

In Defense of Marxism

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World Trends Today:

Reported from Five Continents

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Who We Are

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is published by an independent collective of U.S. socialists who are in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International, a worldwide organization of revolutionary socialists.

Supporters of this magazine may be involved in different socialist groups and/or in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. These include unions and other labor organizations, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. military intervention, gay and lesbian rights campaigns, civil liberties and human rights efforts. We support similar activities in all countries and participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies. Many of our activities are advanced through collaboration with other supporters of the Fourth International in countries around the world.

What we have in common is our commitment to the Fourth International's critical-minded and revolutionary Marxism, which in the twentieth century is represented by such figures as V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky. We also identify with the tradition of American Trotskyism represented by James P. Cannon and others. We favor the creation of a revolutionary working-class party, which can only emerge through the conscious efforts of many who are involved in the struggles of working people and the oppressed and who are dedicated to revolutionary socialist perspectives.

Through this magazine we seek to clarify the history, theory and program of the Fourth International and the American Trotskyist tradition, discussing their application to the class struggle internationally and here in the United States. This vital task must be undertaken if we want to forge a political party in this country capable of bringing an end to the domination of the U.S. imperialist ruling class, establishing a working people's democracy and socialist society based on human need instead of private greed, in which the free development of each person becomes possible.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is independent of any political organization. Not all U.S. revolutionaries who identify with the Fourth International are in a common organization. Not all of them participate in the publication of this journal. Supporters of this magazine are committed to comradely discussion and debate as well as practical political cooperation which can facilitate eventual organizational unity of all Fourth Internationalists in the United States. At the same time, we want to help promote a broad recomposition of a class-conscious working class movement and, within this, a revolutionary socialist regroupment, in which perspectives of revolutionary Marxism, the Fourth International, and American Trotskyism will play a vital role.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism will publish materials generally consistent with these perspectives, although it will seek to offer *discussion articles* providing different points of view within the revolutionary socialist spectrum. Signed articles do not necessarily express the views of anyone other than the author.

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Working People Can Continue the Fight

Vote for NAFTA Shows Labor Needs Its Own Party

by Tom Barrett

By a vote of 234 to 200, the U.S. House of Representatives on November 17 passed legislation approving the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Even after a week of intense political pressure and shameless horse trading, two-thirds of House Democrats broke with President Clinton to vote against the agreement. However, Clinton's hardball tactics convinced a sufficient number of House Democrats to support NAFTA to win a close majority. At this writing, the Senate has yet to vote on the legislation, but its passage seems certain.

The Trade Agreement, to which Canada, Mexico, and the United States are signatories, will supposedly allow greater flow of goods within the North American continent, create and preserve "high paying" jobs in the United States, enable the U.S. to compete successfully with Europe and Japan, and bring about a prosperous new era in which workers and their employers will live happily ever after. The reality, of course, will be somewhat different. The real purpose of the agreement is to enable U.S. and Canadian employers to evade environmental protection laws, health and safety regulations, avail themselves of cheap labor in Mexico, and further lower working people's wages in Canada and the U.S. It inhibits the ability of government at any level to provide social services, insure public health and safety, and preserve natural resources. Its real purpose is to allow multinational corporations to pursue profits without the annoying interference of their countries' citizens. The employing class, along with its spokespeople in the media and the intellectual community, was virtually unanimous in its enthusiastic support of NAFTA. What was surprising, then, was how close it came to defeat.

A Continuation of Reagan-Bush Economic Policy

The negotiations which ultimately produced NAFTA began in 1987, during the Reagan administration. It was intended to extend on a continental scale the U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signed by Reagan and then-Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at their "Shamrock Summit" in 1986. To the strains of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," Mulroney signed away thousands of Canadian jobs to the lower-wage United States. Negotiations immediately began to enable the employers of both countries to take advantage of the qualitatively lower wages and poorer working conditions in Mexico. The agreement concluded in 1991, and Reagan's successor George Bush

went immediately to work for the required congressional approval.

Congressional approval of trade pacts is usually a matter of course, done quietly with little media attention. Journalists for all but the financial press generally respond to issues of the exchange of soybeans, flat glass, and auto seat belt assemblies with the acronym "MEGO," which stands for "My eyes glaze over." The Congress, made up overwhelmingly of corporate attorneys, dutifully enacts whatever trade legislation the American ruling class determines is in its best interests. Something different happened this time, however, and it shows conclusively the power of working-class internationalism.

Most of the larger trade unions active in the U.S. are internationals, which have locals in Canada, where the labor movement participates directly in politics through its own political party, the New Democratic Party. As the impact

of FTA began to be felt, Canadian unionists began blowing the whistle on the new pact, explaining how its provisions would be detrimental to working people in all three North American countries. NAFTA was seen as a continuation of the Reagan-Bush policies which allowed and even encouraged employers to shift production to low-wage areas both within and outside the U.S. The development of the *maquiladora* zone on the U.S.-Mexican border has been part of this process, along with the industrialization of the Southern states, and open and sometimes violent union busting in areas where organized labor has been strong in the past.

Labor and Environmentalist Resistance to NAFTA

The extent to which the trade unions and environmentalist organizations mobilized to defeat NAFTA is testimony to how bad an agreement

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Editor's Note

"World Trends Today" is the focus of the present issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. Revolutionary Marxists from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and North America focus their attention on new developments in the global economy, as well as the social and political realities which are evolving from that. From such "concrete analyses of concrete situations" arises a strategic orientation capable of guiding revolutionary socialist activity as we seek to advance the practical struggles of workers and the oppressed in our various countries.

The commitment to developing a Marxism which keeps pace with the rapid and dramatic changes in our world is evident in the 1964 discussion on "the triple revolution" (in technology, human rights, and warfare) by James P. Cannon, which is remarkable for its continued relevance and is published here for the first time. Paul Le Blanc relates this discussion to new developments which have taken place over the past three decades. The impact of these developments is discussed by Ernest Mandel (focusing on Europe), Neville Alexander (focusing on Africa), and H. Sriyananda (focusing on Asia) — each of whom develops practical revolutionary insights about the situation we face.

One of these insights has to do with the necessity of making revolutionary internationalism a central component of any "practical socialist politics" in one or another country. The disaster of the New Democratic Party in Canada, discussed by Barry Weisleder, is related to the traditional failure of social democratic parties to absorb this insight. Another point that emerges is the absolute necessity for *workers democracy* to be at the heart of the socialist struggle. This is elaborated in the valuable resolution of the Brazilian Workers Party in this issue. As our eyewitness reports on recent events in Russia suggest, the struggle for genuine democracy will be a key to a socialist renewal in those countries once blighted by Stalinist rule.

The challenge for revolutionary socialists in each country is to translate such insights into practical and effective political action in their own workplaces and communities, while at the same time developing practical and effective forms of collaboration with revolutionaries of other lands. Essential tools for this are a revolutionary party and a revolutionary international organization — the focus of numerous articles which have appeared in this journal. Readers may find of interest, in our next issue, Roy Rollin's discussion of this question.

A Mexican Perspective

Confronting the North American Free Trade Agreement

Interview with Hector de la Cueva

The following interview with Hector de la Cueva, a leader of the Mexican PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International), was done by Tom Garvey in Mexico in late 1992. Its message is fully relevant a year later, at the time of the voting for NAFTA by the government bodies of the U.S. and Mexico.

Q. What is your view of the free trade agreement?

A. I think that the free trade agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico is a response, in the first place, to the need for United States capital to confront the competition with the other economic blocs, European and Asian. The large corporations are looking in Mexico and in Latin America, in the context of the Initiative of the Americas, for a platform of cheap labor and resources to put them in a better position for competition, or trade war, against the European and Asian blocs. That is to say, the free trade pact is not in the interests of the three nations, but principally in the interests of U.S. capital.

Second, the free trade pact represents, for Mexico, a subordination of our country to U.S. capital, a violation of our sovereignty, because the treaty does not only deal with trade but also with investment, and in fact would regulate the whole of the economy. It also opens a path for political integration, and so threatens a subordinated integration of our country into the U.S.

economy. We are told here in Mexico that the treaty would allow us to be part of the "First World," but if we would be part of the "First World" in the same sense that Puerto Rico is part of the "First World," we in Mexico do not want it. So the free trade pact involves serious violations of the sovereignty and destiny of Mexico.

Third, the free trade agreement is also being used, including before being put into effect, as an instrument of transnational blackmail against the workers of the three countries. Canadian and U.S. workers are being threatened that if they do not allow their standard of living and working conditions to be lowered, businesses will come to Mexico, in the form of *maquiladoras*. And the Mexican workers are being told that if they do not continue to accept their poor living conditions, their miserable wages, those businesses will not come. The big corporations and their associates are playing with this economic integration against the interests of the workers. The free trade pact, in the case of Mexico, could benefit some of the principal companies if they are in a position to compete against, or associate

with, U.S. capital, but for the majority of the population, including small and medium-sized companies, it is going to be a disaster.

Q. Why has the Mexican government agreed to the treaty?

A. The Mexican government has promoted the treaty because the neoliberal policies which it has been following dovetail with the perspective of opening the country to investment and to integration with U.S. capital. For the neoliberal strategy, the free trade pact is a fundamental ingredient, because it cannot visualize another model for economic development besides integration with the United States and alignment with the U.S. bloc against other economic blocs. But it is a strategy which privileges economic development based upon the largest companies in Mexico. It is not a project designed to benefit the majority of the population.

Q. What is going to happen to the lives of most Mexicans?

A. Surely, as has happened up until now, the existence of two kinds of Mexicans will deepen. A tiny minority may gain the benefits of the "First World," and a great majority will continue to live in the "Third" or even the "Fourth." Even before the free trade pact has gone into effect we have been living its consequences — since the economic reforms which have been instituted in Mexico have prepared the way for the pact. The privatization of nearly 90 percent of the state-owned industries, the constitutional reforms (such as the changes to Article 27, which regulated the [land-ownership] situation in the countryside), the transformation of labor relations, the decline in wages, the mutilation of collective bargaining contracts, etc., have been and are part of the same strategy that promotes the free trade pact. Even before the free trade pact goes into effect, we can speak of those hurt by the pact. The textile workers who have been losing their jobs due to the closing of factories, because of the flood of goods from the north, have all been hurt by the free trade pact. The same is true of the thousands of oil workers who have been laid off because of the cutbacks at Pemex [Petroleos Mexicanos — the state-owned oil company]. It is said that oil would not be included in the treaty, but the truth is that it will be included, and the truth is that Pemex has been limited in its aims in order to permit private investment, both foreign and domestic, and that is the motive that is behind the layoffs at Petroleos Mexicanos. Those workers who have been laid off have also been hurt by the pact, even before it has gone into effect. Workers at Volkswagen have seen the destruction of their collective bargaining agreement, have seen the destruction of their union, as a way of preparing this transnational corporation to enter the competition for the U.S. market. So already, before the free trade pact has gone into effect, there have been consequences, and there have been people hurt.

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Remarks on the North American Free Trade Agreement

by Elaine Bernard

Excerpts from an Address to the Manitoba Federation of Labour

The problem with NAFTA is that it is constantly framed in ideologically loaded terms like “the free trade agreement.” Free trade in the context of NAFTA isn’t a very useful or accurate term, because what the deal is about is deregulating international commerce. There are and will continue to be rules of trade, before and after NAFTA. But NAFTA reregulates trade in a very adverse way for most workers and citizens, in all three countries, while at the same time locking in new rights for business. It is essentially a free investment pact. Through an international treaty, it locks in relatively unrestricted movement of money, capital, goods, and services while providing extensive protection for property rights, including “intellectual property” rights.

One of the best summaries of NAFTA that I’ve heard to date is by Michael Walker, head of the Fraser Institute, a right-wing policy think tank in Vancouver. Walker says, “A trade agreement simply limits the extent to which the U.S. or other signatory governments may respond to pressure from their citizens.” And you thought it was about trade! Think about his formulation, “limits the extent to which governments may respond to pressure from their citizens.” I thought responding to pressure from your citizens was democracy. Limiting democracy, limiting any democratic control over the economy, is very much what this agreement is about.

One of the major issues with NAFTA is its challenge to sovereignty. There is a tendency to think of sovereignty only in the sense of nations and the rights of nations and the rights of governments. But I think we need to remember that in democracies governments get their sovereignty from the people, and that this corporate assault on government through deregulation, privatization, and free trade is also an assault on the concept of people’s sovereignty. That is the right of people, whether it is at the level of the city, province, or national government to democratically determine their own conditions and standards and to make rules and to elect governments which run on political programs and when elected implement those programs. What a novel idea! Electing a government on the basis of a program (that is discussed before the election, not after). The idea that once elected, the government would be obliged to actually work toward implementing its program. This is really radical stuff, you know. But that is the concept of people’s sovereignty — and that is where governments are supposed to get their power from.

Now what does this have to do with NAFTA? Well, under NAFTA, legislation and regulation that moves in the direction of social justice, equality, and values other than the most narrow of commercial and market considerations (profits), can be viewed as non-tariff or technical barriers to trade. Remember, NAFTA is not about tariffs. Through GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, of which the U.S., Mexico, and Canada are all members) tariffs around the world have been steadily dropping to where they now are on average only about 5 percent. NAFTA is about these other things — the so-called non-tariff barriers to trade.

The main thrust of NAFTA is to reduce and redirect the role of government while enhancing the role of the market. It increases the pressure on public enterprise and public programs. It undermines the tradition of cross-subsidization and a noncommercial approach to social services. It demands that we replace democratic and community values with narrowly defined market principles.

Many of us believed that education, health care, and a number of social services cannot be dealt with as just economic commodities to be shaped by the market. NAFTA explicitly denies us access to every tool we’ve ever used to promote upward harmonization of standards and fair trade. The services chapter, for example, opens a wide variety of government services to companies from the U.S. and Canada. It guarantees these companies the right of national treatment and the right of establishment. That means we can’t even ask companies to set up a local office — that’s what the right of establishment means. The right of national treatment means that we can’t give preference to U.S. companies, to local companies, over Mexican- or Canadian-based companies. NAFTA limits performance requirements on companies, including export requirements, minimum domestic content, preference for domestic sourcing, trade balancing, technology transfer, or product mandating. In fact, every mechanism we can associate with fair and managed trade is restricted.

NAFTA sets a framework within which governments in the future will deal with service transactions, even in the public sector, [on a] commercial and profit-maximization [basis], rather than, say, Canada’s traditional approach of viewing the public sector as noncommercial and operating on a different set of values. Let me give you an example of how NAFTA does this: Article 1502 says “that each party shall ensure that any government monopoly (that means crown corporations, etc.) acts solely in

accordance with commercial considerations in the purchase or sale of a monopoly good, including with regard to price, and that it provides non-discriminatory treatment to investment or investors or goods and services provided by the other party.” So, in general terms, NAFTA constrains governments from regulating the market to achieve goals such as conservation of renewable or non-renewable resources as an instrument of industrial policy. It will end, for example, the long-standing practice of tendering public contracts to national firms or regional firms. It will restrict the establishment of new public services such as child care. What is really interesting, though, is that it actually has a special section that will compensate companies for loss of market opportunities if the government takes an action that results in their loss.

Here’s how that works. I’ll give you a real life example from the FTA [the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the U.S.]. In 1990, the people of Ontario, Canada, elected a New Democratic Party provincial government. One of its promises was to provide Ontario drivers with a no-fault government-run auto insurance program, similar to what people already enjoy in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. While still at the preliminary study stage, the Ontario government’s reform was stopped in its tracks. The provincial insurance companies commissioned a study that showed that because of the monopoly provisions of the FTA the Ontario government would have to compensate auto insurance companies \$2 billion — for lost market opportunity — if the provincial government went ahead with its auto insurance plan. Why? Because Article 2010 of the FTA stipulates that if government action reduces the financial benefits that a company might otherwise expect, the company is entitled to compensation. In addition, Article 1605 requires “fair market compensation” to companies subjected to measures which are considered “tantamount to expropriation.” This is incredible! Does the document provide compensation for the workers who lose their jobs? No, not a word! But companies are guaranteed compensating for “loss of market opportunity.” Can anyone doubt that this is a corporate protection pact?

NAFTA: A Cautionary Tale

Canadian voters have signaled loudly and clearly that the North American Free Trade Agreement is unpopular. The Liberal Party’s victory in Canada may contribute to NAFTA’s eventual defeat in the United States.

Canadian citizens realized, as Americans are increasingly discovering, that NAFTA will not only destroy jobs and damage the environment; it will sabotage democracy itself. NAFTA threatens the right of people — at the local, regional, and national level — to democratically determine the values and visions of their own communities.

How could this happen? Politicians won’t tell you, but it’s buried in the mind-numbing details

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Tories Rejected, NDP Crisis Deepens

by Barry Weisleder

The October 25 Canadian federal election crystallized several significant changes in domestic politics.

1. Voters repudiated the neoconservative agenda of cutbacks and public sector slashing, in favor of “jobs with dignity” promised by the Liberals, who were rewarded with a huge parliamentary majority of 177 out of 295 seats.
2. The split of the right-wing vote catapulted the racist Reform Party into prominence over the devastated Progressive Conservatives, whose future as a national party is now in question following 9 years as the federal government.
3. By taking 54 of 75 seats in Québec and forming the Official Opposition in the federal House of Commons, the bourgeois nationalist Bloc Québécois put the national question and the crisis of the Canadian state once again at center stage.
4. The decimation of the labor-based New Democratic Party, punished by its traditional supporters for the traitorous, anti-worker policies of NDP provincial governments, plunges the party into its deepest-ever crisis. The great doubt that looms over the party — not only concerning its relationship to the union movement, but about its very future — has fueled widespread discussion of the idea of launching a new labor party.

Short Honeymoon Anticipated

Jean Chrétien’s Liberals, who benefited from the undemocratic electoral rules of the game by capturing 60 percent of the parliamentary seats with only 41 percent of the votes, are under pressure to deliver job creation. They promised 400,000 new jobs a year over the next 4 years.

But the capitalist economic depression continues, without any sign of recovery. And the Liberals remain a big business party *par excellence*, not inclined to heavily tax the corporate hands that feed them, and dedicated to deficit cutting, albeit with a human face.

This is already reflected in selections to the Chrétien Cabinet and in statements of their fiscal priorities.

The two senior economic portfolios went to right-wing Liberals: Paul Martin, a past leadership contender, in Finance; and Roy MacLaren, editor of *Canadian Business* magazine, in International Trade. Both support the free trade pacts, deregulation, and *lower* standards, though the Liberal Party campaigned claiming to be for “renegotiation” of the deals.

On the subject of cutbacks, Marcel Masse, the new Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, was reported in the *Globe and Mail* (October 29) as saying that the Liberals do not dispute the Conservatives’ contention that the size of government has to be reduced. It would be possible to reduce the civil service by at least 20 percent over four years, he suggested.

The Liberals’ true goals, buttressed by their big business backers and the rabid Reform opposition, will quickly collide with the hopes and aspirations of the Liberal electorate. It could be the shortest honeymoon for the largest majority government in a long time.

And another leap for political cynicism. The Liberals know how to read polls and to tailor their platform accordingly. A *Globe and Mail* poll conducted in October showed that 57 percent of Canadians favored government investment in jobs, as opposed to 31 percent who wanted deficit reduction to be the priority; 50 percent disagreed with the statement that “a make-work project is just pouring money down the drain.”

It is critical that labor and other social movements mobilize early and in repeated mass actions to demand that the new federal government keep its promises to the unemployed and to recipients of social services.

But it is equally critical that these demands be made without any of the illusions typified by the election night comments of Canadian Labour Congress President Bob White, who hailed the Liberal triumph as a victory for working people. The election result can be described as a victory over the hated Tories and their policies, but nothing more.

Progress will come only through extraparliamentary struggle — especially when the Liberals refuse to restore transfer payments to the provinces, when they renege on busting the corporate lobbyists and axing political patronage, and when they fail to get rid of the despised Goods and Services Tax.

Tories in a Tizzy

The Conservatives’ plummet from grace found little solace or comfort in outgoing Prime Minister Kim Campbell’s copious references to hers being “the party of Sir John A. MacDonald” (a founder of the Confederation), or that her party retains 58 members in the appointed Senate. Need she be reminded that once, too, the mighty dinosaurs ruled planet Earth?

But give them credit for consistency: even though the Tories’ attainment of 16 percent of the vote (and over 2 million ballots) netted them

only two seats in the House, they refused to succumb to any democratic arguments in favor of proportional representation. The Reform party, with 18 percent, elected 52 Members of Parliament (MPs).

Instead of challenging the gross unfairness of the system, in the days following the election Tories have been debating in the media the viability of their party.

Right-wing ideologue Don Blenkarn, one of 153 Tories who lost their seats, was quoted in the *Toronto Star* on November 4 as saying, “Whether it’s Reform or Conservative or Reform-Conservative, or a new conservative party, I don’t know. But in any event there is not much point in trying to run an election with two very right-of-center parties.”

“Red Tory” and former MP David Macdonald said any combination with Reform on the right would be “a fundamental and suicidal error.” Leader Kim Campbell added wistfully, “The Conservative party is a party of the center and the center-right.”

But the Canadian bourgeoisie doesn’t presently need another party that claims to be “centrist”; the Liberals have that misleading distinction all locked up. Even less does the ruling class need a divided right-wing vote. Therefore, the pressure for a merger on the right will be enormous. The question, perhaps, is will the surviving Tories go quietly, or will there be a messy split?

In any case, it is the anti-immigrant, anti-Québécois, anti-multiculturalist, right-wing populist privateers of the Reform Party who will be writing the program of any new conservative alliance. The Calgary-based oil millionaires, who supplied the seed money for Leader Preston Manning’s right-wing rebels, clearly won their strategic bet with the eastern Tory old-money establishment.

But what the latter lacked in alertness to the political impact of the polarization caused by the past few years of capitalist crisis, they can make up for by generous political adaptation in hindsight.

They won’t be buffaloed by the media banter about “regional parties tearing apart the Confederation,” except insofar as it applies to Québec. With more money and more organizers (even possibly campaigning in Québec next time, Manning hinted) Reform could be just as “national” a party as ever the Tories were.

And the business elite as a whole can share their financial contributions between the Liber-

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After the Coup: Organizing to Spread the Word on the Russian Workers' Movement

by Alex Chis

Alex Chis is a member of the editorial board of *BIDOM* and the editorial committee of *Independent Politics*, who we thank for permission to use some of the material in this article. Subscriptions to *Independent Politics* are \$8.00/yr. to P.O. Box 55247, Hayward, CA 94545-0247. This October Alex also agreed to become international coordinator for *Russian Labor Review*. (E-mail addresses are: Alex Chis — achis@igc.apc.org, KAS-KOR — krazchenko@glas.apc.org, and *Russian Labor Review* — rlrsf@igc.apc.org.)

My first activity on arriving in Moscow in October was to attend the international labor conference "Modern Telecommunications: New Vistas for Workers' Solidarity," which was primarily organized by the KAS-KOR Labor Information Center. KAS-KOR is an independent center which exists to spread information on the workers movement in the ex-USSR. Just three years old, it got its start during the coal miners' strikes in 1990 when, as Kirill Buketov, one of the main organizers of KAS-KOR, said in an interview in *Independent Politics* magazine, "It was a big problem for strike committees to organize an exchange of information and [figure out] how to cooperate because the USSR was a big country. When in one city the strike only started, in another city the strike was finished. It was a very big problem to organize a coordination of activity in different cities. And our official newspapers and magazines and radio and TV gave only false information."

The conference this October was another step toward their ambitious goal of facilitating the coordination of the workers' movement across Russia. The fact that the conference took place at all is a tribute to KAS-KOR's determination. Scheduled for October 19-21, the proceedings were placed in doubt by Yeltsin's coup and the state of emergency, but the KAS-KOR activists decided too much work had gone into the planning and organization of the conference to call it off, and they went ahead anyway. Western registrants were notified that the conference was on, apprised of possible dangers, and told that the conference might be shortened to two days.

Army Takes Over Conference Site

After the decision to go ahead, just one week before the conference was to begin, the army took over the conference site, where not only the conference sessions were to be held, but where computers and on-line facilities were to be available to participants, and where everyone was to be housed and fed.

Organizing furiously, with the help of friends such as Vasily Balog, of the International Department of the General Confederation of Trade Unions, KAS-KOR was able to find an alternative site, at a trade union school in the village of Saltykovka, just outside of Moscow. Aside from working out easy transportation lines from Moscow, they also had to organize a special bus for participants, all this during a curfew and state of emergency.

Electronic Communications, Censorship, and Solidarity

For me the conference was a somewhat surreal experience: the new site was in a tranquil birch

and conifer forest; there was a bronze bust of Lenin looking down on us as we walked to lunch, but inside the conference sessions the talk was of the most modern telecommunications technology.

Among the speakers was Anatoly Voronov, the head of GlasNet, a computer network with links to Peacenet in the United States. During the events around the coup, while the print media was censored, he put out *Glasinfo* via electronic mail, making available many of the actual stories which had been censored from the print media, which made some of his friends in the West concerned for his safety. But as Anatoly said, when GlasNet USA "sent me a message worrying about the censorship in Russia, and asking whether GlasNet ought to be more circumspect in the coverage of the situation in Russia, I checked the Russian Law on the Press, and discovered that electronic networks are not included in the list of mass media."

Vasily Balog spoke on "Modern Technologies: New Possibilities for Workers' Solidarity." During the coup Vasily put out the information on the arrests of Boris Kagarlitsky and other leaders of the Party of Labor to computer bulletin boards, facilitating the mass response leading to their release. He is the moderator of a computer conference on labor in the ex-USSR.

These two typified the type of speakers at the conference, not just computer experts but participants in the movement as well. People from throughout Russia, from Kazakhstan and Ukraine, as well as the West, participated. Although attendance was cut down by the October events, the conference was a success by any standards. The ex-USSR is an ideal place for the use of computer telecommunications, because of its vast distances and lack of easy transportation. With far less in the way of technical facilities than their Western counterparts, at least part of the labor movement in the ex-USSR seems to have a very forward-looking vision of the future possibilities for labor solidarity.

KAS-KOR Continues to Spread the Word

Far from resting on their laurels after organizing the first labor telecommunications conference in Moscow, KAS-KOR was immediately hard at work. KAS-KOR is an activist group consisting of a few paid staff and a much larger group of volunteers in Moscow, ages averaging from 21 to 28, who have so many projects it's hard to keep up with them. They do a weekly labor radio show, on the major radio station in the ex-USSR with a potential listenership of about 300 million, which has to be the most widely heard labor show in the world. They produce a weekly Russian-language bulletin of news on the workers' movement, which is distributed to about 500 organizations. Their network of about 300 correspondents throughout the ex-USSR supplies the news.

They have just begun a new project, producing an attractive new quarterly English-language magazine, *Russian Labor Review (RLR)*. *RLR* is able to cover the events and debates in the labor movement throughout the ex-USSR in a comprehensive way. Like KAS-KOR itself, *RLR* is thoroughly nonsectarian, with articles from a wide variety of viewpoints. For anyone at all interested in the ex-USSR or the international labor movement, it's a must.

By subscribing to *RLR* one can also demonstrate solidarity with the workers' movement in Russia and help the KAS-KOR activists in their work of spreading the word on workers' struggles throughout the ex-USSR and the world. It is their hope that the financial success of this project will make it possible for them to begin other projects, such as the new Russian-language newspaper, *Workers' Action*, a joint project of KAS-KOR in Moscow and the NERV center in St. Petersburg. The first issue of this paper should be out by the time you read this article. So please subscribe to *Russian Labor Review* and help the workers' movement in the ex-USSR grow. (See box.) □

Subscribe to Russian Labor Review!

Help the workers' movement in the ex-USSR and keep up with the events and debates in the Russian Labor movement by subscribing to *Russian Labor Review*. Subscriptions for North America, Europe and the CIS are \$30/yr. (4 issues), \$50/2 yrs. (8 issues) for individuals; \$50/yr., \$90/2 yrs. for organizations/high income. For Australia, Asia, Africa, and South America the rates are \$40/yr., \$70/2 yrs. for individuals; \$60/yr., \$110/2 yrs. organizational/high income.

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Send to: Russian Labor Review, P.O. Box 8461, Berkeley, CA 94707; Tel: 510-489-8554; Fax: 510-471-4454; Email: rlrsf@igc.apc.org. Note that this is a new address. Please change your address books accordingly.

U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia Makes Statement in Moscow

by Alex Chis

On October 31 in Moscow at the House of the Spirit of Renewal (formerly the House of Atheism), three television cameras and numerous radio and press reporters recorded the newly formed U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia reading a statement condemning the attacks on civil liberties and trade union rights by the Yeltsin government.

Five members of the U.S. committee (Elizabeth Bowman, Susan Weissman, Alex Chis, Michel Vale, and Bob Stone) traveled to Moscow in the wake of Yeltsin's coup to dramatically express their outrage and to lend their support to democratic and human rights activists in Russia. (For the text of the committee's statement, with a partial list of endorsers, see the back cover of this issue.)

The U.S. committee was formed as much in response to the official U.S. position on the events in Russia, as expressed by the major media coverage as well as government statements, as to Yeltsin's coup itself.

Listening to President Clinton and Senator Sam Nunn give tacit encouragement to any action Yeltsin wished to take to get rid of his opposition was bad enough. Having to listen to the U.S. media describe, in classic Orwellian doublespeak, everything Yeltsin did as "democratic" was far too much. The closest thing to "balance" any of the major U.S. media ap-

proached was the description, without any apparent sense of irony, of Yeltsin as a "democratic dictator."

Further international support was evident at the International Round Table for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia organized by Aleksandr Buzgalin, professor at Moscow State University. At that event Luciana Castellini, a member of the European Parliament from Italy, made a statement, as did Hillel Ticktin from Scotland and Livio Maitan from Italy.

Prominent activists from the Russian human rights movement and legal experts led a discussion of democratic rights and the new election laws. Andrei Kolganov, a doctor of economic sciences, began the discussion with a summary of the present position. Among the speakers was Gleb Pavlovsky, editor-in-chief of the Russian magazine *Twentieth Century and Peace*, famous for hosting the first program to freely talk about democratic rights in Russia in a mass way, a figure comparable in Russia to Noam Chomsky in the West. A call for a Russian Movement for Democratic and Human Rights was made, with a founding conference to be held in Moscow November 27.

In an effort to stress that Yeltsin can't operate against his opponents with impunity, and to lend the maximum protection possible to Russian activists for workers and human rights, the U.S.

committee held two other press conferences in Moscow before its members left.

The U.S. committee received coverage on the two major television stations, both state and independent, the major radio station that broadcasts throughout the ex-USSR, and many newspapers including *Solidarnost*, the newspaper of the Moscow Federation of Trade Unions. *Izvestia* ran an interview with Elizabeth Bowman, one of the initiators of the committee, and the press conferences were covered by Spanish, French, Ukrainian, Greek, and other international press.

The U.S. committee feels that its trip to Moscow was a success. The workers' and left movement in Russia certainly knows that it is not alone, and the Yeltsin government knows that others in the West, more critical than Clinton and the major media, are watching what is going on.

The necessity of such a committee has only been underlined by the farce of the elections, and by Yeltsin's statement that he thinks he won't call presidential elections, but would rather just keep being president for a while. The support gathered for the *Nation* ad is a good start. We need to continue that work and build an international movement for democratic and human rights in Russia, so that the Russian people can be allowed to freely decide their own future. □

The Heirs of Sakharov Recall the Times of Brezhnev

by Pyotr Volkov

The following article was translated from the Russian-language weekly newspaper of the Moscow trade unions, *Solidarnost* (Solidarity), issue No. 20(69), November 1-7, 1993.

A new public organization, the Movement for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights in Russia, has been created. Russian public life seems to be going back to the forms that were tested in the time of Brezhnev. With the former democrats now violating human rights, it has become necessary to defend them. The organization arranged a press conference for Russian and foreign journalists [October 31], although at that point it did not have any exhaustive information on the bloody events in Moscow. A number of eyewitnesses gave testimony, but general appraisals of the events prevailed.

Dmitry Furman, a member of the organizing committee, remarked that the former party *no-*

menklatura [the topmost bureaucrats] had brought their mentality to present-day "democracy." In fact, Yeltsin has committed something that the so-called State Committee for the State of Emergency [the would-be coup makers of August 1991] did not dare to commit. Shells were exploding on the top floors of the House of Soviets [the Russian "White House"], where unarmed people were gathered. Boris Kagarlitsky thinks that the authorities' contempt for the masses, which was first manifested in the sphere of economics, is now prevailing in politics. The coup was easily carried out by Yeltsin because society is weak. Only the strengthening of democratic structures will make a stable, lawful order possible. According to analyst Viktor

Militarev, a regime of the Suharto type has been established in Russia. [Suharto was the general who presided over the anti-Communist bloodbath in Indonesia in 1965.] The press, however, uses ideological, rather than legal, criteria to evaluate events.

Boris Slavin, a political commentator for *Pravda*, reported that his newspaper had been banned without the preliminary warning that is stipulated by law. [Former Soviet dissident] Pyotr Abovin-Yegides, now a member of the Socialist Party of France, said that the Western governments which stand for democracy in their own countries were hypocritically siding with the [antidemocratic] victor in the case of this other country. Abovin regards the support

given to Yeltsin by the French Socialist leaders Mitterrand and Moroy and by the leaders of the Socialist International as treachery. ("I am ashamed for my party comrades.") On the other hand, even those former dissidents and political exiles who are not sympathetic to socialism, such as Valery Chalidze, Andrei Sinyavsky, and Vladimir Maksimov, have denounced Yeltsin. (And for that, the venal press [in Russia] is attacking them, reproducing the language of the KGB of the '70s and '80s.) Aleksandr Buzgalin, a professor at Moscow University, called attention to the fact that people originally from the Caucasus are being expelled from Moscow under the pretext of the state of emergency. Here the government displayed the same kind of chauvinistic attitude for which it used to condemn its parliamentary opponents (although, in

fact, the measures look very much like a settling of accounts between the local and newly arrived Mafias).

All those who spoke at the press conference are sure that the organization for defending democratic and human rights will exist for a long time. It brings together a number of public figures, scholars, scientists, and journalists. Some of them, Gleb Pavlovsky, for example, had experience defending human rights during the previous period of repression, while others are new to this sphere of activity. The organization is supported by kindred groups in the USA and Greece and by individual enthusiasts in Russia, who are carrying out their own independent investigation of the events.

However, I think that the new movement for defending democratic and human rights will

encounter difficulties that may be even more serious than those their predecessors had. By this I mean, first of all, a lack of understanding on the part of public opinion abroad — a stereotype that is not easy to change. To hold the attention of the press, the human rights defenders must have exclusive information at their disposal, which requires professionalism and a secret information network, like the one that existed 20 years ago.

Meanwhile, the people who claim to be the "true heirs of Andrei Sakharov" are also repeating historical experience. I wonder whether it will be the experience of Beria's time or that of a milder type — the experience of Brezhnev's KGB. We will know in the very near future. □

The December Elections in Russia

by Elizabeth A. Bowman

The author is a Sartre scholar and a specialist in self-management; she is a consultant to Russia's Party of Labor. In late October and early November she was in Moscow to attend an academic conference, as well as to represent the U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia. She returned to Moscow November 27 to December 14 as an observer of the elections. The following are major excerpts from an Op-Ed article she submitted to the New York Times. Some minor changes have been made for reasons of style. The next issue of our magazine will cover the results of the December elections.

During my recent 2-week stay in Moscow, where I attended an academic conference, I came to believe that the U.S. backing of Yeltsin is a serious mistake. Although not a specialist in Russian studies, I talked with ordinary people, as well as journalists, academics, and representatives of the newly formed, Russia-based Movement for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights. From what I learned, I have concluded that the conditions for open discussion and debate necessary for real democracy do not exist in Russia. The December 12 elections will not be "free and fair"; the legitimacy of a referendum on the newly written, Yeltsin-designed Constitution is questionable.

Yeltsin's promise to hold presidential elections in June 1994 was withdrawn November 6 in a statement he made on Russian evening television news, which I saw. Now, after reconsidering, Yeltsin says he will run for reelection after all. But it is difficult to imagine how Russia can conduct fair elections when the all-important question of whether presidential elections will be held is subject to Yeltsin's whim. A democracy cannot be governed by executive decree and caprice.

Many factors lead me to conclude that the December 12 elections cannot be considered "free and fair." It is difficult to imagine an atmosphere in which candidates and voters can express dissent from the government when the only guarantee of such right to dissent is the mood of the executive. The Constitutional Court, which would guarantee such rights, is currently suspended. Assuming that candidates feel free to voice dissent, they have only the few

weeks between November 7 and December 12 to discuss and debate issues and convince voters of their own merit and electability.

The people I spoke with in Moscow all stressed that the limited amount of time for the electoral campaign is a major problem. For example, 100,000 signatures on petitions are necessary to qualify each list of candidates for the December 12 ballot. Only 15 percent can be gathered in any one of Russia's 89 regions. This in itself is fair, however, requiring this to be done in such a short time (late September to November 6) in a country as vast as Russia is not fair. These petitions must be physically carried to Moscow to the Central Electoral Commission. For many political parties it is simply too expensive for the petition gatherers to fly to Moscow.

Two election rules have undergone major changes since October 4; these changes virtually assure that pro-Yeltsin forces will control the new 450-seat State Duma.

1. The entire country, stretching across 11 time zones, was redistricted in a few weeks in October. This redistricting was done on the basis of the results of the April 24 referendum. On the average, pro-Yeltsin districts have 456,000 voters; anti-Yeltsin districts have 590,000. Thus, anti-Yeltsin districts, taken together, have proportionately fewer representatives than pro-Yeltsin districts. According to the rules of the Electoral Commission, no district can outnumber any other by more than 15 percent. The new redistricting leaves a more than 30 percent difference.

2. There will be 225 races for the State Duma and 178 races for an upper chamber, the Federal Council. Normally, a candidate must secure 50 percent of the vote, plus one, in order to win. In multiple-candidate races, a second round of balloting is necessary if no one wins 50 percent, plus one, on the first round. This will not be the case for the State Duma and Federal Council races. These will be won by the front-runner even if he/she wins less than 50 percent of the vote. The only limit to how few votes it takes to win is that turnout must be no less than 25 percent of the registered voters and the total of the winner's votes must exceed those who choose the veto option, voting for none of the above.

These changes in election rules mean that the best-known candidates and parties and those with the most money to advertise will have the advantage. The benefit to Yeltsin's party is overwhelming and obvious.

Most Russians, being too poor to buy newspapers, get most of their news from TV. Until November 20 there was no restriction on the amount of broadcast time the government, or the president, or any one political party could take. Between November 20 and December 12, each party or coalition bloc must be given one hour of free time and each candidate is allowed one free speech. Otherwise, richer political parties can buy all the advertising time they can afford and there is no attempt to equalize exposure. News broadcasts have no limits on coverage of the different parties and electoral blocs.

Russian state television is controlled by the government and the executive; it blatantly favors Russia's Choice, the party of Yeltsin's economic adviser, Yegor Gaidar. The advertising rates for TV time were recently increased dramatically for the duration of the electoral campaign.

At a press conference on November 5, Arkady Volsky, head of the Civic Union (a coalition of directors of large enterprises), complained about access to TV coverage. Volsky said that about 11 hours of free TV time were due him if he was to have equal exposure with Russia's Choice.

International monitoring is a standard way of judging whether elections are "free and fair." International organizations have been asked to send election observers. They must register with the Central Electoral Commission. Luciana Castellina, a member of the European Parliament and of its Human Rights Committee, said in Moscow at the October 31 press confer-

ence of the Movement for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights that if members of her committee came to Russia now to observe the electoral process, they would be appalled. She made this comment before she and we learned that Yeltsin has recently asked for and received from the Group of Seven wealthiest industrial nations their approval of his authority to expel any "unsatisfactory" election observers. Such authority makes a sham of international election monitoring. Boris Kagarlitsky, a former elected representative to the Moscow City Council and well-known author in the West, is organizing a nongovernmental Committee on Democratic Elections to monitor the elections. I wonder if the foreigners working with his committee will be deemed "unsatisfactory" and expelled from Russia.

On December 12, voters will be asked to approve the new Constitution. This document was made public on November 9, leaving little time for study, consideration, and debate.

Among other changes, this constitution (1) increases the powers of the executive; (2) weakens the power of Russia's 89 regions relative to the capital, Moscow; (3) allows the executive to appoint judges; and (4) shortens the terms of people's deputies from 4 years to 2. Many of the people I spoke with in Moscow said that asking voters to approve the new Constitution does not give the electorate a choice of alternatives. It is not an election, but rather a plebiscite. [And plebiscites have been notorious in history as a means of manipulation.]

The cumulative effect of the changes in election rules, compounded by the very short time of the election campaign, adds up to a gerrymandered election. This gerrymandering is incompatible with genuine democracy and cannot be condoned. □

November 25, 1993

Toward the Elections: The Rummyantsev Syndrome

by Boris Kagarlitsky

MOSCOW — On October 21 the Russian Party of Labor took a decision not to participate in the elections called for December 12 by President Boris Yeltsin. In principle, this decision should have been made much earlier, but in the event more than two weeks were needed for discussions with various opposition left organizations and the trade unions. These discussions showed how unprepared the left is to present itself as a serious force on the all-Russia level. They also demonstrated yet again that such a force is acutely necessary.

The elections will take place under the control of the authorities, according to a script

prepared by the authorities, and under rules which these same authorities have drawn up. The electoral commissions were all appointed by the government, and opposition forces are not represented on them. In the weeks after October 4 the ruling circles repeatedly and arbitrarily changed the electoral rules. In the decree establishing the election procedures, the authorities deliberately set an unrealistic timetable, then regularly violated it. The parliament that will be convened solely on the basis of decisions by the president, without a law on elections or a law on government, will be subject to dissolution at any time through another

such decision. The powers of the parliament are unclear, there are no guarantees that political forces will be able to compete freely, and the presidential administration is playing a direct role in the election campaign, supporting the Russia's Choice coalition. All this would provide ample cause for refusing to participate in the elections, just as Russian democrats in 1905 rejected participation in the "Bulygin Duma."

Such a decision would make sense if the bulk of the opposition were united. But just as the authorities anticipated, all the opposition forces, from centrists to Communists, first condemned the "illegal parliament," then ignored their own interests and declared their readiness to participate in it.

This shows the weakness of legal and civic consciousness in Russia. In these circumstances, the position of leftists is especially difficult. The Executive Committee of the Party of Labor was faced with a choice. Either the party could reject the elections and act in isolation, or it could join with other leftists in presenting voters with a distinct initiative. Meanwhile, the trade unions vacillated. The FNPR [Russian initials for the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, which is descended from the former official unions] declared that it would not take part in the elections. A number of branch unions wanted to participate, but most did not field their own candidates.

The organizations capable of playing a key role in the electoral strategy of the left were two parties that were registered at the federal level. These were the Socialist Party of Workers [Russian initials, SPT], headed by Lyudmila Vartazarova, and the Russian Social Democratic



Center, led by Oleg Rumyantsev. At first these two bodies flatly refused to collaborate with one another. Discussions between the Social Democratic Center and various left and centrist organizations came to an unexpected end when Rumyantsev, overturning all earlier agreements, decided to run on the Civic Union slate. Rumyantsev explained this decision by saying that as an "active politician" he had to get himself elected, and that consequently he could not take risks.

Unexpected shifts also took place within the electoral bloc formed around the SPT. Initially it had been proposed that the SPT should join with the trade unions and the Party of Labor in a formation to be called the Russian Union of Labor. But then the SPT decided to form a bloc with the right-centrist Union for the Rebirth of Russia, led by Dmitry Rogozin. Journalists immediately christened this the "pink-beige" bloc — semi-red and semi-brown. The search by the SPT leaders for new allies is understandable, especially since many trade union leaders who had declared their intention of participating in the elections proved totally unprepared to take part in practical activity when it came to forming an electoral bloc. From the very beginning, however, the fact that all decisions were taken unilaterally by the SPT leaders created grounds for caution. The SPT leaders were apparently convinced that because theirs was the only left party registered at the federal level, all other leftists would have to follow in its wake whatever happened. This applied both to the Party of Labor and smaller groups, and to the banned Communist Party of the Russian Federation. While refusing to open discussions with the Communist Party, the SPT leaders assumed they would receive the help of rank-and-file Communists at the local level simply because these people had no other choice.

This assumption was correct, but only in part. The Party of Labor and other leftists were only ready to follow behind the SPT so long as the SPT was prepared to address the overall tasks of the movement. Furthermore, no one was going to follow the lead of the SPT if it made serious errors and undermined even its own positions. And this, in fact, was what happened.

After contracting a union with Rogozin, the SPT went on to include the Oil Industry Union and the Union of Cossacks in the coalition. Representatives of the SPT constituted only a minority in the list of candidates. The bloc took the name "Fatherland." This was far beyond the bounds not only of the agreements that had been reached with other leftists but also of what had been foreshadowed at the SPT's pre-election congress. The SPT leaders, who had condemned the opportunism of the Social Democratic Center, had themselves been infected with the "Rumyantsev syndrome."

It is not surprising that many people then accused the SPT of having betrayed its left-wing principles. Actually, what the SPT leaders had done was, to use the words of Talleyrand, "worse than a crime — it was a mistake." Devoid of attractions for left-wing voters, such a bloc could not win support from patriots and Communists, since far more influential forces of both stripes would be running in the elections. Nor could this formation count on success as a centrist bloc, since the far more serious Civic Union would also be presenting candidates. The SPT leaders perceived correctly that campaigning on slogans of democratic socialism was hardly likely at present to arouse the enthusiasm of the bulk of the population. The problem was that a bloc formed on unclear principles, and with a "patriotic-socialist-entrepreneurial-democratic" ideology, would prove even less attractive to the public. If presented in an intelligent and modern fashion, left-wing policies will receive a small but stable vote, enough to elect a number of serious politicians to the Duma. But a lack of serious policies and a reliance on populist slogans will now prove even less popular.

Particular compromises might well have worked to the advantage of the movement, but in the present case the movement has not been consolidated and strengthened, but weakened instead. Meanwhile, the SPT leaders have had to confront the consequences of their own unilateral decisions.

Their first reaction was to remove the Party of Labor candidates from the electoral slate. Then the deputy chairperson of the General Confederation of Trade Unions, S.I. Kra-

morenko, took himself off the list. By this time the Communist Party of the Russian Federation had again been legalized, and was now clearly averse to collaborating with the SPT. As a result, the SPT has finished up isolated from the rest of the left, confronting the rightists face to face.

For trade union activists, there is a lesson in what has happened. All the talk of independent participation in elections and of the possibility of working with various parties, choosing whatever was most suitable in their programs, finally left the trade unions incapable of seriously influencing the course of events. If the Party of Labor had become a real force prior to October 1993, everything might have turned out differently. We shall see whether the appropriate lessons are drawn from this experience. At any rate, the coming First Congress of the Party of Labor will call things by their right names.

From the point of view of activists of the Party of Labor, of the Social Democrats, and of independent leftists, it would have been far better if a principled position had been adopted at the very beginning, and if people had not been compelled to take part in confused pre-election wrangles. This is especially so, for the reason that the present parliament is unlikely to be long-lived.

In rejecting participation in these elections, we are not only demonstrating our attitude toward attempts by the authorities to impose their rules on us, and not only rejecting the constitutional referendum which the Yeltsin administration has attached to the December elections. We are also making a fundamental rejection of "politics for the sake of politics," in which one's own election, to any parliament and at any price, serves as the supreme principle.

We are now faced with campaigning for new elections. The key to success here does not lie in political maneuvers, but in establishing strong and effective workers' organizations; in the reorganization of the trade unions, something which we are entitled to hope will begin after the Congress of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia on October 28; and in our recognition of our genuine interests and tasks. □

Oct 29, 1993

Russian Miners Fight Job Losses

by Renfrey Clarke

MOSCOW — More than 30,000 coal miners on November 11 staged a 24-hour strike that completely halted production in the Vorkuta region, one of Russia's main coal-producing areas. A week-long stoppage is now due to shut down two of the country's largest coal basins beginning December 1, as miners demand payment of overdue wages, an end to the threat of layoffs, and state support for industry

restructuring. A statement issued by the Fuel and Energy Ministry on November 24 acknowledged that "an explosive socio-economic situation" had developed.

That did not mean, however, that addressing the miners' problems would become a priority for the government. Times have changed since the huge coal strike of 1989 threatened to cripple

much of Soviet industry and drastically weakened the Gorbachev leadership of the USSR.

Russian industrial production is now barely half its volume in 1989, and even with the output of coal mines falling this year by 10 percent, weak demand has meant that coal is in oversupply. Coal unionists are almost powerless to apply economic pressure on the state.

Continued on page 32

For Another Europe, For Another World! Against the EC of Permanently Rising Unemployment

by Ernest Mandel

*The following speech was given in Paris June 12, 1993, at the first Assemblée Pour une Autre Europe (Assembly for an Alternative Europe), in which 500 people participated. Thirty organizations from 15 countries were represented, all united in opposition to the Maastricht treaty and in favor of a left, internationalist alternative. The initiative for this gathering came from a group of personalities of varying political outlook: Tony Benn, from the left wing of the British Labour Party; Jean Ziegler, from the left wing of the Swiss Socialist Party; Gregor Gysi, deputy of the Democratic Socialist Party in the German parliament; Luciano Petinari, of the Italian party Communist Refoundation; Julio Anguita, from the United Left of the Spanish State; and Ernest Mandel, Alain Krivine, and François Vercammen, from the Fourth International. The text of the speech is taken from *La Gauche* (Belgium), No. 18-19, October 6, 1993. The translation is by George Saunders.*

The Europe that actually exists is not simply a collection of governmental machinery and institutions whose undemocratic nature and technocratic, elitist, and manipulative arrogance we need to expose.

It is a Europe that corresponds to specific interests and has a specific class character. It is the Europe of Big Capital. And because it is the Europe of the big bourgeoisie oriented primarily toward profit, toward increasing the value of its capital, it is, in the current economic climate, the Europe of permanently rising unemployment, regardless of conjunctural fluctuations.

Today there are 20 million unemployed in Europe. There is a danger that there will be 28-30 million in the next recession.

The European authorities admit to being helpless in the face of this mounting unemployment. Meanwhile, the big bourgeoisie is gleefully rubbing its hands. For it, growing unemployment and the fear of unemployment are excellent means for reducing the combativity of the working class, for placing the blame on the workers movement, for attacking workers rights, and for weakening and indeed smashing the trade union organizations.

Even in the 1930s the ultramoderate socialist Albert Einstein was able to state this simple truth: *you cannot effectively fight fascism if you aren't successful in fighting unemployment.*

Today, when we are confronted everywhere in Europe with a rise in xenophobia and racism, the growth of the extreme right, and the reappearance of neofascist violence, this observation is more valid than ever. In the face of the powerlessness, if not the refusal, of the Europe of the trusts to eliminate unemployment, we must proclaim the absolute primacy of the struggle to reestablish full employment, a battle that is indispensable for stopping the rise of the unspeakable beast of fascism. This means first of all the fight for an immediate reduction in the workweek to a maximum of 35 hours, with no reduction in pay.

A Strategic Choice

In this connection, however, we are faced with a fundamental strategic choice.

The Social Democratic parties and their allies on the left who have taken government office proclaim themselves to be enthusiastic partisans of "actually existing Europe." The only thing they swear by is Delors. But when the issue is the need to propose an economic strategy for responding to the crisis and the rise in unemployment, instead of proposing such a response on a European scale, the Social Democrats preach a defense of the competitive capacity of each country taken separately. They come to an agreement with the employers on a policy of austerity at the expense of the workers.

This is not only a step taken backward in the direction of protectionism, in the direction of increasing unemployment in each country, which will end up increasing it everywhere.

It is also the blockheaded policy of simpletons.

For in a Europe dominated by the multinationals, whose power more and more evades the action or control of any government whatsoever, every national step backward becomes totally ineffective. The multinationals will always find a country where wages or social protections are on a lower level, where subsidies and fiscal exemptions (tax breaks and other financial inducements) are higher. It is not even necessary for them to actually relocate production. All they have to do is use the threat of relocation as blackmail in order to carry the day.

The only effective response to the Europe of the trusts is indeed the fight for a socialist Europe.

The battle for a socialist Europe takes the path first of all of a joint struggle by all wage workers employed by the same multinational corporation on a European scale, and on a world scale.

Either class collaboration with the employers of each country, or collaboration among workers of all countries against the bosses of all countries — that is the choice that must be made.

One must stress, in this connection, the responsibility of the right wing of Social Democracy for discrediting socialism in the eyes of the masses just as much as the Stalinist dictators have.

The deplorable attitude of "the respectable left" in regard to the rights of immigrants and the right of asylum underlines even more this record of bankruptcy.

The past has taught us, after all, that to make concessions to xenophobia and racism out of electoral considerations is totally counterproductive.

In the competition among xenophobic forces, the most radical racists always win out. One must therefore have the courage to place oneself radically and totally in opposition to the racist poison in ideology, in politics, and in action in the streets.

The Growing Dangers

Unfortunately, the bourgeoisie is three lengths ahead of the left in the matter of effective international action. And this fact is all the more dangerous because the growing dangers are not limited to the danger from the extreme right. There is also the danger of the universal growth of poverty, above all in the Third World — where there are a billion impoverished people, where every four years as many infants die of hunger and easily curable diseases as all the people killed in World War II. Poverty is dramatically on the rise in the countries of Eastern Europe also, and in the imperialist countries. In addition, there is the universal rise of epidemics linked to poverty, such as tuberculosis and cholera.

And there is the rise of a two-tier society, the result of the dismantling of the system of social protections, the social "safety net." There is also the increasing menace of war and of environmental disasters.

Universal Solidarity

In the face of all these dangers there is a fundamental choice: either increasing fragmentation

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Africa and the New World Order

by Neville Alexander

This paper was presented as the keynote address at the Humboldt Colloquium held in Cotonou, Benin, July 17–19, 1992, and published in the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation magazine, Mitteilungen, No. 60, 1992. It is reprinted here, with some minor changes for reasons of style. The author's rich analysis contains some ideas that some may question (such as the possibility of "outlawing war" and eliminating all "offensive weapons" in Africa, given the continued imperialist presence), but readers will benefit from his incisive discussion of "the new world order" and the role of African liberation forces in the renewal and transformation of the world.

The Concept of Africa

"Africa" is not simply a geographical expression. In this year when some people are celebrating the quincentennial of that fateful voyage by means of which Christopher Columbus inaugurated what the British historian, Lord Acton, euphemistically called "the unification of the world," it is pertinent to remind ourselves that Africa is above all one of the many by-products of colonial imperialist conquest and of world capitalist exploitation on the grand scale. To be precise: Africa is in the first instance the result of the resistance of the peoples of the continent to the inhuman process of "the expansion of Europe." It is particularly because of the Atlantic Slave Trade, which another British historian, Reginald Coupland, correctly labeled "the greatest crime in history," and because of the fact that the peoples of Africa and of the African diaspora have been the main victims of racism in the world that a coherent sense of being African evolved.

Today, with the generosity of a spirit that is often the child of extreme suffering, the most far-seeing amongst us have widened the concept of African to embrace all those, regardless of their geographical provenance, who have a genuine commitment to the continent of Africa and who identify completely with the sufferings and the strivings of the people of the continent. Like Okelo in the recent film by Mira Nair, *Mississippi Masala*, we continue to maintain that Africa belongs to the Africans, but unlike him, we do not qualify that claim by adding the phrase "black Africans." It is indeed the "message" of this paper that it is out of Africa, by virtue of the depths of its suffering, that a new world order will be born, no matter how improbable that may appear at present.

The New World Order

One of the reasons for this formally prophetic statement is that the much talked about New World Order of President George Bush, not unlike Columbus's "New World," is not so new at all. It is no more than the old world order in a new jacket. It amounts to no more than the restructuring of the international division of labor to accord better with the economic and political interests of the three most powerful trading blocs in the world today. Of course, we have to add that the material basis for a new world order has been created through the new (microelectronic and biochemical) technolo-

gies that have revolutionized the production, distribution, and communication processes in the postwar world.

After the ignominious collapse of the bureaucratic centralist, so-called socialist states of Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union itself, the kaleidoscope of the world economic system has stabilized to reveal that three trading blocs, viz., the American trading bloc, the European trading bloc, and the Asian trading bloc (*Brand 1991*), have during the past 30 years or so been redividing the world among themselves. For the moment, it appears as though the balance of power between these three is to be policed and maintained by the only remaining superpower, i.e., the United States of America. The recent war in the Persian Gulf gave us some idea of the shape of things to come. In the words of Noam Chomsky: "The U.S. has a virtual monopoly of force; it is a tri-polar world economically, but it's a uni-polar world militarily" (*Chomsky 1991:23*). Much of the common and the separate agendas of these trading blocs is going to be mediated by international agencies such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Accordingly, these agencies are going to appear to be much more independent of any particular political grouping than was the case in the past. In reality, however, the basic dilemmas of the restructured world economic system have not yet been resolved.

Like empires that preceded them, the regional trading blocs of the new economic world order may divide into a handful of protectionist super-states. If by the new political world order we mean increased American hegemony disguised as international cooperation, we may come to know the new economic world order as regional hegemony disguised as free trade. [*Brand 1991:158.*]

Zbigniew Brzezinski (1991:20) says bluntly that "as of now," the phrase new world order is "a slogan in search of substantive meaning." According to him, the answer to this question will depend on "the eventual resolution of the four large structural dilemmas." These "dilemmas" are: (1) how will Europe define itself? (2) how will the Soviet Union be transformed? (3) how will the Pacific region organize itself? and (4) how will the Middle East be pacified? (See *Brzezinski 1991:67.*)

The Second Wave of Liberation

At the time of writing, the answers to all four of these questions are still in the balance, even though the Soviet Union has formally disappeared from the map of the world. At both the economic and the political levels, these questions continue to confront strategists and politicians as dilemmas. At the ideological level, however, there is widespread agreement among First World intellectuals that

the philosophical tenor of our time is...dominated by Western concepts of democracy and the free market.... [These] represent today's prevailing wisdom. The competing notions of Marxism, not to speak of its Leninist-Stalinist offshoot, once so intellectually dominant, are generally discredited. [*Brzezinski 1991:3.* Also see *Amin 1991:6.*]

In Africa, indeed, the transition to democracy has become such a concentrated and domino-like process that scholars and activists speak of a "second wave of liberation" (see *Kühne 1992; Yeebo 1992; etc.*). It is a fact that more than half of all the states on the continent "have embarked on a fundamental transition from authoritarian governments, military and civilian, to more democratic systems" (*Joseph 1991*). Among academics worldwide and Africanists in particular a veritable industry has been created around the complex of themes called "transition to democracy" or the "conditions of democracy debate." This debate is not peculiarly African; indeed, it is particularly conducted in the context of the dramatic changes being engineered in Eastern Europe.

Clearly, however, we Africans have to reexamine the basic theories of democracy in the context of our history and of the political and economic relations now existing in our respective countries. Detailed research as well as political moves toward a greater unity at the base should be inaugurated. A Pan-African unity of peoples rather than merely of states should become the medium-term objective of those who wish to surf into a democratic future on this second wave of liberation. Democracy means power to the people. It is our task to concretize this concept at local, regional, and national levels, to find out organically, i.e., in consultation with those who will have to carry out whatever decisions are made at any of these levels, how this concept can be realized in practice. We have to find out which combinations of representative and direct democracy work in such a manner that the urban and rural poor are empowered. It is necessary to stop the marginalization of the poor, especially of the rural poor, and to resolve what Kühne (1992:14) calls the "democratization dilemma of the urban middle classes" in Africa. He describes this dilemma as follows:

On the one hand, their economic frustrations constitute the hard core of the "second wave of liberation." Unpaid salaries and stipends, threats to their survival because of difficulties on the supply side, etc., push them in their millions toward resistance and into the streets against the existing regimes. After a short pe-

riod of euphoria based on the attainment of the first signs of democratization, precisely that happens which is to be expected in accordance with the literature on democratization processes, i.e., the same middle classes take to the streets again, even where the new regime in question has made considerable concessions, because their expectations of improvements in the material conditions of life have either not been fulfilled or only partially [been] fulfilled. [Kühne 1992:13. Author's translation.]

Incidentally, Kühne's "urban middle classes" embrace, amongst others, teachers, civil servants, unionized workers, professionals, students, artisans, and traders. I am in agreement with his assessment that the manner in which this dilemma is resolved will influence decisively the direction of the present surge toward empowerment of the people.

In the African context, we have to reexamine at the continental level our understanding of Pan-African unity. In a thought-provoking recent article on the subject, Horace Campbell raised all the relevant questions. He concluded, among other things, that

political independence and the unity of states as inscribed in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) cannot be the basis of African liberation. A federation of Africa based on the cultural diversity of the continent and the harnessing of the knowledge and skills developed over centuries are some of the challenges which face the African people in the next century. [Campbell 1992:26.]

At the national state level, it has become a matter of life and death that we reanalyze honestly and relentlessly the myths that have been spun around the supposed links between the one-party state and so-called "traditional African democracy." Scholars like Peter Anyang'Nyong'o (1992) have begun to sweep away some of the cobwebs. How basic this understanding is can be read from the way in which Nyong'o (1992:01) disentangles the problematic within which these fanciful claims used to be made. He shows, for example, that since modern political parties did not exist in most precolonial African societies, it is a mere anachronism to use this concept, including derivatives such as the one-party state, in order to analyze and understand these societies.

Development, Aid, and Sovereignty Africans, like the peoples of other continents, have the historic opportunity to give shape to the evolving new world order. This is obviously an eccentric view if we look at the world from the vantage point of the present centers of economic, political, and military power. It is not for nothing that the major analyses, with a few honorable exceptions, never mention the African continent. If they do, it is usually as an extension of Europe, one that is "mediated" through the major economies of South Africa and Nigeria. In one of his new world order scenarios, Brand (1993:158) writes quite unproblematically that

the African nations, especially if joined together in the African Common Market (ACM), could

present a problem or a prospect for the [European] Community. EC plus ACM equals two continents united in a trading bloc. The African nexus exists: Morocco has already applied to join the EC.

Similarly, he enumerates the usual devastating list of Africa's problems, to wit, water shortages, health problems, especially AIDS, one-party states, falling GDP [Gross Domestic Product], etc., and concludes that "the best hope for the [African] common market would be leadership by Africa's two strongest economies, Nigeria and post-apartheid South Africa" (Brand 1992: 157).

Which brings us to the unavoidable question of the "Bretton Woods sisters." [At Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, shortly after World War II, the "sister" organizations, World Bank and International Monetary Fund, were established, with the U.S. as their main contributor (and benefactor).] There is generally agreement among students of the question that even though economic growth is not an essential condition for the initiation of the process of democratization, it is such a condition for its survival and consolidation. The parlous state of most African economies is, therefore, an ill omen for the future of what little progress has been made in the direction of a democratic dispensation on the continent. As the base of the so-called Third World, the peoples of Africa are the main victims of the postwar economic order, of which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are the twin pillars (*The Economist*, October 12, 1991:3). At the global level, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) came to the following conclusion in September 1988:

There is no doubt that the IMF and the World Bank, as international institutions for regulation and crisis management, have failed and that they are therefore responsible for the dramatic deterioration of the living conditions of peoples in many parts of the world. They serve the interests of the creditors rather than function for the benefit of the peoples of the world, particularly of the Third World. [PPT 1990:334.]

The assessment is substantiated by statistics that are, in general, incontrovertible. Thus, for example, the Bank itself estimated that in the period 1984-87, there was a net transfer of some \$87.8 billion from South to North because of the imperatives of debt servicing. The OECD put this figure at \$387 billion for the period 1982-87 (see PPT 1990:331).

More than four decades of IMF/World Bank intervention in development programs in Africa and a decade of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have driven the continent over the edge of ruin. According to the Report of the United Nations Program of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, by 1990 Africa's debt had almost doubled its 1980 figure. At present, the debt stands at \$280 billion, and it is rising rapidly. For sub-Saharan Africa, the debt of \$160 billion represents 112 percent of GDP.

Servicing the mounting debt has become the main burden confronting the continent. Each

year sub-Saharan African countries pay \$12 billion. This is only one-third of the interest due and about 30% of export earnings. Debt is costing Africa more than the continent is spending on the welfare of its people, including health and education (Chamley 1992).

This is not the place to examine the many reasons proffered as explanations for the shift that took place in the original developmental and stabilizative functions of the Bretton Woods sisters. More and more, objective scholars have come to agree with the PPT's view that today,

the IMF operates in the interests of private lending institutions. It is doing its best to extract debt service from Third World debtors in order to prevent defaults on private bank debts and their repercussions on the economies of the industrialized capitalist countries. [PPT 1990: 331. Also see *Economist* 1991:32.]

Because of the ways in which the Bank/IMF negotiators impose conditions, both economic and extra-economic, before making available new loans to countries in need, the whole question of sovereignty is raised. In the words of *The Economist* (1991:35):

When the distinguished visitors from Washington, D.C., speak with one voice, they often become, in effect, a lobby with great clout in domestic politics. The government finds it harder than ever to keep up the appearance of being in control of events.

This brief reference to the economic dimension of the new world order as it affects the African continent has to suffice as an indication of the need to reexamine the postcolonial paradigms built up around concepts such as "modernization," "development," "balanced growth," etc. African and non-African liberals see an approach to the solution in refinements of the instrument of "conditionality" by, for example, linking aid to human rights "performance" and to progress along the path of multi-party democracy (see e.g. the informative article by Erdmann 1991). At the economic level, the United States's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) (1992) recommends an infusion of humanitarian, financial, and technical aid to complement active policy reforms, especially in the first phases in the "adjustment process," in order to avoid "catastrophic declines in consumption and maintain support for reforms." The longer-term agenda is stated unequivocally:

Financial aid should be viewed as a transitional mechanism. Over the longer term, sustained growth depends on greater integration into the international trading system and increased access to private capital, both of which depend on comprehensive reforms. [CEA 1991.]

As against this recipe, which clearly foresees a greater role for international agencies, including the Bretton Woods sisters, the radical agendas go in exactly the opposite direction. This includes the relatively moderate view of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal that the dependency of Third World countries "can only be overcome by a dissociation from the constraints

of the monetary world market" (PPT 1990: 310), a view that explicitly denies the relevance and the possibility of autarchy for more regions but which insists that "it has to mean a new form of political control of capital flows, nationally as well as internationally" (PPT 1990:311). They recommend a new Bretton Woods type conference in order to "reshape the existing international institutions."

At the furthest point on this spectrum stands the view that is associated with the name of Samir Amin and that has become known as the theory of *delinking*. In a nutshell, he maintains that democracy under capitalism is impossible in the periphery of the world system. This is the reason why capitalist expansion has brought about not the socialist revolutions expected by Marx and others to break out in the advanced capitalist countries but, rather, "anti-capitalist" revolutions

provoked by the polarization inherent in worldwide capitalist expansion with socially intolerable consequences for the peoples of the peripheries and semi-peripheries of the system. The strategic aims of those revolutions entail delinking from the logic of worldwide capitalist expansion. The process of achieving these aims entails in turn gradual and continual progress of democratization of society through practical management of power and of the economy. [Amin 1991:6.]

Pan-African Unity

This important train of thought needs to be explored in detail; in particular the link between radical democracy and delinking has to be demonstrated in both theory and practice. What has become crystal clear is that the nations of Africa will be unable to solve any of their major problems unless they tackle these on a continent-wide basis. From a totally different point of departure, for example, Martin Bangemann (1992:31), the vice president of the European Communities, concludes that Africa has to rely increasingly on its own strength. Classical development aid can never be more than the proverbial "drop in the bucket," and private capital will not come in because "national home markets in Africa are too small to attract investors." His recommendation, not surprisingly, is strong regional blocs in order to make these areas more attractive to investors.

Whether or not this happens and because of the problem of conditionality, our longer-term goal must needs be a genuine Pan-African unity of the peoples of the continent. An important starting point would be for all the African states to agree that the whole continent shall be a nuclear-free zone and that all "offensive" weapons be destroyed throughout the length and breadth of the continent. Besides the putative economic and security gains that would flow from such a move, its demonstration effect would be massive in the USA and elsewhere. This is a case of turning a weakness into

strength. By outlawing war and using diplomacy and negotiations for the settlement of disputes among African nations or states, we would be tackling one of the fundamentals of our epoch under the most favorable conditions imaginable. Because Africa is an area where, with the exception of South Africa, no large-scale war industry exists, we would be tackling a manageable problem in the most practical possible way; we would promote the unity of the African people, who are the victims of senseless and avoidable wars, and we would be putting a stop to the insane waste of valuable foreign exchange on weaponry and munitions.

Once such a social movement for peace among the Africans gets off the ground, it will become possible, indeed imperative, to tackle other fundamentals of the continent today. I refer here to the questions of ecological preservation, especially the fight against desertification, health provision, especially the fight against AIDS and other forms of plague and, last but not least, we would expose those regimes that are no more than an African mask behind which malign foreign interests hide their rule.

It is essential that the search for Pan-African unity in the course of this second wave of liberation be based upon the struggle against those material conditions that hold the people of the continent in bondage. In this way, the people themselves, the urban and especially the rural poor, will become involved directly in their own liberation. Unity cannot simply be forged in the drawing rooms of conference halls or in the corridors of power more generally. It has to be built from below. And unity of the people of Africa is the precondition for the liberation of the continent from the divide-and-rule strategies that have subjugated our people ever since 1416, when the first dot of African territory was conquered by a European army.

If this generation succeeds in promoting the realistic program of action I have sketched here, a new world order will indeed be initiated from out of Africa. The apparently unbreakable chain of a world system of exploitation and oppression that began quite literally with the chains that enslaved so many millions of our people and forced them out into the diaspora will be broken at its weakened link.

I have used or referred to the notion of "dilemma" repeatedly in this address. In the period we are living in and for the next few years, this is as it should be. For many of the certainties and the verities of yesterday have been blown away by the stormy events of this last decade of the 20th century. We are exploring new ways of solving the riddle of constructing the just society. In this voyage of discovery, Africa is no longer the *Maison des Esclaves* ["House of Slaves"] of the world, no longer the heart of darkness. Just as our continent was the cradle of humanity and one of the main sources of world civilization, so it can and will become a source

of renewal, a bridge to the rediscovery of the oneness of the human species. □

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Political Program of the Brazilian Workers Party

Our Socialism

*Editors' Note: The following document is reprinted, with some minor changes for reasons of style, from Michael Löwy, ed., **Marxism in Latin America**, translated by Michael Pearlman (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993), where it first appeared in English. According to Löwy's commentary, this program 'was approved by the Seventh National Conference of the Brazilian Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), which took place in May 1990. The result of a public debate between the various tendencies of the PT, it was approved by a wide consensus at the conference. It reaffirms the party's commitment to socialist aims at the moment of the historic collapse of so-called actually existing socialism. Although inspired by a Marxist anticapitalist tradition, it expresses a pluralist political culture, looking forward to a democratic and libertarian socialism. It is one of the most significant and rich documents of the 'new thinking' developing in the Latin American left at the end of the twentieth century.' We hope to offer further articles and discussions of the PT in future issues of this magazine.*

This resolution proposes to reaffirm our judgment of the capitalist system, consolidate our party's accumulated views on the socialist alternative, identify the fundamental historical and ideological challenges to the socialist cause, and propose a broad debate in the PT and in Brazilian society on the concrete transcendence of these challenges.

1. The PT was created with radically democratic goals. We arose fighting the military dictatorship and bourgeois oppression, demanding respect for political freedom and social rights in the streets and the workplaces. We grew denouncing the conservative transition and building the foundation for popular sovereignty. In its ten years of existence, the PT always has been in the vanguard of the struggles for the democratization of Brazilian society: against censorship, for the right to strike, for freedom of expression and the right to protest, for amnesty, for multi-party democracy, for an autonomous Constituent Assembly, and for free and direct elections. We became a great mass party denouncing the expropriation of the rights of citizens by state power, the shackling of the unions to the state apparatus, and the trade union tax. Various comrades have given their lives in the workers' struggle for democracy: Santo Dias, Wilson Pinheiro, Margarida Alves, Father Josimo, Chico Mendes, and many others. At the root of our party's project is precisely the goal of making Brazil a democracy worthy of the name, because democracy has a strategic value for the PT. For us, it is simultaneously a means and an end, an instrument of transformation and a goal to be realized. We have learned with our own flesh that the bourgeoisie has no real historic commitment to democracy. The relation of the dominant elites to democracy is purely tactical: they take the democratic road when it pragmatically suits them. Actually, democracy is above all in the interests of the popular masses. Today, it is indispensable to deepen its material and political gains. This will be fundamental in overthrowing the unjust and oppressive society in which we live. It will also be decisive in the future for instituting a qualitatively superior democracy, to assure that the social majorities in fact rule the socialist society for which we are struggling.

2. The democratic calling of the PT nevertheless goes beyond the political slogans it has defended and still defends. Its internal organization also expresses our libertarian commitment. It reflects the constantly renewed commitment of the leadership and rank-and-file militants to make the PT itself a free and participative society: a precedent for another, larger one we propose to inaugurate in the country. In opposition to the monolithism and verticality of the traditional parties, even many left organizations, the PT seeks to practice internal democracy as an indispensable requisite for democratic conduct in social life and in the exercise of political power. The same is true for the relation of the party to its social bases and to civil society as a whole. Although it was born through the strength of the union and popular movements and maintains powerful ties of inspiration, interest, and dialogue with them, seeking to offer political leadership, the PT refuses in principle to constrict their autonomy and treat them as clients or transmission belts.

3. Another innately democratic dimension of the PT is its ideological-cultural pluralism. We are in fact a synthesis of libertarian cultures, united in our diversity. Different currents of democratic and revolutionary thought — Social Christianity, various Marxisms, non-Marxist socialisms, democratic radicalism, secular theories of revolutionary action, etc. — joined together to create the PT as an expression of their concrete, more-or-less institutionalized social subjectivities. The ideology of the party does not unilaterally express any of these sources. The PT does not have an "official" philosophy. The different theoretical formations live in dialectical tension, with no lack of dynamic syntheses on the level of concrete political work. What unites these various libertarian political cultures, not all of which are textually codified, is the common project of a new society to encourage the end of all exploitation and oppression.

4. This basic commitment to democracy also makes us anti-capitalist, in the same way our choice of anti-capitalism unequivocally determines our struggle for democracy. One of the most powerful stimuli to our organiza-

tion as a political party with an alternative project of government and power was our discovery (practically, rather than theoretically, for the majority of PT members) of the structural perversity of capitalism. This was and still is an indignant response to the unnecessary suffering of millions as a logical consequence of capitalist barbarism. Concrete historical experience — in other words, the negative lesson of the "Brazilian miracle" and so many other tragic examples in national and international life — taught us that capitalism, whatever its material strength, is unjust and exclusive by vocation, naturally averse to the fraternal division of social wealth that is the premise of any authentic democracy.

It is this capitalist oppression that results in absolute misery for more than a third of humanity. It is imposing new forms of slavery upon Latin America that have reduced per capita income by 6.5 percent in recent years, forcing various countries back to levels of 20 years earlier. It is the capitalist system, based ultimately on the exploitation of man by man and the brutal commercialization of human life, that is responsible for odious crimes against democracy and human rights, from Hitler's crematoria to the recent genocide in Southern Africa, leaving aside our sadly famous torture chambers. And Brazilian capitalism, with its predatory dynamic, is responsible for the hunger of millions, illiteracy, marginality, and the violence that pervades all levels of national life. It is capitalism that maintains and deepens the objective foundation of social inequality in Brazil.

For this very reason, the founding documents of the PT — its Manifesto and Fundamental Program — already advocated the overthrow of capitalism as indispensable for the full democratization of Brazilian life. While our major documents did not deepen the internal outline of this socialist alternative, the PT's historical goal was already clearly socialist at its birth. And the following ten years of difficult and impassioned social struggle have only confirmed the PT's anti-capitalist option and strengthened our commitment to this transformation.

5. This anti-capitalist conviction, the fruit of Brazil's bitter social experience, also made

us critical of Social Democratic proposals. Today's Social Democratic currents present no real perspective for the historical transcendence of capitalism. They have falsely thought it possible to arrive at socialism through government and state institutions, especially the parliament, without mobilizing the masses at the base. They have trusted in the neutrality of the machinery of state and the compatibility of capitalist efficiency with a peaceful transition to another economic and social logic. In time, they even have stopped believing in the possibility of a parliamentary transition to socialism and have abandoned, not the parliamentary road, but socialism itself. A critical dialogue with such mass currents is certainly useful for the workers' struggle on the world scale. But its ideological project does not correspond to the anti-capitalist convictions or the emancipatory objectives of the PT.

6. At the same time, our strategic commitment to democracy — the democratic identity of the PT — led us to disavow the supposed models of so-called "actually existing socialism." We never ignored the fallacy of the term. The conservative media use it to facilitate their ideological struggle against any historical project that rises against capitalist rule. According to its detractors, socialism, whenever it materializes, must be fatally averse to the ideals of progress and liberty. This is a reactionary idea that we vehemently repudiate. Having said, this, the expression "actually existing socialism," in its abstract generality, does not consider national peculiarities, different revolutionary processes, various economic and political contexts, etc. It equates different experiences of social transformation that are heterogeneous in their character and their results, discrediting historical conquests that surely are not irrelevant for those people who obtained them. Some of these self-proclaimed socialist experiences originated in popular revolutions, whereas others occurred through the defeat of Nazi Germany and the occupation of these countries by the Soviet Army, which redrew the political map of Europe and gave birth to the so-called socialist bloc controlled by the USSR. In some national processes, the masses gained a not dishonorable influence over the course of national life. And the Sandinista experience certainly deserves a special evaluation and a positive appraisal to the extent that it assured an unprecedented political and civil equality to the Nicaraguan people.

The PT supports the struggle of the workers and the peoples for their liberation and assumes the defense of authentic revolutionary processes, but with total political independence, fully exercising its right of criticism. This is why the PT, since its foundation, identified the majority of experiences of "actually existing socialism" with a theory and practice that is incompatible with our project of libertarian socialism — because of their profound lack of democracy, whether

political, economic, or social; the monopoly of power by a single party, even where there was formally a multi-party system; the symbiosis of party and state; the rule of the bureaucracy, whether a privileged layer or caste; the lack of democracy at the base and of authentic representative institutions; open or veiled repression of ideological and cultural pluralism; and the administration of production through a vertical, authoritarian, and inefficient method of planning. All of this negates the very essence of Petista (PT) socialism.

Our criticism of such historical processes, made in the light of revolutionary struggle and diverse socialist experiences on the international level, has been consistent but limited. The PT was the first Brazilian political party to support the democratic struggle of Polish Solidarity, even though we lack any other ideological affinities. We have fought all attacks on union rights and political, religious, and other freedoms in the countries of "actually existing socialism," for the same reason that we struggle for public freedoms in Brazil. We denounce the premeditated assassination of hundreds of rural workers in Brazil and the crimes against humanity committed in Bucharest or in Tiananmen Square with the same indignation. Socialism, for the PT, will either be radically democratic or it will not be socialism.

The movements that have led the reforms in Eastern Europe justly turned against totalitarianism and economic stagnation, intending to institutionalize democratic regimes and subvert the bureaucratic and ultracentralized administration of the economy. The result of this process remains open, and the political and social debate itself will determine its contours. But the PT is convinced that the changes that have occurred and are still in course in the countries of "actually existing socialism" have a historically positive meaning, although the process, at the moment, is under the hegemony of reactionary currents in favor of capitalist retrogression. Such movements should be valued not because they themselves represent a project for the renewal of socialism, but because they break with political paralysis, openly restore the various actors to the political and social stage, give impulse to democratic victories, and open the perspective of new possibilities for socialism. The political energy liberated by such social mobilizations will not be easily domesticated by IMF [International Monetary Fund] prescriptions or the abstract paradise of capitalist propaganda.

7. Our original ideological equipment, enriched in the course of the political struggle itself and consolidated in the various national party conferences, oriented the work of the PT through the 1980s and guaranteed the conquest of important historical objectives. With the general meaning of our politics — democratic and anti-capitalist — fully established, we chose to progressively build our

concrete utopia: that is, the socialist society for which we are struggling. We wanted to avoid both ideological abstraction, the elitist offense of the traditional Brazilian left, and the frazzled pragmatism characteristic of so many other parties. A purely ideological profundity at the summit would serve no purpose unless it corresponded to the real political culture of our party and social rank-and-file. Besides, the leadership also lacked experience that only the patient, continuous, democratic mass struggle could provide. What legitimizes the strategically defined contours of any socialist project are the radically democratic and revolutionary convictions of broad popular sectors. Without being triumphalist, we could say that this political education, based on the self-education of the masses through their civic participation, was found to be generally appropriate.

8. We recognize the experience on the international level of forces and movements of a democratic, popular, socialist, and libertarian character that identify with the Petista project and with whom we maintain privileged relations. We are now facing unprecedented challenges that we will only overcome through greater political and ideological creativity. We are moving into a new historical period both on the national and international levels, which demands of the PT and all socialist forces an even more audacious and rigorous theoretical discourse.

With the projected restructuring of the Brazilian economy and the current recomposition of interbourgeois hegemony, political debate increasingly occurs over general projects, with notorious ideological implications. But whether it is a matter of the mere "stabilization" of the economy or its "adjustment," what is in play is the very character of Brazil's strategic insertion in the international context, whether as an economic or an ideological project.

On the other hand, to the extent that the PT galvanizes growing sectors of Brazilian society and is given credence as a political alternative for the country, our historic alternative must be more explicit. Many apparently conjunctural challenges — reform of the state, for example, or the struggle for the democratization of landed property — can only in fact be met and overcome in the light of better strategic definitions.

In the same way, the failure of so many experiences of "actually existing socialism" and the conjunctural reinforcement of capitalist ideology — even in a country like ours, a victim of the sharpest and most destructive contradictions of capitalism — call for renewed critical and theoretical efforts that can ethically and historically re-launch the perspective of socialist democracy.

9. But what socialism? What society, what state are we struggling with so much effort to build? How should its productive structure be

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Human Rights and Economic Development in the Late Twentieth Century

by H. Sriyananda

Editor's Note: We are pleased to present an analysis by a prominent Sri Lankan activist who is a leader of the Organization to Protect Life and the Environment and of the Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. Dr. Sriyananda, dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at the Open University of Sri Lanka, is also a member of the NSSP (Sri Lankan Socialist Party), a mass party affiliated with the Fourth International. This article first appeared in the July-September 1993 issue of the NSSP's magazine Lanka Left Review.

Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is a substantial island country to the southeast of the Indian coast. Its population is over 16 million, with serious and violent ethnic conflicts between its Sinhalese majority (74 percent) and Tamil minority (18 percent); the government has used these conflicts to launch periodic repression. Close to half of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, with others engaged in significant manufacturing and mining sectors. There is a very strong Marxist tradition among intellectuals and workers in Sri Lanka, where the Trotskyist movement has had very strong roots. We hope to have articles on Sri Lanka and the NSSP in future issues of this magazine.

Professor Sriyananda's strictures against violence should be understood in the context of a devastating 10-year war between Tamil rebels and the central government in which 50,000 people have been killed — and in which some currents among the oppressed Tamil minority have resorted to fairly indiscriminate violence, kidnappings, and assassinations (including against NSSP militants), which parallel antidemocratic government policies. Readers will note that the author also makes passing reference to Cuba as being organized according to the Stalinist model and implies that "consumerism" (including that of the working class) is partly responsible for the degradation of our planet's ecology — views which may generate critical response from some supporters (and editors) of our magazine.

Professor Sriyananda makes four references in this article with which some readers may be unfamiliar. (1) This article was originally presented as a memorial lecture for a prominent human rights activist, Kanthasamy, who "disappeared" (and was presumably murdered) some years ago. (2) The Sixth SARC Summit refers to a meeting of the South Asian Regional Corporation — concerned with questions of political policy and economic development — made up of government representatives from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. (3) Francis Fukuyama's 1989 essay "The End of History," published in book form in 1992, is a very influential neoconservative analysis arguing that liberal capitalism has been proved to be the only viable form of economic development. (4) "Communalism" is a term utilized especially in South Asia for pitting one's own ethnic community against others, seeking to exclude others or force them to assimilate to one's own culture.

As you are all aware, today is the fifth anniversary of the disappearance of Kanthasamy, which took place on the morning of the 19th of June, 1988, at Jaffna, and this is the fifth memorial lecture in his honor. It was both a great surprise and an honor to me to be invited to deliver this lecture today on the topic Ethnic Conflict, Human Rights, and Development in Sri Lanka.

These are of course all matters that were of great importance in the life and work of Kanthasamy. Today they are of even greater importance in the everyday lives of the people not only of this country, but all over the world, and especially in the lives of two-thirds of the people who inhabit this earth but find themselves marginalized and categorized as "developing." I consider it very important that we understand the interrelationships among these factors. In the absence of such understanding, "development" itself has contributed to the rise of more and more conflict situations and to an increase in the incidence of violations of human rights. The issues relating to ethnic conflicts, to human rights, and to development are today not peculiar to Sri Lanka, and I see a very distinct pattern in their intensification all over the world. I think it will be useful to look at, even briefly, the global picture while at the same time giving more attention to local issues.

Historically, most economists and professional analysts have ignored the relationship

between human rights and development, even though they have been rather obvious to an independent observer. This last fact can be further borne out by the classical literary works of authors such as Dickens, Gorky, and Brecht. Brecht's "Three Penny Novel," set in England during the Industrial Revolution, with its disappearances, murders, corruption, and political intrigue, might as well have been set in contemporary Sri Lanka. That is why we cannot isolate the issues relating to human rights from the rest of the political agenda, but have to look at the totality of issues, with particular emphasis on "development."

The Triumph of Liberal Consumer Capitalism?

For most governments and indeed for most political movements, from the extreme right to the left, there is no ambiguity regarding what constitutes development. It simply means increased per capita GNP, increased consumption, and generally, catching up with the United States. Most of the debate is about how this can be done best. This was partly the tragedy of the Soviet Union and its satellites.

This has been the basis on which Francis Fukuyama, the best-known advocate of "the new liberalism," has attempted to justify his political philosophy and his vision of "the new world order."

The following is a very brief summary of Fukuyama's famous essay "The End of History," written before the final collapse of the Soviet Union:

1. In the past, Western liberalism has been challenged by fascism and communism. Both these have been decisively beaten, and liberalism has emerged as the undisputed victor. There are no new concepts to challenge liberalism, except perhaps Islamic fundamentalism, which cannot be taken seriously.
2. The victory of liberalism is self-evident. Fascism has been defeated militarily, and the two major Communist states, the Soviet Union and China, only pay lip service to Marxism. Even though they are not liberal states as yet, they no longer believe in their Marxist slogans and accept the supremacy of liberalism.
3. Hegel propounded the theory of directed history, which was borrowed by Marx, who attributed the progress of history to the action of material forces. Marx saw a communist utopia at the end of history. Hegel, on the other hand, saw ideology as the moving force of history. The victory of liberalism over all other ideologies demonstrates the correctness of Hegel's theories as opposed to those of Marx.
4. The victory of (political) liberalism is both the cause and the effect of "the universal homogeneous state" which in turn is the

result of (economic) liberalism; universal consumerist culture is the "ultimate" culture.

5. Universal liberalism means that the nation states will not use force or the threat of force in their dealings with each other. Future armed conflicts will be confined to the still undeveloped parts of the world and will be the concern of only such marginal peoples as the Kurds, the Tamils, the Sikhs, and the Palestinians.
6. History of the human race has come to an end with the triumph of political and economic liberalism and the advent of the homogeneous universal culture.

The above summary of Fukuyama's thesis brings out its contradictions very clearly. He argues on behalf of ideology as opposed to materialism, but bases his strongest case for the inevitable victory of liberalism on the hegemony of the television set and the video cassette recorder. He also misrepresents Marx's "direction of history."

Marxism and Cultural Diversity vs. Capitalist Triumphalism

It is inconceivable that any serious thinker would have advocated a fatalistic theory where, in addition, any one factor, however important, would uniquely define the flow of history. As shown above, Fukuyama himself seems to endorse the theory that material forces and modes of production (and consumption) control the direction in which society moves. However, it is certainly not sufficient that objective conditions exist for any change in the balance of forces, but equally important, there has to be a movement of peoples (the vanguard party in the case of Marxist theory) which utilizes these objective conditions for the achievement of selected goals.

To me, Fukuyama's references to the "universal homogeneous culture" seem to indicate an almost racist attitude. The least that can be said is that it is chauvinistic. He virtually writes off two-thirds of mankind, those that live in the poor countries of the world. It is certainly true that their contribution to production, and in general, to economic activity, is very small. However, it is also true that the existence of the developed world is very much dependent on the parallel existence of the undeveloped world. His rejection of these influences is much more untenable now than in Marx's time, due to the almost total integration of the world economic order and due to factors affecting resource depletion and environmental degradation. Even in the area of ideology, Fukuyama discounts the existence of these people by consciously marginalizing them. It is, I believe, worthwhile remembering that Che, whose ideas were capable of influencing events on a world scale, originated and worked in such "peripheral" countries as Cuba and Bolivia.

Capitalist Consumerism — A False Solution

Apart from the intrinsic undesirability and the risks involved in propagating a "homogeneous

universal culture," it is also necessary to understand why the dominant Western culture advocated by Fukuyama is in any event unsuitable for such a role. If the majority of the people on Earth can and do adapt such a style of life, the resultant run-down on resources and the damage to the environment will force the collapse of civilization in a very short time. It appears that, contrary to public protestations, international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF] have now realized the impossibility of a global consumer society on the model of the United States.

That is why it can be argued that the advice given by the international lending organizations to the governments of Third World countries is not only wrong and destructive, but also that they are given in bad faith. There are those among us who reject such advice who nevertheless accept that at least the World Bank and the IMF sincerely believe that such advice will result in capitalist development in the Third World. However, the experiences of those countries that have followed such advice during the past decade and also the persistence of the banks in supporting projects that have been proved to be destructive even in terms of conventional analysis, as in the case of the Narmada River project in India, is evidence to prove the insincerity of these organizations. (The World Bank withdrew support for this project in the face of worldwide public agitation by environmental and human rights groups, but not until after it had made sure that the Indian government is capable of going ahead on its own.)

Immediately after the Second World War, they may have been interested in the capitalist development of the world, but now they would have realized that the transformation of the whole world on the model of North America would be an ecological disaster. Hence the need to keep the majority of the people of the Third World in a state of subsistence, while concurrently developing a small subsector in those countries as fully integrated [in the] global consumer society.

Cultural Diversity or Ethnic Conflict

A "universal homogeneous culture" is not desirable in another sense. Just as biodiversity is a necessity for the physical survival of life, so is cultural diversity necessary for the survival of society. Throughout history, the privileged sections of society in almost all countries have used the cultural differences among peoples to keep them from uniting and demanding that such privileges be scrapped. While this exploitation is going on, there is also a simultaneous effort to integrate all those who are economically powerful into a single universal culture. This is the result of market economics, which looks for bigger and bigger markets for its products. Thus, the powerful even in the poor countries are being integrated into a global consumer market while the others are deliberately marginalized and made to dissipate their energies in

fighting each other. The sooner we realize this, the sooner will we be able to escape from this vicious circle.

This has been so in our own country as in many others. There has been concerted effort to misrepresent and misinform the public on the issue of the rights of the minorities and to confuse the issue deliberately by the use of emotional words and symbols. Words such as *race*, *religion*, *nation*, and *state* have been used interchangeably to mean the same and to imply that only a homogeneous and monocultural entity has any meaning. The reverse of this same argument, that is, that a minority which possesses a homogeneous culture of its own then has a right of self-determination, is simultaneously denied.

Examples of this type of manipulation can be found as wide apart as Sri Lanka, India, Spain, Canada, Yugoslavia, and Iraq, and thus this problem has to be viewed in a global perspective. Only a decade or so ago, violent eruptions due to the inability of the modern nation state to deal adequately with the problems of the minorities were generally confined to the countries of the Third World. It is no longer so. The accentuation of this problem can be seen clearly to be a result of the deterioration of the economic condition. This is so not only in the Third World, the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but also in Western Europe and North America.

These two tendencies, the implementation of the "new economic policy" [of the capitalist market] and the suppression of the minorities have been instrumental in the high incidence of the violation of human rights on a global scale. However, as in the case of most other issues, the problem is more severe in the poorer countries. It is also related to the extent to which internal democracy prevails within the community.

Bourgeois Democracy, Repression, Bigotry

Human rights and democracy are directly related to each other. In all existing societies, they are also related to the structure of power. When there is no threat to the power elite, it is easier to maintain the status quo within a democratic framework and this is consciously exploited for the preservation of the existing order. During such periods the rule of law prevails, democratic institutions function, and there is general respect for human rights. However, the moment the power structure is threatened, all these façades are abandoned, and brute force is used to maintain the elite in power. This is why there exists a certain measure of democracy and of respect for human rights in the West, as opposed to the situation prevailing in the rest of the world, including Sri Lanka. It is totally incorrect to argue, as most governments of Third World countries have been arguing recently, that Western norms of human rights do not apply in their countries and that their cultural and other traditions are different. If at all, we in Asia are heirs to a much more tolerant history and culture and

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From the Arsenal of Marxism

The Triple Revolution: Developing a Transitional Program for the Late 20th Century

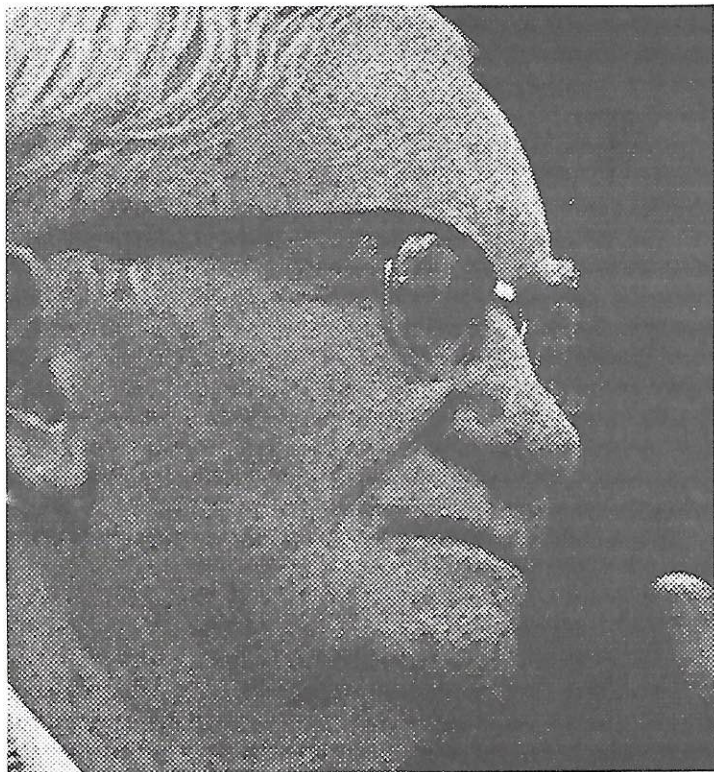
by James P. Cannon

The following is the text of a talk given at the West Coast Vacation School of the Socialist Workers Party (in northern California) September 4, 1964. The talk was transcribed for BIDOM by Lee DeNoyer from an audiotape of nearly 30 years vintage, and a few passages where the words were inaudible have been indicated.

[Cannon's talk was preceded by the following remarks by Asher Harer.]

The speaker for tonight, summarizing the discussion of today, is James P. Cannon, national chairman of the Socialist Workers Party, a founding member of the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World], a founding member of the Communist Party of America, and a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party of America. He has spent many long years in the labor movement as a union organizer and as a socialist agitator, propagandist, teacher, and writer. The title of his presentation tonight is "What Next? Political Implications and a Practical Program of Action That Flows From The Triple Revolution Manifesto." That is certainly a mouth-filling title and what we are about to hear will fill our minds and I'm sure will instruct us in the future.

After such a flattering introduction I can hardly wait to hear what I'm going to say. (Laughter.) Being an Irishman, I know that it's larded with a lot of blamey. And though we like to hear it, we don't take it too seriously (because we feel we merit at least ten percent of it).



James P. Cannon

The document under discussion today, which was introduced by Mr. [William] Worthy this morning and which most of you have read, I assume, by now, is, in my opinion, perhaps the most important new contribution to social thought that's been made this year, and perhaps for several years, in this country. It's all the more significant and, in my opinion, all the more effective and useful because of its source. This devastating indictment of the social system as it operates in America today did not come from a group of disgruntled radicals or revolutionists, but from a group of thinkers who wrote it for the benefit of the rulers of this country, calling their attention to some facts which they had digested and analyzed, and explaining to them that something would have to be done far more seriously, of a far more thoroughgoing nature than they had even contemplated yet. The real bosses of the country were so busy counting their extra profits that they had forgotten to ask themselves the old question that the learned politicians used to ask, "Whither are we drifting?"

The men who were assembled at Santa Barbara, in our own state, in that rich man's town, in plush quarters, had gathered together and, you might say, computerized some of the facts and gave them a terrible looking tape. And just because of its origin in Santa Barbara at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, which is a highly respected subordinate branch of the Fund for the Republic, it has already been widely publicized and its central theme has not been missed by anybody.

Its central theme is that it's necessary to change the value standards of modern society as a result of the multiplied productivity of modern production made possible by automation linked to computers, which they call the cybernetic revolution.

The central theme is that the old Protestant ethic of income only for productive work performed must give way to the right of every citizen to an adequate income, because work for all cannot be provided no matter what they do, and that the possibility of employing people in the given numbers grows less as the computers are multiplied and made more efficient and labor is displaced.

The Triple Revolution Manifesto is a warning from inside their house that if they do not change their standard of values, that if they do not recognize that the people displaced by automation are entitled to compensation sufficient to assure a decent living, they are headed for a crisis of chaos and disorder.

Those are the words of the scholars, not those of a soap box agitator from the IWW. Those are the words of the scholars who are working, and I'm happy to tell you, at the expense of an institution paid for out of funds left by the late Henry Ford. And that proves something to me. That proves that Ford's worth more dead than alive! (Laughter.)

Now what should we, radicals, revolutionists, and fighters for the rights of Negroes in the human rights movement, what should we do with this document that has been prepared from the other side of the fence, so to speak? I say we should grasp it with both hands without any further delay and put it to our own uses. And that goes not only for the party that I represent. I think it applies equally to the Negro movement, which has reached a point in its development where it has either got to do some more thinking for itself or appropriate some of the thinking of others, as I'm proposing we do. These others are the signers of the document on the Triple Revolution.

Sectarianism vs. Revolutionary Marxism

It doesn't come easy for American radicals to take ideas from other people. There's a certain traditional conservatism, which goes by the name of sectarianism. By the way, sectarianism is often misunderstood. A lot of people think it means extreme radicalism. I had a talk with Comrade Trotsky once about that. I recalled that Lenin had said that ultra-leftism is just the other side of the coin from opportunism. He [Trotsky] was asking me to stop over in England on the way to the World Congress in '38, where they had four different groups calling themselves Trotskyists, and asked me to see if I could use my good offices to effect a unification among them, at least long enough to have them send a united delegation to the founding congress of the Fourth International. I had been reading some of their literature and I said to Comrade Trotsky, "You know, I get the impression that all of these groups are afflicted with the traditional sectarian sickness of British radicalism. And it's a *conservative* sectarianism." And he answered me quite abruptly. He said, "Well, you know it's very hard to find a *revolutionary* sectarian."

Why, we used to be so damn radical in this country that before the First World War, about the time of 1912 or 1913, Victor Berger, the reformist socialist from Milwaukee, was elected as the first socialist congressman, and one of his first actions was to introduce a bill for old age pensions. And the left wing of the Socialist Party and the IWW denounced this at the top of their voices as nothing but a damn reform and we wouldn't take anything less than the whole socialist package. Why, even the great Bill Haywood himself wrote an article in the *International Socialist Review* with the heading "Against Old Age Pensions." I wouldn't dare to show an article like that to a recipient of Social Security today!

Do you know that the American Federation of Labor under the philosophy of Gompers and later of William Green had a schematic conception that the government should keep out of the relations between the unions and the employers altogether, and that when the terrible crisis of 1929 and the '30s broke out and the demand began to be made for unemployment insurance — by this time by the radicals who had learned a little something — it was officially opposed by William Green, the president of the American Federation of Labor, on the grounds that that would mean government interference in what should be the free play of collective bargaining between helpless unions and all-powerful bosses? I have not yet heard, and I don't think there is one case on record, of a member of the AFL-CIO today who has not only not refused to take his unemployment check, but who's been five minutes late to collect it! I don't think so. We've learned a little, and we've got to learn to take what's good wherever we can find it.

That's one of the things that we learned from Lenin, one of the many things. In 1917 when the Bolsheviks took over the government of Russia, they represented the majority of the working class

organized in the soviets, but they needed the support of the peasantry, which was the overwhelming majority of the country. I will just quote directly from a remark made by Trotsky in an article he wrote in 1923. He said, "Bolshevism began with a program of the restitution of bits of land to the peasants, replaced this program with that of nationalization, and then made the agrarian program of the Social Revolutionists its own in 1917." The party of the Social Revolutionists was a peasant party, bitterly opposed to the Bolsheviks, and the Bolsheviks took their land program and put it into law as a decree. And the Social Revolutionary politicians hollered bloody murder; 'You're stealing our program!' And Lenin, who with all his other great merits had a sense of humor, answered them. With a straight face, but a twinkle in his eye, he said, 'Did we ever promise that if you had anything good we wouldn't take it?' (Laughter.) So that's our precedent, so to speak, for appropriating the program of the Triple Revolution.

Automation, Unemployment, Poverty

Now I think you've been told before, and you've read — if you read anything that's published in this country — that we are the richest country in the world. And you know from all the evidence around you every day, brought to a focus by the two conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties, that we're not only the richest country in the world, but we're also the most conservative country. But this document on the Triple Revolution reminds us what some of us have already known, that there's a terrible instability about this rich and powerful country. A terrible feeling of insecurity and fear on every side. Not only among the poor, not only among the workers who've got jobs, but also among those who've got money and are afraid they're not going to be able to keep it. That's the real motive force behind the Goldwater movement: fear, insecurity. They've got more money than they can count, but they want to make sure that they can keep it all. So they want to abolish the income tax, cut government spending, do away with public welfare, and all the rest that costs money, out of fear for the future.

We had a film here last night or the night before on the results of automation, taken not yesterday, but seven years ago in 1957. It was an hour-long film presided over by Edward R. Murrow, showing scenes of automatic processes in bakeries and other industries, and it showed, I think, two meetings, one a meeting of bakers after he had shown us a bakeshop with loads of dough coming down on two endless rivers of a moving belt, moving from the origin place without human intervention anywhere down to the ovens and then coming up baked as bread. And there was a meeting of union bakers discussing that. And they were not children; they looked like substantial men of family of 40 and 50. They were discussing, "What is this going to do for us?" There was one thing that you could see on the faces of all these men who in the prime of life ought to be the picture of confidence and optimism. Fear was on every face. And everyone who spoke up at the meeting wondered, "What's going to happen to us if we lose our jobs, our seniority, our medical benefits, our pension rights, and so on?" The same thing was repeated in a meeting of auto workers. That was *seven* years ago when the cybernation revolution was just trying out its wings for the first time.

Since then it has moved at an accelerated speed, and you can imagine from the facts and the figures that are given to us by the authors of the Triple Revolution Manifesto how the men in the shops with jobs and seniority rights, how secure they feel and how happy and contented they may be. Then we heard our comrade

speak the other day when we were talking about the state of the unions, how the men in his shop at Chevrolet had voted 98 or 99.5 percent to strike. They've got jobs. They're privileged in comparison to the unemployed. They've got seniority. They've got pension rights and medical benefits. And yet they were so dissatisfied that they were angry at the union for calling for a showdown first at Chrysler. They wanted a strike in Chevrolet first. And the Ford workers voted almost exactly by the same percentage to be the first to go out on strike. In this richest country in the world, where they tell us everybody ought to be happy.

Another important document contributing to social thought the past year has been the book written by Michael Harrington, the Social Democrat and former social worker, called *The Other America*, a study of poverty in America. I've been reading that book for the last month, very closely and attentively, and it's a harrowing revelation. Harrowing. He gives the government figures — [backward and forward], upside down, cross-checked, and proved in every other way — that at least 25 percent of the population of this richest country in the world live below the poverty level. That means about 40 or 45 million people in this rich and powerful country, 45 million human beings that America has not provided a decent existence for: the old and the sick, the young and the unemployed.

Now we have the figures on unemployment given to us. We've got two sets of figures. One is the official government set. It says the rate of unemployment is about 5 percent, hovering around that, a little above and below, in a period of boom. And the authors of the Triple Revolution say, not in my language, but in their own polite academic language, "That's all a damn lie! The rate is not 5 percent; it's closer to 10 percent, because the government figures include only those who are registered and applying for work, and there are at least the same number who have gotten tired of looking for work, have given up and quit. They're not only taken off the payrolls of the factories; they're even taken off the list of the unemployed. They're the forgotten people." The projection of these figures, from the document on the Triple Revolution, shows that this is going to mount, allowing for what I consider the impossible, allowing the present industrial boom to continue and even go a little higher, that the number of jobs eliminated by cybernation, on the one side, and the oversupply of products of the baby boom of the postwar years coming into the market is going to add anywhere from 2 to 3 million to the unemployed list — every year.

This is only 1964. Where are we going to be in 1970, if we live that long? There may be a couple of million more added every year to the unemployment list. The unemployment slag heap, as some call it. And what is far more likely, in view of fact that Europe and Japan are also increasing their productivity through automation and cybernation, and that the world market competition becomes more severe and America can't sell its goods abroad as freely as it has in the postwar years and they run into a recession or a depression, whatever they want to call it, and have to close down some of their production — you're going to have a tremendous reservoir of millions and millions and millions of people without prospect, without hope.

The authors of this document, gentlemen and scholars as they are, go so far as to say that all the talk about creating new jobs is a cruel hoax, that they're not creating new jobs. On the contrary, they are cutting off more jobs all the time.

Now I see this seething mass not as a number of figures in the government statistics, but as a mass of human misery and frustra-

tion and desperation and anger that's going to look for some kind of action, some kind of solution, and there you have the raw material ready to hand either for a fascist movement, led by some demagogue who will promise them anything they want, or [for] a revolutionary movement that will offer them a realistic program of struggle to change things fundamentally.

The African-American Struggle

I see in the fact that this development of the productive system at the expense of the employment of workers, which hits the Negroes twice as hard as it hits the whites, and the anger, the protests, the frustration, and even the desperation that rises out of these terrible ghettos. I can see the danger of a racial conflict which will be completely destructive all the way around. And I take it to be one of our central tasks as Marxists to strive with all our might to see that the movement of protest takes a different direction: the direction of unity of the oppressed Negroes and the unemployed and oppressed white people in a common battle and not in a racial conflict.

Now, brotherhood has been preached for, I guess, at least two thousand years, but I don't know much brotherhood that's ever been achieved that way. You hear every pompous politician — even including Barry Goldwater — say the way to end the racial conflict is to bring about a change in the hearts of men. Try that on a Kluxer [Ku Klux Klan member] or a cracker. Try changing the heart of people who profit by the superexploitation of the Negro. It doesn't work that way.

But brotherhood has existed in this world. You see it whenever you're out on the picket line. You see brothers who may not like each other very well in the shop, but when they're out on the picket line protecting their jobs and their welfare against scabs, they work together in great shape. The material basis for unity in action, the basis for brotherhood — if you want to extend it to its ultimate extreme — is common interest and common need. When you have that, you got something to go on.

This was illustrated for me very graphically by a story told me by Herbie Hill, the labor secretary of the NAACP. He was down in Birmingham at the time of the big struggles there, investigating particularly the state of the unions, and how the Negroes were represented in the different unions. He said he discovered that the most desegregated union in Birmingham, where the Negroes were employed most freely and on equal terms, was the Brotherhood of Teamsters. He went to see the head business agent and asked him, "How come that you're different from some other unions here and don't discriminate against Negroes." He said, "Well, I'll tell ya, boy," — Now this is not my language, I'm quoting literally — He said, "We ain't nigger lovers, but when we fight these goddam bosses we need all the muscle we can git. And some of these Black boys have sure got it."

He told me another story, along the same lines almost, of a big, husky Negro steel worker just coming off a hard day's work, getting on a bus and plopping himself down on the front seat. The bus driver turned to him and said, "Now listen, boy. Be reasonable. Let's not have any trouble. Go to the back of the bus." The Negro steel worker just stood up to his full height and looked down at the bus driver and said, "Boy, let me tell you something. I ain't one of these peace-lovin' Negroes you've been hearin' about." And the bus driver pushed down the button and the bus rolled on.

The Class Struggle

Now, I say the basis for brotherhood, or at least for cooperation, for alliance, for united action is common interest and common need, and I think that obtains among the great bulk of the white workers, especially the unemployed and the poor and the lower rungs at least of the workers in the unions, and they number many millions.

While this is somewhat of an intrusion on the subject of tomorrow, it's covered in the Triple Revolution as one element of it, the struggle for human rights. I'm a firm believer in the idea, not only a believer, I'm convinced in my knowledge, that all whites are not the same and that there's a great deal of difference between a man who's walking home with his last unemployment check in his pocket and the owner of the plant that laid him off, and a distinction ought to be made between them. There's a common interest with one, and eternal enmity with the other.

It's become rather commonplace nowadays for some people to cross off the American labor movement with its seventeen and a half million members. I just read a piece the other day that just ruled that out of order — they don't count, they're conservative, contented, privileged — they're never going to do anything.

I say those who doubt the capacity of the American workers to play their historic role in the great social struggles yet to come ought to remember or read about the '30s and the '20s. We went through a prolonged boom in the '20s. Throughout the entire postwar period after the First World War, with the exception of a recession in 1921 which was soon overcome, up to 1929 there was a booming economy and the unions actually declined in membership. There wasn't a trace of militancy except in the depressed industries like textiles and some parts of the coal fields. And a lot of people were saying the same thing then, "You got to write off the working class."

As a matter of fact, the unions didn't extend into the basic industries at all; they were restricted to only a narrow fringe of skilled craftsmen for the most part. Even in Minneapolis, union building tradesmen had to sit by and see the two biggest downtown buildings going up before their eyes, built by nonunion labor.

It was pretty hard to be a revolutionary communist in those days. It was pretty hard to go up against the general feeling of passivity, and against the people continually saying, "The workers will never do anything; they'll never rise." Until there came the depression of 1929. I think you've all heard about that. You've probably got scars from it somewhere, either you or your family.

That depression lasted, with slight upturns, for ten years. That depression hit a working class that was not organized in a single one of the basic industries. The only unions they had were company unions. That is, unions organized by the company with their own stooges in charge of them. A cruel hoax that the workers hated worse than no unions at all. The workers were completely unorganized and atomized, and it took them five or six years, and it took an upturn in the economy when a number of them got back into the plants, before they could begin to manifest a little fighting spirit. In the meantime wages had been slashed mercilessly by the bosses.

They went back to jobs at miserable wages and [with] intolerable conditions. And then in 1934 a few things began to happen. There were sporadic strikes around the country which were smashed. The regular formula was to call out a lot of hoodlums, cops, militiamen, detectives whatever they needed... [several words completely inaudible] ... and they would break the strike. Until the Autolite strike in Toledo in the spring of '34, led by the

Musteites, a radical political organization. They were also the leaders of an unemployment movement, the Unemployed Leagues, which they brought into cooperation with the pickets of the plant, and the strike was won by militant action. And then the Minneapolis strikes in '34 ... [and the San Francisco maritime and general strike.] [Tape becomes inaudible again for a sentence or more.] ... which shook this country because these were three American strikes that weren't broken, but were won. And I read the other day in a biography of John L. Lewis by Saul Alinsky, who said that John L. Lewis noticed these three strikes and saw in them a future trend and that influenced him greatly toward throwing his support to the Committee for Industrial Organization that later became the CIO.

And from that beginning mushroomed the uprising of the workers which culminated in the sit-down strikes of '36, '37, '38 — in rubber, steel, auto — and finally in 1941 the organization of the Ford plant and the solid construction of the CIO.

I've always called the rise of the CIO a semi-revolution. If there had been adequate leadership, nobody knows where it might have ended. *I just simply discard the idea that the workers will not move if the squeeze is put on them.*

In the long-drawn-out postwar boom since World War II, propped up by enormous military expenditures and foreign loans and other government spending, you know, the \$50-odd billion military budget is the real cushion on which the whole economy rests. If disarmament were declared tomorrow and they stopped spending money for military preparations, there would be the biggest crisis in history.

Now in the light of the material given to us in this document on the Triple Revolution, where they predict chaos and turmoil unless people are provided with compensation where they can't be provided with jobs, I think it's fitting for us, who try to think about social problems and try by our thinking and our actions to influence the course of development, to ask who will spark the next upsurge of the American working class as a whole? My personal opinion is that it will take a somewhat different direction than it did in the '30s. It is quite likely, as a matter of fact, I think almost certain, that it is going to begin with the organization of the unemployed. You can't have ten million people out of work month after month and year after year and then their number increasing one, two, or three million every year without somebody deciding to do something about it.

And the obvious thing will be to organize the unemployed, as attempts were made in the '30s. There was one unemployment council movement led by the Communist Party, there was another big Unemployed League movement led by the Musteites, there was a third unemployed organization led by the Socialist Party people. And here is a peculiar phenomenon that maybe many of you have forgotten or hadn't heard — that many of the young firebrands who went into this unemployed movement were college students who had graduated or dropped out with no place to go, no jobs in sight, who went into the unemployment movement and there, under the direction of the various political organizations, learned how to organize, learned how to talk, learned how to conduct themselves in meetings, learned how to act as leaders. And later when the industrial rise took place in the mid-'30s under the pump priming of the New Deal, when the factories began to open, these same young college boys — many of them, scores and hundreds of them — went into the factories and became the prime movers in the CIO.

The Logic of Black Nationalism

Now I think they'll do something like that again this time; that the unemployment movement of the '30s will be repeated on a greatly magnified scale. I don't see any reason today, right today, why in Harlem and other ghettos, where 50 percent of the teenage youth are unemployed, according to the figures given from many sources, where the rate of unemployment of Negro adults is twice that of the whites, where they live in these overcrowded, rat-infested houses that are ready to fall apart; they're so cramped and miserable that they go out on the streets because it's more comfortable to stand on the street corner than to stay in the house — I can't see any reason why they don't begin right away organizing something more than the mere demand for civil rights, which formally have been granted, while their economic conditions have been deteriorating year by year in the whole period since 1956, since the civil rights movement began to develop following the Montgomery boycott.

This is the terrible, crying, brutal paradox — that the more militant the Negroes have become, the more they have organized, the more they have asserted themselves, and the more legal gains they have made, the worse has become their economic condition, year by year. That's what's behind these flare-ups, which are simply lightning flashes: heat lightning signifying greater storms.

I can't see why they don't start organizing. And I don't see why there should be any conflict between Negroes and whites. The whites have got to recognize once for all that the Negro people are fed up with the traditional system of organizations dominated by white liberals. They want to have their own organizations and they want to have their own leaders. And if they're going to have any cooperation between them and white workers, we've got to recognize that trend and say it's progressive.

I think they make a certain mistake. They've been terribly disillusioned and let down by the white liberals, who are on hand everywhere calling all the shots until trouble starts and then dropping out or saying, "You're going too far." They tend to judge, I guess, all white people by the white liberals. But you know Heywood Broun, who got into the labor movement in the '30s and helped a lot, the founder, I guess you could call him, of the Newspaper Guild, a great help to the CIO unions wherever they were in trouble. He gave a definition of a liberal that I think is going to stick forever. He said, "A liberal is a man who reaches for his hat when the fight starts!"

Now, I think it's a good thing that the Negro people have learned that, and got disillusioned with them [the liberals], and build their own organizations, beginning [with what] I think is the natural, logical, wide open field for them: the unemployment movement. I don't see why they can't organize it from block to block in Harlem.

Labor Bureaucracy vs. Militant Struggle

Here I come to a disagreement with a minor point in the Manifesto on the Triple Revolution. Among the other things they suggest, without realizing what they were doing, they suggested that the trade union leaders should interest themselves in the unemployment question and negotiate for them. I say that's about the worst thing that could happen to the unemployed. All the negotiating that the labor skates will do for the unemployed is to negotiate them out of the plant to make room for the seniority men. That's what they do in every contract. Every contract that's hailed as a great innovation, beginning with the longshore contract [and going] to the steel contract and other places, is an agreement to

safeguard the jobs of seniority men at the expense of the younger, the newer, the poorer.

I saw Reuther on the film — this was seven years ago, the automation film — and he was pontificating in an interview with Ed Murrow about automation. He didn't seem to have a line of worry on his face. He looked well padded, well groomed, his hair all in order with his greasy kid stuff, and he was talking like a business executive. He said, Something has got to be done. Labor, management, and government have got to get together and work out something. That's seven years ago and they haven't worked out anything yet, and they never will.

The unemployed have got to have their own autonomous organizations. And then the question arises immediately — we're going to take a hand in this, I hope — what can be the program of the first unemployment organizations?

I know the workers of America are not ready to hear the full socialist message. And those comrades in our own ranks of a sectarian bent who answer the arguments of the Triple Revolution by saying nothing will do any good but socialism haven't got anything to say to the worker who isn't ready to hear the socialist program. What we have got to find is what Trotsky called a *transitional* program that will correspond to their present understanding and their present acceptance.

I think the program outlined in the Triple Revolution, that everyone is entitled to work or compensation, will be accepted generally by workers both Black and white, if they're unemployed. I don't think you'll find many that are the least bit worried about somebody calling it a dole. This is not a dole. This is *payment* for the fact that you're a citizen of this country and that you've got a life to live. It's not a beggar's dole; it's a human right! And that's the way it's got to be presented. And the demonstrations for jobs are like pounding your face against a stone wall, when you know and they know and everybody knows that there are no jobs.

We've got to say "Jobs or Compensation." That's the way it's got to be formulated. And if they answer, "How can we give you compensation if you don't produce anything?" We say, "All right, give us jobs." "We can't give you jobs." "Well, what do you want us to do? We're human beings. We're citizens of this great free country. Now let's have a slice of some of the benefits. You got plenty of money. Take it out of General Motors' profits. Cut 20 million dollars out of your military budget and spend it on maintaining the human rights and human dignity of your unemployed citizens thrown out of your factories. Or let the moon alone for a while and spend 20 million dollars making the earth fit to live on." (Applause.)

The organizers and agitators of the unemployment movement under this transitional program have an irresistible argument that will be accepted by the intelligent workers everywhere and for which the bosses can't give much of an answer. Ever since this document was published nearly six months ago, they have been repeatedly commenting on it, but I have never seen anywhere any serious attempt to refute it. Not even this latest article in *Life* magazine. It's been more widely circulated than you realize. *Advertising Age*, which is an organ of big business, reprinted the thing entirely and even went so far as to provide the type for this pamphlet we have here. The business community has heard all about this, and I think they're waiting to see what the workers are going to do about it, especially the unemployed workers.

Developing a Transitional Program

Now, when I agreed to give this speech last week or ten days ago, I knew that I was going to say that this program should be adopted by our party and by other radical organizations and by the Negro movement. I sense a great stalemate in the Negro movement, that their program is too limited for their needs. They have got to adopt a *social* program. It doesn't do the Negroes huddled in the horrible ghettos much good to tell them, "I'm fighting like hell to get you the right to vote," which they've had for years in New York. Or the right to desegregate schools, which they know is not going to be done, and the right to eat a hamburger in a greasy restaurant. What they want is jobs. They want to make a living, or they want to live somehow.

The trouble with the Negro population of this country is not merely discrimination, although that's terrible; the trouble with them is what George Bernard Shaw said many years ago, "The trouble with the poor is their poverty, and the trouble with the rich is their uselessness." (Applause.) I think that the Negro organizations have got to turn their attention to developing a *social program*. And I was going to let it go at that, my first thought, until I picked up last week's *Militant*. And after reading that, I must make a slight correction. I had not seen in any organization in the labor movement or the Negro movement or the radical movement anywhere an outright editorial statement supporting the Triple Revolution's program.

Then I picked up last week's *Militant* and here's what I read — under a dateline, of all places, Meridian, Mississippi. "A freedom school convention assembled here August 6–8. The delegates to the convention, most certainly the first of its kind in Mississippi, or for that matter any state in the South, were teenage Negro freedom school students." They came to a convention in Meridian, Mississippi, where the three civil rights fighters were murdered. Following that they assembled in a freedom convention, and what do you think they adopted as one of the resolutions? Just listen to this: "Among the significant demands raised by the convention were a public works program, on the one hand, and a guaranteed income of at least \$3,000 annually for every citizen." Here in Meridian, Mississippi, teenage Negro children have put themselves at the very head of the entire humanistic movement of America as the first to raise the specific demand for a guaranteed annual income for every citizen.

And further, support to labor was indicated in the following plan: "We will encourage and support more strikes for better jobs and adequate pay. During the strikes, the employers should be enjoined from having others replace the striking workers." Now there's a hit and a miss. One, they're for strikes and support of strikes. And they don't specify only strikes involving Negroes; it's strikes involving workers both white and Black. That's a hit. The miss is, in my opinion, where they say, "The employer should be enjoined from having others replace the striking workers." That is, they should get a court injunction. I know a better way! (Laughter)

Just get some colored men with muscle from the Teamsters union in Birmingham and some Irish Catholics who've forgotten their religion for the moment and put 'em on a picket line! That's the way to keep scabs out of the plant — mass picketing.

But I salute these young teenagers who have adopted for the first time a social program which I am convinced is going to be the transitional program of the entire movement of the disinherited in this country. The transitional program with the demand for either jobs or compensation. And the very fact that they come out

in support of strikes without specifying the color of the people involved shows they're reaching out for allies among the white working class. And God knows they need them. Minorities have played great roles in revolutions in the past, but they haven't always won. They've won in those cases where they've recognized the need for allies.

Now everybody knows that the greatest revolution in history was made in Russia in the name of the working class in 1917. But not everybody knows that the total number of industrial workers in Russia in 1917 was less than three million. Three million industrial workers in a sea of peasants, about 150 million at the time. Now how did they overcome this terrible disparity? They didn't do it by fighting the peasants. They did it by seeking an *alliance* with them. They needed allies, and they offered to the peasants, if you come with us in the revolution, you can take that land you're working for the landlord and chase him the hell off of there. The great slogan that they rallied them with was "Peace! Bread! Land!" — something everybody understood. And when foreign intervention came, and the White Guards tried counter-revolution, and they had to organize a huge army to beat off the invaders from many of the imperialist nations and the White Guards at the same time, they did it with an army primarily of peasants. Because the peasants were given something to fight for: the land, and the promise of peace when they chased off the White Guards, which they did eventually, although it took them four years to do it.

Lenin's genius didn't confine itself to accepting the Social Revolutionaries' land program in order to win the alliance with the peasants. He brought forward his program about the right of nationalities to self-determination. He recognized there's such a thing as a national spirit among the many countries that had been absorbed and assimilated in the old Russian empire. And they proclaimed the right of self-determination. They could decide for themselves whether or not they would come into the Soviet Union. And by the very fact of offering that to them, they made allies out of them. And with such allies, the peasants, the oppressed nationalities, the petty bourgeoisie in the towns, the intellectuals, by offering something to them and inviting them into collaboration, they turned the minority of 3 million workers into a majority that was able to carry through the revolution and to reorganize the whole social system from top to bottom.

Now the demand for jobs or compensation, not a dole, but as they say in Meridian, Mississippi, "\$3,000 a year for every citizen who is unemployed," is a *political* demand. It's not to be addressed to some corner supermarket or some used car lot demanding they put on another salesman or two. It's a political demand addressed by mass demonstrations before the political institutions of the country: the city halls, the state capitals, and the national capital in Washington.

I'm not much of a utopian, or given to indulging in mistaking wishes for possibilities, but I can foresee a great mass of unemployed Negroes marching out of Harlem to meet a similar mass of unemployed whites and march together, each under its own leadership, down to the city hall to tell the mayor they want jobs or compensation. I can see great marches up to the capital of the state of New York in Albany and marches to Washington. And out of demonstrations of that kind, not only will there be a great proliferation of militancy and confidence, but there will come a spirit of solidarity based on common interests and common needs that

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Marxism and the Triple Revolution on the Eve of the Year 2000

by Paul Le Blanc

The crisis of Marxism is a crisis of growth. In order to grow, it must confront new realities, absorb new insights, and leave behind the crusts of analytical assumptions and tactical orientations that were brought into being by a previous stage of reality that no longer exists. Capitalism is the most dynamic of social and economic systems. As Marx and Engels told us in the 1840s in the *Communist Manifesto*: "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all previous ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air..."

What is essential to capitalism has remained, through all of the many transformations that it has undergone since the 18th century, when the Industrial Revolution ensured that it would be the dominant mode of production whose evolution would set the course of world history down to our own time. This is why Marxism remains "the philosophy of our time," as Sartre once put it. The underlying realities which brought it into being remain in place, even as they undergo profound transformations.

Revolutionary Marxists, as opposed to Social Democratic reformists and Stalinist authoritarians, can legitimately insist that the undeniable and massive crisis (to some extent the collapse) of the working-class movement today is not the result of any disastrous policies of genuine Marxism. The organized working class finds itself derailed, and the conception of socialism (whether in the form of the "welfare state" or the form of centralized state-owned economies or in the form of "market socialist" hybrids) finds itself discredited, thanks to the leadership of those associated with Stalin, Khrushchev, and Mao on the one hand and those descended from Bernstein, Kautsky, and Hilferding on the other. The revolutionary socialist banner associated with Lenin, Trotsky, and Luxemburg remains unstained. The problem is, however, that there are very few gathered around that unstained banner, and it is not clear how working class majorities can be regrouped to struggle for political power and socialism in the world in which we find ourselves in the 1990s.

This is the crisis that Marxism faces. But as George Breitman once commented, "Marxism

is a theory *in process of development*, which grows in power and scope as it is applied to specific situations and new conditions" (*Marxism and the Negro Struggle* [New York: Merit Publishers, 1968], p. 18). This defines what must be done at the present time. We must define the new realities that we face, integrating this into a Marxist analysis which can help illuminate future strategic and tactical pathways. As we work toward making such a contribution to the ongoing transformation of Marxism (in process since the time of Marx and Engels), we must ground ourselves in previous contributions which can help us keep our balance in a world where "all that is solid melts into air."

The Triple Revolution

In 1964 a grouping of intellectuals (including several prominent scientists and economists) and activists (largely liberals and Social Democrats, with a few independent radicals) — drawn together by W.H. Ferry of the Fund for the Republic (which was financed by the Ford Foundation) — constituted themselves an Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution and sent a statement to U.S. President Lyndon Johnson and Congressional leaders, which was also released to the public and generated a flurry of discussion in liberal and left-wing circles. The statement declared that "a fundamental reexamination of existing values and institutions" was being necessitated by "three separate and mutually reinforcing revolutions [that] are taking place" and offered a succinct summary:

- *The Cybernation Revolution*: A new era of production has begun. Its principles of organization are as different from those of the industrial era as those of the industrial era were different from the agricultural. The cybernation revolution has been brought about by the combination of the computer and the automated self-regulating machine. This results in a system of almost unlimited productive capacity which requires progressively less human labor. Cybernation is already reorganizing the economic and social system to meet its own needs.
- *The Weaponry Revolution*: New forms of weaponry have been developed which cannot win wars but which can obliterate civilization. We are recognizing only now that the great weapons have eliminated war as a method for resolving international conflicts. The ever-present threat of total destruction is tempered by the knowledge of the final futility of war. The need of a "warless world" is generally recognized, though achieving it will be a long and frustrating process.

- *The Human Rights Revolution*: A universal demand for full human rights is now clearly evident. It continues to be demonstrated in the civil rights movement within the United States. But this is only the local manifestation of a world-wide movement toward the establishment of social and political regimes in which every individual will feel valued and none will feel rejected on account of his race.

The Ad Hoc Committee focused on the so-called "cybernation" revolution, predicting large-scale unemployment and economic dislocations unless a "jobs or income" guarantee was given for all citizens, and greater economic planning initiated. The vision of a more democratic, peaceful, prosperous, and just world was projected as a practical possibility flowing from this "triple revolution." The statement was excerpted in the Social Democratic quarterly *Dissent*, reprinted in full in the radical-pacifist *Liberation* magazine as well as in the summer 1964 issue of the Socialist Workers Party's *International Socialist Review*, and was also extensively and critically discussed in *Monthly Review*.

In an interesting memoir, Spartacist League leader James Robertson has made reference to James P. Cannon's talk at the SWP's 1964 West Coast educational summer camp (reprinted in this issue) asserting: "At that point some members of the SWP were playing with — it sounds so funny today — something called the 'Triple Revolution': poverty's been abolished, war's been abolished, racism's been abolished by new technology. Now there's been this triple revolution, what are we going to do next? Doesn't that sound absurd today? But it's a fancy idea and Cannon was kind of drawn into it." (*Spartacist*, Summer 1986, p. 40.)

Those who actually read the Ad Hoc Committee's statement, and those who read Cannon's discussion of it, will see that Robertson's description is inaccurate. The Ad Hoc Committee didn't say that the problems had been solved, but to the contrary that "these enhanced promises by no means constitute a guarantee. Illuminating and making more possible the 'democratic vistas' is one thing; reaching them is quite another, for a vision of democratic life is made real not by technological change but by men consciously moving toward that ideal and creating institutions that will realize and nourish the vision in living form." In the same period, George Breitman showed how the "triple revolution" perspective could be dealt with in a revolutionary Marxist manner:

The outlook of white workers is going to be altered from two directions. One is from the independent struggle of the Negroes, which

tends to upset the status quo and introduce unsettling elements into class relations. The disrupted patterns of politics in this election year [1964] testify to the power of the independent Negro struggle to disarrange and overturn customary modes of thought and action. Is there any reason to think that white workers will not also be shaken up and divided, and some of them torn out of their ruts, as the Negro struggle continues to develop and explode?

The other and more basic modifying factor comes directly from the operation of the capitalist system itself. In the next decade automation will create vast armies of unemployed and undermine the security of all workers, even those of high seniority, skill and privilege. America's share of the world market will be shrunk by the colonial revolution and from other capitalist countries, and this will drive the capitalists to attack the wage rates and living standards of the employed workers.

Isn't this certain to provoke anti-capitalist sentiments and attitudes, not only among the youth and unemployed, but also among unionists still on the job? Won't such radicalization make white workers more susceptible to suggestions of joint action with the Negro movement? Won't the possibility be opened for a change in the present situation, for united action by the two anti-capitalist movements against the upholders of the system responsible for their common insecurity and misery? [*Marxism and the Negro Struggle*, p. 30.]

This perspective has greater relevance today than it did in the late 1960s or the '70s. Events did not move as quickly or as simply as Breitsman, Cannon, or the Ad Hoc Committee anticipated. The rapid and massive escalation of the war in Vietnam made a mockery of the assertion that technology had made war obsolete. The African American movement, despite stunning victories against "Jim Crow" racial segregation, was unable to improve the economic status and quality of life of the overwhelming majority of U.S. Blacks. This initially had a radicalizing impact (as Cannon and Breitsman predicted). But the combination of reformist leadership (especially through the Democratic Party) and inexperienced or ultraleft alternative leaders, plus government infiltration and repression, as well as the ongoing reality of declining living standards and disappointed hopes, finally resulted in a dramatic downturn in the Black liberation struggle. And the massive unemployment of the highly unionized and well-paid industrial work force failed to materialize in the '60s and '70s.

One of the Ad Hoc Committee members, Michael Harrington, commented in 1972 (in his Social Democratic text *Socialism* [New York: Bantam Books, 1973], p. 445): "We assumed that [automation] would have the obvious effect of producing chronic, and even mass, unemployment. We did not realize the various disguises this trend could adopt. One of them was the war in Vietnam, which carried out a policy many of us had proposed — the direct governmental creation of 1,700,000 jobs — but in a tragic, murderous fashion. Another was this protracted postponement of entry into the labor market on the part of the liberally educated

children of the affluent." (In fact, children of many working-class families were also entering colleges rather than the labor force during the 1960s and '70s.) Optimistic social analysts, such as Daniel Bell, argued that the Ad Hoc Committee had gotten it all wrong, that automation had eliminated some jobs but was helping to create many others in a knowledge- and service-oriented "post-industrial" society. Others drawn to an "orthodox" Marxist analysis concluded that the "triple revolution" had been an optical illusion and that, in fact, the industrial working class was soon destined to move to "center stage," so that serious revolutionaries must seek factory jobs to position themselves for the great "class battles" of the future. (See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* [New York: Basic Books, 1973], and Jack Barnes et al, *Prospects for Socialism in America* [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976].)

By the mid-1970s, for diverse reasons, there was no longer talk of "the triple revolution" among liberals, Social Democrats, independent radicals, or revolutionary Marxists. And yet there were aspects of the "triple revolution" analysis which identified elements of a reality continuing to unfold, regardless of changing intellectual fashions.

The dynamics of the "triple revolution" have worked themselves out in far more complex and grim ways than originally envisioned by the Ad Hoc Committee.

The escalating and expensive *weaponry revolution* evolved in a manner that has helped to bankrupt and destroy the USSR, and which undermined the economic hegemony (while intensifying the military clout) of the United States; the "ultimate meaning" of this particular revolution remains unresolved in the "new world order." It is clear, however, that widespread, murderous conflicts and imperialist interventions (enhanced thanks to further "advances" in weapons technology) have definitely not been done away with.

The *human rights revolution* has stalled and been set back in many ways and in many contexts — and yet it has remained powerful down to the present time, and in some parts of today's world it is an explosive force. Whenever there is a forward movement of peoples struggling for their rights, however, there seem to be hollow victories and increased complexities that block the attainment of genuine liberation.

The so-called *cybernation revolution* (involving dramatic advances in computer and automation technology) has combined with the global restructuring of the economy to impact more profoundly on the economies and the workers of the world than originally anticipated. Internationally there is mass proletarianization and the undermining of workers' organizations and living standards, massive poverty and growing inequality, massive urban blight and degradation of the environment, the increasing loss of control by individuals and local communities over their own destinies.

The "Triple Revolution" statement of the 1964 Ad Hoc Committee concluded: "With the

emergence of the era of abundance we have the economic base for a true democracy of participation, in which men no longer need to feel themselves prisoners of social forces and decisions beyond their control or comprehension." We seem much further from such a world today than ever before.

The Transformation of the World

A substantial summary of data and analysis on the present transformation of our world can be found in Paul Kennedy's recently published best seller *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1993). The author is not a Marxist, and aspects of his study are undoubtedly problematical. He addresses educated elites and policy makers and seems more than a step removed from the working class. A historian born in the north of England, Kennedy now teaches at Yale University, where he has employed a platoon of capable graduate students to help him gather and organize the immense amount of information utilized in this book. A frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *New Republic*, he obviously is animated by many of the same humane values and liberal sensibilities that characterized the members of the Ad Hoc Committee. But he doesn't share their optimism.

Here it will not be possible to give a full account or critique of Kennedy's study. But I do want to touch on three issues to which he gives attention.

One issue involves something about which the "triple revolution" theorists displayed no serious conception — the impact of technological development on the environment in which we live, what Kennedy calls "the earth's thin film of life," which exists precariously on the surface of our planet. Since the late 18th century the Industrial Revolution, interweaving with a dramatic population expansion, has increasingly been altering and undermining the complex ecosystem of the planet, first in the "advanced industrial" capitalist countries, then in the bureaucratically mismanaged "workers' states" and the so-called "developing countries" of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

As we enter the 1990s, the [destructive] trends have intensified; world population has more than doubled since the 1950s, yet world economic activity has more than quadrupled. The population surge in developing countries has encroached upon jungles, wetlands, and broad grazing regions, as more and more people exploit surrounding natural resources. That pressure is intensified by further industrialization in Asia and elsewhere: new factories, assembly plants, road systems, airports, and housing complexes not only reduce the amount of natural land but contribute to the demand for more energy (especially electricity) and more automobiles and trucks, infrastructure, foodstuffs, paper and packaging, cement, steel, ores, and so on. All of this increases the ecological damage: more polluted rivers and dead lakes, smog-covered cities, industrial waste, soil erosion, and devastated forests litter the earth. Since midcentury alone, it is estimated that the world has lost

nearly one-fifth of the topsoil from its cropland, one-fifth of its tropical rain forests, and some tens of thousands of its plant and animal species. And each new investigation...reveals the mounting pressures.

Kennedy expresses concern over such things as deforestation not simply because of his feeling for the intrinsic value of plant and animal life but also because this will undermine the earth's capacity to sustain human life. He warns that "population pressure leading to deforestation would...curb global agriculture's ability to renew itself — and to provide for the additional billions of consumers." It is possible that things can get very, very bad: "While the local and national damage inflicted by acid rain, overgrazing, and water depletion is serious enough, concerned environmentalists nowadays point to what may be the most profound threat of all over the long term: the prospect that human economic activities are creating a dangerous 'greenhouse effect' of global warming, with consequences for the earth's entire ecosystem and for the way of life of rich and poor societies alike."

It is obvious that the expansive economic development fostered by bourgeois industrialization, driven by the antisocial competitiveness and profit motive at the heart of capitalism, are incompatible with the survival of our planet as a habitable environment for future generations. It is also obvious that Marxists (unlike the Stalinist bureaucratic planners who — as Kennedy documents — shamefully polluted the USSR and Eastern Europe) must develop qualitatively better models of economic development than those of the "robber barons" who oversaw the rise of capitalist industrialization in the U.S.

Preparing for the Twenty-First Century also focuses on a reality that was a central focus of the "Triple Revolution" statement.

The "cybernation" revolution to which the Ad Hoc Committee referred is labeled by Kennedy and other contemporary writers as *robotics*. He notes that U.S. manufacturers made early breakthroughs in robotics (which had greatly impressed the "triple revolution" analysts), but then deemed it more profitable to shift in other directions. Japanese manufacturers, on the other hand, have gone increasingly in this direction (due to a labor shortage in their country). Robotics has resulted in productivity that helps give Japanese industry an edge over its competitors in the global market. Kennedy comments:

All this suggests that we may be witnessing the beginnings of a new industrial revolution, involving the automation of the manufacturing process. In many ways, the similarities between the steam engine and the robot are striking. Both are a new way of making things that simultaneously reduces the physical efforts of workers and enhances overall productivity; a process that creates new jobs and eliminates many others; and a stimulus to social change as well as to new definitions of work. Like the steam engine, robotics affect international competitiveness, raising the per capita output of nations that invest heavily in the new technology and

weakening the long-term relative position of those unable to do the same.

One consequence of robotics, Kennedy suggests, "could be to shift the global economic balances away from Britain, France, Italy, and the United States and toward Japan and Germany." He adds: "If Europe's and America's responses to robotics are sporadic and hesitant, they are much better prepared to compete...than societies in the developing world. As with global finance, biotechnology, and multinationalals, we are once again looking at a technology-driven revolution that could keep poorer countries at the bottom of the heap, or weaken them further." Here too, Kennedy identifies a crucial issue that eluded the "triple revolution" analysts — the link between *imperialism* (in the form of multinational corporations) and cybernation/robotics: "Multinational corporations in certain industries, already switching production from one country to another according to differentiated labor costs, will gain the further advantage of assessing whether developing-world wages are greater or less than the robot's 'costs' in the automated factory back home. After all, the theory of the borderless world encourages managers to be constantly weighing the relative advantage of production in one part of the globe as opposed to others." He envisions the massive dislocation of industrial workers anticipated by the "triple revolution" thinkers, but he weaves a more nuanced analysis:

The mass replacement of factory workers will not happen overnight. Just as it took decades for the early steam engines to advance from mere curiosities and "wonder machines" to the center of the manufacturing process, so it may take a generation or more before the robotics revolution makes its full impact; and there is always the increase in cheap labor supplies to slow the pace of automation in many societies....If the biotech revolution can make redundant certain forms of farming, the robotics revolution could eliminate many types of factory-assembly and manufacturing jobs. In both cases, multinational companies become the beneficiaries of the reduced value of land and labor.

In this context, what George Breitman predicted for the 1970s has now (only somewhat later) become part of the American reality. Kennedy writes that perhaps 20 percent of the U.S. labor force — "lawyers, biotechnology engineers, economics editors, software designers, and strategic planners" — will do quite well in the new reality. "Unlike the fast-food server, or the local policeman or schoolteacher, or the blue-collar worker, these creators and conveyors of high-added-value information are no longer linked to a regional or even a national economy. They have become functioning and prosperous parts of a borderless world." But Kennedy insists that "much more important, in social and political terms, is the fate of the four-fifths of Americans" who (in a manner similar to, if not as drastic as, majorities in the "third world") will be excluded from the good life:

Skilled blue-collar employees — the core of the traditional high-per capita-income U.S. work force, and the backbone of the Democratic Party — have lost jobs in the millions as American firms wilted under international competition or relocated industrial production to other countries with lower labor costs. During the 1980s, the United Auto Workers lost 500,000 members even as companies like General Motors were adding employment abroad. At the same time as high-paying blue-collar jobs were disappearing, millions of new jobs were being created across the United States. Unfortunately, the vast majority of those positions were low-paid casual or unprotected jobs requiring few skills and offering little opportunity, such as work in fast-food stores, gas stations, discount supermarkets, hotels, and cleaning and gardening services. An increasing majority of Americans have found their real standards of living — like the real level of national productivity — stagnating since the mid-1970s. Just as the gap between the upper one-fifth and lower four-fifths of global society has increased, so also, though less drastically, has the upper one-fifth in American society detached itself from the rest.

The inequality between countries is impacting on the working classes of the more "advanced" capitalist countries in a manner that also ties in with the *human rights revolution*. Kennedy writes that "the demographic imbalance between poor and rich societies is producing a migratory flood from the former to the latter, and today's disturbing social and racial reactions to that may be small compared with what happens in a world of 8 to 10 billion." Indeed, in Western Europe and North America we have seen a partial transformation of the working class, with many more immigrants, largely people of color from "third world" countries, who become part of the most impoverished layers of the proletariat. The result is the rise or intensification of racism between competing workers, and in some cases the institutionalization of racist government policies. This generates essential human rights struggles of the oppressed racial groups (who win allies among some white workers and youth), but also a fascist potential among insecure and misguided native-born workers and others who see a link between "racial purity" and their own economic well-being.

Even more dramatically and urgently than in the 1960s, the trends identified by Paul Kennedy demonstrate the need for a socialist revolution to check and reverse the destructive "progress" of global capitalism, placing our economic resources under rational and democratic controls. This can only be brought about by a working class majority that understands the need for united struggle, regardless of race or national origin. This is an essential part of the antiracist struggle and is the only way to fight effectively against fascism. It is also the only way to eliminate poverty and social injustice, to dismantle the pernicious "weaponry revolution" once and for all, and to save our planet from ecological disaster. *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*, without quite meaning

to, offers powerful corroboration of the basic goals and analyses of the Marxist movement.

At the same time, however, Kennedy identifies realities which cut across Marxism's traditional strategic perspectives.

A Crisis of Strategy

The *Transitional Program*, developed by Trotsky and his cothinkers in the Fourth International in 1938, asserted that the workers' movement was afflicted by a crisis of leadership, that the Social Democratic and Stalinist elements constituting the bulk of that leadership were incapable of offering a genuinely revolutionary path forward from capitalism for the workers and oppressed masses. History has vindicated that judgment. But the present conditions have created a crisis of strategy, of how we are to move forward to socialism. Revolutionaries must develop convincing and concrete answers to the question of how to move forward, in the face of the global power of the capitalist system, in order to persuade and mobilize masses of people — and to be able to deliver on promises of a better society.

Kennedy describes serious problems that must be faced if we hope to develop such answers. These problems flow from "the globalization of production, investment, and services" which capitalism has created, a "globalization" which has always been essential to capitalism and imperialism but now assumes a character that seems to constitute a qualitative (but hardly benign) shift in the nature of imperialism. One aspect of the reality has special relevance for trade unions and local governments within a country such as the United States. According to Kennedy:

Until recently, many large companies still retained the characteristics of the typical post-1945 corporation: located in a particular region, the provider of jobs to its skilled blue-collar work force and to layers of managers, the provider also of philanthropic and social goods to the "company town." Although examples still exist of such localist and paternalist firms, many have been compelled by international competition to discard all such loyalties to the town, the region, or the country. "The United States," one prominent American executive observed, "does not have an automatic call on our resources. There is no mind-set that puts the country first." In consequence, states, regions, cities, and townships have become "bidders" for the presence of a new factory, or, more often, the retention of an existing plant which a multinational company may be thinking of moving. If the community in question can offer enough inducements — tax concessions, operating subsidies, training grants — as did Danville, Illinois, in 1983 in a bid to win a new forklift assembly plant, it may succeed, at least for a while; if it does not make enough concessions, like Portland, Oregon, in the same bidding war, it will lose. If a union at one plant is willing to

agree to the demands of the corporation — as did the General Motors workers in Arlington, Texas, thereby contributing to the closure of the firm's factory in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where the union was less cooperative — it may survive, until the next time. Since communities and unions are bidding for the same jobs, it follows that one region's enhanced (or retained) employment means another region's rising unemployment. Winner or loser, it is clear that there is "uneven bargaining power" between communities and the globalized company.

Here we see the class struggle taking a terrible turn in which the workers are pushed back to the early condition described by Marx and Engels in the 1840s — "the laborers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country and broken up by their mutual competition." The strategic orientation of Marx and Engels was clear, and could conceivably be argued for as a solution to the dilemma outlined by Kennedy. The workers must overcome this short-sighted "mutual competition" and join together in nationwide trade union federations that will not allow worker to be pitted against worker. More than this, workers must organize their own class-based political party that will challenge and finally defeat the power of the capitalists on a national scale.

Yet here we come up against another dilemma highlighted by Kennedy, the ability of the more globally-organized capitalists to outflank even the most moderate efforts to defend working-class interests:

The ideological implications of this global system are debated more in Europe than in the laissez-faire United States. The reality nowadays is that any government which offends international finance's demand for unrestricted gain — by increasing personal taxes, for example, or by raising fees on financial transactions — will find its capital has fled and its currency weakened. From the difficulties of the Wilson [British Labor Party] government in the late 1960s, to the [French Socialist] Mitterrand administration's failed attempt to "go it alone" in its economic policies of the early 1980s, to the experiences of innumerable regimes in the developing world [such as the Allende regime in Chile, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, Cuba today, and many more], the message is clear: if you do not follow the rules of the market, your economy will suffer. But the market's message ignores important considerations. If, say, a French Socialist government is conscientiously attempting to provide better schools, health care, housing, and public utilities for its citizenry, by what means can it raise the necessary funds without alarming international investors who may be not at all interested in the well-being of those citizens but merely in their own profits? The rational market, by its very nature, is not concerned with social justice and fairness.

Kennedy's comments provide excellent material for socialist education on the rottenness of world capitalism. But to the extent that his

account is accurate, how is it possible for socialists — no matter if they are reformists or revolutionaries — to win durable victories? Whether one is a trade union militant in a North American factory, or the socialist mayor of a modest-sized U.S. city, or a guerrilla leader in Latin America, or in the leadership of a mass workers' party that has a chance of taking power in whatever country we choose — how is it possible to win?

We can give up on politics altogether. This will not cause the problems Kennedy identifies to go away. We can devote our attention to polemical incantations and wrangles among or within would-be revolutionary groups, but word magic will not cause the problems to go away. Rejecting revolutionary perspectives in favor of "practical" reformist activity will not offer a solution either, if Kennedy is right. Something more powerful and fundamental will be needed to open up new possibilities.

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution suggests some general principles that can help to orient us. It is not possible to establish socialism as long as imperialism exists. It is not possible even to secure genuine democracy or meet the minimal needs of masses of people as long as imperialism exists. Struggles for immediate and democratic demands have revolutionary implications, and democratic-revolutionary struggles will necessarily spill over in a socialist direction as they pose the question of working-class political power. But such power cannot liberate society unless the struggle is international in character, with socialist revolutions spreading to a number of countries.

Yet such generalities are worthless unless they can be translated into specific and practical proposals capable of mobilizing masses of people and capable of providing at least partial solutions that advance the interests of the working class against those of the employers in today's world. This is the task that Marxists now must take on. There is a need for more profound analyses of the realities we face and more practical experience to enable us to move forward. Since the problem is global, U.S. activists have to work with and learn from revolutionary and workers struggles on an international scale, as militants around the world reach for and formulate new strategic and tactical answers to the challenge confronting us. The powerful forces once identified as being part of the "triple revolution," especially as understood by American Trotskyists three decades ago, will continue to interact in a manner that transforms the world in complex ways, generating devastating problems while also opening up genuinely revolutionary possibilities. Our contributions must help further develop Marxism as an instrument of human liberation. □

New Zealand's November Elections: A Change for the Better

by Alex Chis

Voters in New Zealand's November 6 elections demanded a major change in what had been parliamentary business as usual. The results brought in MMP [multi-member proportional representation] and gave a significant role to the Alliance. "I think it's a watershed. What it means in New Zealand is the end of the New Right... The National [party] government is in a minority, if in fact they are the government. [The] Alliance is here for good," said Matt McCarten in an interview with the Australian *Green Left Weekly*.

As the election results were tallied, neither of the two major parties, National or Labour, had a majority. Although the Alliance won only two seats in the first-past-the-post system in place for November's election, they won 18.3 percent of the vote. In a phone interview with Matt, he explained to me that under the new proportional system, this would have given them 23 out of 120 seats. "The New Zealand First party got 8.1 percent. This means [our two] smaller parties got 26.4 percent of the vote." As of the November 15 interview, it was still unclear whether National or Labour had the lead and would be forming the minority government, since there

were still close races in 9 seats, and absentee ballots left to count.

With no majority in Parliament, the role of the Alliance is also enhanced. Parliamentary leader Jim Anderton has ruled out coalitions. "Governments in New Zealand are going to have to get used to losing some votes in Parliament," he insists.

In the absence of a clear majority in Parliament, it is likely that new elections will be called before a full term of 3 years, and the Alliance has some impressive results to build on. With proportional representation, voters won't be forced into voting for someone just because they have a better chance of winning, sacrificing their preferred choice to expediency. In this election the Alliance was second in 22 seats.

Although the election results are impressive, the Alliance is not like any electoral formation most of us have heard of. Their required candidate's pledge states:

When elected, I undertake during this parliamentary term to work to implement the policies contained in the Alliance's 1993 election manifesto and to remain part of the Alliance. Should I vote against, or obstruct the implementation of these policies, or leave the Alliance, I undertake

to resign from Parliament and seek a new mandate from the electorate. I make this pledge so that electors can have full confidence that the Alliance policies they vote for will be those that will be implemented by an Alliance government.

Explaining the tasks ahead of the Alliance, Matt McCarten, interviewed by Green Left's Ana Kailis, stated:

I think the key lies in the building of the Alliance. The Alliance has to be a mass movement in the streets, out where the struggles are. The Alliance has to be more than just an electoral party. It has to be a movement for social change, with all its diversity, because that's what our society is like.

Issues of class and race and gender have to be addressed in a real way. I think that is the future, and it's the role I think the Alliance is going to play.

[Note: I would like to thank the *Green Left Weekly* for their excellent coverage of the events in New Zealand. You can contact Green Left at P.O. Box 394, Broadway NSW 2007, Australia. E-mail: greenleft@peg.apc.org — A.C.] □

New Zealand Alliance Leader Tours United States

by Alex Chis

Alex Chis was the national coordinator of the Matt McCarten tour and a member of the Northern California Steering Committee of the Committees of Correspondence. Matt McCarten toured the United States in April and May 1993.

Greetings from New Zealand... I haven't been to the northern hemisphere before, but from all the interviews I've had on radio and in the media, they always expect me to tell how terrible things are in another part of the world. I haven't come to tell you how terrible things are. I've come to tell you how good things are.

That was how Matt McCarten, the Chair and central organizer of the New Zealand Alliance and the President of the New Labour Party, started his speech in San Francisco at a forum cosponsored by the SF Greens, Green Talk Series, SF Committees of Correspondence, and the SF Green Party. The New Zealand Alliance is a new political formation, an electoral alliance of five parties: the New Labour Party, Mana Motuhake (the movement of the indigenous Maori population for self-determination), the Green Party, the Liberal Party, and the Democrats. The exciting promise of the Alliance is that a coalition was formed in New

Zealand, bringing together the environmental movement, the labor movement, and people of color. The Alliance is much stronger than its individual parties, so much stronger that it won the elections in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, and now has 78 elected officials and controls the regional government.

As Matt explained about the election victory:

Most of our movements have the general vision of what we want. But then we have to have the discipline of how we put it together. What if we were elected — next week? That's the question that we have to ask ourselves — [because] it actually happens!

We judge all our policies and our ideas against three criteria. One, it's got to make economic sense; it's got to be economically sustainable. The capitalist system always does that, and its a discipline on us. So it's got to make economic sense.

But what makes us different is two other criteria. What is its social cost? Is it socially useful? Is it good for people? What are the pluses, what are the minuses? It is no good us promoting things which are economically useful but not socially useful. Is it good for people? Politics should be to help people; it shouldn't be there to oppress them.

The third thing that we judge on is, Is it environmentally sustainable? All our policies have to measure up. It is a very strict criteria, a discipline on us. All our policies meet this criteria.

While in the Bay Area, Matt also spoke at Stanford and the University of California in Berkeley (UCB) and addressed members of Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), the Alameda County Central Labor Council, the International Indian Treaty Council, and an American Indian Youth Conference at UCB. He was officially welcomed to

the Bay Area by separate proclamations of the Oakland and Berkeley City Councils.

One of the points Matt stressed in his talks was that the Alliance operates on consensus, something that was learned from the Greens and the Maori people.

From San Francisco Matt continued his tour, sponsored nationally by the Committees of Correspondence. The highlight of his tour was the Labor Notes Conference in Detroit, where he spoke to an audience of over 1,100, sharing the opening night platform with Bernie Sanders, U.S. representative from Vermont, and addressed the People of Color caucus with Ron Daniels the next day.

In his talk on the opening night of the conference, he explained that the Alliance had recently won elections in Auckland and ended with a story of a recent strike there. On a Monday the police had broken up a strike of Maori and other Pacific Island workers, hospitalizing several workers and arresting many more. Early the next morning the Alliance mobilized, with hundreds of people coming to lend support. The police also mobilized, about 250 of them in full riot gear, and they proceeded to advance on the strikers. They stopped short realizing that at the head of the workers' demonstration were Alliance MPs (Members of Parliament), mayors, and other city officers, part of the 78 officials the Alliance had elected in Auckland. The police were not up to bashing MPs' heads; they withdrew and told the owner that they could do nothing more. The workers had a settlement that afternoon, winning all their demands. That story of how the Alliance uses its elected officials on the front lines drew enthusiastic applause from the Labor Notes Conference participants.

From Detroit Matt went on to Chicago for a meeting sponsored by Greenpeace, Labor Party Advocates, and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. In Washington, D.C., he had meetings with people ranging from Sen. Robb of Virginia to Jack Odell of the Rainbow to a brown bag lunch cosponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies and Greenpeace. A continuing theme in his talks was the need for a new politics.

One thing we do with our policies is say this is how much it will cost. It is very difficult for the

incumbent, establishment people to actually attack us, to put down our proposal. We do our homework, we say where the money is, how much it's going to cost. Then we say where the money's going to come from, and that's a new thing for progressive forces. We tell them who's going to be taxed and how much. Nothing's free, and what we say is, We will be honest.

We tell people what it's going to cost and what's in store, so when they elect us there are no nasty surprises. They elect us on our ideas, this is what we will have to meet. And all our candidates sign a public pledge that they will implement this policy or they will resign. We give them strict criteria and they actually put down. We will implement this because we believe in it. Then every month, in Auckland, our elected officials turn up and they give reports on their progress and how they implemented it. When you've got five or six hundred, or eight hundred activists all there, well, I wouldn't defy a group of that number. They give reports and give respect to those forums. People aren't answerable to a party boss, or a party structure; what they are answerable to is to the things they promised the people. We don't break promises! Our candidates are accountable to this platform. We have actually dumped elected officials who have not carried out the program in good faith. People don't mind that you're having difficulties, but you're still trying to do it. But people who have actually ducked on our policy have been dumped by the local people. Because people aren't going to put up with it; its the new politics. That's what is different.

Matt came back to the West Coast to finish his tour, speaking in Los Angeles to a city-wide meeting at the HERE Local 11 hall, with speakers including Kwasi Nkrumah, National Green Justice Council, and the Outreach Coordinator of the Green Party of California. He was also able to meet with a Green Party Member of Parliament from Germany. His last engagement was in Salt Lake City, where he spoke at the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union hall, cosponsored by Labor Party Advocates.

His national tour helped spread the word that it is possible to build an alliance of workers, the unemployed, people of color, and environmentalists, that people with such diverse backgrounds and ideas can get together and can actually win. If it can happen in New Zealand, it can happen elsewhere, even here. We have to work to make that promise come true, and em-

body here the attitude that Matt ended his SF speech with.

It's an exciting time in New Zealand today because we've already done wonderful things. They tried to bankrupt Auckland before we took over. They left us with a debt; they passed legislation by the central government to force us to sell off the ports, the sewerage and water works, the public transport, electricity — you name it. We ran on a program that the people are in charge. We will defy you if we are elected, we will not sell! Because how can you have an environmental program if you don't own the resources. You can't have it; you're just a mere regulatory body. Ownership of the resources like the shores, the harbors, and the land — if you don't have that, how can you actually be effective in carrying out decisions, decisions that are made by those who own it?

So what we've done is we've retained public ownership. What's more, we haven't gone bankrupt, because we had the people on our side. We haven't made one worker redundant [unemployed]. We haven't sold [public property]. Not only have we made nobody redundant, have not sold off any of the properties, we actually haven't had a rate increase either. People start to realize that you can do all these things.

And these problems are throughout the world. The problems of poverty, repression, and injustice, of indigenous peoples' rights and self-determination, and of economic questions belonging to the people, and all those issues, you can't just solve them in one country. That was a question [raised] last night — what will you do if there is international pressure?

Of course we can be defeated, but we're winning the hearts and minds of people; that's how we will do it — bring them to our side. Ordinary people, if you win those, then you can stand anything. That is our belief and it is a very exciting time and I always caution, on the way, that we may get it wrong. But at this time, it is right. You just have to have faith in people. We've just got to continue on. We scared the other two parties like you've never seen. That's fine. We were told that if we win, it will be the end of civilization as we know it. We've started out to do something and we're going to do it. We think we are going to do wonderful things in New Zealand. □

Vote for NAFTA Shows Labor Needs Its Own Party

Continued from page 1

it really is. Often the unions and environmental activists are adversaries, as the bureaucratic labor leadership mistakenly resists environmental protection as a threat to jobs. However, a broad coalition, which included the entire spectrum of the labor movement, from Lane Kirkland and Albert Shanker to the radical left, virtually the entire spectrum of environmentalist groups, and even — at the end — 1992 presidential candidate H. Ross Perot, came together to oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement. They recognized that NAFTA would encourage U.S.

and Canadian companies to shift production to Mexico for a number of reasons:

- Mexican workers earn only a fraction of the wages and benefits paid to workers in the United States and Canada.
- Moreover, Mexico does not guarantee the kind of civil liberties which would allow Mexican workers to organize and strike to improve their standard of living. Strikes in Mexico are routinely quelled with lethal violence, and labor and left activists frequently "disappear," victims of government death squads.

- Mexican environmental standards are hopelessly lax. What laws exist are not enforced. Manufacturing companies can produce much more cheaply if they are not saddled with environmental protection regulations. As a consequence, the Rio Grande and Tijuana rivers are horribly polluted.
- The cheap labor available in Mexico would enable U.S. and Canadian companies to produce manufactured goods inexpensively enough to compete on the world market with commodities produced in the Four Tigers of the Pacific (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore,

and South Korea) and the emerging cheap-labor export havens in Eastern Europe.

The groups which formed the anti-NAFTA coalition were key elements of the Democratic Party electoral bloc; consequently, during the 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton took his distance from NAFTA in contrast to President George Bush, who was enthusiastic in his support. Clinton did not reject the agreement out of hand, but called for additional negotiations — “side agreements” — to address some of the concerns raised by NAFTA’s critics within the Democratic Party. Far too many of them accepted his promises.

Once in office, however, Clinton made it clear that the interests of big business were to be his primary concern. Like George Bush and Ronald Reagan before him, Clinton gave strong support to NAFTA and reneged on his promises to “improve” the agreement. He claims that “side agreements” have been negotiated which solve the problems of unfair labor practices and low environmental standards in Mexico, but neither he nor anyone else has explained to the U.S., Canadian, or Mexican working people what is in those “side agreements” and how they make NAFTA fair.

Hardball and Pork Barrel

During the summer of 1993, the anti-NAFTA coalition was strengthened by the entrance of H. Ross Perot and his United We Stand America organization (UWSA). Perot’s motivation in changing from a NAFTA supporter to an opponent is open to speculation; however, the money and lobbying clout which he and UWSA brought to bear against NAFTA was an important asset. Perot toured the country speaking to packed auditoriums against the agreement. His mastery of the 30-second sound bite enabled anti-NAFTA arguments to get media exposure that they might not otherwise have received. As late as November 9 it appeared that the House of Representatives would reject the pact.

During the last weeks before the House vote on the measure, the White House went on the offensive. The Republican representatives were overwhelmingly pro-NAFTA; the difficulty Clinton had with his fellow Democrats.

However, that also provided him with leverage. As president, Clinton could be of great assistance to a Democratic candidate running for reelection or running for a higher office. He could also be of great assistance to a primary election *opponent*. Clinton put his presidency on the line — he made it clear that if NAFTA failed he would be seen as a weak leader and the Democratic Party would suffer across the board, sweeping Democratic congressmen out of office. (The 1993 elections, in which Democrats for whom Clinton campaigned were turned out of office in New Jersey, Virginia, and New York City, confirmed that perception.)

However, what probably solidified Clinton’s majority was a disgusting orgy of horse trading during the last week before the vote. The “pork barrel” is a time-honored tradition in the U.S. Congress. Public works projects, military facilities, and other government expenditures that stimulate local economies are enacted for no other reason than to reward a representative for voting a particular way on another piece of legislation. Money flows into his or her district, the constituents are happy, and the representative is reelected. This kind of thing has been going on since the 1830s. Clinton bought his majority for NAFTA with pork-barrel legislation to the tune of about \$7 million of the taxpayers’ money per undecided vote, promising favorable action on projects of dubious practicality and little social benefit. It did not go unnoticed. The New York *Daily News* headline of November 17 read “Pass the Pork!” and Perot has consistently called attention to the crass methods Clinton used to gain approval of his trade pact.

Continuing the Fight Against NAFTA

Ironically, one of the selling points which the Clinton administration used to persuade hesitant Democrats to vote “Aye” on NAFTA was the “no risk” provision — after six months, any party can opt out of the agreement. NAFTA opponents should see this provision as an opportunity: even if jobs have not yet started to flow southward in greater numbers than they already are, activists should prepare now to

fight in six months for the repudiation of NAFTA.

More importantly, however, trade unionists, environmentalists, and other activists who opposed this trade pact need to maintain the coalition which came together around this issue. An important precedent was set when U.S. trade unionists addressed the issues of the oppression of workers in Mexico and the destruction of the environment. Similarly, environmentalist groups like Greenpeace and the Sierra Club took action on the question of worker unemployment. In addition, activists from all three countries who are party to this agreement worked together for its defeat. This has been an important step forward, and the momentum should continue. Working people through their trade unions took on a political issue, not a bargaining-table issue, and only lost because Clinton was essentially able to bribe undecided Democrats into voting his way. If labor is to succeed in turning back the ruling-class campaign to drastically reduce working people’s living standards, it must take up broader social issues and indeed international issues and make them its own. The struggle against NAFTA was a big step forward in that direction.

Finally, working people provided Bill Clinton with his margin of victory in the 1992 election. He promised American workers a change from the antiworker policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations. Clinton’s intense effort to win Congressional approval of the agreement shows conclusively whose interests he really represents — those of big business. How many promises do Clinton and the Democrats have to break before labor launches its own political party? Clearly, we cannot in the least depend on the Democrats to defend our interests. They failed us the night of November 17, and they will fail us again. Many rank-and-file workers are turning to the Republicans or to demagogues like Ross Perot, but they will fail us, too. The time for a new political party, of, by, and for working people, is now, and the forces which came together to oppose NAFTA can serve as the foundation on which it is built. □

November 18, 1993

Confronting the North American Free Trade Agreement

Continued from page 2

Q. What do the majority of the people in Mexico think about the treaty?

A. That is hard to say, because in Mexico there is no democracy. If there is no democracy, if there is electoral fraud, if there is no mechanism for political participation, it is difficult to know what is the opinion of the majority of Mexicans. In other countries, for something as important as a free trade agreement, or a process of economic integration, there are referendums. In France there was just a referendum [on the Maastricht treaty]. In Canada there was a referendum on other matters. In Uruguay there will

be a referendum on the privatization law. But in Mexico there is no mechanism designed to ascertain the opinion of the majority. Perhaps it is possible to say that only a very small part of the population favors the treaty. Perhaps it is possible to say that there is an important part of the population which is giving the government the benefit of the doubt, which is waiting — which has doubts but is waiting to see if the treaty will bring benefits. And there is another part, above all the workers most affected, who are clearly against the treaty. But it would be hard to know the statistics in Mexico. The statistics in Mexico are not very trustworthy, and the channels for

democratic participation are practically nonexistent, so it is hard to answer your question.

Q. There are people in the United States, workers and others, who think that Mexicans are going to steal their jobs. What do you think of that?

A. That is part of the ideology that the corporations are trying to introduce. They are trying to foment competition between different groups of workers. It is not the Mexican workers who want to steal jobs. It is the large corporations that are playing with the jobs of U.S. workers and Mexican workers. That is why we think that

the best way to oppose this corporate strategy is solidarity without respect for borders, between the workers of all three countries. The only way to oppose Ford, General Motors, and all the large corporations that play with the jobs of workers in all three countries, is to unite the workers and the unions, the organizations of the workers, in all three countries. The way to oppose the blackmail is not to fall into the position of defending jobs against other workers, but to defend the jobs of all workers, all together.

Q. In conclusion, what message would you send to U.S. workers?

A. I would only say that they must not fall victim to the ideology that foments competition among workers. U.S. workers should seek solidarity and cooperation with Mexican workers. They should understand that if they defend the living standards and working conditions of Mexican workers, that is also the best way to defend themselves. If U.S. workers help Mexi-

can workers gain union democracy, better wages, better working conditions, that will also help them. The best way to defend everyone is always to defend those who are worst off. Everyone, U.S. and Mexican workers, has to fight for the upward equalization of conditions of life for everyone. I think that is the most important thing. □

Remarks on the North American Free Trade Agreement

Continued from page 3

of the 2,000-page treaty. NAFTA's goal is to reduce and redirect the role of government while enhancing the role of the market. Under NAFTA, legislation and regulation that moves beyond standard commercial and market considerations can be viewed as a barrier to trade.

Let's say Chicago wants to redevelop a run-down industrial district to help stimulate the local economy. Under NAFTA they cannot restrict the bidding on that contract to local companies — even though the intent of the project is to spend Chicago's money on Chicagoans.

NAFTA constrains governments from regulating the market even to achieve goals like conservation of resources. It will also restrict the establishment of new public services, such as child care or a single-payer health care system.

This is not speculation: it has already happened in Canada, which signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 1989. Canada's national health care system is a prominent reminder that Canadians prefer a more activist government than U.S. citizens. But this non-commercial approach to social services is jeopardized by free trade's demand to replace democratic and community values with narrowly defined market rules.

In 1990 the people of Ontario, Canada's industrial heartland and most populous province, elected a social democratic government. The election platform of the victorious New Democratic Party included setting up a government-run, no-fault insurance plan for everyone. It's a modest and popular reform which the NDP has introduced in other provinces. But in Ontario the government was stopped in its tracks.

The insurance companies claimed that according to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement a government-run insurance program is a monopoly that would have an adverse effect on U.S. insurance companies and is therefore "tantamount to an expropriation." Such action required "effective compensation at fair market value."

The insurance companies demanded \$2 billion in compensation. The provincial government of the largest and most powerful province in Canada shamefully backed off and walked away from its proposal.

President Clinton's proposed health care reform has rejected a national single-payer scheme, but he has left the door open to states moving in this direction. Many people who support the president's proposals, including organized labor, are doing so in the belief that his

"managed competition" model can eventually lead to a single-payer system.

Considering Ontario's experience with a provincial auto insurance scheme, it seems likely that a single-payer health system would be similarly thwarted in the United States. The compensation demanded by Canadian and Mexican insurers would certainly be a lot higher than the \$2 billion that deterred the Ontario government.

Health care, public education, and other social services are not simply economic commodities. They are the foundation of a civilized society, and should not be shaped by market whims. NAFTA will require governments to abandon this traditional view of the public sector as noncommercial.

U.S. citizens, like their Canadian counterparts, are balking at NAFTA. They realize that NAFTA, as an agent of corporate sovereignty, threatens the sovereignty of all North Americans.

It is our right to determine the way our society will work together. That right should include the power to limit corporate and commercial forces within our community as we see fit.

When insurance profits on the border mobility of car parts dictate public policy, democracy is in peril. □

Tories Rejected, NDP Crisis Deepens

Continued from page 4

als and Reformers, just as they did between Liberals and Tories over the past century.

But the shift to the right of the traditional conservative vote is not an academic, nor a purely electoral, matter. It indicates an escalating social hostility to the most oppressed layers of society, a dangerous trend toward scapegoating that could have fascist-like extraparliamentary offshoots. This trend must be met head-on, both by confronting its Reform Party incubator and by confronting the hatemongers on the streets when they mobilize. Labor has an obligation to take the lead.

Block the Chauvinists

Even in the midst of election-night vote tallying, the English commercial media unleashed a scare campaign squarely aimed at the Bloc Québécois. How could a party disloyal to the

sanctity of the state form Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition?

The fact is, the BQ is more like a coalition than a party. It was carried to its sweep of Québec, attracting nearly 50 percent of the vote there, by the massive rejection of the Charlottetown Accord, the Meech Lake deal, and other failed and misguided attempts to find a constitutional solution to national oppression.

Although dominated by Québec business and technocratic elites, the BQ will have far more social democrats in its 54-member parliamentary caucus than the decimated NDP. Businessmen and former leading Tories and Liberals will cohabit the BQ benches with union staffers, a former Maoist, and a former top bureaucrat from the leftist Salvador Allende regime in Chile, who fled the CIA-backed coup in 1973.

This alliance of convenience, which Marxists do not endorse, is understood as a prelude to a

referendum on Québec sovereignty. It will have difficulty staying together much after that.

In the meantime, it may force English Canadians to face the fact that Québec is a nation, not a province like the others, with legitimate aspirations to independence.

It is crucial that labor and the left challenge the chauvinist "national unity" hysteria, which is aimed not only at smashing the aspirations of the people of Québec but also at lining up the working class and its organizations behind defense of the bosses' state and their antiworker policies.

Once again, defense of Québec self-determination will be indispensable to the defense of working-class independence from the employers and their state.

Already the NDP is failing this elementary test. The Ontario NDP government has done

worse than capitulate to anti-Québec chauvinism. It is fomenting it.

There's Ontario Industry Minister Francis Lankin's counter-protectionist measures against Québec construction workers, and Ontario Premier Bob Rae's vow "to confront BQ leader Lucien Bouchard," just as Rae minimized the Reform Party's success in Ontario.

The truth is that the Reform Party is a much bigger threat to the interests of the working class than the BQ. Reform is the leading advocate of cutbacks, privatization, and union busting. And a nation that oppresses another can never itself be free.

NDP on Death Bed

Despite very compelling evidence, Premier Bob Rae is entrenched in deep denial. He contends that the plunge of NDP support from 20 percent

to 6 percent, going from 43 to 9 seats (none east of Manitoba), has little to do with his government's wholesale betrayal of the party's program of mild reform in favor of neoconservative deficit fighting and union bashing. It's unlikely though that he's even fooling himself.

His resignation has been demanded by former MP and federal NDP Finance Critic Stephen Langdon and veteran Ontario party stalwart Mel Swart. There is growing clamor for replacement of Rae's entire Ontario legislative caucus. The Ontario Federation of Labour convention, Nov. 22-26, will debate a proposal to run candidates against the NDP "traitors" (MPs who voted for the antilabor Social Contract Act), a development which could give rise to a new labor political party.

Of course, this is not a matter of seeking vengeance against a leader and a caucus that

have gone astray. It is a matter of examining the root causes of labor/social democratic capitulation to the business agenda, waging a political fight against the proponents of class collaboration, and ensuring that there will be a vehicle for independent working-class political action in the future.

The proposal for a new labor party, as well as the demand to settle accounts with the betrayers, are essential devices to focus discussion on the need for a dramatic break with past policies and to promote a real political shake-up that could help workers and their allies arm themselves politically for the challenges that lie ahead.

Otherwise, labor bureaucrats will bury the NDP crisis in vague promises about internal reform, leaving a totally discredited leadership intact and members disempowered. □

Russian Miners Fight Job Losses

Continued from page 9

Accordingly, the government has avoided transferring more than modest sums of money [to the coal industry] or making more than general promises.

Miners are therefore being forced, however reluctantly and inconsistently, to take political action. Perhaps the most significant point about the planned December stoppage is that it has been called for the final weeks of the election campaign for the new Russian parliament.

According to *Izvestia* on November 13, Nikita Shulga, chairperson of the Independent Union of Miners (NPG) of Vorkuta, threatened that the December stoppage would take the form of an indefinite political strike. Shulga also stated that unless the miners' demands were met, a call would be issued for electors to vote against parties and political blocs in which ministers of the current government were taking part.

Traditionally requiring large state subsidies in order to operate, the coal industry has long been on the cost-cutting "hit list" of the Russian government's hard-line monetarist ministers. On July 1, the government freed coal prices, at the same time ending many subsidies to the coal industry. These steps were followed on August 1 by massive rises in rail freight charges, which in the past had also been heavily subsidized.

The result was not to usher in economic rationality. Coal prices rose steeply, but could not be raised far enough to cover the soaring costs of many industry inputs. In response to the coal price hike, consumers slashed their orders — or in many cases, continued accepting deliveries but ceased paying for them. Over the first 4 months after price liberalization, *Izvestia* reported on November 24, debts to coal enterprises more than quadrupled.

Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry refused to disburse funds to pay subsidies that supposedly remained. Squeezed between rising costs and a mountain of bad debts, and with state support

inadequate, coal enterprises failed for months on end to pay their employees' wages.

On September 6 coal industry workers, with tacit support from enterprise managers, mounted one of the largest protest actions in recent Russian history. Demanding that the government meet its pledges on wages and subsidies, more than 500,000 industry employees stopped work for 24 hours, halting operations in more than half the country's underground mines.

The September 6 strike was called by the Independent Union of Coal Industry Workers, the larger of the two unions covering coal employees. Descended from the Soviet-era coal union, the Independent Union of Coal Industry Employees has been a frequent critic of the current government's policies. The NPG, which claims to cover the bulk of coal face workers, opposed the September 6 action and urged its members not to participate. With its roots in the miners' strike committees that arose during the 1989 stoppage, the NPG until recently has been closely aligned with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and has given unstinting support to the government's "reforms."

The "reforms" the government is now introducing to the coal industry, however, represent early moves in a program aimed at drastically reducing the number of mines and miners. Plans were recently announced to close 42 pits out of a total of 236 in Russia by the year 2000. But this list, comprising the worst loss-makers, is widely recognized as detailing only the first of the government's intended cuts.

The government has failed to advance more than token programs to ensure the welfare of the miners who are to be made redundant [laid off], and it is this which is now the key issue behind a new wave of coal industry protests. Not surprisingly, the first struggles broke out in Vorkuta, where several pits are early candidates for closure. In this bleak outpost in the far north of European Russia, alternative employment is almost nonexistent, while the chances for re-

dundant miners of obtaining housing in other cities are equally forbidding.

Desperation at these prospects forced activists in the NPG of Vorkuta to break with the pro-Yeltsin perspectives of the national leadership. At the beginning of November, 17 local union leaders began a hunger strike. As well as calling for the prompt payment of wages, the hunger strikers demanded that the government draw up detailed relocation and retraining programs for each mine it planned to shut down. On November 11, as the condition of two of the union leaders became critical, rank-and-file unionists came out in a stoppage that halted mining operations throughout the region. The union leaders called off their hunger strike the following day.

From Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Vorkuta strike won a promise to find the funds to pay overdue wages. Money was, in fact, soon dispatched to Vorkuta to meet the wage bills for September and October. But government commitments to provide funds for social amenities and to allow the purchase of equipment for the mines remained unmet.

Above all, the questions surrounding mine shutdowns remained unresolved. On November 17, delegations of worker activists from Vorkuta set out for other coal regions to explain the call for extended strike action beginning December 1.

Within days the strike call had been taken up in Siberia, in the Kuzbass region, which is by far Russia's largest coal-producing area. In the city of Prokopyevsk on November 19 the Council of Representatives of the NPG of the Kuzbass resolved to call a week-long stoppage from December 1. The meeting endorsed an 11-point list of demands. As well as the prompt payment of wages and the provision of credits that would allow coal industry customers to meet their debts, this included a complete halt to pit closures and job losses pending negotiations with the union.

The final stage of campaigning for the December 12 elections is thus likely to take place against a background of labor struggle. Key issues will be the refusal by government ministers to allow the implementation of legally binding wage agreements, and the regime's disregard for the welfare of workers whose jobs vanish as "shock therapy" purges industry of all but the most profitable firms.

The fact that the workers at the center of the struggle will include coal miners who are members of the NPG adds a special piquancy. As the force that critically weakened Gorbachev, and that later formed a conspicuous part of Yeltsin's support base, the miners are an important politi-

cal symbol in Russia. Their defection from the government camp will be noticed.

Ironically, the decision by the NPG of the Kuzbass to use strike action against the government came only days after the Yeltsin regime apparently succeeded in intimidating the Independent Union of Coal Industry Workers. Under strong government pressure, the latter union issued a statement opposing the use of collective actions during the election period.

The leftward shift by the NPG has many contradictions. On November 11 a group of local NPG leaders from the Kuzbass issued a statement denying reports that they had ceased to advocate a vote for "democratic" candidates. And if rank-and-file miners are becoming

increasingly hostile to the government, most are still far from voicing support for its opponents. Understanding how they were used by Yeltsin and his supporters, most miners are now suspicious of all politicians, preferring to rely on their own strength.

Nevertheless, the decision by the miners to call a prolonged and potentially very militant strike for the height of the election campaign represents some of the worst news Yeltsin and his ministers have heard in months. The rights and interests of workers, which government strategists might have hoped to banish from voters' attention, must now rate as a significant campaign issue. □

November 26, 1993

For Another Europe, For Another World!

Continued from page 10

and atomization or the affirmation of universal solidarity.

Nor has this choice been resolved by the working class. Here, too, there is the real temptation of a short-sighted and self-centered "corporatist" step backward — in which those with jobs oppose themselves to the unemployed, those who are "natives" oppose themselves to foreigners, those of more prosperous regions oppose themselves to those of poorer regions. Beyond that, the crisis of the credibility of socialism, the absence of a credible model for an alternative society, certainly does not facilitate an effective response. But all this only emphasizes once again our duty to fight against all divisive tendencies, to systematically and unceasingly defend solidarity without any rupture.

To the Europe of trusts, cops, and the "strong state," we oppose the Europe of labor, of ever increasing emancipation, a Europe where self-management and self-administration are progressively generalized, a feminist Europe, an environmentalist Europe, a Europe that can rely on liberationist Christian groups at the grass roots but that opposes the Vatican fortress of intolerance and reaction, a radical pacifist Europe, a Europe that rules out any violation of human rights, a Europe that above all is in solidarity with those who are most poor and most neglected, both in the Third World and here, the immigrants, the unemployed, the mar-

ginalized. A Europe that aims at progressive emancipation from the burden of wage labor, that helps the producers to freely and democratically determine what they will produce, how they will produce it, and how the major part of this production will be distributed. A Europe that establishes a unity between pluralist, multiparty political democracy and economic democracy, and that reasserts the indissoluble unity between socialism and liberty.

We Are Many, They Are Few

It is not only for an economically, politically, and socially alternative Europe that we fight. It is also for a Europe based on a different vision of what it is to be human, a Europe of the heart as opposed to a Europe of cold calculation, a Europe with quality of life as opposed to a Europe of stress, a Europe of hope and good will as opposed to a Europe of cynicism and corruption. The struggle for such a Europe will be long and hard. We have a long way to go. The lost time we have to make up for is considerable. The obstacles are numerous. There will be new partial retreats and new partial defeats. But there will also be partial victories. And we hold in our hands two important trump cards.

The first is the one that the great English poet Shelley formulated long ago and which has always proved true in the long run: "We are many, they are few." This has never been so true as it is today. To overcome dispersion, fragmen-

tation, and the undermining of solidarity among those who work for wages, to rally them ever anew in the struggle for specific objectives which they themselves recognize as necessary, that is a major task of the hour.

Finally, there is our moral commitment. The Europe that we oppose to their Europe is the Europe of clean hands and moral integrity, against the Europe of corruption and cynicism. Contrary to appearances, the revulsion of the masses against the existing Realpolitik is profound, just as their aspiration for an upright political and social practice remains profound. Let us make sure our practice remains in keeping with our principles, demonstrating that it is possible to have a different way of doing politics, and we will end up having the ear of the masses.

Up with the Socialist United States of Europe!

Up with the Socialist Federation of the World!

Against the Europe of Big Capital — defiance, resistance, struggle, and generosity!

For Unity of Action, respecting the diversity and the identity of all organizations in the struggle!

Solidarity, solidarity, undivided solidarity! □

Our Socialism

Continued from page 15

organized, and upon what political structures will it depend? How will the cunning ghosts of authoritarianism be exorcised on the practical political level? It is as useless to emphasize the magnitude of this historic task as it is to theoretically and practically respond to such questions. This task does not depend solely on the PT, but must engage all the libertarian energy available in our society, as well as make use of analogous efforts realized in other spheres.

To some of these questions, we could put forward answers that originate in our own experiences of activity and reflection. Dialectically, they have grown from the forms of domination that we are struggling against or result from the strategic concepts we have acquired during our struggles. The Fifth National Conference already indicated this road: to suppress capitalism and begin the construction of a socialist society, a radical political change will be necessary. The workers must transform themselves into a hegemonic class in civil soci-

ety and in the state. Other aspects of our socialist project are open challenges, to which it would be presumptuous and incorrect to claim we can give immediate answers. Overcoming them will probably demand unexpected political imagination and practical creativity, legitimized not only by our ideological options, but by the concrete aspirations of the oppressed masses for a life of dignity.

10. The PT does not conceive of socialism as an inevitable future that will necessarily be produced through the economic laws of capital-

ism. For us, socialism is a human project whose realization is unthinkable without the conscious struggle of the exploited and the oppressed — a project that therefore will be truly emancipatory only to the degree we conceive it as such, or rather, to the degree it is a necessity and ideal for the oppressed masses, capable of developing an effectively libertarian consciousness and movement. For this reason, the recuperation of the ethical dimension of politics is an essential condition for reestablishing the unity between socialism and humanism.

11. The new society that we are struggling to build finds its concrete inspiration in Brazil's rich historical tradition of popular struggles. It should base itself on the principle of human solidarity and in the sum of individual aptitudes for the solution of common problems. It will seek to constitute itself as a collective democratic subject, without thereby negating a rich and desirable individuality. While assuring basic equality between citizens, it will be no less zealous in defense of the right to differ, whether politically, religiously, culturally, behaviorally, etc. It will struggle for the liberation of women and against racism and all forms of oppression on behalf of an integrated and universalist democracy. Pluralism and self-organization, more than simply allowed, should be rewarded at all levels of social life as an antidote to the bureaucratization of power, minds, and wills. While

affirming national identity and independence, it will reject any imperial pretensions and contribute to inaugurating cooperative relations among all the world's peoples. Just as we today defend Cuba, Grenada, and so many other countries from North American imperialist aggression, the new society will actively support the peoples' self-determination and value internationalist action in the struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression. Democratic and socialist internationalism will be its constant inspiration.

The socialism we desire, by its very nature, can only exist with an effective economic democracy. It should therefore be organized with the means of production as social property. This social property should not be confused with state property and should be administered through forms (individual, cooperative, state-run, etc.) that the society itself democratically chooses. This economic democracy will transcend both the perverse logic of the capitalist market and the intolerable, autocratic state planning of so many of the so-called socialist economies. Its priorities and productive goals will correspond to the social will and not to the supposed "strategic interests" of the state. It will take on the challenge of all challenges — to both increase productivity and satisfy material necessities — with a new organization of work capable of transcending its current aliena-

tion. This democracy will operate as much in the administration of each productive unit (factory councils are a necessary reference) as in the system as a whole, through strategic planning under social control.

12. On the political plane, we are struggling for a socialism that will not only maintain those democratic rights won through hard struggle in capitalist society, but will broaden and radicalize them. These freedoms are valid for all citizens, and their only limit is democratic institutionality itself: freedom of opinion, freedom to demonstrate, and freedom of civil and political organization. Instruments of direct democracy, guaranteeing the participation of the masses at the various levels of leadership of the political process and of economic administration, should be joined with instruments of representative democracy and active mechanisms for popular consultation freed of the coercion of capital and enjoying a real ability to express collective interests.

13. The PT, struggling for such a socialism, does not underestimate the theoretical and practical challenges that must be overcome to obtain it. It knows that it confronts a gigantic labor of theoretical construction and social struggle and declares itself more than ever prepared to perform it, together with all the democratic and revolutionary forces in Brazilian life. □

Human Rights and Economic Development in the Late Twentieth Century

Continued from page 17

should have higher standards of respect for human rights than in the West. These are universal concepts, and the differences in adherence are due to external factors.

This places the forces that are attempting changes in the power structure in a dilemma. How are they to overcome the unbridled force and violence of the state without themselves resorting to the use of violence. On the other hand, apart from the intrinsic undesirability of the use of violence, there is also the problem that its use in bringing about any changes will affect the resulting state itself adversely and make the expected changes unachievable.

It is clear from the above analysis that the violation of human rights is initiated by the state in an attempt to maintain itself in power against the wishes of the people. It is also clear that certain groups who are opposed to the state also resort to similar methods, sometimes in the mistaken belief that it is possible to achieve good ends by foul means.

Real democracy and respect for human rights is sustainable in the long term only in a society where no such elite exists, that is, in a classless society. However, in the meantime, we have to strive for even a minimum of adherence to human values in our activities.

In our situation in Sri Lanka today, we find both the state and its antagonists resorting not only to unbridled terrorism and the large-scale violation of human rights, but also appealing to

and fostering the chauvinistic instincts of their respective constituencies.

It is natural that people can relate more easily to a small community where they can interact directly with each other. Such communities are characterized by their own peculiar cultures, be it religious beliefs, language, dress, art forms, games, or any other facet of human activity. Communalism is the tendency to look down upon such characteristics when they differ from those of the dominant culture.

This takes two forms: conflict among different groups who perceive their own cultures as being totally dominant and hence superior and the so-called "internationalist" view that the globally dominant modern Western culture is the only true "culture." The latter view, as was seen earlier through the eye of its advocate Fukuyama, often masquerades as secularism, even though it is only another version of the former.

The Need for World Socialism

Up to now, I have argued that ethnic conflict, human rights, and development are related to each other and that the other issues will be difficult to solve in the long term until and unless we find an acceptable solution to the problem of development. I have also shown how it is related to the problems of resource depletion and environmental degradation.

However, I would have to grant that it is not possible for us in Sri Lanka to face these issues

in isolation. They are global issues and demand global solutions.

It is not possible to transform the poor societies of the world while the rich world remains as they are. On the other hand, the rich will retain their structures as long as a substantial portion of the world remains poor.

In this situation, it is sometimes argued that it is then necessary to strive diligently in the pursuance of egalitarian objectives to relieve the burden on the poor in these societies. A possible model between the two unsuccessful extremes of Stalinism (say in Eastern Europe, Cuba, and North Korea) and of social democracy (say, NM in Sri Lanka and Allende in Chile) would be that of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. It is also argued that it may still be possible to envisage a situation where the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe settle down to a new form of economic organization which is at the same time non-capitalist and also productive.

I believe, and here Fukuyama would agree, that any major change from the present state has to take place in the West. On the other hand, even though the objective conditions may be correct for such a change, there is certainly no likelihood of the consciousness necessary emerging in the West as long as the developed/undeveloped dichotomy exists on a world scale.

It is here that I would wish to introduce an optimistic note. It is not correct to look at the poor countries in isolation. They have to be

considered as an integral part of the global economy. It is necessary to reiterate that the economic world, now more than ever, has become a truly interdependent whole.

Revolutionary Internationalism

The apparent success of the "liberal" Western economic model has to be looked at critically before we can proceed further.

Even though it has been able to avoid global economic depressions on the scale of the 1930s, the system is very unstable and vulnerable to shock. The main means by which such calamities have been avoided is also related to the existence of the Third World. In the absence of a huge "sink" which can be forced to absorb the shocks created in the economic capitals of the world, the whole system would have collapsed long before the so-called collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Even such minor (on a historical perspective) events as the collapse of the New York stock exchange in 1989 or the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq would have been sufficient to trigger a major revolution if not for the shock-absorbing characteristics of the huge mass of people in the undeveloped world.

We need to realize our full potential and be not lulled into a false sense of hopelessness. An agenda limited in vision to Sri Lanka can only lead to a reformist social democratic platform leading to a localized mixed economy, with a

certain amount of state capitalism, coexisting and totally dependent on the world capitalist system. If we would only look further afield and consider the global possibilities for a total change, we can perhaps then begin to feel a purpose, and hence a motivation for continued political activity.

As I stated before, such historically insignificant events as the Gulf crisis precipitated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait illustrate the vulnerability of the world economic order. On the other hand, the productive forces of the West are very well developed as never before in human history, and the objective conditions for a more rational reorganization of their use for, as my friend Kumar David says, "organization of production, leisure, and intellectual life and the avoidance of economic anarchy, waste, and the hazards of environmental destruction" are very ripe. What is lacking is the consciousness necessary for such a reorganization. It is here that possibilities exist for triggering such political consciousness in the mass of the workers in the West, by actions originating in the undeveloped countries.

One major area where such triggering is possible is in the management of the so-called Debt Crisis. All the poor countries in the world are now in the grip of the Debt Crisis. Not only that, the USA is today the biggest debtor nation in the world. An analysis of how we fell into this trap will show how the manipulation of the

market by the banking and other capitalist cartels created a situation from which it is not possible to escape. However, we must realize that this is a two-edged sword. Just as much as the debtor is in the grip of the creditor, so is the creditor in the grip of the debtor. That is why the creditors will go to almost any extent to see that the debtor does not default. Once even a small debtor is able to get away the whole system, which is built on confidence, will collapse, taking with it the whole of the capitalist world economic system.

This is only one example of the possibilities that exist, if only we learn to think globally. A reorganization of production (and consumption) on a global scale will benefit all mankind (and also other species of life inhabiting the Earth).

In the meantime, there is an immense amount of work to be accomplished by us. We have to create a vision of development which is humane, is environment-friendly and non-consumerist, a technology which is suited to such a form of development, a form of organization of both production and consumption that is need-based and not want-based, a form of management that is participatory, a society that is democratic and tolerant, a cultural framework which is diverse and mutually enriching and not antagonistic.

The life of Kanthasamy was spent in the pursuit of such a vision, and it is only by such pursuit that we can pay tribute to him. □

The Triple Revolution: Developing a Transitional Program for the Late 20th Century

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will bind the Negro and white workers together, not in the name of an empty formula, but in the name of necessity, to protect each other.

I can foresee that movement knocking on the doors of the union offices and the union meeting halls and asking the organized workers on the job to lend their support to this demand. And I can see great masses of employed union workers saying, "That's a damn good idea. I'd like to see that done. I'll vote for it. If I lose my job tomorrow, I'd like to step into a situation where I can get compensation — not merely limited to half pay and unemployment insurance, which runs out in six months and then leaves me hungry — compensation as a matter of right as a citizen." There's a basis there. I don't say it's going to be realized in one jump, but there's a basis of common interest between the employed and the unemployed. The employed have got nothing whatever to lose by supporting such a thing as that; they can see a mutual benefit in it.

Revolutionary Leadership

What we're looking for, of course, out of all this is where can we get a mass movement started on the way to doing a much more complete job than merely providing compensation? And who will lead it? Who will lead this movement? I say those will lead who can. Those will lead who think. Those will lead who see what's new in the situation and what it portends for the future,

and are able to learn and to change and to adapt themselves to new conditions and new possibilities.

I have followed very attentively the evolution of Malcolm X from his previous position after his visit to Africa and his consultation with various leaders there and his own experience: a change from sectarian religious withdrawal from the mass movement to a proposal that all Negro organizations cooperate, to the statement that he's not against white people as such, he's just against the white people that are on his back. [I have noted] his declaration that this is an international struggle, and his trying to enlist the support of the African nations to bring the scandal of discrimination against American Negroes before the United Nations. A man who's capable of learning and changing is capable of learning more and changing more. And that has to apply to us, too. We've got to learn and to change and to hope that, by the exchange of ideas and experiences among all the people who've got bitter grievances against this system, we'll come out with a common program that will bind us all together into a great invincible force.

The transitional program of compensation as a citizen will lead to stronger demands as gains are made. With each advance confidence in the masses will grow and things will begin to be called by their right name, which we don't hear now in this present atmosphere of conservative fear and insecurity. The word social revolution

will be uttered and will resound in this country and [be] spoken out loud, and the word socialism, which you hear all over Africa and Asia today, will be heard in the streets of America. It will ring out like the old Liberty Bell in Philadelphia on the first Fourth of July, and with its clamor proclaim: freedom throughout the land and for all inhabitants thereof.

And the movement rallied around such words as social revolution and socialism will learn to sing again. And that'll be the sign that it's coming alive and that it's young and confident of its future. And wouldn't it be wonderful to be alive and to be young in that day? I think of the words of Wordsworth the poet about the first days of the great French Revolution, which began the change of the world, the downfall of the old outlived feudal system. He said, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven."

And I think of the words of another noble poet of the people, I guess the poet that I love above all others — Shelley, the poet who sang of freedom and who exhorted the oppressed everywhere to rise up in unvanquishable numbers and tried to give them confidence. In words that used to be quoted by an old friend of mine in the IWW named Jack White [?; name unclear] who used to wind up his speeches with that note of confidence from Shelley:

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Letters

Disagrees with Peter Johnson

This letter is in reply to the methodology of Peter Johnson's "Trotskyism and the Struggle for Black Liberation" in the July-August 1993 *BIDOM*.

Johnson hangs an entire theoretical revision of Marxism on a single quote. During the 1920s Stalin's hacks seized upon a single 1915 quotation of Lenin to make it appear as though Lenin had supported the possibility of building socialism in one country. Johnson employs a similar method with Trotsky and the national question. While ignoring everything Trotsky wrote in the 1930s about the permanent revolutionary dynamic of the liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities, Johnson hangs his "integrationist" thesis on Trotsky's "praise" of Stalin's 1913 polemic on the national question in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Unlike Lenin, Johnson apparently thinks that one can only be for either the *forcible* integration of oppressed nationalities by the oppressor or their *exclusion*. This is why he falsely accuses Vera Wigglesworth and myself of "distorting" Lenin in our article "Marxism and Black Self-Determination" in the May 1993 *BIDOM*. Johnson cites our 1916 Lenin quote that a revolutionary socialist of an oppressed nationality "may without failing in his duties as an internationalist, be in favor of *both* the political independence of his nation and its integration with the neighboring state of X, Y, Z, etc."

Johnson then attempts to distort Lenin by stating that "'either...or' would be a better translation" than "both"! Why? Because he imagines so? He cites no basis for this "better translation."

As against Stalin's bureaucratism and great-power chauvinism, Lenin consistently fought for the right of self-determination of oppressed nationalities — up to and including separation from the Soviet Union itself. Johnson's rantings against Black

autonomy and self-determination of *any* kind (except in the abstract) have nothing in common with Lenin's methods.

Nor did Trotsky counterpose the fight for civil rights to the right of self-determination. That's why he endorsed C.L.R. James's 1939 plan for a Black organization that would wage a fight for civil rights in the streets as well as the ballot box and that would be run and controlled by Blacks. Black revolutionary Marxists would loyally build, participate in, and seek to provide leadership to such an organization. But none of this required a revision of Lenin's or Trotsky's position on self-determination.

In attempting to remold Trotsky into Stalin, Johnson claims to have "evidence" that Trotsky allegedly changed his position on self-determination. Johnson cites Trotsky's 1939 statement that "the CP's attitude of making an imperative slogan of it was false." Johnson lightly skips over the word "imperative" here since, once again, he assumes there are only two kinds of self-determination that a revolutionary from an oppressor nationality can advocate: (1) forcible separation (the "imperative"); or (2) a meaningless abstraction relegated to a rosy socialist future.

Johnson is also quite fond of equating modern African Americans with tsarist Russian Jews, and equating Jewish nationalism in all times and places with Zionism (Israeli imperialism). Johnson should not forget that by 1937 Trotsky considered the Jews to be an oppressed nationality *without a territory* based on the survival of Yiddish language and culture in major European cities. This did not make Trotsky a "Zionist." Further, Trotsky supported the right of Jewish people to autonomy in the Soviet Union if they so wished (see *Leon Trotsky on the Jewish Question* [New York: Pathfinder, 1970]).

As to Johnson's question of what do we tell Black youth? First of all, we don't tell. We show in action that we support de-

mands they themselves raise in the course of their struggle. But we also tell Black youth — and *show* them in action — that we *unconditionally* support the *right* of African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Native Americans to self-determination. And we explain that only a workers' government would allow them to exercise that right (since any capitalist government will seek to continue to dominate them in order to exploit them for profit).

We tell them we are fighting for a workers' government that will recognize and honor their right to self-determination, that will support affirmative action programs and the concept of massive reparations to African Americans for centuries of unpaid slave labor, that will support their efforts if they wish to separate, and will live in peace with them and aid them, that will dismantle institutionalized racism and protect the rights of oppressed nationalities against white racism. We tell them that's the kind of government we're fighting for and urge them to join in the fight, for only the oppressed themselves can end their oppression.

It was on that kind of basis that the SWP in the 1960s and 1970s was able to work with and recruit Blacks and members of other oppressed nationalities, as Evelyn Sell described so well in the case of the Detroit SWP branch (see her article in the October 1993 *BIDOM*). That kind of work continues to be the basis for building a multinational revolutionary Marxist party today, with cadre that participate in and provide leadership for the struggles of oppressed nationalities.

Lenin's and Trotsky's understanding of the national question represents a major theoretical conquest of 20th century Marxism. To attempt to force that into a Stalinist straitjacket, as Johnson does, is a sectarian caricature of the Marxist method.

Jim Miles
Chicago

The Triple Revolution: Developing a Transitional Program for the Late 20th Century

Continued from page 35

Fear not that the tyrants shall rule forever,
Nor the priests of the bloody faith.
They stand on the brink of a mighty river
Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the springs of a thousand dells.
About them it rages and foams and swells.

And their thrones and their scepters I floating see
Like wrecks on the shores of eternity.

Many thrones and scepters have gone down
the river of history since Shelley wrote those
noble words, and some are yet to come. The
biggest and heaviest and ugliest and most oppres-
sive of all is in this country. And we should

not doubt, we should not fear, that this tyrant
will rule forever. It will also go down on the
river of history and that will be what they call
the great day in the morning, and people will
really sing on the way to that day, "Ain't no-
body gonna turn me around." □

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Appeal for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia

We, the undersigned, protest the recent attacks on civil liberties, trade union rights, and freedom of the press and assembly by the Yeltsin government in Russia.

Contrary to the impression given in the U.S. mass media, among those arrested during the October 4 crisis were many sincere democratic activists; several organizations and newspapers were arbitrarily banned by executive order. In Moscow, leaders of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, the new Party of Labor, and the Moscow City Council were rounded up and brutally beaten, among them Boris Kagarlitsky, whose books are well known in the West, Vladimir Kondratov, Alexander Segal, and Alexander Kalinin.

Thanks to an immediate flood of protests from U.S. and European friends, these nonviolent democratic activists were eventually released. As Boris Kagarlitsky said, as he entered his apartment, bruised and bloody, "International solidarity works."

The arrests and beatings occurred amidst the Yeltsin government's broad repression of dissent, including the dissolution of Parliament, suspension of the court that found the dissolution unconstitutional, dissolution of almost all dissenting local governments, and the expulsion of thousands of non-Muscovites from the city.

Every day brings new reports from Moscow of executive orders undermining the rights of independent and opposition newspapers and political parties. Trade unions are being prevented from participating in political life and electioneering, and witch-hunting is threatening the jobs of anti-Yeltsinites. We fear for the safety of our colleagues in the trade union movement and democratic activist organizations. It is for this reason that we feel the urgent need to give our international solidarity an organized form today.

We therefore call on you to add your name to our protest. Join with us and other trade unionists, academics, and human rights activists in supporting the U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia based on the following simple principles:

☞ Human rights and freedom of press, assembly, and political organization for all in Russia.

☞ No repression of trade unionists and democratic activists.

U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia

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