corruption and their failure to stop such plant closings has led to worker resentment and unofficial strikes by some of the few unions unaffiliated with the ruling party, PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). However, government labor boards can simply shut down strike-bound state enterprises, frustrating the independent unions' efforts.

Bortz thinks that the economy cannot improve without industrial reform, and industrial reform will not succeed without union reform. But, he notes, tampering with the labor system threatens the "social pact" that has kept Mexico stable since World War I. Government officials and dissatisfied workers alike must face this dilemma: Is union reform worth the risk of social instability, and if not, what is the price for the Mexican economy?

### *Soviet Inequality: Wealth and Wages*

"Life, Work, and Politics in Soviet Cities: First Findings of the Soviet Interview Project" by James R. Millar and Peter Donhowe, in *Problems of Communism* (Jan.-Feb. 1987), U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Seventy years after the Russian Revolution, the USSR is a society in which high income is allocated to a small portion of the population and where these highly paid workers increasingly distrust the Soviet regime.

So say Millar, an economics professor at the University of Illinois and director of the Soviet Interview Project (SIP), and Donhowe, a business and economics editor at the University of Illinois News Bureau. Their findings come from the SIP, a survey of 2,793 emigrants conducted in 1982-83 by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research and the National Opinion Research Center. Emigrants were selected so that the sample would conform as closely as possible to the demographics of Soviet cities.

Soviet income distribution is quite stratified. SIP researchers estimate that, in 1979, the top 20 percent of Soviet households received 46.4 percent of Soviet wage income (compared to 44.3 percent in the United States). The lowest 20 percent of Soviet workers controlled 7.4 percent of Soviet wage income (compared to 4.1 percent in the United States).

There are many roads to earning high incomes. Some Soviet workers use *blat* (bribery) or *protektsiya* (influence) to rise. Many Soviet workers make high wages moonlighting in the illegal underground economy. Doctors and dentists earn 1.2 rubles per hour when they work for the state—and 33 rubles per hour when they work for themselves. On the average, Soviet workers earn 1.08 rubles an hour in public-sector work and 8.14 rubles an hour for work done privately.

High-income workers and young people are the groups most likely to rebel. Forty-five percent of upper-level professionals regularly read *samizdat* (underground literature), and 96 percent listen to foreign radio broadcasts. Dissatisfaction with Soviet life rises as incomes rise.

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While young people increasingly belong to "the correct social and political organizations," such as the Komsomol, they are also the most likely group to perform such "politically deviant" acts as refusing to vote and reading foreign books. Young people believe that because the KGB concentrates on arresting major dissidents, minor acts of defiance are "a calculated risk they were willing to take."

The Soviet Union can regain support among the young and well-off by increasing the supply and quality of goods and services. "Otherwise," Millar and Donhowe conclude, "... the best and brightest are likely to remain discontented."

*Dissent in Iran*

"The New Iranian Left" by Nozar Alaolmolki, in *The Middle East Journal* (Spring 1987), The Middle East Institute, 1761 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Iranian Left was a potent force in the political revolution that overthrew the shah of Iran in the spring of 1979. Leftists overran police and military installations in many Iranian cities, and half a million marched through Tehran streets during a May Day demonstration.

Yet four years later the Iranian Left had become a spent force, with all left-wing parties banned and scores of leftist leaders in jail.

Why did the Iranian Left collapse? The answer, says Alaolmolki, an assistant political science professor at Hiram College, lies in its "debilitating organizational factionalism."

Modern Iranian leftism began with the creation in 1941 of the Tudeh or "party of the masses," a Communist party aligned with the Soviet Union. During the 1960s, young Marxist militants angered by the Tudeh's tacit support of the shah created violent Maoist "new left" parties, such as the Komalah ("committee"), a Kurdish guerrilla movement.

After Mao Zedong's death in 1976, the Chinese regime supported the shah, causing Iranian Maoists to choose more esoteric role models. The Paykar ("struggle") faction said that the only Communists who were not "bourgeoisie" and "anti-revolutionist" were the North Koreans. A Komalah spinoff, the Communist Party of Iran, said that Albanian dictator Envar Hoxha was the only "true hero of the international communist revolution," even though the Albanian regime supports Ayatollah Khomeini. These "deep ideological cleavages," Alaolmolki says, frequently led to factional warfare, such as Maoist attacks on the Tudeh.

Ayatollah Khomeini's regime has created "ideological confusion" among leftists, as Marxist doctrine has little to say about combating theocracy. The Ayatollah's condemnation of the United States has led many leftist leaders and the Tudeh to support him, leaving the left divided.

The new Iranian leftists are more pragmatic than their predecessors. The Komalah has become Iran's largest leftist party by replacing violent Maoism with political education in "Islamic socialism" as its main tool for winning support. However, Alaolmolki concludes, "the persistence of ideological disputes" and Khomeini's repression bar a leftist revival.