



Rosalind Boyd and Sam Noumoff, October 14, 2013.



Photo Credit: Ping Fu  
Sam Noumoff with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji.

## **The Writings of Marxist Scholar Samuel J. Noumoff: A unique vantage point on China, the developing world and socialism**

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“Socialism is neither the sharing of poverty nor the limitation of freedom, it is rather a system devoted to the elimination of the impediments to human equality, a claim capitalism cannot make”.



Sam Noumoff 1990

For many generations of students who studied politics at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Sam Noumoff was an iconic figure. He taught courses in political theory and comparative politics that are unlikely to be found on the curricula of universities in the developed or, indeed the developing, world today. Aside from offering a radical perspective on the comparative politics of East Asia, over the years Sam introduced thousands of students to Marxist political theory and even offered a course, on which I was briefly his teaching assistant, called Comparative Revolution. When he died on 26 November 2014, after a long fight with cancer and only weeks after the sudden death of his lifelong love Francesca, he left behind several generations of students, activists, scholars, friends and, indeed, many leaders in the developing world who were inspired by his thinking, research and innovative policy ideas. Noumoff also left behind some two hundred articles and papers, many unpublished or published in difficult to access journals in the developing world.<sup>2</sup> It is surprising how much of this work speaks directly to the issues of today, from understanding the rise of China as an economic powerhouse through means quite different from those prescribed by the World Bank, to understanding why so many people angered by venal politicians and growing inequality turn to

right wing populists like Donald Trump, the advocates of Brexit in the UK or Marine LePen's National Front in France.

Three big threads run through Sam's writings. First, he argued that socialism as constructed in China and pursued by movements throughout many countries in the developing world represented a positive response to the exploitation and limited freedom of the capitalist system, even if it had not yet transcended the economic or political achievements of modern capitalist society. Second, his writings provide a profound critique of inequality in the global system with a particular and penetrating criticism of the role of the United States, from its aggressive war in Indochina in the 1960s to its military adventurism in Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa today. Third, he presents a strong argument throughout his writings for the need to listen to, and understand the standpoint of the communities and states in the developing countries, or "Third World" as he continued to call them, who struggle to acquire new technologies, limit the ravaging of their countries by transnational corporations and aspire to eliminate poverty, promote growth and do so in ways that are environmentally sustainable and equitable.

Sam engaged directly, not only with senior Chinese officials particularly as they sought to interact with the global economy, but also with leaders and social movements in Cuba, El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America, South Africa, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East. His preoccupation with issues of global inequality speak directly to politics today, with popular attraction to politicians in the North and South who are challenging the status quo and major intellectual figures like Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, Thomas Piketty or former World Bank chief economist Justin Lin placing inequality at the heart of the causes of poverty and international insecurity.

In this article I can do little more than sketch the evolution of his career and highlight some of his most important contributions, many of which remain highly relevant to challenges facing the world today and in the years to come.

## **The Philosophical and Political Foundations forged in his Early Years**

Sam Noumoff was born in Brooklyn on 14 November 1935 and, as a young man, was drafted into the US Army in the mid-1950s where he served as Private First Class in the 3rd Armoured

Cavalry Regiment stationed in Europe (Noumoff, 2010b).<sup>3</sup> After finishing a BA at Clark University, he studied political philosophy primarily at New York University where he began his Masters/PhD studies in 1965.<sup>4</sup> He became an outspoken opponent of the Viet Nam War and participated in the defence of Daniel Elsborg and Anthony Russo when they were charged for releasing the Pentagon Papers, the exposé of US aggression in Indochina (Noumoff, 2007).

In the 1960s at NYU, Sam steeped himself in the study of the philosophical basis of the Chinese revolution. He wrote a paper on the “dialectic” in China, which summarised the main ideas in his doctoral dissertation, completed several years later (Noumoff, 1968, 1975). In it Sam traced the concept of a “circular dialect” in traditional Chinese philosophy and argued that the full development of Marx’s re-conceptualisation of a “linear” upward-moving Hegelian dialectic only occurred once Marxism took root in China. This was manifested in Mao Zedong’s (1937: 36, 42) famous essay ‘On Contradiction’ and formed the basis for conceptualising on-going contradictions (both non-antagonistic and antagonistic) in socialist society. As many students of Sam’s over the years would recall, from this he derived his idea of ‘an open ended upward moving spiral’ (Noumoff, 1968: 10), which informed Sam’s thinking about social change throughout his career.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of the decade he published his early analysis of the Cultural Revolution (Noumoff, 1967), which he argued had at its core a “rectification” movement, despite the “inter-personal” dimensions that were also at play. He argued that the mass movement of the 1960s was motivated by a deeply held ideological commitment to building socialism that was not “a mere façade of power” – the same ideological commitment that allowed the Chinese Communist Party to survive during decades of hardship leading up to the successful seizure of power in 1949. Throughout the process the party had engaged in “rectification movements” seeking to balance “party control” and “mass support”. This continued in the two decades that followed. Sam suggested that the Cultural Revolution began as a campaign to reorient the cultural and educational spheres to bring the Party (and many young cadres who had no direct experience of the revolution) back in touch with ordinary people and developed into a full-blown effort to arrest bureaucratisation of the state. He insisted, through documentation, that the intention was to promote non-violent struggle ‘where the minority was to be protected’

(Noumoff, 1967: 231). But he documented the escalation of the campaign to full-blown factional and often violent confrontation.

While carrying out this analysis of tumultuous developments in China and still working on his PhD thesis, Sam emigrated to Canada, first briefly taking up a post in New Brunswick in 1966, then in 1967 joining McGill University's Department of Political Science where he was based until his retirement in 2006. During his early years at McGill he interacted intensively with Professor Paul T.K. Lin who remained a close colleague and friend until Lin's death in 2004. Together they built the Centre for East Asian Studies and interpreted and pursued research and teaching about China. In 1971, he was part of the first Canadian delegation to go to China after the normalisation of diplomatic relations (Martin, 2006). Sam also got involved with the Centre for Developing Area Studies, which he later directed, and he became a major figure in University governance, usually defending the underdog and always acting as the "conscience of the University" fiercely promoting academic independence.

At McGill, Sam engaged with Professor Charles Taylor and others on issues of political philosophy and the Vietnam War. In the early 1970s he travelled to Vietnam several times and wrote about the war, including contributions to two anti-war volumes, *How to Make a Killing*: (Duchow et al, 1972) and *How to Buy a Country* (Duchow et al, 1973) and a raft of papers, talks and newspaper articles.<sup>6</sup> Sam's deep opposition to the war was reflected in a double page article he published in the *Montreal Gazette* (Noumoff, 1974) after a one month investigatory trip to the war-ravished north covering 3,000 km in 1974. The data was truly shocking, reporting 30 billion pounds of bombs dropped, 2 million incidents of toxic chemicals showered over the country and 50% of forests destroyed, not to mention 87% of cultivable land removed from production. He put the lie to claims of indiscriminate US bombing documenting the precise targeting of factories and destruction of productive capacity. He documented as well the torture of prisoners at the hands of US and South Vietnamese forces. He argued that, 'The central objective of the U.S. seems to have been to utilize all of its technological resources with such concentration and devastation so as to quickly bring North Vietnam to the surrender table' – a policy of "civil terrorization". He cited senior North Vietnamese General Chu Van Tan saying, 'In the present era of all-out war, it would have been

impossible for us to gain victory if we had only mobilized in a military manner. The last 18 years of war have taught us that we must couple our military struggle with the economic and cultural battle and we know we have justice on our side'.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the decade he wrote his first major papers on North Korea, at a time when the country's development progress still seemed competitive to US aligned South Korea (Noumoff, 1979b). In it he looks at North Korea as a developing country facing authorities in South Korea, the US and Japan who were 'committed to a policy of destroying the social system of the north' (Noumoff, 1979b:28). Mirroring his earlier efforts to understand China, he devoted considerable space to efforts of leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to craft their own approach to building socialism around the "Juche" idea (a concept of self-reliance for national integration), distinct from both the USSR and China. He documented efforts to build a cooperative system in agriculture that would attempt the "proletarianization" of the peasantry and collective management in state industries in contrast to 'the one man management system which had been adapted from the Soviet experience' (Noumoff, 1979b:43). His own research in the country led him to conclude that what he saw was 'a unique experience in socialist construction' (Noumoff, 1979b:49): 'A country small in size with a recent colonial legacy, limited natural resources, virtual total destruction during a war in which it faced the might of the only superpower of the period, burdened with external attempts to dominate it and pervert its development and subordinate its economy, could rise above these challenges' (Noumoff, 1979b:49). This was a judgement that coloured Sam's interpretation of the DPRK throughout the rest of his life.<sup>8</sup>

### **China's Drive for Development: Market Reforms and Opening**

From the early 1980s, Sam became not only an astute interpreter of China's drive to modernise through selective use of market mechanisms, but contributed actively in advising senior Chinese officials on their engagement with transnational corporations. The respect he commanded in China by this time was evident when he became, according to one Indian observer, the first foreigner to publish an article on China's foreign policy in a Chinese newspaper (G.P.D. 1982). In 'China Sticks to World Role' (Noumoff, 1981b), Sam argued that attacks on China for "allegedly" abandoning the

struggle against oppression came from both the USSR as well as ‘those who are struggling for their own liberation and China Improving state-to-state relations with their enemy’. While Sam shared the Chinese view that the Soviet Union was expansionist, he argued that, ‘In those parts of the world where the United States is the threat to national independence China will support those countries’ and that ‘both the US and Soviet domination and expansion must be fought’. But he also emphasised that ‘revolution can neither be exported nor imposed from the outside’.

In 1984, Sam wrote a major article analysing the contribution of Mao to theories of socialist transition and related these to China’s modernization drive (Noumoff, 1984a). He sought to explain how in conditions of underdevelopment the Communist Party could mobilise the population to propel social and economic advancement (a ‘transformation of the mode of production’) through a “proletarian” led united front counting mainly on the society’s own resources. He emphasised that Mao understood the need for a transition period to develop ‘the structural features’ of capitalism ‘without capitalist rule’. He wrote that Mao formulated three stages: (1) private ownership on state order, (2) government purchase and sale of private output, (3) joint state-private operation (Mao, 1977: 44) and two major objectives [1] capital accumulation, [2] training of personnel (Mao, Works v:112-113). Once these objectives were realized to the minimum necessary degree a buy-out would take place with remuneration for shares (Noumoff, 1984a:10).

Sam argued that the policy was by and large adhered to ‘except for the interruption of the cultural revolution’.<sup>9</sup> Mao chose to expand agricultural production, rather than squeeze the peasantry, as had occurred in the Soviet Union, to permit accumulation for industrialization. However, Mao believed the transition could happen in fifteen years, Sam argued, but in actuality there was a very uneven transition throughout the country and, where stages were skipped, ‘participation was less than voluntary and income was equalized too rapidly’ (Noumoff, 1984b:15). He went on to explain problems of incentive structures within the party (a ‘yes man cadre syndrome’) that led to a mechanistic application of policy and a failure to adapt to local conditions. The biggest problem, in Sam’s view, was the tendency to see the transcendence of a particular stage in antagonistic terms. The ‘policy of 100% repudiation and denunciation of the immediately preceding policy’ (Noumoff,

1984b:18) plagued the whole period post-1949, turning what should have been understood as ‘non-antagonistic contradictions’ into antagonistic ones. Ultimately, this would lead both the old and the young to withdraw from the political process, denying society ‘a considerable human resource’. He suggested that there could be much more room for public discussion and debate about alternative interpretations of the past and the present on such issues as “socialist alienation”, “anti-pollution” and other issues of public concern in the early 1980s.

Sam suggested that the responsibility system in agriculture, which devolved production decisions to households, was selected for its ‘rapid pay-off’ in reducing urban rural inequality, however at the cost of strengthening ‘individual commodity production’ and the ‘privatized access to the means of production’. He saw similar problems in the responsibility system in industry. In both sectors there would be limits to individuals’ gains and disillusionment. If these limited individual incentives are combined with ‘a political campaign which employs collectivist vocabulary’ political campaigns are ‘simply not taken seriously’ (Noumoff, 1984b:20).

In the early 1980s Sam began to make one of his most important contributions, which would continue for the next two decades, concerning China’s opening to foreign investment and engagement with multinational corporations (MNCs). It is noteworthy that upon his death, the eulogy offered by a representative of the Chinese Embassy at his memorial service in Montreal, particularly underlined Sam’s contribution in helping China to formulate policy and engage in practice with multinational corporations (Zhang, 2014).

In a very substantial study he demonstrated how China could work with and harness the technologies, capital and market opportunities of transnational corporations (Noumoff, 1985a). This was a brilliant piece that combined a theoretical reflection, central to Sam’s view of development, with an evaluation of where China stood in its economic reforms and what should be done. Theoretically, he pursued his argument criticising the Party’s tendency to repudiate the past, emphasizing that history is a cumulative process. His own vision comes across clearly in this work where he argued that socialism must not be ‘shared poverty’. Sam underlined that 1978 was a crucial turning point where experience since the revolution needed critical evaluation. ‘The rate of material change within the

country was insufficient relative to both the potential for growth, as well as in comparison to advanced technological achievements in other societies' (1985a: 4).

| <b>China's Goals</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>[International] Capitalists' Goals</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acquire advanced technology               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) through direct purchase and financed through trade surplus</li> <li>(b) through a variety of investment agreements not requiring hard currency cash outlay</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase production and disposable surplus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the modern industrial and agricultural sectors aimed ultimately at changing the worker/peasant ratio.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acquire production and management skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish pivots of growth, having a ripple effect for the entire society</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maximize real employment, address the question of under-employment and increase overall efficiency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progressively institute import substitution with a strong enough matrix for self-generating innovation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase material welfare with a minimum of social dislocation, recognizing that there inevitably will be some.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maximization of profit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate China into the world capitalist system and the global division of labor; Chinese owned subsidiaries functioning on the basis of comparative advantage.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide China with a stake in maintaining the basic system by providing benefit through an export market share</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultivation of a sector of the bureaucracy whose point of reference is the maximization of trade advantage rather than the overall strategy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the view that systemic convergence (socialism and capitalism) is the logical outcome of historic development, on the grounds that the capitalist mode of production has created and will continue to create more abundance.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Neutralize China's support for struggles of national liberation in exchange for advanced technology.</li> </ul> |

He contrasted China's strategy to catch up to the advanced capitalist countries, which from today's understanding was China's move to become a "developmental state", with the goals of the capitalist world vis a vis China (Noumoff, 1985a: 5):

He argued that, while the elaboration of China's goals versus those of the capitalist world illustrated there were short-term mutual benefits, in the long-term they were incompatible. He went on to demonstrate the necessity of opening up and engaging in the world economy, but laid out the dangers based on the experience of the wider developing world. These included: the creation of a dual economy between production sectors catering to the export market and those geared to the domestic market; the high costs of foreign imports into the production process against the immediate return; new technological dependencies; distortion of development priorities; increased corruption promoted by foreign firms eager to make deals; the creation of elites with a vested interest in maintaining the strategy despite its consequences (Noumoff, 1985b: 7-8).

As part of this work, Sam undertook research across the region to garner insights and lessons from other countries' experiences with MNCs, particularly in Malaysia, where his research was reported in the press (Lim, 1982). He pointed to the problems of Western management systems based on maximising profit to the individual level, the creation of labour aristocracies and depoliticization 'where economic self-interest becomes the norm'. "Transfer pricing" practiced by MNCs, particularly where host countries lacked experience in capitalist accounting, leads to surplus drains that should be part of the net profit of joint ventures. But he also pointed to the familiar gains from engagement including increased tax revenues, increased share of manufactures in exports, and increased production and labour productivity. China, he argued, was in a stronger position than most Third World countries to maximise the gains and minimise the costs of engagement. He concluded arguing, 'The challenge China faces, and the answers China provides, are not only essential for China's future, but for the 3rd world as well, all of who share the same basic set of problems' (Noumoff, 1985a: 10).<sup>10</sup> During his trips to China in this period, he persuasively advised Chinese leaders to engage Western corporations through joint ventures that required technology transfers to China.<sup>11</sup>

## **The Developing World and Globalization**

Sam's scholarship was not restricted to research on China. Also in the 1980s, he wrote about the wider developing world, including a critical interpretation of the USSR's role in the developing countries (particularly Afghanistan), Lebanon's crisis, the situation in Central America and specifically in El Salvador, and he produced a major research paper on the pharmaceutical industry and its exploits in the Third World. At the end of the decade he laid out an assessment of trends in the world economy. By the early 1990s he interpreted the impact of the end of the Cold War on developing countries, as well as the consolidation of neoliberalism in rich countries, engaging with new pressing issues such as the environment.

The criticism Sam developed of the USSR during this period was based not on taking sides with China over Sino-Soviet rivalry, but a profound understanding of the exploitative relations the USSR had developed first within the socialist block and further with the countries of the Third World. In an important article on the Soviet Union-led trading block, the CMEA<sup>12</sup>, Sam argued that the Soviets sought to extricate developing countries from integration in the world capitalist system and integrate them into an equally exploitive "counter-system" (Noumoff, 1980). His criticism rested on the fact that there appeared to be no strategy in the CMEA to allow for the gradual industrialization of Third World countries. Some 75% of imports from the developing world to the Soviet Union and allied states in the CMEA understandably comprised primary commodities, but there was nothing in the strategy that would allow the poor countries to get away from dependence on primary commodity exports. He documented the technical assistance and military aid provided to developing countries by European CMEA members suggesting that they were presiding over an international division of labour at least as unfavourable for the developing world as that over which the OECD countries presided. First, the Soviets sold to most of the European CMEA members at prices above world market prices and paid for their exports at below world market prices, just as they had done in Sino-Soviet trade in the 1950s. A wealth of empirical evidence is presented in the article demonstrating the reproduction of this exploitative relation between the European CMEA countries as a whole and the developing countries with whom they traded. He concluded the piece arguing, 'Exploitation under the facade of

socialism is no less exploitative than under capitalism, although it might be considered more invidious as it functions with the pretence of liberation' (Noumoff, 1980: 1452).

It was also during this period that Sam participated in a major research project on the pharmaceutical and pesticide industries. While he recognised the advancement in science and the human capacity to control the environment represented in these industries, he argued that they operated under a mystique that masked exploitation and profit. He demonstrated the extent to which a handful of corporations in a handful of advanced capitalist countries dominated the international market and the huge profits they made through exports to developing countries at extortionist prices. He argued that the drug companies had 'come to profiteer from the fears and misery of the sick and dying', particularly in the developing world (Noumoff, 1984b). He reported that while the World Health Organisation had recommended a basic list of some 200 drugs sufficient to serve the needs of most Third World countries, 'Mexico had 80,000 products on the market, Brazil 30,000, Thailand 20,000 and India 15,000' (Noumoff, 1984b:4). People in these countries had internalised the idea that Western produced drugs were 'safer, better, and more potent than either local manufactured or generic products', in no small part due to the advertising investments of the drug companies. He provided evidence showing the drain on local incomes caused by the industry and the threats to health caused by inappropriate marketing (including bribery of physicians to prescribe the drugs) and sale of dangerous and unnecessary drugs.

In 1989, Sam offered an assessment of the state of the world economy, which he felt particularly important at a time when the socialist challenge to capitalist hegemony had been put into question by China's open door policy and the USSR's perestroika (Noumoff 1989). In a prescient manner he summarised the main characteristics of the period: (1) the movement from multinational to transnational corporations and the rise of "globalized enterprise"; (2) absolute US dominance of the capitalist system had given rise to "multi-polar mutual dependency" including Japan and Europe, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict, where the US has become the world's largest debtor; (3) an increasing concentration of corporate power where capital is centralised and production increasingly diffused, making capital much more mobile; (4) greater integration of Third World and socialist countries into the international division

of labour allowing some industrialization in the least developed regions while extracting greater surplus; (5) the diffusion of industry had been allowed as the “knowledge intensive aspects” of productive processes retained by the rich countries had become the largest source of profit; (6) informatics had revolutionised decision-making especially in finance; (7) finance capital became particularly important, neutralising gains in the Third World and soon would do the same in socialist countries (Noumoff, 1989:1-3).

Sam pointed to the glaring increase in global inequality and a decline in incomes in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and difficulty throughout the Third World in absorbing a rapidly expanding labour force. While he noted a relative expansion of the share of the Third World in global output, he argued that ‘3rd world imports are projected to increase, while economic growth, welfare, capital growth and prices for primary commodities will all be low’ putting into question “trade-led growth strategies” (Noumoff, 1989:4). Most importantly he identified the impact of new technologies across productive systems that were outside the grasp of developing countries, destined to leave them further behind. Sam’s overall analysis fairly well predicted what became evident particularly in Sub-Sharan Africa and Latin America in the 1990s. He also correctly predicted that China was poised to meet the challenges, however, he probably underestimated the dynamic character of the Northeast Asian developmental states.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Future of Socialism**

Over the next twenty years, Sam continued to analyse the evolving situation in China and its big push for accelerated development. In 1990, he wrote an assessment of the condition of socialism, bringing to it the maturity of a seasoned scholar and activist. As the decade progressed he examined the crisis in China’s rural areas. He went on in the 2000s, continuing and deepening his engagement with Chinese officials, advising on short and long term development strategies for several Chinese cities and he served as a consultant to the Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Geology on the establishment of a Mining & Minerals Stock Exchange for China and the ASEAN Region. His writings during this period examined China’s approach to technology, the role of the armed forces and experiments with democracy, work which he disseminated widely in China and in many other developing countries. His last major

(and unfinished) paper on China looked back and considered future challenges.

In 1990 Sam was invited to contribute to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the weekly magazine, *Holiday*, founded in Dhaka by the radical and nationalist Bangladeshi journalist, Enayetullah Khan (Noumoff, 1990).<sup>14</sup> He titled his talk, from which the citation at the start of this article was taken, “Is Socialism Dead?” In many ways this was a remarkable paper, both for its intellectual honesty about the weaknesses and failures of “actually existing socialism” and its clarity of purpose in revealing the continued need for an alternative to the exploitative capitalist system. With his characteristic sarcasm Sam began his reflection writing, ‘The euphoria currently gripping North America and Western Europe over changes taking place in the socialist countries verges on the demented, and border[s] on a kind of systemic narcissism’, but continued with a clear analysis of fundamental problems in the socialist countries. Sam suggested that every socialist country with the exception of the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, inherited backward economic and social systems and faced an intensely hostile global capitalist system. Consequently, in every socialist country two objectives dominated: survival against attempts to overthrow them and creating the economic conditions for socialist construction. Survival and production were seen as key and, with devastating consequences, the political and social requirements for consolidating socialism were side-lined. Sam welcomed the recognition within the socialist countries that ‘inflexibility on the part of an overly centralized bureaucracy and an overly concentrated political structure’ were a barrier to future development (Noumoff, 1990:3).

He laid out in more detail the deep-rooted problems in the socialist countries:

*‘In the economic arena, the list would include, poor allocation of resources, lagging agriculture, bureaucratic management, industrial stagnancy, a work ethic inconsistent with the level of material accumulation, and an underdeveloped consumer sector; in the political arena the list would include, appropriated privilege by member[s] of the Party and State structures, a lack of openness in arriving at decisions, imposing old solutions as dogma to every new problem, excessively narrow boundaries of debate, inadequate institutional checks*

*on abuses of power; and the one sided application of democratic-centralism; while in the social arena the list would include, corruption, nepotism, the erosion of legitimacy, and the employment of Marxism as if it were a sterile eternal catechism' (Noumoff, 1990:3).*

Sam then suggested that there were two opposing visions of how to address these fundamental problems. The first, the one that had been adopted in the USSR, Central and Eastern Europe and China until June 1989,<sup>15</sup> involved the adoption of the market mechanism, expansion of private property, deployment of capitalist management techniques and measures of efficiency, acceptance of “comparative advantage” as the principal for both internal regional allocation of resources and determining the country’s place in the international division of labour, reliance on borrowing and exports and decentralisation of decision making. The assumption was that technical solutions of capitalism could be deployed without disrupting socialist society under a version of united front politics allowing for Party renewal. In a statement that revealed Sam’s own vision of socialism he suggested there was a second possible response that, while sharing the assessment of the fundamental problems, recognised that the wholesale adoption of capitalist solutions would have economic, political and social consequences incompatible with socialism. Instead it looked to the socialist tradition for solutions and included: recognition of the interdependence of economic, political and social policy; rescaling the size of the collective unit to be more in line with mutually responsible production; introduce a wage system which more effectively combines the individual and collective contribution to the productive process; introduce the concept of coordination in tandem with decentralization; encourage and protect wider parameters of democratic debate internal to the Party and greater transparency of decision making and administration; very selectively separate the scientific from the systemically dependent components of the capitalist system; rigorously examine the adaptations made by the global capitalist system; realign ideological work away from dogma and more towards creative scientific work; and elevation of the role of socialist culture to a more meaningful place in society (Noumoff, 1990:5).

He wrote those that pursued the first option failed to recognise that the achievements of capitalism had depended on,

and continued to depend on, the exploitation of the Third World and the internal exploitation of labour. Once this is recognised the selective adaptation of scientifically superior elements of capitalism could be pursued. The political consequences of taking the first option would be enormous: 'A popular scepticism, already deep as a result of the chasm between Party/State pronouncements and the exigencies of daily life, interprets these moves as an admission of capitalism's superiority' (Noumoff, 1990:7). This could be seen in the very logical conclusion by many that if capitalism was needed to fix socialism it becomes rational for individuals to emigrate to a capitalist society and reap the individual rewards of doing so, or, if unable to do so, contribute to adopting full-blown capitalism at home. Sam concluded that there was a very real danger of a move to Praetorianism with the destruction of socialism, bringing to mind what we know today of Putin's Russia.

There is not space here to elaborate on what Sam then went on to describe in great detail as the devastating consequences for the Third World cementing the subordinate position of the least developed countries in the global system. He probably underestimated the possibilities of developmental progress open to some Third World countries, in some domains, even in the unequal world capitalist system.

Over the next two decades Sam conducted research and produced important papers on various dimensions of the transition in China, including a detailed and insightful analysis of the transformation of rural enterprise and the role foreign investment could play (Noumoff, 1996), an examination of the mining sector (Noumoff, 2003a), the transformation of the People's Liberation Army (Noumoff, 2005) and many other sector specific analyses. This work all deserves careful consideration beyond what is possible here. However, there are two crucial contributions that I want to highlight briefly in this monumental corpus of scholarship and progressive policy advocacy, relevant to Sam's overall assessment of the future of socialism and of China in particular. They were products of detailed research in China during the period and remain of immediate topical interest to understanding China's current situation.

In 2003, Sam published the results of a detailed study of China's strategy of 'four modernisations' (agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology) adopted after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 in order to move from technological

dependency to what Sam called ‘asymmetrical equality’ (Noumoff, 2003b). He asked whether China’s move to modernisation was a departure from the socialist revolution or the construction of socialism under the conditions of the era. He suggested it was the latter, but that the strategy was highly risky. The challenge he said was to increase social wealth enough to compensate for the economic, social and regional inequalities that will have to be tolerated in the process. Echoing his 1990 article discussed above, he said China had constructed a peacetime variant of the “united front” on the international level to harness foreign investment and transfer technology to close the gap with the capitalist world in producing the means of production in both the civilian and military sectors. Sam argued that the strategy was adopted with a clear understanding that there would be a “systemic haemorrhaging” of socialism in the process, but that this would be controllable.<sup>16</sup>

Sam then provided what can be considered one of the first comprehensive assessments of the strategy behind, and early achievements in, China’s new industrial policy. The strategy for technology acquisition and development came to prioritise eight strategic areas: ‘biotechnology, information technology, automation, energy, advanced materials, marine, space and lasers’ (Noumoff, 2003b:161). The risks were clear: (1) technology available on the international market might be antiquated – either environmentally degrading or inefficient; (2) the imposition of intellectual property rights could freeze innovation and widen the technology gap; (3) the cost to finance projects could enmesh the country in a debt trap; and (4) the economy could be overwhelmed by external market penetration. He described the major structural changes in the technology sector involving: moving a huge proportion of scientists from university institutes to spin-off commercial enterprises especially in less developed areas to ensure pursuit of useful research and the diffusion of expertise; industrial consolidation across the board; the promotion of small and medium high-tech firms; and refocusing the operations of large industrial enterprises both to diversify into priority production areas and establish joint ventures and overseas operations. Sam also described and assessed the principal forms of cooperation deployed to acquire technology: partnerships; joint research; joint ventures; and strategic alliances. He then looked at the record of achievement in this cooperation detailing where China was involved in developing products, where it had achieved semi-autonomy in

production, where it developed autonomous capacity breaking the technological hegemony of capitalist countries' firms, and where it achieved major "firsts" for China (e.g., space technology, medicine, nuclear fusion, bio-engineering, advanced electronic technologies, chemical and petrochemicals). He also detailed major advances in industrial design and production including lithium batteries, high-speed trains, light rail, nuclear power plants, turbojets, wind power, alcohol fuel, and weather modification processes, along with major achievements in high-tech exports (Noumoff 2003b).

The last part of his assessment tracked China's progress in securing intellectual property rights, moving entire production areas from abroad into China and taking the lead in important areas of production – finding early evidence of impressive achievements. He then considered the dicey question of WTO accession. He concludes with cautious optimism that the strategy was paying off. There were signs also of some opening of space for public discussion of the major points of systemic "haemorrhage" including corruption, foreign dependence, inequality, rural unemployment, insider trading and banking fraud – all interestingly subject to public campaigns under Xi Jinping in today's China. Sam wrote, 'What remains profoundly uncertain is the ultimate location and power of the private economy within the process' (Noumoff, 2003b:196) and it still remains uncertain today.

In 2011, Sam published an article entitled, 'Democracy with Chinese Characteristics' (Noumoff, 2011a), in which he reflected on public debates that had emerged in China about political reform. While Sam asserted that this was not a debate about adopting Western forms of liberal democracy, which he always saw as deeply flawed, he said it was a debate about how China could institute certain "universal functions" required by society: 'participation, transparency of decision making, accountability, a well-informed population, voting accepted norms or rules expressed in law' – all of which had remained elusive.

He argued that there was evidence that the 'democratic impulse for political reform...is slowly gaining traction'. The examples included: 10% of delegates at the National People's Congress in 2003 actually voted against President Jiang Zemin retaining his post as Chair of the Military Commission; the institution of term limits for leaders; barring President Hu Jintao from designating his successor in 2007; holding of direct elections

in villages since 1987, extended later to townships and some urban areas with open nominations since 1998; slowly growing awareness among citizens of their rights; and greater access to information. But as expected there was also evidence of voting in some places being riddled with bribery and clan blood ties being mobilised to support candidates. Sam argued that local governments were increasingly promoting e-government initiatives as an increasing proportion of the population had access to the internet, which was also giving much wider access to information. Also there was increased use of “law suit petitions” dealing with the treatment of prisoners and incidents of corruption. There had also been an expansion of the number of non-governmental organisations and a relaxation of registration requirements.

Sam then outlined how this could be taken forward including: expanding the scope of elections and the numbers of candidates in competition; identifying bureaucratic blockages established by vested interests and redistributing power to remove them; strengthening cooperative property rights at the grass roots level; changing incentive structures of officials by measuring progress based on growth and per capita *benefit*, rather than simple per capita growth; and regularising annual *open* party meetings guaranteeing follow-up on actions agreed. Thus Sam saw both the need for political reform and evidence of some progress.

In the last and unfinished paper he wrote on China (Noumoff, 2012) Sam did not change this basic assessment, which could be summarised as highly cautious optimism. He reiterated his major criticism concerning the destructive tendency of the victors in major line struggles in the Party and the State to totally repudiate previous policies and the individuals that promoted them. But he also reaffirmed the general direction of economic reforms, with all their dangers, as necessary to ensure that socialism is not “shared poverty”.

### **Neoliberal Dominance and the Struggle for Development**

During the 1990s and 2000s, Sam was not concerned only with the evolution of development in China, but continued to have a passionate interest in the wider struggle for development in what he continued to call the “Third World” – what many of us label the “developing countries”. His writings during this period were far too numerous and varied to do them justice here. He wrote papers and

lectures on Cuba (Noumoff, 2000a), Vietnam and Cambodia, and he published new research and analysis on the DPRK (Noumoff, 2006; 2013a; 2013b), which he continued to support, almost as a lone voice, as a socialist country under siege by the United States. But here I want to concentrate on three dimensions of his sustained critical interpretation of neoliberalism throughout this period. First, was his analysis of the drivers of globalization, which he conceived as the impulse by the centres of capital to incorporate the entire globe into the reigning system. Second, was his critique of the ideological dominance of neoliberalism, where all actors including so-called “civil society” were generally operating within the limited parameters permitted by the system. Finally, I look briefly at his continued opposition to US military adventurism, the hard-edge of globalization.

In 2001 Sam published a major critical assessment of the rise of neoliberalism and “globalization” with the aim not only of understanding the world at the start of the new millennium, but reflecting on the possibilities for action (Noumoff, 2001a).<sup>17</sup> He began by setting his analysis squarely in Marxist political economy, ‘Globalization is a mere euphemism for the totalization of capitalism on the world scale’ (Noumoff, 2001a:51). He argued that this was necessary since the well-intentioned protests of labour rights proponents, human rights advocates and environmental activists that first emerged in full-force in Seattle protesting “globalization” ‘all share a fidelity to the prevailing system which limits both their analysis and proposed remedy’(52). To analyse the current epoch it is necessary, he wrote, to ‘step out of the existing paradigm’. Sam’s biggest objection to the movement in the North was the way it was dominated by a narrow focus on workers’ wages in the richest countries rather than the systemic exploitation of capitalism on a global scale. It is this perspective that makes his analysis all the more relevant today, as young people are registering their protests in the campaigns of Bernie Sanders in the US or Jeremy Corbyn in the UK.

The core of his article examines the forces driving globalization, which Sam saw as a push to fully incorporate the Third World into the global capitalist system. Foreign economic control had moved from direct forms of colonialism to ever more refined neo-colonial variants, including increasing demands on states to become more hospitable to foreign investors through removal of restrictions,

altering tax structures and removing remaining controls on capital flows. Any effort of resource-rich countries to regulate production levels to obtain fair prices for their non-renewable resources was threatened with sanctions. He noted that by the beginning of the millennium there were more corporations than states among the 100 largest global economic units (Noumoff, 2001a:58).

Sam claimed there was a rationale and a sequence in efforts by “the globalized elite” to get states to bend to their will. After examining the crisis in Zimbabwe he suggested a cycle could be identified: ‘financial liberalization, tighter credit, raising interest rates, inflation, increased foreign debt, firm closures, loss of tax revenue, reduction of wages, rising unemployment and over-work, deteriorating nutrition, health and education, decreasing productivity, devaluation of currency, increased raw material exports, causing shortage on the domestic market, reduction in domestic sales, and increased high cost imports, after which the cycle begins again’ (Noumoff, 2001a: 61). While one could quibble with his analysis of the dynamics (balance between domestic and external causes) and the causal sequence in Zimbabwe,<sup>18</sup> his general proposition that a sequence of measures had been imposed on developing countries to bend the will of states to the logic of the global system holds considerable weight. His further proposition appears prescient given what ensued during the decade after writing the essay: ‘states whose external and internal policy fail to conform to the US agenda will be singled out for particular attention’. He argued that in bending the will of states to the logic of the global system, ‘incurrence of debt beyond the threshold of manageability appears to be the critical lever of pressure’ (Noumoff, 2001: 63).

Sam reserved special attention to the impact of the enforcement of intellectual property rights since the establishment of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1967. There was ‘a clear attempt to coerce accession by Third World countries to legally binding protocols as a precondition for technology transfer to any of them’ (Noumoff, 2001:64). This, argued Sam, had become a crucial instrument in the ‘era of scientific application’ where the value in what have become global production chains rests increasingly in intellectual property. The move to patent first plants, then living organisms and animals – central in the development of genetically engineered innovations – illustrates how insidious the quest for control has become. Nowhere, Sam argued, had the

control of intellectual property become more pernicious than in the pharmaceutical industry, though he noted some counter-moves, which have since come to fruition, to temper the actions of the industry by UN agencies working on the development of affordable drugs to combat malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Sam went on to consider how institutional debt mechanisms, privatisation, currency manipulation, e-commerce and asymmetrical trade rules were all contributing to the integration of a highly unequal global capitalist system. He also suggested, in what may prove to be an especially prescient observation given the current direction of politics in the US and throughout Europe, the re-emergence of significant 'intra-imperialist rivalry' within the global system. Today, the protectionist rhetoric of Donald Trump who gained the nomination of the Republican Party to run for President, the successful scaremongering campaign to bring the UK out of the European Union, the rise of the anti-immigrant crypto-fascist Alternative for Germany and the positioning of Marine LePen's National Front ahead of French Presidential elections all tend to confirm these fears, which clearly became increasingly evident to Sam as he neared the end of his life.

Throughout his career, Sam understood the dominance of capitalism and struggles against it, not only in economic terms, but also in political and especially ideological terms. During this period Sam wrote two papers, which explicitly addressed the "ideological" dimensions of the globalised capitalist system and which continue to have relevance for anyone seeking to challenge the limits of the reigning neoliberal paradigm. One can recognise the influence of Noam Chomsky in this line of Sam's thought. In the first, delivered to the Cuban Academy of Science in March 2000, he focused on the manner in which dominant neoliberalism attempts to present its truths as apolitical and scientific, ruling out all contending points of view as something less than scientific (Noumoff, 2000a). Even the choice of language establishes boundaries that 'delineate the realm of the possible, and the exclusion of the impossible' (Noumoff, 2000a:3). This applies not only to the policy world, but also to both natural and social science: 'the issue becomes who is published, in what medium and where, with what "impact index", in addition to who is filtered into and out of the "academy". Legitimacy is conferred or denied in a systemically reinforcing manner, and conceptual hegemony is thereby established' (2000a:3). During the

Cold War the struggle was over the meaning of “democracy”, while today have been added “civil society”, “market” and “transition”. He asks, ‘Is it the “civil society” of Gramsci or Rousseau? Is it the “market” of socialism or capitalism? Is it the “transition” to a “new stage of socialism”, or to “capitalism”?’ (Noumoff, 2000a:4).

The “ideology of globalization” rests on some basic “truths”, most prominently, argued Sam: we have moved beyond history and modernism to a new realm of science defined as that which works or “only capitalism”; historic progress is driven by “competition”; capital is mobile; efficiency requires capital concentration and penetration into all spheres of life; erosion of the state and national societies in the sense that capital transcends them; and basic science is no more than “intellectual property”.

As could be seen in his framing of the paper on globalization, Sam was not at all sanguine about the euphoric “rediscovery” of “civil society” and its promotion by both international aid agencies and popular movements critical of globalisation. He published around the same time an important critical reflection on the discourse of “civil society” (Noumoff, 2001b), which he argued has become firmly anchored in, and confined to, the paradigmatic boundaries of neoliberalism. Civil society has been counter-posed to the state, as an alternative vehicle for donors, and the organisations it comprises have been either co-opted to work within the (neoliberal) rules of the game, or identified for exclusion. This has both an ideational character – setting the limits of what can reasonably be debated - and a very material character, rendering most organisations compliant through control of their purse strings.

In Sam’s view, “Civil Society”, as a concept, has come to be employed as an instrument to craft a particular kind of society in conformity with the liberal paradigm, and therefore is used to assault both the feudal right, and the progressive left’ (Noumoff, 2001b:11-12). If the concept of civil society is to be retained at all, he called for its ‘re-articulation as formulated by Antonio Gramsci’ (Noumoff, 2001b:12). This means seeing civil society as an arena of contestation, where the dominant group establishes its ideological hegemony, but also where an alternative hegemony can be constructed. For Gramsci civil society was the terrain for ‘combat for the cultural, moral, and ideological leadership of the national popular movement’ (Noumoff, 2001b:13). While Sam never directly applied this idea to challenges within “really existing

socialist countries”, his take on civil society could constructively not only inform the protest movements within the developed capitalist countries, but also those that have emerged in China in reaction to the “social haemorrhaging” he observed.

The last strand of Sam’s critique of globalization, which can be dealt with briefly here, is the continued interpretation of, and opposition to, the US role as coercive enforcer of the global system. In 2003, after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Sam wrote a short piece entitled, ‘The New Global Order’ (Noumoff, 2003c). After reminding the reader of the history of US expansionism, from driving the ‘indigenous population into a continuous “homelands” existence’ through its penetration into Asia after WWII, Sam took stock of the situation under President George W. Bush. He called attention to the now familiar “Project for the New American Century” (Donnelly, 2000), established in 1997 (but whose ‘ancestral tribal home’ was the administration of Ronald Reagan) to provide an outline of the ideological basis of the US hegemon in its worst form. It should be noted, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Putzel 2004) that the project was launched four years before the attacks on the US on 9 September 2001. Sam summarised the main features of the doctrine:

- (1) As the preeminent world power, the U. S. must have the resolve to shape the new century favorable to American principles and interests.*
- (2) Reestablish the Reagan principle of a strong military ready to me[e]t all challenges in the promotion of American principles abroad, and accepts the United States’ global responsibilities. Failure to do so invites challenges to U.S. interests.*
- (3) Four immediate priorities are: [1] Increase the military [2] Challenge regimes hostile to U.S. interests and values [3] Promote the cause of global political and economic freedom [4] Extend an international order friendly to U.S. security, prosperity and principles.’*  
*(Noumoff, 2003c)<sup>19</sup>*

It was this doctrine, that openly called for an invasion of Iraq, even if Saddam Hussein was no longer in power (Donnelly, 2000:14), that underpinned the post-9/11 National Security Strategy (USNSS, 2002) of the Bush administration issued in September 2002,

which Sam went on to discuss. Sam argued, ‘The U.S. moved from fighting terrorists, to terror-loving regimes, to tyranny in general, especially hostile tyrannies ... to regime change by military force in the urgent cases and regime change by diplomatic and political means in those non urgent ones. I can only assume given this optic on regime change, should diplomatic and political means not succeed, the military option is always available’ (Noumoff, 2003). Speaking of those who articulated the strategy, Sam concluded: ‘They have formulated an Imperial Doctrine in contemptuous disregard for the rest of humanity, and the richness of our collective historical diversity. They are the new talibs, quintessentially arrogant and self-righteous, who hopefully shall meet the same fate as did the Taliban, at the hands of the rest of the world’ (Noumoff, 2003c).

Several years later, comparing US action in Iraq and its earlier aggression in Vietnam, Sam wrote, ‘Both Vietnam and Iraq reflect the same global phenomenon: the U.S. determination to control the world’s destiny on its own terms through military power—a.k.a. American Imperialism’. However, ‘Saddam Hussein was no Ho Chi Minh. While the Baath party's self-reference was socialist, it bore no resemblance to the nationalist and socialist program of the Viet Minh Front’ (Noumoff, 2007). Writing two years later on the situation in Pakistan (Noumoff, 2009), Sam pointed to the futility of US counterinsurgency efforts, including the arming of tribal groups, to defeat Islamist armed groups in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan ‘while US/NATO drones indiscriminately rain missiles on the civilian populations of the targeted areas’.

Just months before his death, Sam published a short piece on the website of *Montreal Serai*, where he wrote, ‘We seem to be global witnesses to what I can only characterize as neo-tribalism’ (Noumoff, 2014). He argued that economic globalization ‘resulted in the continued relative pauperization of the many and the disproportionate accumulation of wealth and benefits of the multinational oligopoly’. Expressing deep pessimism about the possibilities of social democracy to temper the ill-effects of globalization, he wrote, ‘Economic dislocation has progressively eroded nascent attempts at equity, beginning with the Prussian welfare state, Keynesianism, the New Deal in the U.S.A or the Swedish social welfare attempts in Northern Europe’. He described the characteristics of the present moment in terms that will sound familiar to us today:

*'The central feature of globalization appears to be anchored in a strategy of breaking down society and the nation state into small territorial units for easier control. Capital becomes increasingly mobile, while labor becomes fixed. Legal migration fulfils the objective of filling convenient gaps by Koreans mining in Germany, Nepalese constructing in Bahrain, or Mexicans working in agricultural fields of California, to name a few. Illegal migration, in the meantime, surreptitiously winks through porous borders. The reserve army of labor expands or contracts like a rubber band as compelled by the needs and requirements of the capital' (Noumoff, 2014).*

While Sam was writing before Donald Trump had hit the headlines, or Brexit fear-mongering of immigrants had led the UK to decide to exit the European Union, he saw in these processes the foundation for a new xenophobia. He said in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century a particular form of “identity politics” gained traction. While what he labelled as “primordial birth identity” had attenuated with the secularism of modern capitalism (and socialism), there had been a resurgence with globalization, ‘be they Catalan, Basque, Scots, or Quebecers, and most recently Venetians’. With broader identities collapsing through processes of globalization ‘default identities provided smaller geographic units with coherence and an anchor for unity and pride’. Along with this trend, Sam said, has been a resurgent racism, the most reprehensible feature of xenophobia.

Sam suggested that ‘economic insecurity and the inadequacies of systems of distribution’ has fractured social cohesion and sent society back to its tribal roots (presumably in places as far afield as Rawalpindi in Pakistan to the “Rust Belt” in the United States). He outlined the battle lines that seem still appropriate two years later:

*'The search for a new integrating identity has begun, initiated on the political right by the crypto Nazis and the religious zealots, each in turn seeking some form of purification and its preferred rites conditioned by private property. On the political left, one finds, a search for a community with an accompanying organic consciousness that fulfils the unencumbered human potential' (Noumoff, 2014).*

## **Final Note**

When Sam Noumoff died there was an outpouring of messages of remembrance from people all over the world on a website established by his friends in Montreal (<http://samnoumofftribute.blogspot.ca/> ). The testimonials delivered at a memorial service in Montreal spoke to so many dimensions of this fiery revolutionary intellectual. It has not been possible in this quick tour through the evolution of Sam's thinking and work to do justice to the complexity of his ideas or the gravitas of his contribution. I can only hope that it will stimulate further work. For a start, there should be a volume published comprising his most important writings, some of which I have touched on here.

Sam was a lover of art. I visited him at his small house during his "self-exile" in retirement in Spain, where the art collection that had filled his more spacious home in Chateaugay in Montreal was so densely on display that one had hardly room to move. He was a lover of music and dance. I accompanied him and Francesca for an evening of Flamenco music, a genre they much enjoyed during their sojourn in the country. There is a rich biography to be written about Sam, the man, in his times that should explore the trajectory from his neighbourhood in Brooklyn to his travels throughout the world and the relationships he struck up with national liberation fighters, Pakistani generals, municipal and village officials in China, Cuban leaders and Central American guerrilla combatants.

Perhaps this exploration of Sam's ideas will whet the appetite of future students to explore the archives of his writings at McGill University once they become available and that the insights they find there will stimulate them to challenge the status quo, in the manner Sam had always encouraged students to do, to strive for a more just, equitable and enlightened world.

## **Endnotes**

1. James Putzel is Professor of Development Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, [j.putzel@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.putzel@lse.ac.uk).
2. Two archives of Sam's writings have been assembled, one comprising hard copies of the papers he left behind deposited with the McGill University Library Archive and the other, in electronic form, assembled by Elaine Zuckerman, Rosalind Boyd and myself. Elaine and I have put together a book proposal to publish a selection of his writings, which remains in search of a publisher.
3. From August 1955 until February 1958 the Brigade headquarters was

- in Nuremburg, but it operated throughout the region (Blood and Steel, 2006: 23-24) and Sam evidently spent at least part of the time in France.
4. It seems Sam studied at Clark between 1953 and 1956. As an undergraduate he spent some time on an inter-university programme at the American University in Washington D.C. and he appears to have studied at Washington University's Faculty of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, since a BA thesis was submitted there in 1956 according to the archive of his papers. His wife wrote that he continued his studies at the Institute for Political Studies in Paris where they met (Francesca Noumoff, 1992:47). The years he served in the armed forces are not clear, but probably were 1956-59. An early curriculum vitae states that he worked as an interpreter/escort for the International Program of the National Welfare Assembly (1959-1961 and again in 1962) and as a case worker for the New York City Welfare Department (1963-65), during which time he completed his Masters in the Politics Department at NYU having written a thesis entitled 'The Struggle for Leadership within the Chinese Communist Party Between 1921 and 1935' (Noumoff, 1965) after which he began work on his PhD dissertation.
  5. A decade later Sam attempted to document and explain how this philosophical core of Chinese communism was actually applied by ordinary people in processes of production and social interaction (Noumoff, 1979a)
  6. In 1973 he produced two reports, which the author has not had the opportunity to examine, now held in the archive at McGill, 'Vietnamese Perspectives (based on 1 month visit to Dem. Rep of Vietnam & Dem. Rep of South Vietnam)' and 'Investigation Report Based on a Trip to South Vietnam' (May 16-May 30).
  7. Sam's voice can still be heard speaking about the evidence of Canada's involvement in the Vietnam War in an interview with Barbara Frum in what was a very popular Canadian Broadcasting Corporation news programme, "As it Happens" 27 January 1975. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/supplying-the-war-machine>
  8. He reasserted his support for the DPRK in Noumoff, 2013a and 2013b.
  9. Sam never acknowledged the more horrific consequences of the Great Leap Forward, nowhere rendered more poignantly than in the account of Yang Jishang (2013). In a review of Paul and Eileen Lin's (2011) book Sam acknowledged the 'complexities and opportunism of the Great Leap Forward and the accompanying *xia fang* (intellectuals going down to the countryside)' and recognised its failure, writing, 'the revolutionary enthusiasm, if combined with science would have led to success, but the stifling of intellectuals aborted the process and resulted in failure' (Noumoff, 2011b: 209).
  10. At the end of this paper Sam laid out an astute series of research

proposals that could help the Chinese government monitor and steer its engagement with multinational corporations.

11. Sam advised Zhu Rongji Likely when he was on the State Economic Commission, but later while he was Shanghai Mayor (late 1980s) and then Premier (1998-2003). Zhu had served as Governor of the People's Bank of China 1993-95.
12. Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, later also known as COMECON, established by the USSR in 1949 and disbanded in 1991.
13. In my view Sam underestimated the dynamic processes of development in the Western aligned "developmental states" of Northeast Asia, not least South Korea. He appeared to have no time for Friedrich List or the ideas of Alexander Gerschenkron, Chalmers Johnson, Alice Amsden and Robert Wade on "developmental states".
14. It is unclear if Sam attended the anniversary or contributed the article from afar.
15. This was when Jiang Zemin took over as General Secretary of the CCP from Zhao Ziyang after the Tienanmen demonstrations. Here Sam appears to argue that the reforms under Zhao Ziyang in the 1980s and the "Perestroika" reforms under Gorbachev in the USSR after 1985 were of a piece and he was hopeful that the new leadership of the CCP would have a more measured approach.
16. 'The "systemic haemorrhaging" would include, among its main consequences, corruption, the seepage abroad of both brains and cash, the emergence of a comprador fraction accompanied by increasing gaps in wealth and the increment in private property, accentuation of regional inequality, a diminution of explicit politics and its replacement with a determinist linkage between economy and politics and, the emergence or re-emergence of various sundry spiritualist movements' all of which we can recognise in the thirteen years since Sam wrote this article (Noumoff, 2003b:159).
17. An earlier version of the paper was presented at a Conference in Kuala Lumpur jointly sponsored by the Malaysian Trade Union Congress and the Political Science Department of the National University of Malaysia in September of 2000.
18. An alternative interpretation is provided by Brett (2008).
19. Sam noted, 'The initial Statement of Principle was signed by twenty-five persons, including the current Vice-President, the current Secretary of Defense, a former Vice-President, the brother of the current President, an assortment of Defense and State Department ideologues, five academics, one theologian, two publishers, one Afghan Muslim who currently represents the U.S. in Afghanistan, a former "Drug Czar", a former White House Director of Policy Development, and the ex-head of the Committee for a Free World. This core group reflects the soul of the current Administration, who six years ago elaborated their policy manifesto' (Noumoff, 2003). 28

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