

Chinese experience that foreign policy, regardless of the rhetoric, is driven by various factors. For those of us on the Left in the USA to be advancing our strategies and programs based mainly or solely on the political line of a party in power in another country is, at best, risky. No successful Left movement has

ever built its line around the foreign policy of another country. Unfortunately, many of us — and certainly including those of us who came through the Maoist experience — recognized this a bit too late.

In Struggle,
Khalil Hassan

insisted on total political subservience. We mustn't forget examples like the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to crush the Prague Spring uprising, or when the Soviets gave the Polish government a choice: declare martial law or face an invasion to crush Solidarity. The USSR also treated parties under its political leadership in countries outside the Soviet Bloc as mere tools of its foreign policy. One such country, which has been in the news the last couple years in part because of the legacy of this social-imperialist policy, is Afghanistan. China had no such mechanisms to create and maintain an international bloc under its domination.

We hail the milestone importance of Max's book and share with him at a deep level the desire for a *Newer Communist Movement* based much more on a spirit of unity. At the same time, we value constructive struggle over how to sum up the history of the Twentieth Century's socialist experiments. We continue to believe that a dialectical materialist class analysis has to be applied to these countries if we are to learn the lessons we need to do things better the next time.

The Editors respond to Max

In critiquing Maoism, Max, as does the political tradition that he comes out of, places his main emphasis on one aspect of China's foreign policy in the Mao era — its relations with unsavory governments. With this one-sided approach Max repeats the same error that Khalil previously identified — attempting to explain away Maoism by narrowly equating it with these external governmental relations. While we agree with Max that there were real problems with many aspects of China's foreign policy (and Khalil points to at least some of the causative factors involved there), we believe that this approach is reductionistic.

The Maoist political tradition — which the majority of people in Freedom Road, as well as the majority of the New Communist Movement that Max wrote about in his book, identify with — has a fundamentally different approach toward analyzing the character of "socialist" countries. Our critique of the Soviet Union is a fundamentally *internal* one. We believe it is necessary to examine the *class relationships* within a country: Are the people from the working class and other formerly oppressed groups in their millions actually learning to exercise political power within a country, leading the struggle to eliminate the vestiges of the old society, and fighting to prevent the development of a new exploitative order? Or is a layer of self-reproducing elites merely ruling *in the name of* the working class and oppressed masses, who are mobi-

lized merely for economic production? In the view of Maoism, the latter was the basic character of the Soviet Union, and we think the ease of the transformation of the "Communist" rulers into the new capitalist rulers after 1991 proves it.

Given this emphasis on China's foreign policy, it is ironic that Max skips right over that of the USSR. Whereas China may have had ties with regressive regimes, it had a fundamentally defensive military policy. Its army was organized mainly around defending the national territory, and it had no blue-water navy. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, economically and militarily dominated the countries in its bloc and

We're Not Going Back Continued

I think the challenge is that Prison-Industrial Complex is an elite term and we have to figure out how to make that term — and also the connections between militarism abroad and increased policing, prisons and surveillance at home — real to people. The anti-war movement is very middle class and white here in New Orleans and I'm sure plenty of other places too, even though both war and the domestic PIC primarily affect people of color.

What riles me up — and Michael Moore's film *Bowling for Columbine* pointed it out — is that it is the same group of people who stand to gain from locking people up who benefit from going to war. The weapons manufacturers, politicians, police, companies that

get contracts to build prisons, build walls at our borders and rebuild Iraq — they are all part of the same complex of interests. The manufacturers of the culture of violence, retribution and punishment both abroad and at home are the ones that benefit from their so-called "solutions" to violence and crime — more prisons, more police, more borders, more surveillance, more war.

Dan: We can fight to stop a prison here, fight to stop one there, but that's not going to stop the PIC. Same with the anti-war work, if we fight one invasion, then another, that doesn't stop imperialism. It needs to be strategic, and needs to make connections. Any kind of anti-war work needs to be rooted in fighting for economic and social justice for it to succeed.