

Authors

Mayor helps write 'revolutionary' book

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By PAUL BEATTY

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SANTA CRUZ — Santa Cruz's socialist mayor is an author.

Michael Rotkin is one of four associate authors who helped UCSC Professor William H. Friedland write the "Revolutionary Theory," a new book with a red cover and gray contents.

"It's not really a primer on how to make a revolution," Rotkin explains, "it's more of a 'how not to' book on revolution."

The book had its local debut a week ago and immediately sold out.

"We really didn't have that many copies on hand," Rotkins says.

The book describes itself as "Drawing on the work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Mao and other important revolutionaries, this book provides a systematic examination of the full range of modern revolutionary theory."

"From an interdisciplinary perspective, it looks at theories of the forces that produce revolution and theories of revolutionary organization and mobilization.

"A final section, devoted to the shaping of the socialist future, comments on unresolved theoretical issues that have emerged as a result of revolutionary



Mayor Michael Rotkin

transformation."

Most of the book was written 10 years ago as a project of the professor and four of his students after Friedland sold the idea to a publisher and got an advance.

"It was really a learning experience for all of us. A question would arise and we'd sent one person off to read up on it and then write a draft.

"Then we'd collectively tear the draft

to pieces," Rotkin recalls.

The first draft was completed around 1972. Then came the bad news from the publisher that the market had dropped out on books on revolution and there would be no publication.

Around 18 months ago, a new publisher — Allanheld, Osmun and Co. of Totowa, N.J., commissioned a re-write and the book went to the printers.

Friedland was the founding chairman of the Department of Community Studies and is a professor in that department.

The other co-authors are Amy Barton, now completing her degree sociology at UCSC, Bruce Dancis, now completing his dissertation in history at Stanford, and Michael Sprior, who is completing a master's thesis in ethnomusicology at the University of Washington.

Along with being mayor, Rotkin is the field studies coordinator of the Community Studies Program at UCSC.

Rotkin explains, "It's not like a best seller, but I think it does make these folks — Marx, Lenin, Mao — accessible."

He said that accessibility includes answering such questions as a folksy explanation of dialectical materialism.

"To look at things dialectically is to see contradictions or apparent opposites which if looked at in a broad enough

context may in fact not truly be contradictory.

"An example would be the government of the U.S. and its role as a neutral mediator between classes and the answer to that has to be a 'yes' or 'no' but there's no simple answer.

"As a neutral mediator the government tells the working class and the capitalistic class that in their contest with each other, the government will act as the referee.

"The government will insist that both contestants do not interfere with each other and that both start at the same time.

"Then the government shoots off the gun and watches the race begin. The worker starts off on foot and the capitalist drives off in his car."

Rotkin says there won't be a revolution in the U.S. "in the near future" and that he has always opposed the idea of violence to achieve the revolution.

He says that in his student activist days he shunned the Weatherman's approach, knowing violence would not entice the industrial working class to a class revolution in the U.S.

Rotkin does want a world where production is at a community level and that the people of the community make the decisions.