

Landsberg goes to Oil Conference in Tripoli

Donavon King
of the Pioneer Log

Lewis and Clark professor Marty Landsberg was one of 250 invited participants in an international oil workers conference held in Libya last month. Landsberg, an assistant professor of economics, was one of 30 North Americans to attend the Fifth Oil Workers Anti-Monopolist World Conference in Tripoli, Libya, March 24 through April 1.

More than 250 participants from oil industry trade unions, other union associations and national liberation and democratic organizations from 56 countries attended the conference.

The conference was "a really important opportunity to talk with union leaders from Greece, France and Italy in order to get a more international perspective of worker's responses to current economic conditions," Landsberg said.

Solidarity between OPEC, Third World and socialist countries against domination by the capitalist market

and multi-national corporations was a major goal of the conference," he said.

"I was impressed by the amazing degree of solidarity between socialist and Third World countries and their recognition of the fact that the U.S. is pursuing policies designed to divide them."

Landsberg participated in workshops on oil pricing and Third World economic development. As a representative of the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE), Landsberg spoke on the state of the U.S. economy and dollar, likely economic actions of capitalist countries, and strategies for uniting U.S. workers and workers from other countries.

"Being a leftist in the United States, it was especially exciting to be with people from all over the world who are committed to many of the same goals and dreams that I am," he said.

Representatives from the participating OPEC countries resent the low

prices multi-national oil corporations have paid for oil in the past and blamed them for depleting oil supplies, Landsberg said.

Those OPEC nations favor a slowdown in oil production to "stretch out" their oil supplies for global fuel conservation and their own economic development, he said.

Landsberg said the conference participants attributed recent OPEC price increases to several causes—inflation, since 1974, in the goods market in excess of oil price increases, attempts to make up for low prices in pre-OPEC years, and a desire to stimulate alternative energy sources.

The participants viewed the United States as following a "dangerous course" by using OPEC as a scapegoat for its economic crisis and by flexing its military muscles in the Arabian Gulf, he said.

U.S. oil worker's unions and "right-wing" OPEC nations did not send representatives to the conference.

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Local

Overseas study in Cuba, USSR

Students encounter other cultures, political systems

Katie Fitzgerald
of the Pioneer Log

Four Lewis and Clark students visiting the Soviet Union on a five-week study program got a closer look at communism in action than they had anticipated.

Someone, allegedly, caught them taking photos in Kiev, and the Soviet KGB (secret service) interrogated them for three hours.

"We were by ourselves, looking around at a construction site at the end of a subway line," said junior Susan Kaplan. "Someone started to take a picture of a huge picture of Lenin, and a foreman suddenly grabbed one guy."

"We all had to go into a building nearby and submit to three hours of interrogation by the KGB."

"They confiscated our film," Kaplan said. "They made us each write five separate statements about why we were there. We stayed calm and they let us go."

"It was scary, but actually now that it's over, I'm glad it happened."

Kaplan and the other three—Wendy Shupe, Chris Wood and Eric Jensen—were among nine LC students who spent the break between fall and winter terms in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Donna Seifer, lecturer in Russian.

Another two-week study program, organized and led by Assistant

Professor of Economics Marty Landsberg, took 19 students (11 from LC) to Cuba last month.

The Soviet study group, which visited Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Tbsi-

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lisi and Leningrad, had meetings and direct encounters with citizens through a joint U.S.-Soviet organization called the Friendship Council.

"False fronts—a fear of foreigners and outsiders—is an old Russian tradition since the 10th century," Seifer said. "I think these students received a genuine exposure to the USSR, one that went beyond the false fronts."

Students said they saw clean, European-looking cities with good transportation systems. They said they also saw disorganization and many long lines. Seifer said the Soviets are embarrassed about the long lines and inefficiency.

"The Russian people seemed content to me," said junior Abbe McKenna. "For a lot of them, things have gotten better since the revolution. There is full employment, free medical care and free education."

"They want the same things we want, including world peace."

Seifer said alcoholism is a problem in the Soviet Union. Alcoholics are evident on the streets if one looks carefully, she said.

"I saw tired people," Seifer said. "The Russian people have a patience, tolerance and endurance that is hard to find in the U.S., where instant supply and instant service are always available."

McKenna and Kaplan agreed they saw shoddy merchandise because of the lack of competition in industry. The economic system did not look efficient, they said.

"It's not a perfect system," McKenna said. "But neither is ours."

Students paid \$3,000 each to participate in the USSR program Nov. 23 to Dec. 30. Participants were required to take one term of Beginning Russian and to study the country's culture and civilization before the trip. Each had to write a 10-page paper upon completion of the program to receive the two-thirds credit offered.

"The students who went were of a high caliber," Seifer said. They could handle stress, they exhibited discretion and cultural insight, and they were in good physical shape."

Landsberg's Cuba study group visited museums, elementary school classrooms, housing developments, agricultural communities, a cigar fac-

tory, sugar cane fields and the Bay of Pigs site of the 1962 missile crisis.

Landsberg and sophomore Sarah Allen organized the Cuba program which was independent from the programs offered by the LC overseas study office. A Cuban travel agency planned the tour of the island Dec. 10-25.

The group stayed in Havana, Comaguay, Santa Clara and Santiago de Cua. Students paid \$700 each to participate.

"The Cubans are incredibly outgoing and friendly," Landsberg said. "English is spoken frequently. They get all the Florida radio stations. Music is important to them. They are quite up-to-date on the USA."

"I'm very inspired by what I saw in Cuba," Landsberg said. "It's not perfect, but they've come a long way."

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The Cubans are proud of what they've done and are committed. In some ways they have even surpassed what we've done in the U.S.

"There is certainly evidence of Soviet and Eastern European goods in Cuba, because the U.S. refuses to trade with them. Cuba couldn't sur-

vive without its strong friend, the USSR. The people have a positive, friendly interest in Soviets. I was mistaken for one myself."

Allen went to Cuba mostly to see the schools and education system, and the "romantic" revolution she had read about.

"It's a beautiful island and good for tourism," she said. "It's a good way for Cuba to bring in revenue without exploitation if managed right."

"It was hard to be a tourist. We stayed in fancy hotels and ate luxurious meals. The people were poor but they had what they needed: shoes, clothes, health, medical care."

"The country is small and poor, but it's developing in a very humane way, as Socialism is humane for Cuba."

Landsberg said the embargo the U.S. imposed on Cuba makes economic matters difficult.

"Cuba doesn't have many resources, food is rationed and all trade is at great distance, he said."

"The U.S. is very hostile toward Cuba," Landsberg said. "I think there is still debate in Cuba about sabotage and counter-revolution."

"Naturally they emphasize institutionalizing control. Cubans are proud of their position and they know they couldn't exist as a socialist country without others in the world."

Allen said the revolution is still alive in Cuba. "The hope is for the future," she said. "The emphasis is on education and children, and although women are still very oppressed, they believe that eventually it will end through education."