

A letter to Ivan Vrachev and Rebecca Boguslavskaya

David North

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Dear Comrade Vrachov and Comrade Boguslavskaya:

First of all, please accept my heartiest greetings on the 74th anniversary of the great October Revolution. Despite the crude insults and calumnies being hurled against this earth-shaking event and those who led it, that which was achieved by Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party cannot be effaced from history. Man's progress from the barbarism of class oppression to the socialist reorganization of society has proven to be more complex and difficult than Marx or even Lenin foresaw; but the international proletariat will ultimately triumph. As Liebknecht said so well, "Trotz alledem und alledem..." [And yet, in spite of it all]

As you requested, I am enclosing in this letter a copy of an editorial which appears in the so-called "Marxist Monthly" published by Vanessa Redgrave.

Allow me to cite certain portions of the editorial. Entitled "The Triumph of the Political Revolution," the editorial begins as follows:

The counter-revolutionary coup of August 19 has been crushed, and *the political revolution in the USSR has taken a giant leap forward*. The absolute defeat of the State Committee for the State of Emergency, disgraced and totally discredited, and all of their accomplices in the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus of the CPSU and the state, *is a colossal victory for the working class throughout the world and for every national liberation struggle against imperialism*.[emphasis added]

It is one thing to welcome the collapse of the coup; it

is quite another to hail the political victory of the comprador bourgeoisie led by Yeltsin's faction as a great advance for the working class. The events which have occurred over the last two months clearly demonstrate that the Yeltsinites are striving to systematically liquidate whatever remains of the basic conquests of the October Revolution. Exploiting the political confusion and disorientation within the working class — which is the tragic product of decades of Stalinist crimes and betrayals — the Yeltsin government is attempting to carry out what amounts to a counter-revolution.

In August 1917, Lenin and Trotsky welcomed the collapse of Kornilov's coup; but they did not hail the victory of Kerensky! Instead, they exposed the class interests represented by Kerensky and mobilized the proletariat around its own socialist program.

But Redgrave's attitude to the victory of the Yeltsin faction is indistinguishable from that of every imperialist government—from the United States to Germany. How could anyone who claims to be a socialist hail the leadership of Yeltsin as a "colossal victory for the working class throughout the world and for every national liberation struggle against imperialism"?

The reactionary character of Yeltsin's program is indisputable. He proclaims openly his allegiance to capitalism and has introduced a new program that has as its principal aim the final destruction of the property forms created on the basis of October. He has called for the raising of prices to world market levels while demanding that the wages of workers be held down. This is a formula for the impoverishment of workers.

As for his international program, Yeltsin is a backward Russian chauvinist whose contempt for the non-Russian nationalities serves only to accelerate the

disintegration of the Soviet Union. At the same time, his international policies are nothing more than an echo of those proclaimed by the US State Department in Washington, D.C. The capitalist media in the United States openly boasts that Yeltsin is “their man.” As for Redgrave’s claim that Yeltsin’s victory serves the cause of national liberation, one has only to consider the attitude of the Russian government to Cuba. Yeltsin’s government has cut off all aid to Cuba and welcomed to the Kremlin representatives of the Cuban fascist organization, based in Miami, that is seeking to overthrow Castro! Many other examples could be given of Yeltsin’s attitude to the struggle against imperialism.

And yet Redgrave praises Yeltsin, Rutskoi and Sobchak for their “courage” and “steadfastness.” (Incidentally, the newspapers this morning report the arrival in “St. Petersburg” of the Romanov archduke at the invitation of Sobchak. Is this to be considered another “giant leap forward” by the working class?)

As I sought to explain to you when we met in Moscow, it is necessary to examine the *written political record* of those who present themselves to you as Trotskyists. I appreciate how difficult it must be for you to make an evaluation of those whom you meet. You have lived in political isolation for so long. But political leaders must be judged by the program they represent. From this standpoint, Redgrave is nothing more than a petty-bourgeois reactionary who is “playing the role” of Trotskyist like she plays so many other roles in the theater.

These are harsh words but they are absolutely true.

It is very easy for you to verify the points I have made. If you see Redgrave again, demand that she or her brother provide you with Russian translations of their statements on the USSR and explain their political positions.

Next week, the International Committee of the Fourth International will hold its international conference against imperialist war and colonialism in Berlin. It will be a genuine revolutionary gathering of Trotskyists. I am confident that it will be a great success. I will send you copies of the resolutions endorsed by the conference so that you can evaluate its political character.

With best wishes for your good health,

David North



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