

Business Briefs

International Credit

Soviet nomenklatura was right about IMF

The old Soviet *nomenklatura* was ironically not far from the truth in its characterizations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the French daily *Le Figaro* comments. Despite all the talk of reform in Russia, there is a deep popular suspicion of "western aid," which comes from three-quarters of a century of "brainwashing."

But the content of that "brainwashing" is intriguing, says the paper's Moscow correspondent, Pierre Bocev. He quotes from the *Dictionary of Political Economy*, utilized as recently as last year in higher educational institutions in Moscow, and which is still used in some provinces. It defines the IMF as the "instrument utilized by the supranational state monopolies to regulate the international monetary sphere. It is, in fact, controlled by the United States, which uses it to maintain the position of the dollar as the central currency in the capitalist world. The U.S.S.R. does not participate in the activity of the Fund."

"Capitalist credits" deployed through this system, says the *Dictionary*, are "utilized by the monopolies to conquer the markets and to appropriate to themselves the sources of raw materials in the debtor countries, to loot these countries and to reduce them to slavery." This is all central to the strategy of "neo-colonialism."

Health

TB crisis could 'dwarf' AIDS

New forms of drug-resistant tuberculosis threaten to produce an epidemic that could dwarf the AIDS crisis, according to New Jersey health officials in attendance at a conference on "The Tuberculosis Crisis" in Cranford. State epidemiologist Dr. Kenneth Spitalny said, "We could be facing a crisis that would shake the very foundation on which the

basis of public health is founded."

The director of Newark University Hospital's Pulmonary Division and president-elect of the New Jersey American Lung Association, Dr. Lee Reichman, added, "Unless we're willing to take action now, when we still have the ability to control the disease, we're talking down the road of a bigger problem than AIDS; TB is more contagious than AIDS."

"New York is already facing a crisis because it decimated its public health care support system. Now they have allocated \$10 million to try to stem the tide and our legislators are quibbling about \$900,000," thinking the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia "will make up the money. That is absolutely not true."

The officials assert that the only avenue to avert disaster is more aggressive prevention and treatment, which would not be possible should the state legislature turn down the Health Department's budget request of \$908,000 for TB control programs.

More than 40% of multi-resistant TB cases have been diagnosed in the New York metropolitan area. Such cases account for 7% of TB cases in New Jersey, concentrated mostly in Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson.

Eastern Europe

Walesa proposes 'second European Community'

Polish President Lech Walesa proposed the creation of a "second European Community" for eastern European nations, at a meeting of the Presidents of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in Prague May 6.

Walesa said that recent years prove that the East European economies can not simply jump into an entirely new "free trade" structure, but necessarily had to live with, or even revive, the "red structures" of cooperation in the abandoned Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) economic accords.

The new East European Community, he said, should not be restricted to the economic sphere, but should include defense and foreign policy cooperation.

Food Aid

Ethiopia fears repeat of 1984 famine

The government of Ethiopia said May 8 that it fears a repeat of the 1984 famine which killed at least 1 million people, and appealed to the world for aid. In a statement marking Red Cross Day, Vice Minister of Health Azeb Tamirat recalled that the world had been generous in previous disasters, but said that many died because it was "too little and too late." She urged the world to be more compassionate in helping to alleviate the effects of drought and the aftermath of war.

The government has to date received only 71,000 tons of the aid it appealed for last December, about 20% of what it estimates is required to avert disaster, Reuters reported.

"The likelihood of the continuation of the disaster situation in Ethiopia seems unavoidable. If the 10-year cycle repeats itself, we will soon be facing another disaster whose consequences may be as grave as in 1984-85," said a senior Red Cross official.

Biological Holocaust

Most who die of disease live in Third World

Of the 50 million people killed annually by disease, over three-quarters live in developing countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported on May 3. According to excerpts cited by Reuters, 77% of the 46.5 million deaths directly attributable to disease occurred in the developing world.

The top killers were infectious and parasitic diseases including pneumonia, cholera, tuberculosis, and bronchitis and related infections.

"But the tragedy is that there are at least 20 million deaths each year that could be prevented with improved health systems, access to essential drugs, and vaccines," it says. It also gave the "chilling statistic" that 12.9 million children under five die each year in the devel-

Briefly

oping world, making up one-third of all deaths there in 1990. In industrialized states, children under five accounted for 284,000 or 2.4% of all deaths.

About 6,000 Third World children die each day because they have not been immunized, while 9,000 die from diarrheal diseases, and nearly 10,000 from pneumonia. More than half a million women, 99% of them in developing countries, die each year from causes related to pregnancy. Only 50% of births in developing countries were attended by trained personnel.

According to a new report issued by the Agency for International Development, the rapid spread of AIDS and a resurgence of cholera and malaria threaten to wipe out more than a decade of health gains among the world's poorest children. "We are confronting a major problem with AIDS, seeing death rates we have never seen before," AID official Richard Bissell told a news conference May 8.

By the end of the decade, he said, 10 million children will be affected by the HIV virus, and it could become the leading killer of children in a number of developing countries. More immediately, "Malaria is rapidly becoming the single largest killer of young children."

Infrastructure

'Cost-saving' privatization caused Chicago flood

While Mayor Richard Daley has blamed Chicago's April downtown flood on the failure of city departments and employees to quickly repair a tunnel breach, it was the "free market" privatization of services which the mayor has promoted, with a resulting reduction in services by city workers, that stalled the process of repairing the tunnel.

Daley is nationally known as the leading big-city promoter of privatizing and contracting out city services. In January, he abolished the Department of Public Works as a key part of reorganizing city departments to save money, "streamline" services, and reduce the city work force. The 800 layoffs included

skilled tradesmen from Public Works—the very personnel who work on tunnel repairs.

At a press conference May 8, James McTigue, a city engineer who was scapegoated and dismissed, revealed that despite his repeated exhortations since March 16, his new superiors were seeking to contract out the repair work. McTigue said that had Public Works still existed, he had the authority to complete the repairs within 3-4 days, by about March 20. But now, "there were no longer tradesmen available to perform the work." Instead, there was a crippling bureaucratic foul-up centered around haggling over lines of responsibility and which outside contractor would get how much money to do a basically straightforward job.

EIR has also been told that the Great Lakes dredging company, which had won the lucrative contract to install the river pilings that caused the tunnel breach, contributed \$75,000 to Daley's last election campaign.

Debt

Nigerians slam IMF package

"A structural adjustment program that does not encourage production is no good to anyone," Uzor Okeke, acting director general of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria told Reuters May 8. "In Nigeria, SAP has tended to favor banks and traders," Okeke said.

Critics blame the austerity program for humbling sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy and bringing untold hardship to Nigeria's 88.5 million people since its first implementation in 1986.

On the same day, Tom Ikimi, chairman of Nigeria's conservative National Republican Convention, told a London audience, "Instead of aid and donor-assisted programs, the West should move swiftly to forgive Africa's debt, which is proving rather burdensome for most countries, especially Nigeria, where 30% of the annual budget is used to service debts annually. The West should wipe out our huge debt burden, not by rescheduling, but through complete debt forgiveness."

● **IRAN** is trying vigorously to reduce its birth-rate, and the program has surgically sterilized over 200,000 citizens in the past two years. U.S.-trained Health Ministry official Hosein Malek-Afzali is "a principal architect of Iran's family-planning program," according to the *Washington Post*. President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani doubled the anti-birth program's budget this year to \$150 million.

● **SYPHILIS** in southern Illinois is at its worst level in years, officials reported May 5 on the disease incidence in East St. Louis. There have been 39 cases treated this year, in contrast to only 9-10 cases in recent years.

● **RUSSIA** will trade machinery, aircraft, and factory equipment for Chinese food and consumer goods under an agreement for 1992 signed in Beijing on May 5. Russia will export plant and equipment for factories that it has helped to build or is now constructing in China, Tass-Itar said.

● **MONGOLIA'S** parliament fired its central bank chief, in a vote that saw 72% in favor of removing Namhaisur-engiyn Zhargalsaikhan from the post he had held for a year. He was accused of covering up over \$100 million in foreign exchange trading losses for which he was responsible.

● **IRANIAN** President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will attend an economic summit meeting of six Muslim states which were once part of the Soviet Union. The conference will take place in Akhbad, the capital of Turkmenistan, in mid-May.

● **AN EPIDEMIC** of dysentery has hit Britain, where the number of cases has quadrupled in a year, Reuters reported on May 8. Public Health Laboratory director Rodney Cartwright said scientists could not yet explain the epidemic, but believed it was related to poor hygiene in schools and declining living standards—meaning less hot water, sanitation, heat, etc.