

In Defense of Marxism

\$3.00

Haiti, Cuba, Persian Gulf:

U.S. Hands Off!



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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.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism

Volume 12, No. 9

Whole No. 120,

November 1994

Closing News Date:

October 22, 1994

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From the Editors:

U.S. Hands off Haiti, Cuba, Persian Gulf!

In this issue we focus attention on U.S. imperialist military actions, including blockade and intervention, against the fighting people of Haiti and against Cuba, the island bastion of revolutionary socialism that has stood firm against imperialism as a model of courage for almost 35 years.

A new U.S. occupation of Haiti, the second one in this century, has now occurred. Marty Goodman assesses its implications and the contradictory forces at work in this situation, raising the demand for self-determination for the people of Haiti and an end to the U.S. occupation. In opposing the occupation, we do not share the motivation of the American rightists, Republican, Democ-Rat, or other, who want U.S. occupation to end quickly so that the terrorist military-police-and-death-squad government of Haiti can remain in place. They are afraid that the tinkering by Clinton and Co. with the Haitian military machine could cause the dictatorship to malfunction, leaving an opening for a popular uprising and the overthrow of any kind of U.S.-controlled government. Far from fearing such an outcome, we would applaud it. What we oppose are the U.S. government intentions to "modernize," "civilize," "streamline," or in any other way prop up the terrorist military and police machine in Haiti (which was first created during the 1919-34 U.S. occupation). We demand that U.S. forces not be used against the mass mobilizations of the Haitian people so vividly described in Marty Goodman's article. The best way to be sure that American boys aren't used to mow down Haitian civilians is to — bring them home! And let the U.S.-backed military, police, and death squad terrorists leave Haiti with them. Haiti for the Haitian people!

We also call for an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba, which has been in effect for more than thirty years. Whether Republican or Democ-Rat, one U.S. imperialist administration after another has tried to use the method of economic embargo as well as military pressure to deny the Cuban people the right to decide for themselves how to run their own country and what kind of social system they choose to live under. We also think that at this time, when there is increased attention to the struggles of oppressed and embattled peoples to the south of us, it would be good for a national educational conference and teach-in to be held — on Cuba and Haiti and on the Zapatista struggle in Mexico.

The revolt of the Zapatistas represents another important struggle against oppression and for democratic rights in Latin America.

The situation in Mexico is discussed in this issue in an illuminating article by Rosendo Mendoza, who appraises the results of the August elections in that country and the ongoing battle of the Zapatistas and their supporters.

In addition to the Mexican elections, important elections took place in Brazil on October 3. As a result of elaborate machinations by the capitalist ruling class, the temporary result has been the seating of the neoliberal "Social Democrat" Fernando Henrique Cardoso as president of Brazil. Hopes for fundamental social change had centered on Lula (Luis Inácio da Silva), presidential candidate of the Workers Party (PT), who did receive more votes in the first round this year than in the 1988 first round. However, the dramatic surge of support for Lula earlier this year was successfully deflected by the capitalist government and media, using their resources and manipulative skills to full capacity. As Lula expressed it, the electoral process in Brazil was conducted "the Mexican way." "The governmental elite is using the government's machinery and other mechanisms to take Cardoso to victory. It seems and it looks like a democratic election, but it is by no means democratic" (*La Jornada*, Mexico City, September 23).

In future issues we expect to print further articles appraising the experiences in Mexico and Brazil, as well as the ongoing battles around Haiti and Cuba.

Also in this issue we are printing for the first time a 1961 talk on Cuba by Joseph Hansen, long a leading figure in the American Trotskyist movement. Hansen reviews 500 years of Cuban history and appraises the significance of Cuba's entry into the socialist phase of its revolution, as part of the worldwide process of transition from capitalism to socialism.

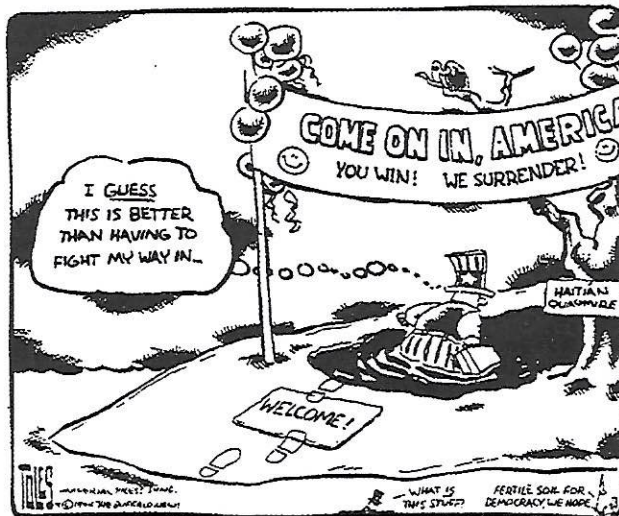
Likewise we are proud to share with our readers an important interview with a Midwestern trade union activist who in 1961, while serving in the U.S. Navy, found himself on a destroyer observing a battle that later came to be known as the Bay of Pigs invasion. How many others in the U.S. military today, and in the U.S. in general, may be starting to think along different lines, starting to question the system,

as a result of similar bizarre experiences with imperialist operations like the ones against Haiti, Cuba, and Iraq?

As we go to press, Saddam Hussein's acquiescence to Washington's demands has averted the threat of a new Gulf War for the time being — much to the chagrin of Clinton, who seemed to be spoiling for a fight. In fact, even as Saddam ordered the retreat of Iraqi troops from the southern region, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright kept raising new demands, such as additional no-fly zones, to try to maintain a high level of tension. Only when France and Russia balked at Clinton's more outrageous demands did the U.S. reluctantly stand down from its war footing.

It should be clear to any honest observer that since the Gulf War of 1991, Iraq has posed no serious threat either to its neighbors or to U.S. domination of the Middle East, if indeed it ever really did. There is no justification for the continuation of the economic embargo, which causes immense suffering to the Iraqi people and next to none to the dictator Saddam. Saddam Hussein is undoubtedly guilty of many crimes against the Iraqi people, but there is no less worthy judge than the U.S. government or the United Nations, which have made sure that Saddam has remained in power even as they self-righteously denounce him. We must demand an end to the embargo and all other acts of war against the people of Iraq.

In conclusion, the theme of this issue is: Stop the U.S. government and military attacks, both open and clandestinely funded, against the peoples of Cuba, Haiti, and Iraq. □



Self-Determination for the People of Haiti! U.S./UN Out of Haiti!

by Marty Goodman

After a year of political speculation the U.S. government occupied Haiti on September 19 for the second time this century.

The U.S.-led "UN" occupation force has edged toward 20,000 U.S. troops, plus a few hundred from Caribbean (and some other) nations. These troops are supposedly scheduled to stay about 7 months, after which a 6,000-member "multinational" peacekeeping force, including 3,000 U.S. troops, would take over. Pro-Aristide liberals in the Congressional Black Caucus and Social Democrats have finally gotten what they wanted.

Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide told his patron saint Bill Clinton, "Thank you and the people of the United States for your commitment to lead a multinational effort in carrying out the will of the United Nations to help restore democracy in Haiti" (*Newsday*, September 21, 1994). Aristide no longer referred to prohibitions in the Haitian constitution against advocating intervention (also forgotten by the U.S. media) in his open embrace of the plans of his current imperialist sponsors and controllers.

Aristide helped pave the way for U.S./UN intervention. In a July 29 letter to the UN Security Council, the Haitian president called for "swift and determined action," language considered crucial to the UN's passage of resolution 940 on intervention.

With Aristide urging Haitians to say "no to vengeance" and "yes to reconciliation," U.S. imperialism is squeezing the Haitian president for all he's worth. Aristide has been virtually under Washington's control ever since he was ousted and exiled by the CIA-backed military in 1991. His role is to try to silence the Haitian masses. He's even promised Clinton not to run again for president, after spending three years of his five-year term in exile. U.S. politicians say, "Aristide has matured."

Under U.S. pressure, Aristide appointed Major General Jean-Claude Duvalier, formerly the army's second in command, to lead Haiti's "new" army. Duvalier replaces his former boss, coup leader General Raoul Cedras, who left Haiti with a U.S. Army escort on October 10. Cedras had originally been appointed chief of the Haitian army by — Aristide himself! Cedras had allegedly kept the army "neutral" in the presidential election of December 1990, which Aristide won. The new army chief, Duvalier, in his swearing-in ceremony, claimed that the army would now be different, would have "respect for life and the people," according to a Cable Network News commentary. CNN said Duvalier sounded a "new note of human rights." This is the same Duvalier who loyally served as No. 2 man to Cedras during

three years of massive human rights violations, including the murder of at least 5,000 Haitians.

The tone of Duvalier's comments was strikingly similar to that of CIA agent Emanuel (Toto) Constant, head of the paramilitary FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti). In light of the new situation, Constant called on the people his death squads had terrorized to "put down their tires, their stones, their guns." (More on Constant below.)

Michel François, Haiti's top cop and leading state terrorist, beat Cedras out of the country. François fled to the Dominican Republic on October 4, where he joined numerous other former Haitian dictators, military leaders, and members of the Tonton Macoutes terror squads.

Neither the army leaders nor Aristide will be able to contain the rage of the Haitian masses against the Haitian army, police, and the paramilitary Tonton Macoutes organized into the FRAPH, often called "attachés."

Aristide's great error, since being deposed on September 30, 1991, has been to rely solely on U.S. diplomacy and military might, rather than on the Haitian masses. (See "Imperialism in Haiti: What's Behind Shifts in U.S. Policy?" by Jackson Kandinsky and "No to the U.S./UN Embargo! No Military Intervention in Haiti!" by Kandinsky and David Weiss, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, No. 117, July-August 1994.)

"He could not admit to himself and to his people that it was easier to find decency, gratitude, justice, and humanity in a cage of starving tigers than in the councils of imperialism." These lines written by C.L.R. James, historian of the 1804 Haitian revolution, about independence leader Toussaint L'Ouverture's dealings with France, are strangely prescient in their application to Aristide's position today.

However, the Haitian masses remain mobilized, feeling for the time being released from the terror that has taken the lives of 5,000 pro-democracy Haitians as well as the many thousand victims of torture, imprisonment, and rape. Already many food depots have been looted, selectively chosen for their ties to junta supporters. Many coup supporters have been attacked. Said one U.S. officer in Haiti, "Every time the U.S. disarms or shoots a Haitian policeman or soldier, it emboldens the crowds to act on their own. They think they have the right to revenge" (*Haiti Progrès*, October 4, 1994).

The Masses Intervene

Haiti Progrès newspaper's correspondent Dan Coughlin, reported from Port-au-Prince October 3, "There is one political actor who's very powerful who's not had a voice these past three years, and that's the Haitian masses. It is truly

amazing to watch the self-activity, the creativity of these people as they march here in PAP [Port-au-Prince], in Jacmel, in Jérémie, in St. Marc, up in Cap-Haïtien. We have to understand that clearly everything will not go smoothly for the U.S. military here. They've had to disarm FRAPH, because [otherwise] the people would have done it themselves, that's very clear. That if the U.S. hadn't moved against them today, they would have done it themselves today or the next day. This is an important political factor to realize.... This one social, political force is pushing the situation here in directions the United States does not necessarily want and does not necessarily perceive" (WBAI, October 3, 1994).

Yet despite the clear political objectives of these mass actions, U.S. officials and the mass media alike continue to grind out mindlessly racist images of "anarchy" in Haiti and "Haitian on Haitian violence." The usually more circumspect *New York Times* ran a headline, "The Mouse that Roared Says 'Thanks'" after Aristide's mild criticism of the Carter-Cedras agreement (*New York Times*, September 22, 1994).

It appears that in the initial stages most Haitians are supporting the occupation, but that is likely to change soon. About eight years ago, the Haitian people in Port-au-Prince erupted with joy at the departure of dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier when he fled Haiti February 7, 1986, after nationwide protests forced his departure on a U.S. Air Force C-130. A U.S.-orchestrated military junta seized control. At first Haitians crowded around the Palace in Port-au-Prince shouting "Long Live the Army." They didn't shout that slogan for very long.

Haiti's organized grassroots movement — still ignored by the U.S. media — vigorously condemned the occupation. The Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP), Haiti's largest peasant organization — whose leader Chavannes Jean-Baptiste is in Aristide's cabinet — said, "Never yet in all history has any American or multinational military intervention ever been done in the interests of any people." The MPP also said that "the intervention and occupation of the country is in the interests of the putschists and the imperialists" and that even though "there are many Haitians who think that the invasion has come to crush the criminals for us, we are sure that one day people's eyes will be opened."

Said one Haitian soldier in Port-au-Prince a few days after the September 19 occupation, "If it was not for the Americans, we would have been dead. The people would go after us" (*New York Times*, September 26, 1994).

The slogan of revolutionary socialists must be "Let the People of Haiti Run Their Own Country — U.S./UN Troops Out Now!"

The U.S. Occupation

"The key is not just to invade the country — it is to sit on the country." — A U.S. official, quoted in the *New York Times*, September 11, 1994.

"Our mission was not to intervene," said U.S. military spokesman Col. Barry Willey, maintaining the U.S. stance after pro-military "attachés" gunned down at least eight pro-Aristide demonstrators at a rally in Port-au-Prince on the third anniversary of the coup (*New York Times*, October 1, 1994). The next day Clinton praised the U.S. army role. Clinton thereby reversed a position he had taken only a few days earlier after a coconut vendor was killed on September 20 by Tonton Macoutes in full view of U.S. troops.

Although U.S. policy toward Haitian "security" forces has not been consistent day to day, it is consistent with U.S. strategic objectives in Haiti, that is, to reinforce the military and financial elite. U.S. forces have repeatedly intervened to prevent the looting of Macoute property and food depots and have set up roadblocks near parade routes close to wealthy Port-au-Prince neighborhoods (*New York Times*, October 1, 1994). Yet they were not willing to prevent the attachés from killing demonstrators. U.S. troops were first "prevented" from intervening under the "rules of engagement." That policy was reversed after graphic pictures embarrassed the U.S., then changed, then changed again several times by Clinton.

Said one Haitian in Port-au-Prince September 30, when eight pro-Aristide marchers were killed by attachés as more than 20,000 Haitians marched for the return of Aristide on the third anniversary of the coup, "As Aristide supporters we want to know what the Americans are doing here? With so many soldiers, why don't they uproot the Macoutes?" (*New York Times*, October 1, 1994). Many Haitians demanded that they themselves be allowed to disarm the Macoutes. Another Port-au-Prince Haitian said, "I can't believe what I see now. The American soldiers were supposed to be here to help us. They were to restore democracy and protect us from the machine guns of FRAPH people" (*New York Times*, October 1, 1994).

Initial U.S. reluctance to disarm the "attachés," let alone the military, stemmed from the desire not to antagonize the army it had created (see "U.S. Role in Haiti" below) and also not to appear too quickly in the role of sole enforcer of Haiti's unjust social order. That is, they want some other force (a "reformed" Haitian police, the Haitian army, or even the "attachés") to take the role of crushing the pro-Aristide masses and, most importantly, taking action against political developments to the left of Aristide.

As of this writing (October 10) the U.S. had dismantled several police stations and arrested several members of the pro-military FRAPH organization in Port-au-Prince — yet the institutions of the Haitian army remain in place. The dismantling of the heavy weapons camp in the hills above the capital, used by one branch of the Haitian army to intimidate another, was

largely symbolic, said U.S. commanders (*Newsday*, September 22, 1994).

The U.S. moves against "unruly" elements is window dressing. A shoot-out between U.S. and Haitian security forces in Cap-Haitien on September 24, under circumstances that remain unclear, did not have as its aim the "uprooting" of the Macoutes, as Haitians call it, but was the result of nervous Macoutes and probably trigger-happy U.S. troops. Ten Haitians died after 1,000 U.S. rounds were fired. U.S. troops soon pulled out of Cap-Haitien and allowed truckloads of Haitian troops to take over the city!

It is clear that all this is a precursor to U.S. (racist) violence against the popular movement in Haiti and must be opposed by revolutionaries. The demand for withdrawal of the U.S. imperialist troops, and unwavering opposition to any use of those troops against the Haitian mass movement, are crucial stands for revolutionaries.

Although the U.S. role may now appear to be "humanitarian" and even "antifascist," time will render a different conclusion. On September 24 the U.S. military surrounded the Haitian Parliament building with 600 troops, claiming to protect parliamentarians voting on amnesty. Wouldn't U.S. troops play a repressive role if the angry masses refused to accept the political amnesty granted to the coup makers by the parliament on October 7? (The amnesty, incidentally, did not grant immunity from criminal charges.)

Another ominous move was the takeover of Haiti's national television and radio by the occupation forces. Under U.S. military control, the TV and radio were soon broadcasting pictures from the American invasion of Panama in 1989 (*New York Times*, September 22, 1994). How long will it be before the U.S. forces, with the Panama-style massive use of firepower, are unleashed against the anti-imperialist left in Haiti?

Whatever the U.S. does *vis-à-vis* certain Haitian army or Macoutes elements, the U.S. will pump in millions of dollars to reinforce, not replace, the Haitian military as an institution.

The U.S. Role in Haiti: The Historical Record

Washington has dubbed the occupation "Operation Uphold Democracy," but the history of U.S.-Haiti relations shows that to be a sham. During the 1915-34 U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti the U.S. created today's Haitian army and trained it in counterinsurgency. Haiti's banks were seized; slave labor was employed to build roads — in large part to transport troops more efficiently and to further open the internal markets to the world economy; foreign land ownership was legalized for the first time since the 1804 Haitian revolution; and racist decrees and censorship were imposed.

The U.S. propped up the 1957-1986 reign of the Duvalier family dictatorship and of every thug that followed. The military coup leaders who overthrew Aristide were trained by the U.S. at the "School of the Americas" and were on the CIA payroll. CIA money was used, through a phony "anti-drug" unit called SIN

(from its French initials), to spy on and repress the pro-democracy forces, including to spy on Aristide himself. Official and unofficial U.S. propaganda undermined Aristide at every step, calling him "crazy," "uncompromising," and a violator of human rights.

Key to U.S. policy is Washington's unprecedented, racist immigration policy, which violates U.S. and international laws. The U.S. Coast Guard delivered thousands of Haitian refugees back into the clutches of military thugs to be jailed, tortured, and killed. The names of refugees and asylum applicants have been collected on a U.S. government data base containing the names of tens of thousands of "dissidents." The recently reopened refugee camp in Guantánamo, Cuba, revealed once again the preferential treatment given Cubans. Hundreds of Haitians have protested. Protest leaders were jailed in five-by-six-foot cages. A recent U.S. deal with Cuba grants 20,000 U.S. visas a year to Cubans, but no such offer was made to Haitians.

Clinton's Occupation and the "New" Haitian Military

The Haitian president has retreated on the "new," post-invasion U.S.-trained Haitian army. Aristide initially said that no more than 1,500 should be drawn from existing security forces. But the Clinton administration, which foresees a permanent force of 3,000, has concluded, "It is impossible to replace most of the Haitian military and police and is falling back on the model used in Panama of rehabilitating existing security forces." According to a senior U.S. official, Aristide softened his position during meetings with General Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but would still be directly involved in approving who would serve in the new police force (*New York Times*, September 11, 1994).

Well, perhaps. But what is certain is a clearly mapped-out U.S. strategy to suppress the popular movements. According to *Newsday*, U.S. military experts say Haiti will be a "perfect scenario" for testing crowd control weapons — including foam rubber-tipped cartridges for grenade launchers and a special exploding gas that blinds and disorients crowds.

The *Washington Post* reports Aristide is also arranging on behalf of the Haitian bourgeoisie and U.S. army, "land and facilities for storing fuel and housing troops." The *Post* article said that "the U.S. Army has to use as many existing facilities as possible... and those are often in the hands of the wealthy" (*Washington Post*, September 18, 1994).

But the real story of U.S. occupation was first exposed a year ago by the Haiti Anti-Intervention Committee in New York (see July/August *BIDOM*), which outlined preinvasion U.S. plans, including the sending of hundreds of Green Berets, FBI agents, and Canadian Mounties as "advisers" and "trainers" to Haiti.

Essential new information is contained in two articles by Allan Lairn in *The Nation* — "The Eagle is Landing" (October 3) and "Behind Haiti's Paramilitaries" (October 24).

Naim's articles revealed that FRAPH's leader, Emanuel Constant, was a CIA agent. A U.S. intelligence official interviewed by Naim described Constant as a "young pro-Western intellectual...no further right than a Young Republican" and said that U.S. intelligence had "encouraged" Constant to form FRAPH after the 1991 coup to "balance the Aristide movement" and do "intelligence" work against it. The relationship began when the U.S. official met with Constant at the CIA-sponsored "anti-drug" unit SIN. Constant was teaching courses on "The Theology of Liberation" and "Animation and Mobilization." The *Washington Post* reported on October 8 that Constant was paid more than \$500 a month for two years.

Naim, who interviewed Constant several times, also revealed that during the 1991 coup, a U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) attaché, Col. Patrick Collins, and the CIA station chief, Donald Terry, who also ran SIN, "were inside the (general) headquarters." The SIN headquarters, says Naim, was a nerve center of army, police, and FRAPH activity. The U.S. routinely monitored walkie talkies and was in a position to know about the impending coup, which resulted in the deaths of 1,000 Haitians on the very first day. The U.S. could have warned Aristide. It did not.

In "The Eagle Has Landed," Naim reported on interviewing Major Louis Kernisan, who worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in Haiti from 1989 through 1991. Referring to the possibilities of mass revolt under occupation, Kernisan said, "Popular uprising? I doubt it. This is only the kind of shit they've been able to get away with when there's nobody watching..." Kernisan is now a central occupation figure. He operates out of ICITAP, an FBI outfit that was formed in 1986 to provide training for cops in Guatemala. ICITAP will provide hundreds of "trainers" in Haiti.

Kernisan asked rhetorically, "What are we going to save? You're going to end up dealing with the same folks as before, the five families that run the country, the military and the bourgeoisie. They're the same folks that are supposed to be the bad guys now, but the bottom line is you know that you're going to always end up dealing with them...It's not going to be the slum guy from Cité Soleil. The best thing he can hope for is probably, 'Oh, I'll help you offload your cargo truck.' Because that's all he has the capacity to do. It'll be the same elites, the bourgeoisie, and the five families that run the country."

A U.S. Army Psychological Operations official interviewed in "The Eagle Has Landed" estimated that "anti-U.S. sentiment" could be expected within four weeks of intervention — perhaps longer if Aristide returns — but protests would begin when the demands of the masses are not met. "You publicize that you're simply not going to tolerate that kind of stuff," said the official.

Backdrop to Occupation: The World Bank Tightens Its Noose

On August 22 a deal was reached in Paris between the Aristide government and the U.S.-

controlled World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The agreement, called "Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction," was presented by Aristide advisers, one of whom was Leslie Delatour, a Chicago School graduate and former finance minister under the post-Duvalier military dictatorship of Henri Namphy.

According to an earlier article by Allan Naim, this one published in the July/August issue of *Multinational Monitor*, the agreement called

for Haiti to commit to eliminate half the civil service jobs, privatize public service, "drastically" slash tariffs and import restrictions, eschew price and foreign exchange controls, grant "emergency" aid to the export sector, enforce an "open foreign investment policy," and diminish the power of Aristide's executive branch in favor of a more conservative parliament. Haiti will receive \$770 million in financing, \$80 million going to pay debts owed to international banks, \$13 million of which will be paid by an Aristide government.

Naim interviewed a World Bank desk officer, Axel Peuker, who said that there was a contrast with Aristide's "public image" as a populist and the "rather conservative approach, financial and otherwise," adopted when his ministers were in power. Peuker was referring to a World Bank/IMF austerity agreement developed by his advisers during Aristide's administration (February 7 through September 30, 1991). That deal brought sharp protests from grassroots organizations in Haiti. Peuker said the new plan goes farther.

Indeed it does. Previously, Aristide tried to raise the minimum wage from 33¢ an hour to 50¢ an hour. (In reality, wages in the U.S.-dominated assembly industry are commonly 14¢ an hour.) The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a notorious CIA front, spent \$26 million opposing the wage reform (National Labor Committee [NLC], 1983). Peuker dismissed a new minimum wage increase as a "non-issue" and said that reviving Aristide's program for a social security system was, "not on the agenda."

CIA Funds "Democracy" in Haiti

U.S. domination will also include USAID (CIA) funding to a maze of phony human rights, journalist, labor, and "community" organizations in Haiti. For example, before the coup the "USAID used a front group [Prominex] (99% USAID-funded) to organize, direct, and manage business opposition" to the democratically elected Aristide administration (*Haiti Under the Coup*, NLC report, 1983.)

Part of the funding goes to the USAID Democracy Enhancement Project, a conduit for the CIA-connected National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The NED, officially a private organization, receives 99 percent of its funding from the U.S. government and is not subject to Congressional oversight. A Democracy Enhancement Project report of September 2, 1993, two years after the coup, spoke of an \$11 million budget for 5 years. The USAID offers funding to many PVOs (private voluntary organizations), most of which clearly have conservative and right-wing agendas (Washington Office on Haiti [WOH] report, September 1994).

Some of the many CIA front groups receiving funds this year are the notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development and PIREDE, which received a \$5 million grant to "eligible Haitian NGOs which work to promote human rights, free and independent media, democratic and civic education" (WOH report, March 1994). Another is the Center for Democracy (CFD), whose alleged purpose is to "promote the democratic process." It is headed by Allen Weinstein, who has been described as "the dean of covert operations" (WOH, March 1994). Another USAID recipient is the "human rights" organization CHADEL (Haitian Center for Human Rights). CHADEL's director, Jean-Jacques Honorat, became the first prime minister under the coup!

There is also FONDEM, run by Evans Paul, Aristide's campaign manager in 1990 and mayor of Port-au-Prince, who is seen as Aristide's likely successor. FONDEM, which gives seminars on "democracy," received \$100,000 from the USAID in 1992 (*Village Voice*, September 27, 1994). After the September 1991 coup, Evans Paul helped found an opposition organization in Haiti called K-16. Unlike the genuine grassroots groups, K-16 never opposed U.S. intervention. A final irony: Clinton has implemented a \$5 million CIA plan to "neutralize" opposition to Aristide and \$1 million in "pro-Aristide" propaganda (*New York Times*, September 28, 1994).

Burning Issues

The U.S. occupation of Haiti raises critical issues that cut to the heart of today's worldwide ideological crisis. It is time for a balance sheet. Can Social Democracy achieve meaningful gains for the working class through the ballot box? Can the UN act independently of U.S. imperialism? Can U.S./UN embargoes aid workers' struggles? Can U.S. and/or U.S./UN intervention play a progressive role? Clearly, the answer to all of these questions is "No!"

The vacillations, confusions, and betrayals of Haitian and international Social Democracy and its ideological bedfellows in the Stalinist and neo-Stalinist camp, more than ever point to the necessity of building a Leninist vanguard party to achieve the complete transformation of society by the working class.

Build the Haiti Anti-Intervention Movement

Today, there is a growing Haiti anti-intervention movement in the U.S., composed of Haitians and non-Haitians in over a dozen cities. These committees coordinated emergency protest rallies, planned in advance, that took place within 24 hours of the invasion. This movement needs to become a mass struggle of the African American, student, and labor movements. To contact the Haiti solidarity movement, call or write: The Haiti Anti-Intervention Committee, P.O. Box 755, Fort Washington Station, New York, NY 10040; telephone (212) 592-3612. Financial donations are desperately needed. □

October 10, 1994

Strike Wave Rocks South Africa

by Tom Barrett

South African workers have continued their struggle for improved living standards and trade union rights since the final collapse of apartheid in May of this year. Emboldened by the victory of winning universal franchise and a Black-majority government, workers in a number of key industries have gone out on strike to demand that the African National Congress (ANC)-dominated government live up to its promises of economic improvement for South Africa's impoverished Black workers.

COSATU Re-Elects Shilowa; Reaffirms Commitment to Struggle

In early September the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which has a membership of about 1.3 million, held its national congress, at which it re-elected Sam Shilowa as its secretary-general. President Nelson Mandela, addressing the gathering, called on workers to "tighten their belts" and invoked the example of the Asian "Gang of Four" (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore), where low wages predominate. "For the good of the country and in order to create economic opportunities, they are prepared to take low salaries... Unless we sacrifice, we have that determination to tighten our belts... it is going to be difficult to get our economy to grow." The COSATU delegates didn't buy it. Shilowa told reporters after the congress, "We are told we have the right to strike, but the minute we use it we are told we are fighting the ANC."

COSATU delegates demanded that the government negotiate with the trade unions before any tariff reductions are enacted. They also called for the removal of a clause in the interim constitution which protects private ownership of the means of production as well as the repeal of all laws which conflict with workers' rights.

Auto Strike

Coinciding with the COSATU congress was the ending of a crippling five-month strike in the South African auto industry. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA, the second-largest member union of COSATU), which organizes South African auto workers, had demanded an 11 percent wage increase. The employers were offering a 10.5 percent increase at the time of the strike's end; both sides agreed to continue wage negotiations after the strikers returned to work.

Six weeks into the strike, Finance Minister Derek Keys ordered a drastic reduction in tariffs on imported automobiles. Angry union officials accused the government of meddling in the labor dispute and attempting to force the union to capitulate to management.

At the beginning of September, President Mandela announced the formation of a committee on labor relations, consisting of repre-

sentatives of the government, employers, and trade unions. There is considerable doubt as to whether such a body will be effective. The ANC succeeded in establishing an alliance with COSATU precisely to foster class peace in the post-apartheid period, but today COSATU feels shortchanged. The twenty COSATU leaders who were elected to parliament have tended to behave as typical capitalist MPs rather than as labor representatives, increasing the tension between COSATU and the ANC government.

Red-Baiting in Truckers' Strike

In a much briefer but more dramatic strike action, 3,000 truckers belonging to the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU, also a COSATU affiliate), staged the equivalent of a sit-down strike on Highway N3, which links the Indian Ocean port city of Durban with Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city. During the last week of August, drivers parked 68 trucks loaded with inflammable freight across the road in both directions at the Mooi River toll plaza, effectively preventing the government from taking violent action to break the strike.

Spokespeople for the government and the employing class launched a vicious red-baiting campaign against the truckers, using as a pretext the membership in the Workers List Party (WLP) of one of the strike leaders, Richard Madime. The WLP was formed to field a slate of independent labor candidates in the May elections. Among the organizations which came together to launch the WLP was the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), in which members of the Fourth International are active. The newspaper *Weekend Argus* concocted a fantastic story of a "Trotskyite plot" to "create havoc, bring down the government, undermine the Reconstruction and Development Program [RDP], and discredit the unions."

In an angry response, WLP vice president Neville Alexander wrote:

The only fact referred to in the article relates to Comrade Madime's membership in the WLP. To jump from this fact and that others in the leadership of the workers' action might also be members and supporters of the WLP to an elaborate conspiracy hatched by the "Trotskyists" in the WLP is not only far-fetched but frankly ludicrous... It is also an attempt to undermine the capability of workers themselves to provide leadership. Our support of the truck drivers' demands and of other workers is a matter of public record; there is nothing secretive about this. The WLP is an open mass organization, and we stand with workers, the unemployed, youth, women, and other oppressed strata willing to fight against their oppression and exploitation....

Most perturbing to us is the meaning of such gutter journalism in respect of the future of democracy in this country. Besides the transpar-

ent attempt to divide the workers... we are particularly incensed at the vulgar stereotyping of pro-worker democrats and socialists as mindless and irresponsible "activists" whose only concern is undermining the government, the RDP, and the trade union movement. This is red-baiting and crass sensationalism of the worst kind. One is forced to ask whether it is a transparent attempt to lay the basis for future repression against the socialist left.

As it happens, we have in fact agreed in our structures that it would be mere sloganizing for us to prattle about "overthrowing the government or the state" in the stereotypical manner, as though the attainment of the franchise by the majority of our people had no political significance. The WLP will support any reforms or progressive measures taken by the government which are in the interests of the working class. But we will fight any measures which attack the working class. We are proud to call ourselves and to be called revolutionaries, because we continue to believe in and to promote by all means necessary the radical transformation of our society as the only solution toward meeting the needs of our people.

We make no bones about our opposition to the exploitative capitalist system in South Africa and in all other parts of the world. This is in fact the basis of our critique of the ANC and the SACP [South African Communist Party]. We believe that those organizations, despite their historic contributions to our struggle for freedom and against racism, are now misleading our people to believe that within the framework of the capitalist system the basic problems of poverty and inequality can be solved. All recent history, in the so-called Third World, demonstrates that this is a pipe dream.

If one is not permitted to hold such views in the "new" South Africa, then we are headed for the abyss. If the newspapers of the "new" South Africa cannot get rid of knee-jerk anticommunist reactions, they will have to learn through mass action and mass strikes that the real power resides with the working class. The ranks of the WLP have recently been swelled by workers who only yesterday voted for the ANC. They have learned in a short space of time through hard experience that what is needed in South Africa is a mass workers' party to take forward their demands. What we observe in our country today is a rank-and-file revolt against all forces preventing workers from attaining their demands. Instead of looking for scapegoats one must rather address the demands of the workers.

Militant strikes have also occurred in the gold mining, paper, metal, and oil industries. Though South Africans overwhelmingly recognize that universal suffrage and the collapse of apartheid have been tremendous victories, working people are not satisfied as long as they contend with long hours, low wages, inadequate housing, and nonexistent health benefits. The Workers List Party is able to gain a hearing from workers such as the truckers at Mooi River precisely for that reason. No amount of "plotting" can force workers to turn against the ANC if they feel that the Mandela government is truly sensitive to their needs and acting in their interests. As Sam Shilowa explained, "Workers expect to see political democracy translate into economic democracy at the workplace. They don't just want to hold a ballot paper every five years." □

PRI "Wins" Mexican Elections

by Rosendo Mendoza

It had been billed as the election to end all rigged elections. Following the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas and the March 23 assassination of the regime's presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, a virtual consensus had developed on the opinion pages of the leading daily papers that Mexico would never be the same after August 21.

The only question open to discussion was just what form the transition from one-party state rule to a more democratic, pluralistic system would immediately take. Would the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) be forced to seek a multi-party government in the wake of a poor showing at the polls? Would President Carlos Salinas de Gortari be forced by mass anti-fraud protests to name an interim president to preside over a transition period? Would an extended period of political instability ensue? Might the PRI lose outright at the voting booth?

Speculation and conspiracy theories were multiplying by the hour, but as the first returns from the federal elections came in, everyone, including PRI presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo, appeared amazed. The PRI had pulled it off again.¹

The PRI's traditional recourse to election fraud undoubtedly played a role in the outcome. Throughout the country, a combination of old-style intimidation, vote buying, and ballot stuffing was well documented by opposition poll watchers and independent election observers. A more sophisticated operation, involving a selective purge of voter lists and restricted access to polling stations, also had a major effect.

But other factors also came into play that shed light on the evolution of official political life in Mexico.

A transition is clearly under way, but there is no indication that it will signal any significant moves toward a democratization of Mexican society. The elections served to underscore the fact that the transition involves a consolidation of the political and economic might of Mexican and U.S. capital, who are agreed that the PRI is its primary vehicle for implementing their agenda.

The Salinas administration's forced-march effort to bring Mexico into the ranks of First World countries has essentially consisted of a massive transfer of wealth in the past six years. The bulk of the public sector has been sold off at rock bottom prices to a select few favorites of

the regime. While espousing its neoliberal free-market philosophy, the Salinas team has used every tariff and regulatory trick in the book to convert such enterprises as the Telmex telephone monopoly into some of the most profitable private companies in the world. Multimillion-dollar frauds recently uncovered at two leading financial groups also shed light on the way development bank funds have been channeled to help a new generation of PRI protegés assemble huge fortunes virtually overnight.

As a result of the Salinas-style capitalist restructuring, the number of Mexicans living below the poverty level has gone from 18 million to 40 million, almost half the population. The buying power of average wages has declined 55 percent. Meanwhile, the number of Mexican billionaires has gone from none to 24, according to *Forbes* magazine. This new group of First World capitalists is dedicated to eliminating the vestiges of the bonapartist character of the PRI and further adapting it to their own political and economic agenda. The conflicts involved in this consolidation of their direct control over the party via the Salinas and Zedillo teams are reflected in ongoing internal strife and political assassinations, including the September 28 killing of PRI General Secretary José Francisco Massieu.

Big business threw its weight around on an unprecedented scale during the elections, bankrolling the parties of their choice. Though the PRI continued to pillage public coffers for their campaign efforts, the most prominent representatives of Mexican capital boasted of multimillion-dollar contributions to the PRI well before the election campaign ever got off the ground. Though recent reforms of Mexican election law put caps on private donations, no effective means exists to monitor such contributions. As a result, the PRI is estimated to have outspent its rivals by as much as a thousand to one. Even the government's tiny and ostensibly left-wing satellite, the Labor Party (PT), outspent Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) — which is entirely dependent on outlays from government campaign funding — by a ten-to-one margin. The strongest factor in the PRI's favor, however, is the absence not only of a well-financed political rival but of any clear alternative project.

Despite the economic hardships faced by the vast majority of Mexicans, both the PAN and the PRD offered economic platforms strikingly

similar to that of the PRI. Business chambers and financial analysts alike admitted they were hard pressed to find any significant differences between the three parties on such issues.

Cárdenas focused his campaign on promises to dismantle the PRI regime and institute major democratic reforms. But with little hope of any reversal of a 20-year trend toward declining living standards, many voters were clearly swayed by the PRI's and PAN's bogus promises of orderly democratic change and an end to violence.

In the absence of clear political alternatives, it is evident that a shift to the right occurred among most voters, including a considerable number of those who had cast their ballots for Cárdenas in the 1988 race. According to post-election studies, Cárdenas lost a large part of the urban middle-class support he had achieved six years earlier. But even more significant was the fact that the PRI fared best among low-income voters, and there was no repeat of the 1988 phenomenon in which districts with a high percentage of unionists voted strongly for Cárdenas and against PRI congressional slates.

Balance Sheet

The outcome of the August 21 elections clears the way for a much-needed evaluation of the currents to the left of the PRD-Cárdenas project and their relationship to it. For the past six years, virtually the entire left bet on the idea that the 1994 Cárdenas campaign would pose a definitive challenge to PRI rule and radically shift the political landscape to the left. In the process, the left increasingly adapted to the program of Cárdenas.

The outcome of this approach has been precisely the opposite. Cárdenas's defeat at the polls has served to consolidate the approach of the most right-wing sectors of his party and has left the more radicalized sectors of the PRD organization politically unarmed.

The PRD leadership has unanimously approved a proposal to begin negotiations with the PRI. The most corrupt and right-wing elements in the PRD, who have long advocated a conciliatory approach to the PRI regime, have won out. The order of the day is to "institutionalize" the PRD as a "mainstream" party, further absorbed into the machinations of official politics and politically further to the right.

CND and Left Alternative

An alternative to the left of the PRD leadership could still coalesce around those forces that have strongly identified with the struggle of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN — Zapatista National Liberation Army). At present, the main framework uniting such forces is the Convención Nacional Democrática (CND — National Democratic Convention), a body that was established August 9 at a gathering held in Chiapas under EZLN auspices. But the CND confronts major difficulties.

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1. Official results gave Zedillo slightly more than 50 percent of the vote and the PRI a comfortable congressional majority. The PRI's de facto allies in the conservative National Action Party (PAN) finished a strong second with more than a quarter of the vote, and the left-of-center Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) finished a distant third at 17 percent.

Québec Independence Referendum in 1995

by Barry Weisleder

Parti Québécois (PQ) leader and Premier-elect Jacques Parizeau has confirmed that a referendum on Québec independence will be held in 1995, but the Canadian ruling class is hard at work stepping up its war of threats and disinformation, seeking to undermine the right of the Québécois to determine their own national destiny.

The PQ, a capitalist pro-sovereignty party supported by a segment of Québec businessmen and endorsed by the three major Québec labor centrals, captured 77 seats, compared to 47 seats for the right-wing federalist Liberal Party, in the September 12 Québec provincial election.

English Canadian business media and politicians quickly tried to undermine the new government's mandate by pointing to the PQ's percentage of the popular vote (a matter usually of little concern to them). The PQ won 44.7 percent, compared to the Liberals' 44.3 percent.

They habitually neglect to mention the 6.5 percent who voted for the Democratic Action Party, a pro-sovereignty party that split off from the Liberals and which elected one deputy to the Québec National Assembly. And we should add that a portion of the remaining 4.5 percent preferred to vote for small leftist pro-independence parties, repelled by the anti-worker, pro-cutbacks record of PQ governments since the 1980s.

Provincial governments headed by the English Canada labor-based New Democratic Party have joined the reactionary anti-Québec, pro-"national unity" chorus of Capital.

In fact, leading the chauvinist charge are Saskatchewan NDP Premier Roy Romanow and Ontario NDP Premier Bob Rae. Rae displays extraordinary "chutzhah" in this regard: his party captured a majority of seats in the September 1990 Ontario provincial election with only 37 percent of the popular vote — and then proceeded to betray its progressive election promises and to viciously attack union rights, workers' wages, and public social benefits.

Even though the PQ and the Bloc Québécois in the federal House of Commons are capitalist parties and do not deserve even the slightest confidence of the working class, they are forced to advocate Québec independence (and to try to contain the struggle for sovereignty within the bounds of capitalist rule) by a Francophone working class which, in its majority, is deeply committed to national liberation.

The prospect of a highly unionized, militant nationalist, and potentially radicalized Québec working class taking the leadership of this struggle in the future is the permanent nightmare of the Canadian establishment. Likewise,

Washington and Wall Street are distressed at the notion of a "Cuba-North" and have declared their "preference" for a "united Canada."

But even assuming capitalist continuity, Canada's rulers have extreme difficulty coming to terms with the idea of losing direct control over the one-quarter of Canada's work force, market, and natural resources that Québec presently encompasses as a province in the Canadian Confederation. Anglo Capital will fight to keep in control.

Québec is an oppressed nation. It is less economically developed than Ontario. But it is also the second largest province in Canada, with a population of seven million, of which over 85 percent are Francophone. Among the 21 million people in the rest of Canada, French is the mother tongue to only 5 percent.

From the time of the English Conquest of 1759, through the armed rebellion of 1837, Confederation in 1867, and the failed attempts of Prime Ministers Trudeau (Liberal) and Mulroney (Conservative) to suppress and/or coopt Québec national aspirations in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the Québec "national question" remains the main source of instability in the Canadian bourgeois state. It just won't go away.

Due to the "solidarity" of the English Canadian labor and NDP leadership with the Canadian ruling class and their combined hostility to the national aspirations of Québec workers, divisions between English Canadian and Québécois workers have deepened. Such divisions reached a peak when, in the 1970s and 1980s, the NDP and labor brass opposed Québec Language Law 101, as well as the later law on store signs (both designed to make the use of French the rule in education, government, and commerce inside Québec), and the 1990s when they stood with the Canadian establishment in support of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown constitutional accords, and against both Québec labor and majority public opinion across the country.

Revolutionary socialists support the struggle for Québec independence for at least two reasons: firstly, it will advance the class struggle of the Québécois workers, removing at least one structure or layer of their oppression, while weakening the Canadian imperialist state — the "prison house of nations" which denies the national rights of aboriginal peoples, Acadians, and others; secondly, Québec independence will necessitate a new relationship between the workers' movements of the two major nations — hopefully to become a new relationship

based on genuine solidarity, freed from the shackles of state stewardship and paternalism.

The latter point underscores the need now for an active movement of solidarity in English Canada, led by the unions, in defense of Québec's unconditional right to national self-determination. A successful mass movement of this type could neutralize the big business-led propaganda and economic assault on Québec, and reverse the self-destructive and anti-worker policies of the NDP leadership on many levels.

And such a movement could lay the basis for a genuine united front in support of democratic rights for all against the bosses' state. It would counter the current trend of leaders of native bands and minority groups who play into the hands of the ruling rich by parroting the "stay in Canada" official line, vainly hoping for favors from the Canadian business elite after Québec is "put in its place."

Clearly, Québécois workers need to form their own mass labor party. The NDP turned its back on them in the 1960s and has been steadfast in its hostility to their national aspirations ever since. The PQ is clearly a business party (even if most Québec-based business remains staunchly Liberal and federalist). And the PQ's legislative track record is decidedly anti-worker.

A mass Québécois workers' party, based on the Québec unions, and committed to national independence and socialism, would offer a meaningful class alternative to the PQ and would provide workers with a means to advance *both* their national and class interests.

But the task of challenging and replacing the present "leadership" of the national struggle in Québec is the task of the Québécois working class and no one else. For socialists or others outside Québec to make their solidarity with Québec's right to independence *contingent* upon replacement of the PQ with a party or leadership more to their liking, is unprincipled, and in essence, national chauvinist. Unfortunately, this is the stance of most of the English Canadian organized and independent Left.

By contrast, Socialist Action, an organization of Fourth Internationalists in the Canadian state, will be campaigning in the unions and other social movements for unconditional solidarity with Québec's national right to self-determination. We will promote resolutions and actions against all efforts to thwart or obstruct that right, and we will seek opportunities to explain why Québec independence is in the interests of *both* Québécois and English Canadian workers, in opposition to the bosses and their state. □

Teamster President Carey's Foes Organize

by Charles Walker

The "hard" strategy seeks to short-circuit a prolonged conflict by going for Carey's political throat. It aims for his removal or resignation within six months.

— *From the old guard's strategic plan*

For most of 1991 the Teamsters union has resonated with one controversy after another. In February, Teamsters General President Ron Carey denounced the old guard's opposition to a membership referendum on Carey's proposal to raise the basic dues rate from two hours pay per month to two and a half hours. Carey said the dues increase would end the international union's financial crisis, which stemmed, in part, from a 1991 constitutional change that mandated an increase in weekly strike benefits from \$55 to \$200. (Carey could have pointed out that he, unlike his predecessors, had not stifled members' determination to mount defensive strike actions against their bosses.)

Carey pinned the failure to provide for the strike payment increase on the old guard, who controlled 85 percent of the 1991 convention delegates. Carey also pointed out that after their spending had exceeded income for ten years, the old guard took \$34 million from the strike fund to cover up their deficits. On top of that, the old guard cut a deal to settle federal racketeering charges that cost the union more than \$40 million (and the meter is still running).

UPS Strike

Before the dues-referendum mail ballots came back, Carey was forced to call a nationwide United Parcel Service (UPS) strike. The walk-out was called (just after the new master contract was ratified) in order to stop a corporate double cross that would threaten the health and safety of the 165,000 unionized UPS workers.

The strike effort was openly opposed and sabotaged by many of the officers Carey defeated in 1991's first ever rank-and-file election of international officers. Still Carey managed to get 70,000 of the 165,000 workers out on the street. The UPS bosses caved, and the strikers returned to work the next day with amnesty.

Dues Vote Defeat

The old guard strenuously campaigned against the dues increase, and claimed a major victory against Carey when the members voted decisively against the proposal. It was soon clear that the old guard claimed too much influence for themselves, and gave too little credit to the membership's antipathy to a dues increase as such. That conclusion follows from the freight strikers' overwhelming vote to support Carey's recommendation to end their strike when no more could be won. The opportunistic old guard urged the ranks to vote no, and send Carey back to the bargaining table, in order to try to show Carey that the old guard was once again the boss.

Freight Strike

In April, Carey called the first national freight strike since 1979, and 70,000 Teamster strikers found themselves (as had the UPS strikers) fighting the bosses on one front and a fifth column of old-guard officials on a second front. Freight boss Robert A. Young III was reported as saying that there are people inside the Teamsters leadership who are the employers' kind of union officials. Those officials hobbled Carey's communication lines with strikers and/or helped some struck freight move to its destination.

After 24 days on the picket lines, the strikers ratified the proposed national master contract with a lopsided vote of 67,784 to 15,729. The 81 percent yes vote must be compared with the 64 percent no vote cast in 1988. Then the old guard imposed the contract anyway, under the two-thirds rule that was later dumped by the newly appointed General President Bill MacCarthy, following Jackie Presser's death.

The strikers won on the key issue driving the confrontation: the displacement of full-time jobs with part-time jobs. But their bargaining muscle had been eroded long ago by the old guard's go-along and get-along relations with the freight bosses. Although Carey gave nothing away, he could not prevent concessions that will reduce the Teamster freight workforce as trucking freight is transferred to the railroads.

Carey's Giant Step: Abolishing the Conferences

The old guard's fifth-column betrayal of the freight strike seemed to be the last straw for Carey. In February he had warned that he was prepared to abolish the regional bureaucratic middle-level structures called conferences. The conferences, which had originally been organizing and coordinating bodies, degenerated decades ago into patronage-based regimes, inaccessible and unaccountable to the membership.

The four U.S. conference heads had \$14 million to spread around, and controlled key appointments to the crucial grievance panels, whose decisions can protect or take away a member's job and make or break the political careers of lower-level officials. The conferences were old-guard strongholds, which became centers for opposition to the UPS and freight strikes, as well as to Carey's dues increase proposal. Carey had met repeatedly with the conference leadership as part of his "olive branch policy" based on the notion that the old guard was capable of self-reform and would reform when the very top of the union was free of the corruption that Carey's election eliminated.

Carey's meetings with the conference chiefs got nowhere. They would only agree to support a \$2-3 monthly dues increase, and then only if Carey called a special convention, which would

be dominated by the old guard with its 85 percent of the delegates. At such a convention they would certainly adopt constitutional amendments reducing Carey to a ceremonial figurehead. Carey later said, "I've tried to work real hard to build relationships with local union officer, whether they were on my team or not. I want them to know that Ron Carey represents all Teamsters. But the reality is that the olive branch approach is not working."

What to do with the conferences was left up to the General Executive Board (GEB), the union's highest body between conventions, which are normally held every five years. After ten days of emotional hearings the GEB voted 14-3 on June 9 to revoke the charters of the conferences.

Restructuring the International

Earlier Carey had sent teams of overseers to the conferences to make sure that no sudden or extraordinary transfers of funds took place, and that no records were "disappeared." Following the GEB findings and decision, the same teams were in place to immediately fire the conference heads and then more slowly their cronies. Carey has retained some, perhaps many, of the sitting grievance panel chairs, but at the same time he has added rank-and-file members and low-level officials as well. Critical-minded reformers have been told that while many of the panel chairs have been retained, it's expected that the new panel members will act as a check on the panel chairs, whose technical expertise cannot be dispensed with.

The transferring of the legitimate conference functions to the appropriate trade divisions of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) and the restructuring of the International has been relatively smooth, so that few have noticed much more than a change of names on panels, and some changes in their makeup. The old guard's warnings that the abolishing of the conferences would lead to a breakdown in the orderly functioning of the union have not been borne out.

Old Guard Tries for a Comeback

If the ordinary member sees little that is different so far, the same cannot be said for the officials who lost one of their multiple salaries and whose power to get things done has been curtailed. No longer veiled by the conferences, they have put a new face on their political machine. Borrowing a page from their opponents, they have formed a national caucus patterned after Teamsters for a Democratic Union, which tipped the balance and made possible Carey's stunning upset victory in 1991.

The new outfit is named the "Real Teamsters," and is led by many of the same folks who

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Speech at 60th Anniversary Picnic

“Keep the Legacy of the Minneapolis Strikers Alive”

by Diana Kilmury

Following is the transcript of Diana Kilmury's remarks at the July 17 Minneapolis labor picnic commemorating the 60th anniversary of the 1934 Teamster strikes in that city. (See the report on the picnic in the September issue of BIDOM.) Kilmury was introduced by one of the main organizers of the picnic, Teamster activist Gillian Furst.

Gillian Furst: Diana Kilmury is someone very dear to my heart. She is the first woman to be an international vice president of the Teamsters Union. In 1991 she was elected on the Ron Carey slate, getting more votes than anyone else except Ron Carey. Diana has been a powerful advocate for the rank and file for many years. She is co-chair of Teamsters for a Democratic Union. She is a leader and a friend.

Diana Kilmury: Thank you very much, Gillian. It certainly is an honor and a privilege to be here today as we celebrate the many great sacrifices that the Minneapolis strikers made 60 years ago. I was especially delighted when our general president, who could not be with us here today, asked me to speak in his stead. So without further ado...

Greetings from Ron Carey

On behalf of America's 1.4 million Teamsters I bring greetings and solidarity to this day's commemoration of the 1934 Teamsters strike from our union's General President Ron Carey.

Teamsters have a long tradition of standing up for our rights as workers and fighting for a better future for all Americans.

Today we are honoring the thousands of brave strikers and their families who helped build the foundation for that Teamster tradition. Through months of struggle their unity and courage brought victory to their strike and inspiration to the entire labor movement. They put their lives on the line for justice.

On July 20, 1934, in a strikebreaking tactic that many modern-day trade unionists will find familiar, letters were sent to all the strikers giving them three days to return to work or find themselves replaced in their jobs. And then at 2:00 P.M. on that fateful day, Bloody Friday, an act occurred that will live in infamy forever. Heavily armed police opened fire without warning on the unarmed and peaceful pickets following a scab delivery truck.

Bloody Friday

What follows is the eyewitness account from Farrell Dobbs's excellent book on the strike, *Teamster Rebellion*:

Before long the police were on the prod, their change in attitude coinciding with unusual ac-

tivity at Slocum-Bergren, a wholesale grocery house near Third Street and Sixth Avenue North. It appeared that an attempt was going to be made to carry out a delivery by truck. The new development was reported to strike headquarters and reinforcements were sent to the scene, bringing the picket force up to about 5,000. All the strikers were completely unarmed. We knew we couldn't challenge the riot guns, and it was our intention to conduct a peaceful mass protest against the anticipated strikebreaking move.

A foot patrol of some fifty cops was on the scene, carrying riot guns as well as service revolvers and clubs. Around 2:00 P.M. they became quite tense, and within a few minutes a scab truck pulled up to the Slocum-Bergren loading dock. It was escorted by about 100 more cops in squad cars, riot guns sticking out of the car windows like quills on a porcupine. The truck had wire mesh around the cab and the license plates had been removed. A few small cartons of groceries were loaded onto it, the pickets jeering the scabs doing the rotten job. Then the fink rig pulled away from the dock and started up the street. It was followed by a picket truck, an open-bodied vehicle of the type used for dirt hauling, in which nine or ten unarmed pickets were standing.

Suddenly, without any warning whatever, the cops opened fire on the picket truck, and they shot to kill. In a matter of seconds two of the pickets lay motionless on the floor of the bullet-riddled truck. Other wounded either fell to the street or tried to crawl out of the death trap as the shooting continued. From all quarters strikers rushed toward the truck to help them, advancing into the gunfire with the courage of lions. Many were felled by police as they stopped to pick up their injured comrades. By this time the cops had gone berserk. They were shooting in all directions, hitting most of their victims in the back as they tried to escape, and often clubbing the wounded after they fell. So wild had the firing become that a sergeant was shot by one of his own men.

During the course of that murderous rampage some sixty strikers were shot down. Two men, John Belor and Henry Ness, died. As his life ebbed from his body Henry Ness gave a command to his brothers in the struggle: "Tell the boys not to fail me now." His last words were taken to heart by the 40,000 people who attended his funeral a few days later. His sacrifice

welded together the strikers, who soldiered on to win the strike on August 22, 1934.

Last Friday it was a great honor for me, on behalf of a grateful union, to lay a wreath on the grave of Henry Ness. I was joined in that solemn ceremony by two of the four Ness children left fatherless by the events of Bloody Friday. Bill and John Ness were just seven and five years of age, and I was moved to tears by Bill's description of a small boy's loss of his father. Bill had to go to Texas, but his brother John Ness and his family are here today. I am pleased to report that both Bill and John grew up to be proud members of Teamsters Local 120 and are now retired.

Keep the Legacy Alive

The victory of the Minneapolis strikers, won at such appalling cost, gave birth to today's Teamsters union. Their epic struggle has inspired generations of proud Teamsters in the intervening years. That is the legacy that we have inherited today. It is alive and well in the hearts of tens of thousands of Teamsters.

The tens of thousands of Teamsters who recently struck the freight companies to fight for full-time jobs are keeping the legacy alive. The thousands of Teamsters who are still fighting UPS [United Parcel Service] for a safe weight limit on packages are keeping the legacy alive. The thousands of Teamsters who are leading the fight for democracy and reform in each and every Teamster local are keeping the legacy alive.

Whenever American workers stand up for their rights against hostile employers, as the great Minneapolis strikers did against the Citizens Alliance, they are keeping this proud, rich legacy alive.

Let us now bring the strength and determination we can learn from those brave martyrs of yesterday to continue the fights we face today. There are many battles still ahead, but by standing strong together we can win a better life for every working American and keep the legacy of the Minneapolis strikers alive.

[In closing] from Ron Carey, who is carrying on that legacy, as probably the best trade unionist in the labor movement today, "Solidarity!"

Support for Democrats Erodes — Prospects for Labor Party Brighten

by Jerry Gordon

The author is co-chair of the Workers Unity Network (WUN).

With every passing day, disillusionment in the ranks of labor with the Democratic Party deepens. In fact, the pace at which this is happening is accelerating.

Consider what has happened within the past several months:

- Democratic President Clinton succeeded in getting NAFTA passed, with 102 Democrats in the House of Representatives and 27 Democrats in the Senate voting for the measure.
- Further layoffs have been announced by major companies, as “downsizing” and “re-engineering” escalate. Meanwhile, the government says it has no money for a jobs program.
- Striker replacement went down the tube. While declaring his nominal support for the measure, Clinton failed to campaign for it. Three of four senators from Clinton’s and Gore’s states — Arkansas and Tennessee — refused to support cloture, which would have allowed a vote in the Senate. The glaring contrast between Clinton’s all-out fight for NAFTA and his passivity on the striker replacement issue has been noted by many in the labor movement.
- Health care legislation has become a fiasco, as the Democrats gave up their stated goal of providing universal coverage. Taxing workers’ health care benefits, which is especially anathema to the labor movement, was endorsed by a number of key Democrats, including Senate majority leader George Mitchell.
- The Clinton administration pushed hard for the U.S. Supreme Court to approve the \$52 million fine imposed by a Virginia state judge against the United Mine Workers during the Pittston strike. (By unanimous vote, the Supreme Court set aside the fine.)
- William Gould IV, appointed chair (by Clinton) of the National Labor Relations Board, ostensibly as a favor to labor to help it “level the playing field” after years of harsh anti-labor decisions by the Board, told the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO in a May 6, 1994, speech:

Last month, at my urging, the Board initiated contempt proceedings against the United Mine Workers...These contempt proceedings grew out of extensive violent conduct in which the

Mine Workers were involved during last year’s bituminous coal strike.

I am against employer lawlessness in attempts to frustrate trade union organizing and collective bargaining — but I am also against union lawlessness which undermines the peaceable resolution of disputes. And I say to you today that during my four years plus as Chairman of the Labor Board, the agency and the statute will be at war with attempts by any side to undermine the process... We must be vigilant against lawbreaking, no matter what its source.

Nowhere in Gould’s speech did he condemn lawbreaking by the government — federal, state, and local — and its agencies in violently breaking strikes and framing workers who get in the way.

- Democrats like Senator Robert Kerry of Nebraska are leading the charge in attacking social programs and demanding cutbacks. They contend that the country can no longer afford anywhere near the current level of entitlements. So the bipartisan Commission on Entitlements and Tax Reforms, set up by the Democrats with Kerry as co-chair, will make legislative proposals to Clinton by December to deal with the problem. It is already clear that their recommendations, if adopted, will make it even more difficult for tens of millions of low income and impoverished people to survive economically.
- Clinton did find money for a repressive crime bill which, among other things, increases the number of capital offenses by 60. This is primarily directed against African Americans. The Racial Justice Act, which might have provided Blacks a modicum of protection against wholesale executions, was excluded from the crime bill.
- On the state level, Democrats are joining Republicans in gutting workers’ compensation laws, canceling out benefits that workers have had for half a century. This is becoming so pervasive that today it is national in scope.
- On the municipal level, the Democrats are also showing their colors as the loyal servants of the big corporations. In New York City, the Democratic-controlled City Council approved a budget which will result in the layoff of 15,000 workers, over \$37 million cuts in youth programs, over

\$200 million cuts in education, over \$296 million cuts in health care, and over \$1 billion cuts in welfare, housing inspection, and relief for the homeless.

In Cleveland, Ohio, Democratic Mayor Mike White is leading the fight for privatization and the displacement of hundreds, if not thousands, of unionized city workers.

Other Democratic mayors are pursuing the same course.

The above is only a partial list of attacks on the rights, welfare, and living standards of working Americans. They are only recent examples of basic anti-working class policies carried out under a national Democratic Party administration and supported by politicians of both major capitalist parties. And these policies extend, of course, to foreign policy, where the U.S. government is escalating attempts to overthrow the Cuban revolution while simultaneously finalizing plans for an invasion of Haiti.

End of the Reform Era

For decades the Democratic Party has enjoyed the reputation of being the party of reform, the party responsible for such measures as social security, unemployment compensation, and workers’ compensation. Ruling class historians have largely succeeded in attributing these to the munificence of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the New Deal, rather than to the militant strikes, mass demonstrations, revolutionary fervor, and vast growth of the labor movement during the 1930s.

Be that as it may, the age of reforms under U.S. capitalism has reached its end. With the government \$4 trillion in debt, interest on that debt skyrocketing, a military budget of \$270 billion annually, massive giveaways to big business (tax breaks or no taxes for the big corporations, generous research grants to them, subsidies, pork-laden legislation, government contracts worth billions, etc.) and the capitalist system as a whole in deep decay, there is simply no money for social programs. That is why the call today is not to expand entitlements but to reduce them.*

The global economic crisis — characterized by the massive number of jobless (120 million worldwide with another 700 million underemployed) — only exacerbates the situation.

No wonder that even the liberal wing of the Democratic Party has so little to offer working

*That is true today not only in the U.S. but throughout the capitalist world. Speaking of Canada, for example, and the experience with the New Democratic Party, Elaine Bernard states, “A decade of privatization, deregulation and free trade along with corporate tax giveaways and the resulting large deficits, have all reduced the redistributive power of government...It is no longer in the hands of social democratic governments to deliver on reform” (*Labor Research Review*, No. 22).

Workers Unity Network Perspectives on LPA

At its August 27 meeting in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, the Workers Unity Network (WUN) voted to reaffirm its support for LPA. WUN views LPA as the central vehicle nationally for advancing the labor party cause today.

As an independent voice and caucus in the labor party movement, WUN will also continue to advocate:

- the need for a democratic labor party movement controlled by the rank and file;
- an action-oriented labor party movement which combines participation in struggles in support of workers and the oppressed with continued education on the need to establish a workers party;
- an immediate, total and definitive break with the Democratic Party;
- special reach-out by the labor party movement to women to ensure that they have a central leadership role;

- the organized labor movement to be the base for a workers' party, but other community-based organizations of the working class, particularly in the South, to be given representation as well;
- a workers party that combines electoral and nonelectoral activity. As an immediate perspective, unions and other worker-based groups should run independent working class candidates for political office. Labor should also provide financial support for independent campaigns in the South challenging the situation in hundreds of communities, especially rural, where Blacks, though a majority, have little or no political representation.

WUN believes adopting this program will strengthen the labor party movement and hasten the day when working people govern this country, putting an end to the violence, war, poverty, discrimination, and oppression spawned by the system of today's ruling rich.

people these days. Unwilling to challenge any of the basic money-spending priorities of the capitalist state or support significant measures that would relieve at least some of the hardship — such as a public works program, providing jobs for millions, or a shorter work week with no cut in pay — they endorse austerity positions which are only slightly less oppressive than those called for by the Republicans. The result is that masses of workers are gaining a deeper understanding of what lesser-evil politics is all about and why an alternative is so urgently needed.

Apologists for the Democrats

Stung by a series of legislative defeats and with their political action policies now in shambles, top labor officials are feverishly straining to contain sentiments within the ranks calling for a break with the Democrats.

One way of doing this is by lavishly praising Democratic Party politicians every time they posture as labor supporters. An outstanding example of this was Lane Kirkland's well-publicized July 18, 1994, letter to Clinton. Kirkland wrote:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Workplace Fairness Act, legislation to prohibit the "permanent replacement" of workers who exercise their legal right to strike. I know that you, the Vice President, Secretary Reich, George Stephanopoulos and others in your administration did everything possible to persuade members of the Senate to allow this bill to come to a vote.

Everything possible? Did Clinton take to the airwaves to call for passage of the striker replacement bill? Did he use his "bully pulpit"? Did he offer senators incentives to support cloture, as he did in other pieces of legislation that he really wanted to see enacted, such as NAFTA?

Striker replacement was never the panacea the labor leadership represented it to be for conducting a winning strike. In fact, it obscures what is really needed at Caterpillar, Staley, and Bridgestone/Firestone, which is to shut down production through mass mobilization at the plant gate. But the point is that striker replacement legislation was the organized labor movement's stated number one priority, the main justification given for supporting Clinton. It is an act of desperation for the labor leadership to praise him now, after his default in refusing to campaign for the measure.

The labor bureaucracy will have a tough time persuading the rank-and-file to campaign or even vote for Clinton in 1996. The Democrats' credibility as the party for working people is now largely depleted. Indeed, the tide is now turning as more and more trade unionists and activists in the workers movement thoughtfully consider a new course: independent working class political action.

Rail Union Acts as Labor Party Sentiment Grows

There are a host of developments which document this. The following are indicative:

Continued on page 34

Come to the "Labor and Politics" Educational Conference, Dec. 10 and 11, 1994, Toledo, OH

Saturday, 9:00 a.m., December 10 — Opening of Conference

Keynote Speakers: **Bob Wages**, International President, OCAW

Jed Dodd, General Chairman, BMW, Pennsylvania Federation

Followed By Workshops on "What Should Labor's Action Program Be Today?"

Saturday Morning: (1) Jobs; (2) Health Care; (3) Privatization; (4) Oppressed Minorities; (5) Independent Labor Candidates

Saturday Afternoon: (1) Strike & Lockout Solidarity; (2) Women's Rights; (3) Labor Law Reform; (4) Workers' Compensation; (5) Foreign Policy

Panel, 3:30 p.m.: "Should a U.S. Labor Party Be Established Now?"

Speakers (5 minutes each):

Jerry Brown, President, United Automobile Workers Local 974 (Caterpillar workers, East Peoria, IL)

Ajamu Dillahunt, President, American Postal Workers Local 1078 (Raleigh, NC)

Don Dudley, President, American Flint Glass Workers Local 700 (Toledo, OH)

Marian Kramer, President, National Welfare Rights Union (Detroit, MI)

Joe Lindenmuth, President, United Steel Workers Local 2265 (Cleveland, OH)

Harold Mitchell, President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2265 (Cleveland, OH)

Jim O'Neill, President, United Automobile Workers Local 600 (Dearborn, MI)

Greg Somerville, President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 39

(Cleveland, OH)

Sam Theodus, President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 407 (Cleveland, OH)
Rosemary Trump, President, Service Employees International Union Local 585 (Pittsburgh, PA)

Baldemar Velasquez, President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (Toledo, OH)

Dave Watts, President, United Paperworkers International Union Local 7837 (Staley workers — Decatur, IL)

Dave Yurick, President, United Rubber Workers Local 7 (Bridgestone/Firestone workers — Akron, OH)

Saturday Night, 7:30 — Special Event, Open to the Public: "Focus on National Health Care"

Tony Mazzocchi, Special Assistant to the President, OCAW, and founder of Labor Party Advocates, with panelists from workshops.

Sunday Morning, 9:00 a.m., December 11: Reports back from workshops, discussion, and straw polls on workshop recommendations

Adjournment, 1:00 p.m.

Conference Site: Holiday Inn—Southwyck 2429 South Reynolds Road, Toledo, OH 43614 (Exit 4 off of Ohio Turnpike)

For hotel reservations call (419) 381-8765. Specify "Labor Conference" (special \$55 rate, up to 4 people)

[To register, send check payable to "Labor Conference" (\$15, employed; \$2, unemployed, retired, or on strike), with name, address, phone, affiliation, to Labor Conference, c/o OCAW Local 7-912, 2910 Consaul St., Toledo OH 43805. Phone: (419) 698-1757.]

Ben Chavis, the NAACP, and African American Leadership

by Vera Wigglesworth

This article contains phone interviews conducted during the week of August 25–September 3 with the following leaders in the Black liberation movement: A. Peter Bailey, a lieutenant of Malcolm X's, editor of the newsletter of the Organization of African American Unity (OAAU, founded by Malcolm), currently an author and recently a columnist with the *Richmond Free Press*; Conrad Worrill, chairperson of the National Black United Front, a professor and columnist and one of the leaders invited to the leadership summit called by then Executive Director Ben Chavis of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and Don Rojas, communications director for the revolutionary government of Maurice Bishop in Grenada until that revolution was overthrown in 1983, editor of the *Amsterdam News*, then communications director of the NAACP until removed from office along with Ben Chavis.

On Saturday, August 20, the NAACP's Board of Directors fired Executive Director Ben Chavis. The following Monday, flanked by leaders he had called together for a National African American Leadership summit, Chavis addressed a town hall gathering:

What happened Saturday night, the overwhelming majority of the membership of the NAACP had nothing to do with it. The decision that was made on Saturday night was made by the majority members of the National Board of Directors.

So, I want to encourage you to continue to support the NAACP and not to back away from it. The organization needs young brothers... young sisters...

We have a lot of organizations. And the reason why I have not called at this point for the establishment of a new organization is because we have organizations. What I want to use my life for is to help the organizations we have to work together, to help the leaders that we have to work together. Including, the NAACP.

... We must not let forces outside of our community come in and take that which should belong to the masses of our people. And therefore I would encourage you to join the NAACP and help rescue it from forces that are trying to take it out of its beloved founding and existence.

The National African American Leadership summit is on the move. And we're going to move. Even the NAACP is going to move. Going to move forward...

— Ben Chavis, from a C-Span broadcast, August 22, 1994

On this positive note Ben Chavis concluded the second National African American Leadership summit, held in Baltimore. With these summits he had hoped to reshape the NAACP and bring in a new era of African American leadership. On Tuesday he would file a suit, in defiance of the clouds overshadowing this effort, against the Board of Directors of the NAACP, who had fired him on grounds of improperly committing the organization's funds to settle a dispute with a staffer and to forestall a threatened sexual harassment claim against him. His grounds for complaint against the Board would be that the Board failed to properly inform him of its charges and that there was precedent for his handling of the claims against him made by the staffer, Mary E. Stansel.

But the real battleground is African America and the real charges revolve around the ques-

tion, What direction forward? From the reaction among African Americans around the country and from the point of view of leading observers, there is no question that what Ben Chavis said is true — the majority of the membership of the NAACP was overwhelmingly supportive of the process he began and that process was looked to by many African American leaders as an important step forward.

And it was the unanimous opinion of those involved in the summits that the majority of the NAACP Board was opposed to the changes Chavis was initiating. Said Dr. Conrad Worrill of Chicago in a phone interview: "The firing of Ben Chavis had nothing to do with Mary Stansel." He pointed out that ever since the spring of 1993, when Chavis was hired, there had been a campaign by some "reactionary Blacks" and their allies to dismiss Chavis because of his attempts to "bring Blacks across all ideological lines together." The former executive director had called together for the first summit (June 12–14) Pan-Africanists and progressives as well as prominent figures from the mainstream of Black journalism and religion — and he included Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, which horrified the Board.

But the new direction in which Chavis was trying to point the NAACP was also beginning to imply deep changes in the venerable organization. Chavis was working with "groups that the NAACP does not normally interact with," said Worrill. At the grassroots level Chavis was promoting gang peace and cooperation, youth involvement in the NAACP, and united activity. And "the meaning of extending summit invitations to Pan-Africanists and progressives was to re-energize the NAACP and get it to relate to those groups."

The Grassroots and the Program of the Leadership Summits

The need for such changes is well documented. According to the August 31 issue of *The Final Call* (organ of the Nation of Islam), a 1992 *Detroit Free Press* poll found "51 percent of Blacks surveyed felt the NAACP was out of touch." Somewhat more than that percentage felt the NAACP was poor in each of these areas: fighting unemployment, crime, and fighting for federal and local aid to inner cities. And 55

percent of Blacks (and even 54 percent of middle class Blacks) felt whites "had too much influence on the policies" of the NAACP."

The National African American Leadership summits were (and are) a process of self-organizing, of identifying and consolidating activities around priorities that participants agreed are the most urgent for African Americans today. According to Dr. Worrill, these are:

1. economic development;
2. youth and community;
3. moral and spiritual renewal.

That this agenda has broad support was well described by an article in the July 6 *Final Call*. Residents of Washington, D.C., including a 24-year-old, the owner of a small store, a school teacher, and an unemployed worker all voiced enthusiasm about the summit, stressing their concern about "the moral decline in the Black community", drugs, Black on Black crime, jobs, housing, the necessity for middle class Blacks to participate again in movements, and the need for "unity in the community."

When asked how he would respond to a view that nothing much was accomplished in the summits, Dr. Worrill replied: "B———t! The first thing that was accomplished was that everybody didn't kill each other!" Indeed, the "historic" coming together was the most impressive accomplishment. Some one hundred leaders reflecting virtually the full range of perspectives were present in the same room, agreeing on joint plans and making joint commitments. Commenting on the second summit, held August 20–22, the August 27 *Chicago Defender* wrote: "They are excited about the birth of a grassroots organization they say is 'inclusive' of all factions from the Black community."

Then why the Board attack?

Solidarity and Self-Determination

Early on, the Chavis administration sustained mounting criticism from the largely conservative NAACP Board for the new, progressive course it embarked on. While the *New York Times* reported that the Board voted to dismiss Chavis for actions that were "inimical" to the organization, Dr. William Gibson, chairman of the Board, told the *Times* that Chavis had been removed "because of an accumulation of

things." Chief among them were Chavis's attempts to forge closer ties with "Black militants" such as Farrakhan. Such actions not only threatened the intention of Board members to keep the organization "mainstream," but alienated corporate donors. As Dr. Worrill indicated, "tremendous pressure was put on the Board" to halt the new direction and to get rid of Chavis's administration.

The pressure on Black leaders to dissociate themselves from Farrakhan has been growing in intensity. Dr. Worrill pointed out that the current conflict on the Farrakhan issue had its beginning when Black organizers of the 30th anniversary March on Washington last year excluded Farrakhan. They were in part bowing to protest organized by a rabbi, but also reflecting a conservative fear of alienating liberal whites and business. This exclusion became an important controversy in the Black community that culminated in the much denounced inclusion of Farrakhan in the Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Weekend discussion in September 1993.

Ben Chavis's inclusion of Farrakhan in the Leadership summits was a continuation of that solidarity. Thus the pressure mounted. "The June 12 summit took place under a veil of tight security," said Worrill. "There were bomb threats, police protection, helicopters" at the summit site, the Baltimore headquarters of the NAACP. And, it might be added, a large contingent of Fruit of Islam men, the Nation of Islam's defense wing. "The issue," said Dr. Worrill, "is self-determination."

But experience has shown and will show that there are stages of struggle to go through in the process of self-determination. The first question is: Do African Americans have the right to meet with other African Americans without outside pressure, to choose or follow the leaders they wish without outside intervention? Without the assertion of that right, African Americans will be denied the right to ask the next question: Who among us represents our interests? What program should be advanced that meets our needs? And without the process that leads to clarity on that question, the next one cannot be addressed: Who are our enemies? What makes them so? African Americans have grappled with these questions since their early struggles for self-organization.

The Negro Convention Movement, 1830-50

Prior to the Civil War, many Northern Black abolitionists found it necessary to organize for their own economic and civil rights issues separately from white abolitionists, most of whom did not identify with Blacks' concerns for economic advancement. This was the impetus for the Negro Convention Movement, which started in the 1830s. Only Blacks could lead the abolition movement on the second of its twin planks: social equality and economic opportunity for Blacks. As the historian Benjamin Quarles put it, "Negroes realized that a more realistic appraisal of the movement was in order. The Negro would have to look more to his own

strength, to put into fuller anti-slavery use his own organizations."

Whether or not the Black abolitionists remained organized within the larger abolition movement, they found their self-organization and expression in their vanguard role in the movement. Foremost among them was Frederick Douglass, who was instrumental in organizing the 180,000 Black troops who spearheaded the military victory against the South.

Post-Reconstruction

The defeat of Reconstruction meant Black people in the South lost the political and economic gains won by their struggles during and directly after the Civil War. A consequence of the political defeat of the abolitionists in the 1870s, and the withdrawal of Northern military, financial, and political support, left Blacks to face alone the new Southern white terror campaign that was designed to tie them down on the old plantations, impoverished, uneducated, and disenfranchised. Newly enslaved, though no longer property, they faced a collective quandary: the terrible necessity of development, without the political and economic means to achieve it.

Once again Blacks could only turn to self-organization. And again, their self-leadership met with attacks from both whites and Blacks. Excerpts from a famous speech by Frederick Douglass, presiding at the 1883 National Convention of Colored Men, in Louisville, Kentucky, echo the recurring themes in the politics and program of self-determination:

Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.... Depend upon it, men will not care much for a people who do not care for themselves.

Our meeting here was opposed by some of our members, because it would disturb the peace of the Republican Party [the "party of emancipation"]... If the Republican Party cannot stand a demand for justice and fair play, it ought to go down. We were men before that party was born, and our manhood is more sacred than any party can be. Parties were made for men, not men for parties."

(Life & Writings of Frederick Douglass, Vol 4, 1955, p. 373-81.)

Two Responses to the High Tide of Reaction, 1890-1910

In the year that Frederick Douglas died, 1895, a great debate unfolded publicly among Black leadership that continued through the 1920s. Should we try for political power, acquire education, develop a layer of our own leadership, in an effort not only to fight for and guarantee the necessities of life for our people but to realize our full potential? Or should we acquire industrial skills, accumulate property, make ourselves useful to society, and in that way show we pose no threat to either Northern or Southern white financial and social interests, trusting that gradually we will earn our rights as equals? The first view, a continuation of Frederick Douglass's perspective, was propounded most notably by W.E.B. DuBois; the second, by Booker T. Washington.

This debate was crucial, particularly in the context of the period. The year 1890 saw the completion of Southern reaction's comeback from its total defeat in the Civil War. Southern reactionaries were back in political power and, state by Southern state, they proceeded to enact laws completely disenfranchising Blacks and excluding Blacks from legal protection. Their hold over the South was mirrored in the dramatic rise of lynchings of Blacks, the rapid growth of the Ku Klux Klan, and the nearly total acquiescence to their reign of terror by most Northerners and the federal government. What was therefore critically on the agenda for African Americans was organizing for self-defense, justice, and political rights. The accommodation to the white South represented by Booker T. Washington's perspective was thus a betrayal of great magnitude.

In the "Atlanta Compromise," a speech before the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition, Booker T. Washington proclaimed to the white businessmen (who invited him there for that purpose) that "the agitation of social equality is the extremest folly," that the financial interests of Southern whites and Black people were the same, that if whites helped Blacks "learn to glorify and dignify common labor" they would find Black people as loyal as in the days of slavery. Washington's perspective received enthusiastic support from financial interests North and South, and money poured in to Washington's projects for industrial and agricultural training of Blacks, most notably the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The "Tuskegee Machine" became a formidable force nationally, with white benefactors seeking Washington's advice whenever they received requests for funding from Blacks. This meant that those Black leaders who disagreed with Washington's views faced great obstacles in obtaining white-backed resources — the only resources available in any significant amount. In addition, the "Tuskegee Machine" played a serious role in curtailing freedom of debate in the Black press and in other means of public discourse.

But Washington's program met with vigorous resistance from leaders such as Ida B. Wells of Chicago, who was spearheading the anti-lynching fight, editors of Black newspapers, and major Black religious figures. The most prominent organizer of resistance to Washington's capitulation was W.E.B. DuBois.

In 1905 Du Bois helped organize a meeting in Niagara, New York, of leading Black intellectuals determined to orient to a struggle for Black political rights. In opposition to Booker T. Washington, the Niagara Movement advocated a program of racial equality — at a time when Black people were completely excluded from political activity. Unfortunately the meagerness of financial resources in the Black community confined its efforts to a marginal role, and by 1909, four years later, the Niagara Movement had dissolved for lack of funding. The first 20th-century attempt by African Americans to fight for civil rights through self-organization had failed; nonetheless, that self-

organization produced a clarity that was to impact on the organization that succeeded the Niagara Movement, radically affecting Black political alternatives.

The NAACP, 1909–1954

The founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909 marked the beginning of the major counteroffensive by African Americans for political and social equality. Founded in response particularly to the Springfield, Illinois, race riot of 1908, but in general to the political and physical assaults on the Black population nationwide, the National Negro Committee (as it was initially called) drew together from all over the country leading figures who had studied or tried to address the crisis confronting African Americans North and South.

In its orientation toward political action and in its key African American personnel, it was an outgrowth of the Niagara Movement. The initiators however, were three white people influenced by the abolitionist, socialist, and white philanthropy traditions, and whites constituted the majority of the top leadership of the organization for the first ten years. The first gathering, three hundred of both races, met to develop counterarguments to the myth of Black racial inferiority and to pose the economic environment as the barrier to Black advancement. But the political leadership developed during the Niagara Movement made its mark when W.E.B. DuBois pointed out that the root of the problems confronting Black people was *political*, and their lack of political power was the source of their marginalization in society.

In the second year the post of director of publicity and research was given to DuBois, who enthusiastically plunged in and founded the magazine *The Crisis*, which became the official organ of the newly named NAACP. Under his editorship *The Crisis* grew from a circulation of 1,000 to 100,000 in ten years. It became known not only for its thorough coverage of the national plight of Black people and the struggles of the NAACP, but for DuBois's brilliantly militant editorials.

The NAACP was confronted with a gargantuan task. Lynching was at an all-time high in 1910, Blacks were destitute and powerless in the South, segregated, poor, and ostracized by labor unions in the North, and the federal government was impervious to appeals. Battle by battle, the Association broke down the legal instruments of Black oppression and laid the basis for Black political enfranchisement.

During the first ten years, the NAACP always coupled its legal efforts with mass activity, in the form of mass meetings, publicity, and circulation of studies, such as on the subject of lynchings. It also from the first day oriented toward building a mass base; branches and membership across the country grew at a steady pace and mushroomed in 1919 as a result of a major membership drive. Due especially to the leadership of Field Secretary James Weldon Johnson, an African American, memberships in

the South outnumbered those in the North despite many attempts by Southern states to circumscribe NAACP activity and organization. The NAACP became more supported by its members than by wealthy philanthropists. And also by 1919, Blacks were beginning to assume more leadership positions at both national and local levels. In 1920 James Weldon Johnson became the first Black executive secretary.

In the second decade, the NAACP became involved internationally. It put major effort into opposing the 1915 U.S. invasion of Haiti, which had occurred in the wake of the sixth assassination of a Haitian president in four years. Decrying as false the American government's law-and-order rationale, and providing evidence that several thousand Haitians had been killed by U.S. occupation forces, the NAACP kept up an insistent mass fight for Haitian self-determination all the way up to 1934, when U.S. troops were finally withdrawn. In the process it also aided the founding of Haitian branches of the NAACP — significant especially in light of the NAACP's advice to Haitians not to put their hopes in a new administration in Washington, but to self-organize.

One of the most intense and disappointing fights was for the passage of anti-lynching legislation. After years of documentation, petitions signed by prominent politicians, clergymen, and academics, and lobbying of every member of both Houses, the Dyer anti-lynching bill was defeated in 1922. Lynchings did decline to one-third their former level, however, due to the mass educational and agitational campaigns conducted for a decade by the NAACP.

Among the many struggles that the NAACP took up in the decade of the 1930s were: the frame-up rape trials of the Scottsboro boys in Alabama, boycotts of white-owned businesses in Harlem that refused to hire Black workers, and campaigns for Blacks to get a share of Roosevelt's New Deal assistance programs.

With the start of World War II, the NAACP waged a campaign against discrimination in the military and for wartime production jobs for Blacks. This resulted in a growth of membership from 85,000 to 530,000. In 1943 the NAACP called an emergency conference of 23,000 in Detroit on the status of Blacks. But the most significant political organization of the 1940s, a precursor of the future, was not initiated by the NAACP. This was the March on Washington Movement, led by A. Philip Randolph. Despite initially endorsing the mobilization for the march in 1941, the NAACP withdrew its support within a year.

In 1943 a deal was cut with Roosevelt to call off the March on Washington. Although the pact was made by A. Philip Randolph and the Stalinists, that movement nevertheless marked an end of the NAACP's role as vanguard of civil rights because of its abandonment of the mass action part of its strategy. Still, the NAACP achieved a major legal victory in the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka* ruling of the Supreme Court, which overturned "separate but equal" segregation of schools. As the U.S. ruling class,

facing the rise of the colonial revolution in Africa and Asia, sought to alter its image and convert to neocolonial rule at home and abroad, African Americans all over the U.S. seized on this court decision to launch a mass-based civil rights movement. That movement showed that only mass mobilization could *implement* legal victories.

The NAACP at a Crossroads

The massive civil rights battles of the 1950s and '60s, occurring mostly outside the NAACP, defeated Jim Crow. But the conclusion of the civil rights era means that economic rights (problems of development) are now foremost on the agenda. This is why the NAACP has reached a crossroads. Chavis's efforts to unify Black leadership signaled an attempt to coordinate Black efforts to address the very real crisis of development gripping the Black community.

The conflict of the NAACP's Board of Directors with Chavis is nothing new. DuBois was fired twice by the NAACP, each time for attempting to assert a more militant or nationalist policy in the face of the Board's increasing conservatism. Chavis's call for an African American leadership summit was simply the last straw for the board. But did the leadership summit really pose new solutions to the problems of the Black community?

The National African American Leadership summit voted to establish an African American Fund, drawn from the Black middle class and Black-owned corporations to promote jobs and development in the Black community. But can an African American Fund really finance the needs of Black people? Just to raise the average income of 30 million African Americans by \$10,000 a year, would mean raising resources amounting to \$300 billion every year. That kind of money is simply not available from the tiny Black middle class or Black-owned corporations.

The movement for reparations for slavery, by making demands on the government in Washington, D.C., points more clearly to both the source of the problem and the source of the funds. What is needed is what the leadership summit failed to take up: organization of a Black political party. Such a party could fight for reparations and fight for the African American community's control over those funds. Such a party would put forward all the urgent demands of the Black community. A 1993 poll by the *Detroit Free Press* showed that 50 percent of African Americans support the idea of an independent Black political party. Such a party could effectively fight for the development goals raised by the Leadership Summit if it based its tactics on a mobilized Black community.

What are the challenges and pitfalls facing a leadership with an independent agenda? Founding such a party would pose dangers for the leadership, and not just the danger of assassination that Malcolm X, a leader of impeccable integrity, fell victim to.

The Chavis Case

A sifting through the media coverage reveals the real facts of the Chavis case, which though

for the most part accurately reported, leave an impression that Chavis is being charged with — and is guilty of — sexual harassment. Chavis is being charged with breach of contract. Hired on an interim basis as a \$50,000-a-year assistant to Chavis, Mary Stansel wasn't working out and kept demanding a higher position and salary, according to NAACP sources, as reported by *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*. When eventually dismissed, she retaliated by threatening a lawsuit. An out-of-court settlement was reached providing her, from NAACP funds, two \$50,000 lump sum payments, six monthly payments of \$5,400, and \$250,000 more if a job paying \$80,000 a year was not found for her.

A lawyer herself, Stansel is known for a habit of filing lawsuits and obtaining settlements from parties seeking to avoid more costly trials. She filed suit against an 80-year-old woman who allegedly sold her a house with defective heating and air conditioning, seeking \$150,000 in damages and settling for \$10,000. She sued for defamation when she was asked to stop misrepresenting herself as a co-chair of a National Bar Association convention committee (\$400,000, settling for \$5,000); she was awarded nothing by the jurors when she sued Eastern Airlines after a beverage cart bumped into her knee.

In this case, Stansel charged breach of contract because efforts to find her comparable employment didn't succeed. (According to sources reported in the *Final Call*, Stansel didn't do her best in cooperating in the outplacement. She turned down one job, failed to update her resume, and failed to show up for an interview.) In the meanwhile, some \$76,000 of the settlement has been paid, \$16,000 from private funds.

None of this proves that Stansel's claims of discrimination and harassment are baseless — or that Chavis is guilty. He claims no misconduct, and a staffer says the relationship has been only professional. But the unfortunate result was that Chavis became vulnerable to attacks that were mounted for political reasons, not for the Stansel issue. Indeed, Chavis did effectively point out that there was NAACP precedent for using a settlement to avoid entangling the NAACP in public controversy. Apparently, with someone like Stansel, there was no way to avoid controversy. Though Chavis offered to pay back some \$60,000, the Board refused. Apparently, with a political agenda like that of the Board, there was no way to placate them.

Chavis's handling of this affair drew a strong reaction from A. Peter Bailey, a Black journalist who had worked closely with Malcolm X right up to the time of Malcolm's assassination. In a phone interview Bailey said: "He should never have done it [made an agreement with Mary Stansel]. When Chavis wrote that first check, that's when he made the mistake. He should have taken it head-on." Bailey emphasized that the Stansel suit had nothing to do with why the NAACP Board fired Chavis. "The NAACP has needed to have a serious, knock-down internal discussion...Chavis's direction would have forced the NAACP to have this kind of discus-

sion. But now, instead of confronting him on policy issues, they can hide behind this smoke screen." Said Bailey: "Malcolm used to say, 'Always have your facts straight. You know they're going to come at you. But they can't win if you have your facts right.'" He repeated: "The NAACP needed to have a knock-down, drag-out fight. This will only delay that necessary process."

The Challenge of Leadership

A left critique of Chavis's administration is offered by Don Rojas, who served as the NAACP's communications director and was the first person brought on board by Chavis. Rojas had helped to get Chavis's campaign launched for the directorship, left his job as editor of Harlem's *Amsterdam News* to head up communications at the NAACP, then was "booted out after 16 months without any compensation" along with Chavis. Chavis's administration was "pretty much fraught with a typical petty-bourgeois radical inconsistency, falling prey to opportunism," said Rojas.

Your personal ethics have to be squeaky clean when you're trying to carry out a radical political agenda, especially within the framework of a bourgeois organization. If not, you give the class enemy much more ammunition. Political attacks can be fended off by mobilizing mass support. But when these attacks are mixed with claims of bad financial management and poor relations with women, mobilizing support becomes difficult if not impossible.

Two other people were hired by Chavis to assist his program, Lou Meyers, from Chicago (who for a while was a movement attorney); and Lorena Wallace, who served in the Chavis administration as comptroller. But apparently Chavis had a go-it-alone approach. Don Rojas's account continued:

Chavis's leadership style did not put value on collective functioning. His methodology was extremely individualistic. I had always pressed hard for collective decision making, to pull in people from outside to help us and provide perspectives. Two or three people alone couldn't [transform the organization]. *This had to be a movement responsibility.*

The NAACP is a huge organization — with 600,000 members, 2,000-plus branches across the country, and 60 on college campuses...it is a huge operation. It requires a different kind of approach — especially if you want to transform it into a progressive organization.

There were dozens and dozens of people in the movement, nationally and internationally, who were willing to give their time. But Ben ignored these resources — he thought he alone could turn the thing around from the inside.

There are important lessons to be learned from this experience. But they should be viewed first in light of the concrete achievements [of the Chavis tenure].

First, Rojas pointed out, the NAACP's membership grew from 490,000 to 600,000 in the sixteen-month span from April 1993 to June 1994. 65 percent of this increase was Black youth, in whom the message of revitalization "resonated." The reason for the dramatic rise in

membership was "the vision we were able to project, that Ben was able to articulate." And the vision? "An NAACP that was activist, progressive, dynamic. A fighting organization, fighting for full empowerment of African Americans, economic democracy and social justice. We were attempting to revive the legacy of W.E.B. DuBois in the organization."

The second accomplishment was effectively "reaching out to the diversity of African American leadership, to young people, to gang members — people who have never been touched by the NAACP before."

And finally, there was the attempt to "internationalize the NAACP, to establish branches in the Caribbean and Africa." Rojas took Chavis to Jamaica, where they had talks with officials and progressives in laying the groundwork for a chapter there. And a resolution was actually passed at the July 1994 national convention in Chicago to establish a permanent office of the NAACP in South Africa.

In attempting to make the NAACP "a progressive, Pan-Africanist, and self-determinist organization" the Chavis team was up against serious forces. It was not that the NAACP is white-dominated in terms of persons. According to Rojas, 90 percent of its membership is Black, and of the 64 Board members, only three are white. But it is clear that the majority of the Board is dominated by a perspective that adapts to, or at best refuses to challenge, financial and political interests that are of course white-dominated — corporate interests and the Democratic Party.

Says Rojas: "The majority of the Board are petty-bourgeois and aspiring to be bourgeois. There are some genuinely bourgeois elements on the Board, millionaire businessmen. And the highest-ranking Black trade union leaders are also on the Board." These latter in fact "were some of the most anti-communist members. They were the ones who led the charge against me." Rojas explained that from the first day of his tenure as communications director, these Board members had red-baited him "for my Grenada and Cuba connections." (Don Rojas served in the revolutionary government of Grenada as communications director — and was one of only two government officials who escaped the internal coup of 1983 that murdered popular Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and the rest of his Cabinet. The overthrow of the Bishop leadership paved the way for the U.S. invasion.)

Red-baiting escalated to outright attack. Rojas said these Board members were gunning for him long before they turned full artillery on Chavis. And in May of this year, at a Board meeting held in South Carolina, a motion was introduced to fire Rojas. Chavis fought it, and when it came to a vote, it was defeated. It proved only to be a stay of execution, however; Chavis and the three members of his team were all dismissed August 20.

The lessons: "The internal weaknesses [of the Chavis administration] had to do with ethics. This was a lesson we learned from Grenada too. There should be no contradiction between what

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A Sailor-Eyewitness to the Bay of Pigs

“Being in Cuba and Haiti Got Me Thinking — Working People Everywhere Are All the Same”

an Interview with Richard Parker

Richard Parker is a veteran Midwestern trade union activist, a supporter of Labor Party Advocates, and an opponent of the U.S. blockade of Cuba and occupation of Haiti.

Parker enlisted in the navy in the mid-1950s, expecting to make a career of it. But when his squadron was secretly assigned in April 1961 to an “operation” that turned out to be the abortive U.S.-sponsored invasion of revolutionary Cuba by anti-Castro forces at Playa Girón, a beach on the Bay of Pigs, that experience stimulated the beginning of a radical change in his outlook.

Parker was interviewed for BIDOM on October 5, 1994.

Q.: When did you go into the navy?

A.: 1956.

Q.: Your intention was to make a career out of it?

A.: Yeah, there were a lot of things I liked about that life. I still like to go to sea.

Q.: What was your rating?

A.: I was a signalman.

Q.: What do they do?

A.: Visual communications between ships, by semaphore, by flags, anything you don't want to go over the radio.

Q.: After you were in the navy a few years the Cuban revolution took place?

A.: Yeah, but we weren't so much aware of that. You knew what was going on. You knew Castro was a Communist, and he was your enemy.

Q.: But you weren't too convinced of that. Why not?

A.: Well, I just never thought that Cuba was a threat to the United States.

Q.: Even after they decided he was a Communist?

A.: I thought that they could have had him on their side if they'd wanted to. My idea always was that they could have supported him. He came to New York and everything, to speak at the United Nations.

Q.: You saw that he went to Harlem, you saw that on the news?

A.: Like I said, I always thought he did something for the people. The Cuban people were behind him, and that wasn't lost on the American people, I think. To me it was — we didn't use the word revolution — an uprising of the people.

Q.: So 1961 came along, and your normal station was at Norfolk, Virginia.

A.: Yeah, we had just come back from the Mediterranean, six months there.

Q.: You didn't normally go to the Caribbean?

A.: No, they had another squadron of destroyers that were in Mayport, Florida. They usually covered that area. Desron [destroyer squadron] 23.

Q.: You were in Desron 22?

A.: Yeah, out of Norfolk. Our primary mission was antisubmarine warfare. Whenever we went with a task group we'd screen it for submarines. We'd also run plane guard for the carriers. If a plane crashed, we'd pick up the pilot. That's what we did.

Q.: Then in 1961 they told you you were going to the Caribbean to protect a sailboat race?

A.: We were going to Cape such-and-such and have a party.

Q.: That was to be the reward after the regatta?

A.: Right. We were to be stationed off of Cuba to protect any sailboats that came by. In case any Cuban government boats came out and tried to arrest them or hijack them, we were going to protect them.

Q.: And so you went there?

A.: Yeah, we went 26 miles off the coast of Cuba. There were supposed to be 50 sailboats, but you know, they weren't necessarily right on course. That's what we were told.

Q.: Did you see any sailboats?

A.: No.

Q.: They didn't show up?

A.: No, we sat out there for weeks. Really.

Q.: Did they tell you why the sailboats didn't show up?

A.: Because they were “becalmed.” They told us we had to wait for every last one. And it was pretty calm; there was no wind. And so we sat out there.

Q.: What do you think now? Why were you really there?

A.: Probably some sort of espionage, or surveillance, some sort of relay or something for someone. We weren't there for a sailboat race. This was an old World War II vessel. We didn't have sophisticated gear. I don't really know what the hell we were doing there, but I know there weren't any sailboats. There never were.

Q.: You were there for a couple of weeks?

A.: Yeah, the regatta was over and everything.

Q.: Then they told you to go to Guantánamo.

A.: They didn't tell us where we were going, but when we started going in there, they told us we were going into Guantánamo, that we were going to be doing training, and we'd probably be there for about nine weeks. Then when we got into Guantánamo they told us about the water being cut off and there was a threat that the Cubans might try to invade the base. We had to run patrol every night for the water ships to come in. They were going to bring water in at night, so the Cubans wouldn't know.

Q.: So one night you went out, and it wasn't a water ship?

A.: No, one night we didn't go out. We were tied up at the pier, and the water ship came in. But it wasn't a water ship. It was a personnel attack ship. They offloaded combat infantry. Marines. It was an armored infantry regiment. They had tanks and infantry. They offloaded them, and they formed up on the pier, two or three boatloads of them, and they went up in the hills somewhere.

Q.: These were Marines?

A.: Yeah, Marines. They were from — Ten Pines? Tent Circle? — California, out in the desert, there's a big Marine base out there.

That's where they were from, because I talked with a couple of them, on the pier.

Q.: What did they think they were there for?

A.: They were going to kick ass, kick the Cubans' ass, because the Cubans were going to invade the base, and they were going to break their back and then go to Havana.

Q.: They were going to capture a provincial capital?

A.: No, they were going to go to Havana. That's what a couple of the gung-ho ones told me. I think the actual plan was they were going to bust out of the perimeter and they were going to capture this city, I think it was Guantánamo; that's the name of a Cuban town right near the base. That was the only logical place for them to go. But they knew they were going to break out of there; they had been told that.

Q.: When you say "up in the hills," you mean up by the perimeter of the base?

A.: Yeah, they called the fence "the wire."

Q.: How big is the base? Many square miles?

A.: About ninety or a hundred. It's got airports on it, for fighter jets, transport planes. It's real big, like a city.

Q.: One day you were going to the beer hall when the alarm went off.

A.: They call it "the geedunk"; it's a bar, restaurant, and recreation place. There's always alarms going off there, you know, Condition 3, Condition 2, Condition 1 — that's a threat that we're being invaded. The alarm went off and the Marine Corps came around in these quarter-ton and half-ton trucks and picked up all these vagrant sailors that were wandering around. They'd ask you what ship you were on. I told them my ship was the Henley, DD762. They said get in the truck. We went up in the hills somewhere, and they had these slit trenches and bunkers. I was given an M-1 and a bandolier of ammunition and a helmet and put under the command of a gunnery sergeant. We were going to be the twenty-first line of defense or something.

Q.: What did you think about that?

A.: Well, we were nothing but a bunch of cannon fodder. We were sitting there with white uniforms on in dirt trenches and nobody knew anything. Now, when I was in boot camp I was trained with a .22. I had fired an M-1 before but I couldn't say I was proficient at it. What were we going to do if we were attacked? Get over-run, that's what.

Q.: You didn't have a lot of enthusiasm about being there.

A.: It was just a big joke. I think if any of us had taken it seriously, we'd have all run away. I'm serious. We knew about that sort of thing.

Maybe the gunnery sergeant wouldn't have run away, but I think the sailors probably would have. Of course, we were young and stupid. Maybe we would have stayed there.

Q.: That just happened one time?

A.: Yeah, nobody took that seriously. It was just a joke. We felt they were just doing that to make our life miserable.

Q.: So there was a lot of tension with the Marines?

A.: Yeah, the Marines were garrisoned there. They were — what would you call it? — goofy. They were at a high pitch, in a high state of readiness all the time, and they'd start giving the salts a hard time. They'd come into the bars all worked up. There was one Marine who would sit there and throw bottles into the mirror. They were under a lot of stress.

Q.: You said one of the things that got you thinking about all this was watching the Cuban nationals come in. They came in from Cuba to service the base?

A.: Right. If there was some sort of problem with the Cuban people, what were they letting them in there for? I talked with a few of them. The reason I knew they were cleaning officers' quarters was that one or two of them told me that. But you never got a chance to talk with them about what was happening. They'd come by water and they'd get frisked by the Marine Corps.

Q.: How many in a day?

A.: They'd come in by the hundreds, a flood of them, about 8 o'clock in the morning. They'd come in and go do their jobs. I don't think the Marines even took them seriously, considered them a real danger; they'd only frisk a few of them. They went through a Marine Corps checkpoint; they were primarily Black people.

Q.: Some of them spoke English?

A.: Yeah, but they wouldn't let me talk with them that much. But once they were on the base they could mostly go where they wanted, although there were always Marines around.

Q.: They were mostly there cleaning?

A.: They cleaned officers' quarters.

Q.: Menial labor? Did they clean the enlisted men's quarters?

A.: Are you kidding me? They didn't clean the bars either. They were primarily there to clean officers' quarters, and they did ground work — lawns and shrubs — and street work.

Q.: Sounds kind of colonial.

A.: It was. I don't know if it was after that incident, but I started having thoughts like, What have we got against these people?

Q.: You said you thought they looked just like you.

A.: Well, they did. They were just trying to make a buck. Coca Cola. The Yankee dollar. I wasn't any different than they were. That's when I first started thinking about these things. It wasn't real clear though. I just had this feeling, What the f— are we f—ing around with these people for? They're not hurting anybody. They're just trying to make a buck.

Q.: After you were at Guantánamo for about nine weeks, you went to Key West.

A.: Yeah, we were there for one day, and we were walking down the street and the Shore Patrol picked us up and took us back to the ship, because "there was a war going on."

Q.: The captain told you there was going to be a war with Cuba?

A.: The captain told us there was going to be a "conflict," that it was going to be real, and that it was going to be a shooting war. The Cuban people were uprising, he said, and were going to overthrow the Castro government and we were to go support them. And that there were Cuban brigades that were going to start a Provisional Government. And that this was for real.

Q.: Had you been paying much attention to what was in the media? To Kennedy talking about Cuba, and so on?

A.: Yeah, everybody listened to Kennedy. Kennedy was a popular person. People took what he said as gospel. But there was no political rhetoric that we were aware of before this happened. I suppose there was some, but nothing that we were aware of, that would have let us know that this was going to happen. We thought they were coming after us, that's what we thought. That's what we were told so often. They were going to invade Guantánamo and we were going to defend it.

Q.: So you were retrieved from Key West and put on the ship and then headed toward Cuba?

A.: They didn't tell us we were heading for Cuba. They just told us there was political unrest and there was going to be shooting and that this was for real.

Q.: Some weeks before this, when you were at Guantánamo, you unloaded some Marines onto Cuban national territory at night? Somewhere down the coast of Cuba?

A.: That's right. For two or three nights when we'd go out we'd have these six Marines on board and they were called "beach jumpers." Their mission was to go in ahead of an assault force and set up some sort of radio communications. They'd be behind enemy lines. So this was supposed to be an exercise. We'd take them out and sail around, and one night we took them out and dropped them off! Supposedly off the shore of the Guantánamo naval base, but I know we were past that.

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Cuba and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution

by Joseph Hansen

*Joseph Hansen, who died in 1978, was for many decades a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. In the late 1930s he worked with Leon Trotsky, who was in exile in Mexico, serving as his personal secretary. This is the second part of two taped lectures by Hansen on permanent revolution, given in 1961, but never before printed. For the first part (on the development of the theory of permanent revolution in Russia), see the July-August issue of *BIDOM* (No. 117). The lectures were transcribed by Walter Lippmann with the assistance of Leslie Evans and Jamaka Perrier. The transcript has been edited slightly for reasons of style and to clarify certain references. For a time the audio tapes of these lectures were available as part of an *Education for Socialists* series of tapes published by the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, which played an important part in educating a generation of revolutionary socialists of the '60s and '70s.*

One final note. This second lecture ends rather abruptly, because the speaker's time limit had been reached.

Today we want to take a look at how the theory of permanent revolution worked out in Cuba, and to determine to what degree it was verified there. To approach this problem, I'll begin first by utilizing the main points that Trotsky utilized in explaining his theory of permanent revolution; first of all, to determine in what way Cuba's development could be said to be highly uneven. This is just to give you a brief indication of the historical background.

Cuba Colonized by Spain

Cuba, along with Hispaniola, was the first area in the Western hemisphere to be colonized. I'm sure you all know where Hispaniola is. It's the island that today is divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. That is where the first colony was set up by the Spaniards, and Cuba shortly thereafter. However, Cuba rapidly became the main base of the Spanish colonization efforts. As a matter of fact, it was the center for the whole Caribbean area.

In those days, the Caribbean was a Spanish lake, and had nothing to do with the United States, because [what is now] the United States was not yet colonized. Havana was an old city before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, or the other British subjects landed in Virginia.



Fidel Castro

When the Spaniards came to Cuba, they found a race of people there called the Caribs, whom Columbus writes of as being extremely good-looking people, both the males and the females; a people the like of which he'd never seen before. Extremely loyal, extremely gentle, extremely unwarlike, and very trusting. As you can see, they were perfect suckers for the Spaniards, who came in there with their idea

of getting gold, and who disseminated their syphilis. The Indians on the island of Cuba were virtually exterminated by the Spaniards, through either disease or forced labor.

The Spaniards put them to work digging in areas where they thought they could find some gold. The Caribs had some gold trinkets, which the Spaniards took, melted down, and sent back to Spain. Then they began to work them on large areas of land, which the Spaniards set up in the form of ranches. It wasn't long until none of these people were left.

Spain, on coming into Cuba — and in fact wherever Spain went in those times — imposed its own feudal relations on the country. That meant serfdom for the inhabitants, and slavery [that is, the importation of Black slaves from Africa]. Because of the lack of labor power, the Spaniards were willing to utilize any form of servitude in order to pin the unwilling hands to the task, which was to dig for gold and silver and to grow such crops as were necessary in order to supply the miners with a minimum amount of food. Wherever Spain went, they established their own relations of production, which reflected the ones they had in Spain. The idea was for each Spaniard, who came from the upper classes generally in Spain, that is, the feudal aristocracy, to enrich themselves and then return to Spain. That was their idea of how to colonize the New World.

Spanish Colonial Policy

Over the centuries, the Spanish policy in relation to the colonies was the same as that of other European countries, which was to prevent the development of industry in the colonial areas, and to utilize them as sources of gold, silver, and raw materials. This was a very carefully worked-out policy. They even prevented trade between the various colonies, and they barred trade between the colonies and other European powers. The pattern was to take raw materials from areas like Cuba. (In Cuba they introduced sugar early. I think Columbus brought the first sugar plants there, so far as is known).

They took these raw materials back to a key port in Spain, either Seville or Cadiz, and there they imposed a high tax on the goods that were brought in. That tax would go to the crown. These raw materials, for example, would be worked into cotton goods, whatever they were in those days, blouses, shirts, skirts, and so on. The

Joseph Hansen's lecture on Cuba and Permanent Revolution ranges over a broad span of history, roughly 500 years. At the same time it touches on a number of issues that remain as urgent today as when he gave this talk more than 30 years ago — the general problem of combined and uneven development in the modern world, the role of U.S. imperialism and its history of intervention and occupation in the Caribbean, U.S.-backed military machines there and the subservient local bourgeoisie, the role of Stalinism and Trotskyism, and how Castroism, while a revolutionary current, doesn't fully coincide with the Fourth Internationalist conception of what is needed for capitalism to be replaced worldwide.

People demonstrating at the November 12 March on Washington to Stop the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, End the U.S. Occupation of Haiti, and Recognize the Right of Self-Determination for the People of Cuba and Haiti will find much of value in Hansen's observations. All who consider themselves revolutionary socialists will benefit from his discussion of these crucial questions.

Many of these same issues are discussed at greater length and with very careful consideration in Hansen's extremely important books, *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* and *Leninist Strategy of Party Building* (both available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York NY 10014).

This 1961 lecture can in fact be read as introductory material, or as a supple-

ment, to Hansen's books. The reading of this talk especially adds to, and gains from, the following chapters in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, articles or speeches from the same time period as this lecture — "The Cuba Question" (January 1961), "What the Debate on Cuba Is About" (May 1961), "Theory of the Cuban Revolution" (1961), "In Defense of the Cuban Revolution: An Answer to the State Department and Theodore Draper" (1961), and "Cuba — The Acid Test: A Reply to the Ultraleft Sectarians" (November 1962).

Hansen, incidentally, in collaboration with the James P. Cannon and most of the veteran leadership cadre of the SWP, played a particularly important role in the early 1960s in helping to bring about the unification of the Fourth International, which had been divided since the early '50s. Agreement about the "permanent revolution" type of dynamic at work in the Cuban revolution, and agreement on the need to support and defend revolutionary Cuba internationally, were two key understandings shared by the forces that carried through that reunification. Some of the chapters indicated above in Hansen's book on Cuba shed much light on the Cuba-related discussions that accompanied the reunification of the Fourth International (FI). The United Secretariat of the FI, the leading body that resulted from reunification, continues to be virtually the only world center today trying to implement the genuine concept of revolutionary internationalism, the

need for the working classes of every country, and their allies among the oppressed everywhere, to work together globally against the global domination of "free market" capitalism.

As Hansen said so well, "when we talk about a party, we mean an international party, one that is commensurate with tremendous international goals." He continued:

"We mean a party that is capable of taking the world working class and leading it forward to overthrow capitalism, which is an international system... It's probably the greatest task that has [ever] faced humanity, the building of such a party. Marx [wasn't able to] build one [and] Lenin didn't build one [although they] started the core of it. Their aim was absolutely clear — where they were headed... they never conceived this party as simply a narrow, national party. They conceived it as an international one, one that is capable of the greatest task that has faced humanity, taking us from capitalism to socialism..."

"So, when we say a revolutionary party, a revolutionary socialist party, we don't just mean a revolutionary socialist party in little Cuba or in little Guatemala or in little Costa Rica or in little Nicaragua. Those will be important sections of it. We are thinking of an international party on a major scale, in which these are component parts" (*Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, pp. 90-91).

— George Saunders

finished goods would then be brought back to these same ports, reloaded on the ships, and carried back to the colonies.

You might have the strange business of cotton being grown in New Granada, which is now Colombia and Venezuela, shipped over to Cuba, and from Cuba over to Spain, and then up to Belgium or Holland or somewhere in Germany, worked up into a finished handkerchief, brought back to Spain, back over across the ocean to Cuba or New Granada, or ferried by manpower (or womanpower) across the isthmus of Panama, reloaded on ships and carried down the west coast of New Spain, down to Santiago de Chile; and then maybe right back over to Buenos Aires, the same handkerchief. The cost kept pyramiding.

They deliberately barred the colonies as much as they could from developing their native industries. This led to a great deal of dissatisfaction, as I'm sure you'll remember was the case in the [British] colonies in [what is now] the United States, if you're up on your American history. There was a big impulse to develop native industries. These, along with other grievances, led the colonies to break loose from Spain.

Independence Struggle in Spanish Colonies

The revolutionary period of their independence struggle lasted from about 1810 to around 1824, about a fourteen-year period. But Cuba was not among those colonies that were able to break loose. As the struggle developed on the mainland [of South America], and in Mexico, and in Central America, those who were most bitterly opposed to the freedom struggle, the refugees and the

emigres, all landed in Cuba. Cuba became a sort of Miami of its time. All the counterrevolutionaries went to Cuba, strengthening the counterrevolutionary forces already there.

In addition, Spain kept armies in Cuba which were much larger than all the armies they had in all the rest of the Americas, because Cuba was the prize colony in the estimation of Spain. It was known as the "Pearl of the Antilles." Columbus said when he first discovered it that it was the fairest land that man had ever set eyes on. They hung onto Cuba grimly, as long as they could. There were a number of additional reasons that kept Cuba from breaking loose and finding its freedom.

There was a struggle for power between the United States, Great Britain, and France. In this jockeying around, all of them reached the decision that none of the others could have Cuba. Their policy was to bar one another from taking Cuba, and thereby keeping Cuba in Spain's hands. None of them would agree to Cuba's freedom. All these things worked together.

Three Great Social Problems of Cuban Society

Over the centuries, three great problems began to arise in Cuba, as elsewhere. The first was the necessity for an agrarian reform. Some of the estates in Cuba amounted to as high as thirty-three thousand, forty thousand acres; some even larger than that. I think you'd find certain ones that were up in the hundreds of thousands of acres. These were really vast estates, only partially cultivated, and largely reduced to one or two crops, like sugar or tobacco.

Sugar was far larger than tobacco, the value of the sugar crop being maybe 95 percent, and the tobacco crop about 5 percent. (This is just to give you an idea of the relation between the main crop and the secondary crop.)

Their next problem was national independence. The Cubans naturally had the same desire for independence, and the same need for independence, that the other Spanish colonies had. But their struggles were long delayed because of these many different circumstances. This problem grew in urgency and became more and more acute as the years went by.

The third great problem was the necessity to industrialize Cuba. It was simply an area which produced raw materials for the industrially advanced countries for many years, particularly Spain, which sent the materials into other areas. Spain itself was in the peculiar position of not developing its own industries. So in this country too, like the other Spanish colonies, there was a tremendous need for industrialization. These were the three problems in Cuba that kept growing in urgency over the years.

The Cuban Independence Struggle

The Cuban independence struggle began in 1868, under [Antonio] Maceo and other leaders. It was fought for about ten years. There were huge forces involved in this, relatively speaking — peasant armies, guerrilla forces, which began fighting in the eastern part of the island, in Oriente, and then moved toward the West.

They put up a very strong struggle during that ten-year period. There was a revolution in the 1860s in Spain, which facilitated this struggle. But when the revolution came to an end in Spain, the crown made big concessions to the Cuban struggle, both verbal concessions and real concessions, and so the struggle for independence died down about 1878. It was not resumed until around 1895.

In 1895 it began again under the leadership of Jose Martí. For three years the struggle mounted in intensity, as it had in the previous period. By 1898 they were very near victory. It seemed that Cuba, being the last colony [in the Americas] to break out to freedom from Spain, would have had a very interesting career in that period.

U.S. Domination Begins

At that precise moment, the United States took over Cuba. The date is quite important — 1898 — because this is generally taken by serious students of the question as marking the beginning of capitalist imperialism in its finance stage, finance capitalism or monopoly-stage capitalism. It's the point that Lenin marks as the emergence of modern imperialism. That was the Spanish-American war, which brought the United States into world prominence as a leading contender for world power.

The turning point was when it conquered and took over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. They went down there under the guise of helping the Cuban freedom fighters, but they ended up with the Philippines and Puerto Rico as well as Cuba. They put an occupation army in Cuba.

When the United States took over Cuba, it accentuated Cuba's uneven development. Instead of filling in the parts where Cuba was backward, or where it was underdeveloped, the United States accentuated those uneven sides of its development. Big investments were made particularly in the sugar industry, which gave an enormous impulsion to the development of the sugar industry. Later investments also began in mining, which is another raw-material industry.

The mines in Cuba, which are very rich, especially in copper and nickel, produced ore in a form which was shipped out of Cuba

and refined in the United States. It wasn't even refined in Cuba. Here, too, the uneven characteristics of Cuba's development were accentuated by the United States. From the four-year period when they had an occupation army — 1898–1902 — up until January of 1959, the conditions of the peasants and the poor people in Cuba became *worse* than they had been before.

Cuban People Worse Off

Some improvements were made in general by the U.S., the stamping out of yellow fever, etc. But the living conditions, the way the people lived, were actually worse than they had been. It was a common saying in Cuba that the peasant was worse off in modern times than he was at the time of Columbus. He lived in exactly the same kind of house, a *bohio* made out of bark and the fronds of a certain kind of palm tree down there called the royal palm. It makes a miserable hut, even though it is a royal tree. They lived in these miserable things, with a bare earth floor, quite open to insects and to the weather, especially the rain. Their food, etc., was on a very low level. They were worse off after four centuries than before the Spaniards brought Western "civilization" to Cuba.

U.S. Investment

Cuba became a tremendous field for investment. At one stage, U.S. investments in Cuba were as large as they were in all the rest of Latin America, if not larger. I don't have the exact figures at hand, but you can verify this very easily. Even when the takeovers occurred in Cuba [by Castro's revolutionary government], the size of the American investments was very large in proportion to what they were in the rest of the world. They measure up something like the ones in Canada. They completely dominated Cuba, especially around the development of the sugar industry. Cuba's whole development was very, very uneven under the Spaniards, as I've said, and this became accentuated under American control, resulting in some very interesting combinations.

Combined and Uneven Development: The Sugar Industry

Cuba had the biggest sugar mills in the world. You may not realize how big a sugar mill can be, but they are tremendous things, situated outside of the cities, in the countryside, on the plantations. The sugar plantations surround the sugar mill. For miles and miles and miles, nothing grows there but sugar, which is hauled into the sugar mill, the *central*, when the crop is ripe.

These vast plantations were the most efficient in the world. The soil was ideal for sugar growing, and the skills that were developed over many years were applied to both the growing of sugar and its grinding. They had the biggest and most efficient sugar industry in the entire world on this small island. Yet those who worked this industry, the agricultural proletariat, were among the worst off in the world. They not only lived in these miserable huts I described before, the *bohios*, but the *bohios* were situated wherever the worker might find a place to put one up.

They had two divisions, or categories of workers: one was of those who lived in the company town around the *central*, in barracks, the most miserable of places, like some of the company towns you'd find in the mining areas in the western United States. Then there were those who had families, who would build their *bohio* just along the side of the road, because that was the only place they could find to build it. On the shoulder of a road, they'd just build their hut right there.

Another place they'd build them would be in the fire lanes, the *guardarrayas*, as they're called in Cuba. These are areas that are

opened out into the sugar cane field in order to make a fire break. It's like a fire lane; you have these in the West, in the forests. Around Los Angeles they have them too; you know what a fire lane is there. That's where they would build their homes. If they grew anything to eat, it would be right around this small little place. This is the way they lived, right around the most enormous and modern sugar mills in the entire world.

On top of that, they were only employed for three months a year, a great convenience to the sugar mill owners. They only had to pay labor costs to these people when they were working, three months in the year. Then, because it's a very nice climate, they could be left to scrounge for themselves the other nine months.

So, in the relative polarization of class forces in Cuba, there were extreme opposites. On the one side, enormous wealth, largely centered in Wall Street. On the other side, the most miserable conditions among the workers. Extreme polarization of wealth and of poverty in Cuba. Quite in accordance with Marx, although I'm not sure that the Wall Street investors had read Marx and were deliberately trying to carry out what he said about the impoverishment of the working class.

The normal pattern in Cuba, as these investments were made, was to extend these plantations on a vast scale. The extensions were done sometimes in the most illegal way, through corrupt government officials, who would give away a great extent of land, thousands and thousands of acres, for maybe just being paid off one way or another. Or they would pay a phenomenal sum, like five or ten cents an acre, for this beautiful land. Where the peasants did have the wholesome land, they were driven off. Driven right off the land. And let them argue in court as to who actually owned that land, and whether or not they could establish that their ownership went back to the time of Columbus.

Thus, you have this other strange development — the extension of great big plantations and the driving of peasants off the land. And this is in modern times. But it's exactly as if it were back in the days of the primitive accumulation of capital. So Cuba had this combination — a big sea of backwardness, of misery, of disease, of hunger. Ninety to ninety-five percent of the poor people in Cuba had some kind of tropical disease that could have been cured or prevented with a minimum amount of attention to health. Also you had this great big sea of illiteracy: one-third of the people unable to read or write, disease-ridden, hungry, without work, or underemployed. And right in the midst of this sea, you have one of the most glittering playgrounds of rich tourists in the entire world.

Havana was a playground of the rich American tourists. It was quite a spectacular place. You could put Las Vegas in one corner of Havana. Las Vegas is really a piker compared to what they had in Havana in the way of odd forms of pleasure. I won't go into those. The seamen comrades might be able to tell about some of the things they've heard about Havana. So you have the American standard of living, which is very high, flaunted right in the faces of the people in Havana. The rich tourists themselves coming there and demonstrating how things are done in America, and how the Cubans should live if they had any better sense. These were the conditions in Cuba.

Cuban Politics

It was the same way in politics. You had the strange combination that, ninety miles from America, with all its boasted freedoms — you know that we're supposedly the freest country in the world, with the greatest democracy the earth has ever known — ninety miles from that you have some of the most dictatorial and repressive regimes the world has ever seen.

Two of them are especially notorious: the Machado regime, which began about 1924 and lasted until 1933; and the Batista

regime, which had two phases and was especially brutal, the last phase lasting from 1952 to 1959. Right off our shores, ninety miles away, one of the worst dictatorial regimes the world has known. All these strange combinations were intensified by the United States: the problem of agrarian reform, the need for rounded development of Cuban industries, and the need for national independence and democracy. These became more and more acute with the passage of time.

Bourgeois Tasks of the Cuban Revolution

From this we can easily draw the conclusion, looking back at the theory of permanent revolution, that what Cuba needed was a good bourgeois revolution, like ours in 1776, or like the one in France in 1789, which converted France from a feudal paradise into a model capitalist country at the end of the eighteenth century. The big problem was to end landlordism, which, in its essence, is a hangover from the feudal system of economy. Landlordism in which the principal landlords were American landholders and Spanish landholders, as well as some Cubans.

To win their national freedom was another big necessity. National freedom being necessary for them to develop their own industries, to open the way for industrialization.

Another need was political democracy; that is, to break out of these dictatorial regimes, which actually functioned as puppet regimes for Wall Street. Along with this, tied in with all these needs, was the necessity to raise the cultural level of the people. First of all, the need to spread literacy and teach people such a simple thing as to be able to read and write. Then to develop their skills in the various trades and occupations, and to open up the possibilities for Cuba to really utilize its great natural resources, so it could take its place in the modern world. What Cuba needed was a good bourgeois democratic revolution.

The Cuban Bourgeoisie

The question comes up then — and again, we're looking at this in light of the theory of permanent revolution — why couldn't the Cuban bourgeoisie deal with these problems? There were some Cuban capitalists, you know, and some Cuban bourgeois figures. Some of them were in the rum industry. Some of the best rum you ever tasted was made by the skills employed by the Cuban bourgeoisie.

The Cuban bourgeoisie, the class that owned the wealth of Cuba, was divided up into three sectors. One of them was predominantly American. Their home address was in the United States. For example, in the cattle industry, some of the biggest ranches there were held by Americans. One of the prominent ones was the King Brothers Ranch. They have a whole county in Texas, where they have the biggest ranch in the United States, with special breeds of cattle, very resistant to tropical climates. They had opened up tremendous ranches in Cuba with their special breed of cattle. I just indicate this as one instance. The mining industry likewise. Predominantly American.

The next important sector of the Cuban bourgeoisie were the Spaniards. That is, they were born in Spain, and they were really Spanish citizens, and they were really tied to Spain more than they were to Cuba. That was Spanish capital, owned by Spanish stockholders. They were interlocked with the Americans.

Finally, there was the Cuban part of the Cuban bourgeoisie, who on this scale were at the very bottom among these layers. The Cuban bourgeoisie was especially subservient, real lickspittles. What they actually did was to play the role of native agents of Wall Street. There was nothing independent about them whatsoever. Their whole outlook was geared into that of Wall Street. It was

common knowledge that the most important figure in Cuba was not the dictator, but the ambassador from the United States, who talked things over with the dictator. The dictator would then carry out things according to the will of the American ambassador. The Cuban bourgeoisie was especially subservient.

The Cuban Petty Bourgeoisie

What about the petty bourgeois class in Cuba, especially around Havana? They were exceptionally weak. I'm talking now about figures like Carlos Prio Socarras. He's a typical example, a bourgeois or petty bourgeois democrat who really believes in democracy, so far as it works and so far as he can apply it. But the limits for that are very narrow in Cuba, and he knows what's possible and what isn't possible. There were a number of others, and each of them had a party of one kind or another. There were the Autenticos, for example, one large party in Cuba which was democratic in character. But these democrats in Cuba were tied in very closely with the militarists.

The Cuban Military

Cuba had a large military establishment. It was constructed and trained under American auspices, and maintained with American military aid, with American money, with American know-how, and with American military missions from the very beginning of the century. This whole military machine was constructed under the supervision of the U.S.

All the democrats in Cuba, without exception, were tied in to this military machine to one degree or another. In all big questions they bowed to this military machine, and went along with whatever it wanted. The final control, and the final arbiter in Cuban politics, were the military forces, that is, this professional army, of which the leading representative became Fulgencio Batista. The Cuban democrats operated on the sufferance of this military force. They were not in a very good position to lead a revolution in Cuba, although they sometimes talked very militantly about the need for a solution to some of these problems that were on everybody's mind.

The Cuban Peasantry

What about the Cuban peasants? Was it possible for them to lead a revolution? Well, you know from what we learned yesterday in regard to the theory of permanent revolution that it was not a very likely possibility. As in other countries, the Cuban peasantry was scattered over the countryside, isolated from each other. Communications were very poor in Cuba. In some areas no roads whatsoever existed, only narrow trails, and even those were scarcely passable at certain times of the year. So the peasants were divorced and separated from the main cultural and political stream.

In addition, there were many divisions among them. The poorest of all, who were semiproletarian, or almost proletarian, worked around the sugar mills. Some had isolated farms in the mountains or isolated patches of land in the mountains. Others had larger areas of land, say, a hundred and sixty to four or five hundred acres, and hired workers in the season to help them on their farms. For these reasons it seemed excluded that the Cuban peasantry could constitute itself as a homogeneous political force and lead a revolution of the kind that Cuba needed.

The Cuban Working Class

What about the Cuban proletariat, the Cuban workers? Was it possible for them to lead this revolution, this bourgeois revolution? The Cuban workers are quite interesting from this viewpoint.

They began to become radicalized in the 1920s, under the impulse of the October Revolution in Russia. As we recall, in the theory of the permanent revolution, it was believed and projected that when the October Revolution would occur — they didn't know the date yet — it would give enormous impulse to socialist revolution in Western Europe and throughout the world. One of the places that turned out to be true was in Cuba. The October Revolution had a big impact on the workers in Cuba. And in 1925 a Communist Party was organized in Cuba and it grew in strength.

By the time of the fall of Machado — and he was known as the Butcher of Cuba (that was before Batista's time); he was a ferocious dictator — there was a brilliant opportunity for the Cuban workers to lead the kind of revolution that Cuba needed.

As a matter of fact, the thing that brought Machado down in 1933 was a general strike. A general strike of all the workers that swept clear across Cuba from one end to the other. That was what finally convinced Machado's friends that it was time for him to take a plane and get out of Cuba. He did, and the contingents of the revolutionaries came out on the airfield just in time to see him take off. They fired their guns at him. Unfortunately, they didn't hit him. There were bullet holes in the plane when he landed in Florida.

From 1933 to 1935, it seemed that in Cuba there was every chance for a successful revolution. There were repeated strike waves. In the sugar industry, and in other industries, there were strike waves that occurred almost spontaneously, one strike after another in that two-year period. This was before Batista had consolidated his power, when he was still weak, and it was uncertain what would be his exact course when he did consolidate power. These strikes were so militant, and went so far, that in many places in Cuba the plants were taken over by the workers. (This was before the sitdown strikes in the United States.) Plants were taken over by the workers in Cuba, and some sugar mills were taken over.

It went even further: in many areas of Cuba they established "soviets" — that is, workers' councils were established in Cuba in that period, in 1935. It seemed as though they had every possibility, under the impulse of the proletariat, that it would be possible for a revolutionary party, a revolutionary socialist party in Cuba, to move into power and to carry out the bourgeois revolution that Cuba needed. But here we come into a complication, which I'm sure most of you were expecting. And that's the perfidious role of Stalinism.

The Stalinized Cuban Communist Party

The Cuban Communist Party became Stalinized about the same time the American Communist Party became Stalinized. By 1930, it was pretty much under the domination of the Stalinists. In the early 1930s they followed a policy which paralleled that of the Communist parties in other countries, which was extremely ultraleftist. [This was the so-called third period that Stalin had decreed from Moscow, the third and final period of capitalism's downfall all over the world.] They called for armed uprisings in Cuba, and they actually engaged in a few adventures of that kind. As a consequence, the Communist Party took quite a setback even before Machado fell from power — because of its extreme ultraleftism. It took a setback, and lost a good deal of influence. But it again made a comeback after Machado fell, in 1933, as the workers began to move in greater force and power in Cuba.

In 1934, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who some know by the initials FDR, concluded a pact with Stalin, a peaceful coexistence pact. One of the items that was involved in this pact was, quite clearly, the Communist Party in Cuba. That was one part of the

package deal. The Communist Party very shortly shifted over to support of Batista. They pictured Batista as a man of the people, which he was, with his origins as a bartender and odd-job worker in various parts of the country. That was before he became a stenographer in the army, and revealed a considerable capacity, particularly in military politics.

The Cuban Communist Party depicted Batista as a man of the people and a good democrat. They put all their forces behind Batista. As he moved into greater power, they took a share of the responsibility for governing the country. Their main responsibility was to keep the workers from getting too much out of hand.

Batista was a shrewd politician, and he was quite willing to accept the help of the CP. He utilized the CP for many years in the 1930s [and later] to contain the working class and to prevent the workers from moving into a prominent position or a ruling position in Cuba. Batista also made some concessions to the workers. There were some wage increases, especially to a rather thin layer of the workers in the big monopolies. The electrical monopoly, the electrical trust, was one place where some concessions were made. Batista went even further. In the 1940 constitution he wrote down many concessions of a progressive character. Workers couldn't be fired from a job in Cuba without just cause. And you could take your case to a Labor Court. They actually enforced this under Batista. There were other provisions in this 1940 constitution that were quite okay, so far as they were written in a constitution.

The role of the CP, in supporting Batista, led to a decline in its influence. Gradually the CP was replaced by a different type of trade-union leader. It was replaced by the type known as "Mujalista" after Eusebio Mujal, who began as a member of the Communist Party but under Batista became more and more simply a Batista agent, until that's what he actually turned out to be, an agent of the capitalist state in Cuba in charge of the trade unions. The trade unions were harnessed to the government. It became impossible for the workers to move through their own unions. They would have had to reorganize them from top to bottom in order to move through that channel.

This in general was the role of Stalinism in Cuba. As you can see, it boiled down to a very simple business, which was to prevent the workers from moving into a position where they could carry out the bourgeois revolution that Cuba needed.

The Cuban Trotskyists

Now, a word about the Trotskyists. They were a minor current in Cuban politics. The split in the Cuban Communist Party over the issue of Trotskyism vs. Stalinism, that is, between permanent revolution and "socialism in one country," if you pose it on a theoretical level — this split occurred in the early 1930s. It was just before or about the time that the CP began to move into its ultraleft phase, I would say about 1929 or 1930 insofar as I've been able to determine. I'm not familiar with all the exact details. They were a minor current in Cuban politics, but well known. Their main base was in Oriente, especially around Guantánamo. That's the city, not the bay. We always think of the bay, and the American naval base there, but there's also a large city in eastern Cuba named Guantánamo. They were well known there as militants, as figures in the labor movement.

By 1935 there were a few forces moving in the direction of the Trotskyists. One of them was an outstanding figure by the name of Antonio Guiteras, who is now one of the heroes of Cuba. They named the electrical plant in Havana after him just last year. I think it was last summer. Antonio Guiteras. He was moving in the direction of Trotskyism, and he was the sort of figure that Fidel Castro is considered to be today. That's the kind of figure Guiteras

was, a man very much concerned about the improvement of Cuba's fate, determined that it could only come about by moving in a revolutionary direction, and searching for an organization and the mounting of a movement that would bring Cuba out of its impasse.

In 1935 he was going to leave Cuba and go to Mexico as an exile, in order to operate from abroad. It seems like every one of these movements at a certain stage has to go abroad and establish a base among the Cubans who are in other countries, in order to gather funds and get organized. As his trip was being planned, they were betrayed. They were captured, and they were killed by Batista. Guiteras was killed, and it seems that the Trotskyists never recovered from this blow.

Periodically, the CP in nearly all countries has been able to go through big declines, due very often to the perfidious types of policies that they carry out. But then they recover, due to the influence of the Soviet Union, which continues to remain an attractive center. When new forces come into play in political life, they turn toward the Soviet Union as the great example of a successful revolution, and the Stalinists were thereby able repeatedly to recoup their positions. The Trotskyists are not able to do that, since they have to base themselves purely on independent positions that are developed by the workers themselves through their own experience. This kind of thing has been repeated many times, and was repeated in Cuba.

The Cuban Trotskyists existed in the 1930s and up into the '40s — we were in touch with them during the '40s. Some of our seamen comrades who were on the runs in that direction used to see them regularly. They were reinforced by some refugees from Germany, who had escaped from Hitler's terror. They lived in Havana for awhile, but they remained a minor current. What finally happened to them was, that as Castro's movement developed force from 1953 to 1956 some of the leading Trotskyists in Cuba joined his movement. They became very good members of the July 26th Movement, but not so good as Trotskyists. We lost touch with them after awhile.

I knew one of them in particular. They used to come up to New York, to try to raise money, and he'd tell me some of the experiences that he would have with the Castro movement in Mexico. That was when they were in exile. And he was one of the figures that was in the Granma expedition, and one of the twelve who escaped up onto Pico Turquino. We tried to look him up in Cuba in recent times, and apparently he's become enmeshed in the government apparatus. And we're not sure exactly what he's doing, but so far as being a Trotskyist is concerned, he is very quiescent. He is not a prominent July 26th figure, either.

Now that we've summed up these various class forces in Cuba — the bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the proletariat, and these various political tendencies — you can see that the situation appeared to be hopeless. There was no available force to lead the bourgeois revolution that Cuba needed. A great vacuum had been created in radical leadership in Cuba. The July 26th Movement filled this vacuum. So I'll just spend a few minutes now on the July 26th Movement, to give an indication of what this movement was like.

The July 26th Movement

The July 26th Movement was led by petty bourgeois figures who became interested in politics while they were on the Havana campus. Havana University has an old tradition of radicalism and of political activities.

I can remember when I was going to the University of Utah, a long, long time ago, that Havana University was always in the news. Some of us at the University of Utah compared political activities on our own campus very unfavorably with those that

were occurring in Havana. Politics on the campus I was on was mostly fraternity factions fighting for posts and privilege and things that were available in student politics. At the University of Havana the students were all engaged in national politics: big issues and big ideals. They were out there fighting in the streets, and that seemed to us a very fine thing. We couldn't convince many people around the University of Utah that that was the correct course, to follow that example. Those were the kind of leaders that came to the July 26th Movement, that formed it.

They emerged from the Ortodoxo movement, which was a split-off from the Autenticos, one of the democratic parties in Cuba. They began as leading exponents of the views of the Ortodoxo Party, but gradually Castro moved away from their positions to establish an independent position. And finally he split from the Ortodoxo movement and founded the July 26th Movement. In fact, he founded the movement before he split. He split about 1955, and he founded his movement in 1953 [when he led the assault on the Moncada army barracks of the Batista dictatorship].

They operated on one main principle. This was the most interesting feature of this entire movement. This main principle was the necessity for the violent overthrow of the government, which was quite legal in Cuba. They advocated it, they organized for it, they fought for it, they staked their lives on this one main principle.

In relation to all the other forces in Cuba, they had this one main proposition they put on the table, in case of alliances or in case of collaboration, that whoever they worked with would have to agree to this one principle — to overthrow Batista by force and violence. And they didn't just go by words. They demanded *deeds*.

Who have you shot? What have you tried to overthrow? Where are your guns? What guns have you captured from the soldiers? What money are you giving us in the mountains? Cash on the barrelhead, that's the only thing they understood, the only thing they would accept. They disregarded words. They were very good at looking past what people said to what they did. They became real experts at that. That was their main principle on the political level.

The Organizational Character of the July 26th Movement

On the organizational side, they were just as interesting, because what they did was to form an organization that was already known in political history. That was an organization along the lines set up by Louis Auguste Blanqui, who was a great revolutionary figure in France in the nineteenth century. I can't remember offhand now when he actually began his organization, but it was probably in the 1830s. He spent about 38 years in prison because of his views on this question. What he did was set up a highly conspiratorial organization, an elite of revolutionaries who were bound by a completely iron discipline, no ifs, ands, or buts, but just one figure in control of the organization. That was Blanqui.

He gave the orders, he determined the dates of everything; everything went according to what Blanqui said, no ifs, ands, or buts, a highly disciplined organization. They operated on the theory that if they would seize a government installation, say, like City Hall, and broadcast the news to the workers, that the workers would respond by rallying to their cause and they could then sweep out the government and put in a workers' government. They tried that a few times.

The Blanqui Model

The first few times, they created quite a sensation, but the workers, not knowing what was up, stayed at home. The cops came in and

captured the whole force, and sent them to prison. After this happened two or three times, Blanqui himself came to the conclusion that it was necessary first to spend a lot of time preparing the ground in a propagandistic way. But his organization went ahead under its own steam and created more situations like that. And each time, they'd arrest Blanqui and put him in prison, and as I say, he ended up spending about 38 years in prison.

There is a view held by some students of the movement that if Blanqui had been out of prison at the time of the Paris Commune (he was in prison at that time, and was already an old man then), if he had been functioning in the Commune, he would have known the correct steps to have taken so that the Commune would not have been overthrown as it was. There were all kinds of errors that the Commune made that Blanqui would not have made with his experience. But he was in prison.

This was the kind of organization that was set up by the July 26th Movement, and it operated along the lines that Blanqui had worked out for his organization. This was a very interesting development, that in modern times something like this would appear, and in Cuba of all places, and led by Fidel Castro.

The Ideology of the July 26th Movement

In ideology, they picked up where the Cuban independence fighters had left off in 1895 and 1898. They began with a bourgeois democracy all up and down the line. That's what they were fighting for: bourgeois democracy, or a bourgeois program. Very briefly, they were first of all for an agrarian reform. That was the biggest point in their platform, an agrarian reform. Second, the establishment of political democracy. In other words, end the tyrannical dictatorship and establish democracy. Third, the independence of Cuba, its freedom from American influence and the establishment of true national independence. And finally, the industrialization of Cuba, its complete industrialization, the rounding out of its economy.

These were all bourgeois demands. There's nothing wrong with them being bourgeois demands. That's just what they happen to be. The whole point of the theory of permanent revolution is that these demands can only be carried out by the workers' being in power, establishing their dictatorship and then carrying out these reforms. But in Cuba, it turned out that there was a petty bourgeois force that advanced these demands, and advanced them very vigorously, and in action, not just in words.

Some Observations

These are some observations I'd like to make here. In Cuba, the bourgeoisie were incapable of carrying out this bourgeois-democratic [*not* socialist] program. We know the reasons for that incapability. Now, according to the theory of permanent revolution, this program can only be undertaken by a proletarian dictatorship. That was the theory as it was developed in 1905, and as it was held after the October revolution [and confirmed by that experience]. But in this case, in Cuba, this program was espoused by a petty bourgeois political formation, and they carried it out! Although the theory excludes that possibility.

This is because we know that the petty bourgeoisie, from all historical experience, is incapable of carrying out such a program. That is because they split [among themselves] on big questions like war or revolution. Part of them go to the bourgeoisie, and part of them toward the proletariat. Now we have to ask the question: was the theory of permanent revolution verified in Cuba, and if so, to what degree? Let's look just a little bit more closely at exactly what happened in Cuba.

The Actual Course of the Revolution

The July 26th Movement took some big steps when it came into power. First, it carried out the agrarian reform in two ways: one, it gave land, individual plots of land, to the peasants. This occurred all over Cuba, but especially in Oriente, in the mountainous areas. It also carried out the agrarian reform by taking over the big estates and converting them into cooperative farms, which began to employ thousands of workers, all year round, by varying the crops. (Before the agrarian reform there had only been maybe ten, fifteen, twenty, or a couple of hundred workers employed on growing a very few crops.) That's on the agrarian reform side, a very thorough and deepgoing agrarian reform.

Then they went further than that. They began to put controls on industry, and more. First, they began to nationalize the industries that were held by the Batista followers, and Batista politicians. They took those over, nationalized them. Then they began to move toward other nationalizations, but always under impulsion from the United States. You are all familiar with what occurred there in regard to the nationalizations. They reached the point that by the end of 1960, from, say, August to October of that year, they had completely taken over everything in Cuba of any size whatsoever — all the major industries, and especially the sugar industry, the key industry. They took these over completely, and they began to institute a planned economy.

In other words, they shifted from purely bourgeois measures. They carried out a prolonged class struggle, and they finally reached the point where they began to take socialist measures, that is, measures that are socialist in principle [that go beyond capitalism]: the complete nationalization of industry, its organization by the state, and the introduction of a planned economy.

In this respect we see an exact fulfillment of the theory of permanent revolution. In other words, according to that theory, a dictatorship of the proletariat is established, and it opens up a class struggle that exists over a longer or shorter period of time. Time is not specified. It can be a longer period or a shorter period. But this dictatorship opens up this class struggle, and first it carries out measures characteristic of a bourgeois revolution.

We're all familiar now with what those bourgeois measures are. But the impulse of the revolution is so great, or the class struggle becomes so deep, that they have to go beyond these simple measures, and eventually they begin to take socialist measures. But taking these socialist-type measures, they begin to alter the whole character of the state, so that it changes from the base that it had had previously, when it came to power, to a completely different kind of base. In this process, the very institutions of the state are changed. From what they were in the beginning under the bourgeoisie; they finally end up as a completely different type of state institution.

In Cuba, it's quite clear what the new state institutions are. They are the Revolutionary Army, the Revolutionary Police (that's a strange combination — "revolutionary" and "police"), the militia, the unions, which have been organized from top to bottom, the Defense Councils — we don't know too much about those, but we do know that they are being organized by the tens of thousands across Cuba.

In every city, every village, every part of Cuba, the Defense Councils are being organized. In addition, there are the Technical Advisory Councils, which are organs that are set up for workers to have a voice and part control in management. A whole series of different organizations and institutions are set up, which are conducting a planned economy, and are committed to a planned economy. Together they constitute a qualitatively different kind of state institution from what they had at the beginning under Batista.

A Theoretical Problem

All of this is exactly as predicted in the theory of permanent revolution: this whole problem of continuous revolution is exactly as predicted in the permanent revolution, except that in one of the main points, the very point that's most familiar to the permanent revolution — that it was not done under a proletarian dictatorship. It was not done under the guidance of a revolutionary socialist party taking power. That didn't occur. So it seems that we're in the position that the permanent revolution was both confirmed, very brilliantly, and not confirmed, not so brilliantly, in this key point. That is what's special about the permanent revolution; that this is done under the government of the proletariat through their revolutionary socialist party.

That gives us a problem now. We just can't say that the permanent revolution was confirmed in every jot and tittle, and let it go at that, with this big gap in there; and on the other hand, we just can't say, well, it's been put to the test, and it's lacking in certain respects, so there's a big question mark over the theory of the permanent revolution, and leave it like that. We can't do that, at least from a theoretical viewpoint.

Theory demands its own rights and its own logic. So you have to account for this deviation. We have found, in our study of Cuba, that this deviation is accounted for by new forces on the international arena which did not exist at the time the permanent revolution was first projected in 1905, or was carried out in 1917. I'm sure that some of you at least are quite familiar with these new forces. But just let me indicate them now, so that we'll have them before us on the table, and make this theoretically rounded.

New Forces in the World

These are all on the international arena. First of all, the deviation was due to the fact that capitalism, on the whole, has entered an era of decline. Capitalism today is quite different from what it was in 1905 or in 1917. This is shown clearest of all in the very center of world imperialism, right here in the United States. It's still plenty powerful. But relatively speaking, it has taken a whole series of defeats and setbacks which could not have been dreamed of in 1905 or even in 1917, or in the early 1920s. Cuba finds itself in a world situation quite different from that visualized at the time the permanent revolution was projected.

Strength of the Soviet Bloc

Number two, and this just as important, is the strength of the Soviet bloc. There was no Soviet bloc in 1905 to exercise an influence. There was no Soviet bloc in 1917 to exercise an influence. But today, there is a Soviet bloc, of tremendous power, next to imperialism in power. What's especially important about it, from a theoretical viewpoint, is this: that a planned economy exists in the Soviet Union as a living example. In every country, the leaders of all countries, no matter what class they are, can see this living example in front of their eyes. And even if it's distorted, even if it's not as good as it should be, still, it *stands* there.

From a theoretical viewpoint, it stands as a programmatic point: planned economy [as a real, existing thing]. A program can begin with words on pieces of paper, and that can be transferred into a living organization. People carry out this program, and finally it becomes an institution, or a number of institutions, governments, economies. It takes that form in its final stages. Here you have revolutionary socialist program in the form of a planned economy, standing as a living example. That didn't exist in 1905 or in 1917. It has an influence on every country.

Rise of the Colonial Revolution

Then there is the rise of the colonial revolution, occurring all over the world. This gives special impact and force to every [anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist] sentiment, in every part of the world, even outside of the areas where this revolution is most active. For example, the Algerian revolution has been conducted for seven or eight years now against France. In Cuba, the example of the Algerians is held up every week in Cuba, to show what the Algerians could do against an imperialist power like France; well, think what the Cubans could do against America.

In other words, the struggle is not hopeless, no matter how big the power is. They are in touch with each other, the Algerians and the Cubans. They send missions back and forth. The same is true with other areas where there is a colonial revolution. So the colonial revolution has a direct influence on Cuban politics. This is not well known in our country, where we're isolated and kept behind several kinds of walls and curtains.

The Default of Stalinism

The next big item which we must list is the default of Stalinism. In the '30s Cuba could have had its revolution, its bourgeois revolution, which then could have gone over to a socialist revolution in 1933–35. But due to the role of Stalinism, this did not occur. But there is a certain payment that occurs. Not only the payment of setback and defeat but also a payment that Stalinism itself has to make, even though it seems to recover from it. The end result is that it creates a vacuum of leadership. This vacuum now opens up possibilities for new leadership formations. Especially revolutionary socialist formations.

So when you have a form of leadership come along like the Castro leadership, which occupies this vacuum, it's manifest that its tendency must be in a revolutionary socialist direction if it is to succeed. It has no other choice — except to sell out, and create another default. Then the vacuum becomes bigger. But there is a strong pressure, in fact, the main tendency, toward the building of revolutionary socialist leaderships throughout the world. And formations like the Castro leadership, considered from a long-range viewpoint, give us the greatest hope. Because what they have done is bypass Stalinism and open up completely new perspectives.

These are the main determinants that have occurred on the international area which make it necessary for us to make a certain modification, to a minor extent, in our theory, when we check it. So let me now try to summarize.

Summary

The theory of permanent revolution was drawn up as a result of *experience*. In the main sequence of revolution, from feudalism to capitalism to socialism, we have not yet had the experience of going directly from capitalism to socialism, but we have had the experience of the permanent revolution. This was drawn up as an expression of the experience of the 1904–1905–1906 revolution in Russia, checked back against the experience of 1848–1850 and the conclusions drawn by Karl Marx. This theory was drawn up as a result of experience in revolutions. That's one of the main things to note about it.

Within that experience, which it expressed, the theory of permanent revolution allowed some variations. It is not a mathematically perfect formulas, which has to be filled in with every single

number in the formula. It allows some variations, particularly in the beginning of the revolution. In that sense, even the theory of permanent revolution, although it is an arithmetical expression of Lenin's algebraic formula of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" — still, even within the permanent revolution, there's a certain algebraic formulation in regard to the beginning of the revolution. If you study it very carefully, you will notice that Trotsky leaves open the possibility of some variants in the beginning of the revolution.

In 1922, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International took up this special point, which is only a very small special point in the whole theory of permanent revolution, and it foresaw the possibility of regimes other than the dictatorship of the proletariat beginning the revolution — not ending it, but beginning it. It began this process of the permanent revolution in a country like Cuba.

Part of the following of the July 26th Movement headed in the direction of the counterrevolution, that is, toward the bourgeoisie and Wall Street. You could count them as they took their planes and ships, and put on the swimming wings and swam from Cuba to Florida. I don't know how many thousands there were, but you could name them as they came across. Many of them were supporters of the opening stages of the revolution and had backed the Castro movement.

One section went in that direction, and another section went in the direction of the proletariat. That's quite obvious, because at a certain point the movement itself declared that the revolution was socialist in character. So obviously they must have moved in a proletarian direction. They finally ended up last May with Castro himself declaring that it was a socialist revolution. This confirmed the main line of the theory of the permanent revolution.

What was novel about it was the fact that when the petty bourgeoisie split, and one part went toward the bourgeoisie and the other part went toward the proletariat, one of the sections that went toward the proletariat was the leadership of this petty bourgeois movement. That was a great historic accident. A very rare one. The fact that a man like Castro would choose *that* course, rather than the other course, toward the bourgeoisie. I could find dozens and dozens of examples where this law of the permanent revolution is exemplified, where the petty bourgeoisie split between the big forces, the two main classes, and virtually all of them, *especially* the leaders, go toward the bourgeoisie. This is one of the rare occasions when you had something else happen.

Now another thing strictly in accordance with the theory of the permanent revolution, although the sequence is out of order, is the organization of a new party, which is obviously on the order of the day in Cuba, and which has been talked about by some of the leaders. The composition of it has even been specified. The direction of this party is clearly in the direction of revolutionary socialism.

Another point that directly confirms the main line of the theory of permanent revolution is the fact that the extension of this revolution throughout Latin America is high on the agenda. You can hardly pick up a paper without hearing some news about some representative of Cuba or Castro being in trouble in one country or another because he's hauling in propaganda, or because he was speaking to some local organization and telling them about the Cuban revolution, and why it should be an example to them. It's extending along these lines. I've also seen that it's having a big impact inside the Soviet Union through the exchange of missions between Cuba and Russia. □

Capitalism Against Democracy

by A. Manafy

What follows is an edited excerpt from a much longer paper entitled "Is Marxism Obsolete?" by a faculty member at New Mexico Highlands University. While many readers of this magazine may disagree with some of Professor Manafy's arguments, the editors felt that this excerpt puts forward some interesting ideas as well as a useful survey of the thinking of some left-wing academics.

Bertell Ollman has recently commented that "a lot of people have taken the wrong lessons from the collapse of so-called socialist systems [the Soviet and Eastern Bloc countries], and that is propagated by the capitalist-owned media. But it is not a moment to be defeatist. Things can turn around very quickly."¹ In fact, the collapse of the Soviet Union has created a new opportunity for the true realization of Marxism, because the totalitarian order which developed there under Stalin, and the Soviet bureaucratic dictatorship which finally collapsed in the late 1980s, had little to do with the political orientation of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. This orientation was radically democratic — in a manner that contradicts at one and the same time both Stalinist dictatorships and also the capitalist economic system.

Marx and Engels on Democracy

According to Engels, "Democracy is the proletarian principle, the principle of the masses. The masses may be more or less clear about this, the only correct meaning of democracy, but all have at least an obscure feeling that social equality of rights is implicit in democracy."² The interests of the ruling class oligarchy, in "democratic" capitalist countries, lie not only in "economic oppression" but also in political restrictions, alienation, and exclusion (though in a limited form) from political participation. This state of affairs clearly reflects the class nature of capitalist democracy. Such antagonisms, which are the by-product of class politics, need to be abolished.

Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* is emphatic in saying that class antagonism must be abolished by revolution. It is the function of revolution to put the proletarian class into the ruling position, thereby enabling the working-class majority "to win the battle of democracy." For Marx, democracy is "the situation where society is dominant over its own productive development. The establishment of such an order is only possible by overcoming economic obstacles: the contradictions between labor and

capital. Having changed their relations in the course of a social revolution, society will rid itself of state violence and the corresponding apparatus of coercion by replacing it with a union of free and equal people."³

Marx never abandoned the concept of democracy. He even went on to maintain that, in England and other free countries, the transition to socialism could be achieved through the ballot box (although he added — pointing to the 1861–65 uprising of the slave-owning ruling class in the United States when the anti-slavery Abraham Lincoln was elected president — that a working-class socialist victory at the ballot box could give rise to "a new version of the slave-owner war"). This essential democratic component of Marxism has often been obscured. But elements of the future socialist society envisioned by Marx exist today wherever genuine democracy can be found in existing institutions. As Engels once put it, the transition to socialism can come about "when representatives of the people concentrate power in their hands, where, if one has the support of the majority of the people, one can do as one sees fit in a constitutional way..." Marx and Engels opposed limitations on mass participation in politics, as well as attempts to censor critical minds or eliminate the opposition press, not to mention rule by force exerted by party cliques. When Marx speaks of "proletarian dictatorship," he means full realization of democracy for the masses of the working class.⁴

We can see that the Marxist perspective on democracy sharply contradicts the political realities which arose in the so-called "communist" countries which have risen and fallen in the 20th century. But it is no less the case that, in reality, capitalism and democracy do not mix.

The Anti-Democratic Nature of Capitalism

Capitalist systems cannot fully implement democratic ideals: democratic choices cannot be sustained under capitalism. Capitalism is a system in which the primary desire is for wealth

and unlimited possessiveness. A greed-motivated oligarchic man is not able to control his passion for acquisitiveness. He possesses a conviction that is derived from his crudest self-interest. Admiration for profit maximization and wealth animates capitalist society. Under capitalism the means of production and resources are privately owned and controlled by the few. It is the few who make both political and economic decisions. It is the ruling economic class that allocates values and decides for the masses. Public policy does not reflect the will of the people; it reflects the values of the dominant class. Since the primary goal of capitalism is the realization of surplus value — which arises from the difference between what labor is paid and the value of the products that labor produces — the capitalist employer has to squeeze wages, lower the cost of production by laying off workers, and promote productivity by continually revolutionizing technology (which often degrades the quality of life of the workers, the community, and the environment).

It can be argued that a right to a job is a basic human right. Through their labor, people acquire the means with which to live in a manner which strengthens one's self-reliance and dignity. Yet the "health" of the capitalist economy requires a certain level of unemployment, what Marx called the "reserve army of labor." By stifling this basic human right, capitalism dehumanizes human beings. The capitalist mode of production is dependent on maintaining an elemental form of material or economic inequality in the form of at least some level of unemployment.

There are other forms of inequality that are essential to capitalism. As Andrew Levine argues, "inequality of income and wealth is almost certain to promote inequality of political power. Then the better-off are likely to acquire considerable and inordinate power over the less well-off." Both rich and poor, he argues, have only one vote, but the rich have wealth, which allows them to buy access to means of shaping, influencing, and changing opinion. They are able to change or "define the terms of debate." This basically means the domination of politics by the few. This results in exclusion and the restriction of democratic rights of those who lack the wealth necessary to buy political influence. Their choice is limited. There is no denying that, when one's choice is limited, one is not free.⁵

Some defenders of the capitalist status quo, basing themselves on pluralist democratic theory, argue that inequality in political power is compensated for by the creation of interest groups. These groups supposedly offset the political influence exerted by the rich by virtue of their wealth. But the pluralist model fails to see that the poor do not have the resources pos-

1. Bertell Ollman, interview in *Chicago Tribune* (November 15, 1992).

2. Cited by Boris Kagarlitsky, *The Dialectic of Change* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 16.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

5. Andrew Levine, *Arguing for Socialism* (London: Verso, 1984), p. 132.

sessed by the rich — that is, time, money, and education. Politics belongs to the rich. There is a world of difference between those who participate in group politics and those who do not. In reality, the political world is irrelevant and meaningless to the poor. Hence, the poor are not likely to exercise any “comparable influence.”⁶ Moreover, the standard forms of “group politics” alluded to by “pluralist” theorists is conservative; it tends to preserve the status quo. Capitalist pluralism promotes elitism and oligarchism. This is incompatible with democratic ideals because it excludes mass participation in the decision-making process.

According to Levine, “Public questions constitute, as it were, the domain of collective choice. Now, the sorts of decisions capitalists make — about the use of the productive resources they own and about the allocation of the product derived from the employment of those resources — plainly affect the public and therefore fall within the public domain.” Nevertheless, under capitalism such questions are privatized; they are not the function of “democratic collective choice.” It follows that capitalism limits the scope of democratic choice. Indeed, under the capitalist system economic decision-making not only is privatized but also occurs mostly, if not always, behind closed doors. The reason for this secrecy is that public choice and private ownership are not congruent. Capitalism depoliticizes the economic domain, which is central to the realization of democratic ideals in civil society. Socialism, inspired by the radical-democratic theoretical insight of Marx, eliminates restrictions of this sort.⁷

Throughout most of the 20th century, however, capitalism and liberal democracy have coexisted, at least in certain countries. What has been responsible for this coexistence, and how has democracy been made safe for capitalism? Klaus Offe has emphasized two factors: (1) competitive party politics, and (2) the Keynesian welfare state.⁸

The organization of competitive party politics “contains, perverts, and obstructs class politics.” This kind of (relatively passive, spectator-oriented) mass mobilization results in deradicalization, for it transforms class politics into vote-getting competitions and coalition building. It accommodates antagonistic factions into the existing political structures, leading to the “erosion of collective identity,” dissolving this into a relatively amorphous electoral base held together by blurring conflicting interests. Hence, “the party system,” in C.B. MacPherson’s words, “has been the means of reconciling

universal equal franchise with the maintenance of an unequal society.” Competitive party politics thus mitigates class conflict, lending support to a false social “compatibility.”⁹

The Keynesian welfare state is the second key variable that supports and maintains democratic capitalism. Many scholars argue that it helped to expand the basis of economic growth, thus altering class conflict into the logic of profitability, productive development, and class compromise. It deradicalized working-class ideology. According to Offe, the Keynesian welfare state “contributes to the democratic-capitalist congruence by establishing the basis for a viable compact or ‘accord’ between workers and capitalists premised on demand maintenance, economic growth, and select programs of redistribution of the ‘tax dividend’ of economic expansion.”¹⁰

Offe argues that these two mediating principles are in crisis. The Keynesian welfare state has, in large measure, been dislodged by the neoliberal/neoconservative policies of such enthusiasts of *laissez-faire* capitalism as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. And popular disillusionment with the effects of bourgeois competitive party politics has resulted in a drastic decline in voter participation — as well as a decline in the authority, among a growing sector of the population, of governments and political parties. The logical conclusion is that capitalism, due to its internal contradictions, is incompatible with democracy, because the introduction of reforms to contain the effects of the rigidified and class nature of the system in the end have been unable to resolve the system’s built-in contradictions. This is basically Marx’s thesis.

For Marx, reforms — even though they may weaken or conceal political consciousness — are good. They introduce elements of socialism into the prevailing political structure. Without socialism (i.e., the social ownership and democratic control of the economy) as a crucial mediating factor between political power and economic power, the contradictions of capitalism cannot be solved nor a higher democratic order realized.

The Future of Marxism

Since Marxism is a systematic study of capitalism’s inherent contradictions, the more capitalism expands, the more Marxism emerges in response. Given the fact that global capitalism is in trouble, Marx’s class analysis may have more applicability than ever before. According to Eric Hobsbawm, “Today twenty-six coun-

tries, with just fifteen percent of the world’s population, enjoy a mean GNP [Gross National Product] per capita of over \$18,000. This is about five times the mean GNP of the world and 55 times the GNP of the 3,000 million — rather more than half of humanity — who now live on a GNP per capita of about \$330.”¹¹ This, along with the existing gap between the haves and the have-nots within the rich capitalist countries, cannot be explained by any other theoretical framework except the Marxian theory of class politics.

Theda Skocpol has put it well: “The Marxist conception of class relations as rooted in the control of productive property and the appropriation of economic surplus from direct producers by non-producers is, in my view, an indispensable theoretical tool for identifying one sort of basic contradiction in society.”¹² One can argue that Marxist class analysis must be supplemented with cultural values, and that its vision of the centrality of class must not be allowed to degenerate into a simplistic class reductionism, but class theory remains a critical intellectual tool of explanation, with both comparative and analytical value.

It is true that the West has won the Cold War. But this “win” thesis is one thing, and the Right’s claim that liberal democracy represents the end of history is another.¹³ Capitalist democracy is still bound by the same contradictions analyzed and criticized by Marx. On the one hand, the capitalist system demands the existence of a relatively small class that owns and controls the means of production and major sociopolitical and economic decision making. This class plays a great role in politics and society both nationally and internationally. On the other hand, there is democracy, which requires “equality of condition.” Equality of condition is repudiated by the nature of capitalism and denied or limited by the dominant class. As long as the class at the top of the social pyramid appropriates the values produced by the many, as long as the state and corporate powers are linked to control the many, the realization of democratic ideals will remain unfulfilled. More important, socialism without democracy and democracy without socialism will be nothing but a perverted form.

Ralph Miliband has cogently illustrated Marx’s view that when defenders of the status quo find that even limited capitalist democracy threatens their interests, they move to abolish it: “Recall the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran in 1953 or Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, of João Goulart in Brazil in 1964, of

6. *Ibid.*, p. 133. Also on points made here, see Thomas R. Dye and Herman Ziegler, *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1993).

7. Levine, pp. 180–181.

8. Klaus Offe, “Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State: Factors of Stability and Disorganization,” in *The Political Economy: Readings in the Politics and Economics of American Public Policy*, ed. by Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rodgers (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1984).

9. Offe, p. 355; C.B. MacPherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 69.

10. Offe, p. 349.

11. Eric Hobsbawm, “The Crisis of Today’s Ideologies,” *New Left Review*, May-June 1992, pp. 55–65.

12. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 13.

13. John Ikenberry, “Who Won the Cold War,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 87 (Summer 1992), pp. 123–138.

Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic in 1965, of George Papandreou in Greece in 1967, of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, and so on — all of them constitutional reformers.”¹⁴

Miliband has stressed that “as long as capitalism...endures, so will the socialist alternative remain alive; indeed, it will gain more and more ground as capitalism shows itself to be incapable of solving the major problems confronting humankind.”¹⁵ For a socialist democracy to be realized, Marxism must continue to develop. It must more deeply comprehend the culture of the

oppressed as well as the bourgeois institutions that block the creation of political awareness. It must give attention to ways through which a mass-based movement for socialism — a bloc of class-conscious, democratic forces — can arise that is capable of abolishing class rule and attaining socialist democracy.

The owners of the means of cultivation and production favor autocracy over democracy. Future struggles will be between those who, for the purpose of self-realization and profit maximization, advocate the status quo, and the sub-

ordinate social forces — the working class and all of the oppressed — who support change and more democracy. The solution to the political problems of the world lies in more democracy. In this context, it is fallacious to think that Marxism could be obsolete. Because it is radically committed to the cause of democratic change (as a method and as a goal), Marxism continues to be profoundly relevant for our time. □

Teamster President Carey's Foes Organize

Continued from page 8

held power in the regional conferences, plus their apologists. The leaders are R.V. Durham, James Hoffa, Jr., Joe Hogan, Larry Brennan, and Chuck Mack.

Apart from the same old faces and the same old policies, what's striking is the intent to finance their political ambitions in the same way that they paid for their golf fees, fine dining, first-class airfares, and the like — from the members' dues.

Several joint councils (subregional groupings of local unions) have voted to fund the new caucus. In San Francisco, Joint Council 7 voted to make a monthly payment of \$1,000, plus pick up the caucus expenses of Joint Council 7's president, Chuck Mack (who is also the principal officer of Oakland's key Teamster local union). Mack hopes to get another \$6,000 each month in direct contributions from Bay Area locals.

Mack's record includes opposing majority rule on contracts, opposing direct election of all convention delegates, and refusing to allow his members to strike UPS. Mack never protested the mob connections of former general presidents Roy Williams and Jackie Presser and never refused their political appointments, nor the multiple salaries and lavish pensions the posts provided.

Mack's public relations flack outlined the caucus's aims and purposes, in essence the old guard's strategic plan, in a statement of May 9, 1994: “The plan proposed the creation of a national caucus to begin more aggressive membership contact and allow key Joint Council leaders and those from large Local Unions to play active roles. The caucus can become a ‘shadow government’ with a Washington office should the Conferences be abolished. It creates organizational tools that can be used by allied

campaign groups to support vulnerable officials in the Fall 1994 elections, and go on to elect delegates in 1995 and fight the election of 1996.”

First Gathering of “Real Teamsters”

No more than 200 Teamster officials attended the first major meeting of the new caucus. Held in Chicago, a major Teamster hub, the mostly over-60 crowd was gathered ostensibly to attend educational seminars, but the real action was in the corridors, where rivals for the top spot in the 1996 elections, R.V. Durham and James Hoffa, Jr., and contenders for the lesser GEB positions, lobbied and jostled for support.

The old guard's base is primarily among full-time principal officers and business agents, whose lackluster support and campaigning in 1991 didn't match TDU's hustle and rank-and-file connections. If the old guard leaders don't submerge their opportunistic differences and field a single slate, lower-level officials are again likely not to campaign hard, increasing the odds that the old guard could lose again in 1996.

The old guard's main issue is the financial crisis of the union. They still talk of forcing Carey into calling a special convention to get their support for a dues increase. But everyone has figured out that this is a Trojan Horse proposal that Carey can't agree to. Instead Carey has proposed a \$2 dues assessment solely to rebuild the strike fund. Two hundred of the 600 local union principal officers have endorsed Carey's plan. Since many of them opposed Carey's election and his policies to date, their support for his latest dues proposal signifies new weakness for the old guard leadership, not a basic rapprochement between the lower-level officers and Carey.

Need to Mobilize the Ranks

The mood of the ranks, and their interest in union affairs, is no different from that of the members of other unions. So it's no surprise that the ordinary Teamster is at best a passive observer of the old guard struggle to regain power. Most developments are learned about by word of mouth. Polemical faxes and flyers are numerous and are found in worksite lunchrooms and on bulletin boards, but they reach only a small fraction of the 1.4 million members. Interest in local union politics runs a distant second to interest in contract negotiations. Typically, only 25-30 percent of the members vote in local union elections, which are typically dominated in the extreme by the “all politics are local politics” rule, lobbying and horse trading for elected and appointed posts.

Carey could bring about a sea change in members' participation if he used his high standing and credibility to directly challenge the membership to transform the union, so as to reverse the decline of the union's strength relative to that of the corporations, to shift the relationship of forces back toward one favoring the union. For example, if Carey spearheaded a union-wide rank-and-file organizing committee, he could build on the members' latent interest in rank-and-file activism, much as TDU has, but with even greater effect. Carey would not only beef up the organizing results but would at the same time stimulate a larger and broader democratic resurgence in the union than even his election did. Such a development would be a formidable barrier to the return to power of the union's former misleaders. □

September 29, 1994

14. Ralph Miliband, “Fukuyama and the Socialist Alternative,” *New Left Review*, No. 193, May/June 1992, p. 111.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

The Internal Functioning of a Revolutionary Party

by Morris Lewitt

What follows are excerpts from a speech given by Morris Lewitt — using his party name of Morris Stein — at the November 16–19, 1944 National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party. Lewitt, who had been a youthful participant in the Russian Revolution, as an immigrant working-class intellectual was also an early and prominent activist in the Communist Party and one of the founders of American Trotskyism. During the Second World War, when the central SWP leadership was imprisoned under the Smith Act, Lewitt took over from James P. Cannon as the organization's National Secretary. Under Lewitt's leadership, the SWP made important strides in trade union work, anti-racist work, circulation of its press, and membership growth. At the same time, a minority in the organization — led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow, with an especially strong following in Chicago — challenged important aspects of the party's orientation and also called for a rapprochement with the split-off from the SWP led by Max Shachtman. Lewitt reported on "The Internal Party Situation" (printed in SWP Internal Bulletin Vol. VI, No. 13, December 1944), from which the following excerpts are taken, offering important insights into the nature of a revolutionary party, the Leninist perspective on such an organization's internal functioning, and how this relates to political disputes and factional conflicts.

Now before I go on to deal with the main issues, let me say a word to the newer comrades in the movement, those who are attending one of our conventions for the first time. Ours is the most democratic party in the world. You can see that by the pre-convention discussion. You can see it by the amount of time we give a minority so insignificant in size — the amount of patience we exercise in listening to their point of view. This is how it should be. We all speak freely what is on our minds, and that is how it should be. But to new people in the movement this sometimes looks like a squabble, a family quarrel, and they don't take to it very well. Something like it happens to medical students witnessing their first vivisection — some of them faint at the sight of the body's internal organs. They are taken aback. Medical students must learn, however, to overcome their first feelings of revulsion to vivisection if they are to become surgeons. If you want to be a revolutionist you must, in addition to all other requirements, also learn to examine the internal functioning of the party, its methods of operation. You must be able to examine all and learn from it all.

Organizational Methods are the Instruments of Program

Organizational methods and practices of the movement have no independent existence. They flow from our program. We do not build the party just to have something to play with. We build it as an instrument for the application of our program. We don't do one thing or another because we get an idea out of thin air to do that kind of thing. What we do or do not do flows from a line, a system of ideas we have on the kind of party we want and need. In short, the whole party organization, its methods and functioning, are subordinate to the program and flow from the program that calls for the overthrow of the mightiest capitalist system and the building of a socialist society.

Our party structure rests on the foundation of democratic centralism. We need democracy in the party, controlling the life of the organization, and we need centralism because it gives us the best medium for an effective fight against a

rotten but ruthless system. You can fight this ruthless system only through a party trained to fight ruthlessly. You can fight the centralized power of monopoly capitalism only by a centralized party.

Ours is not the only party built to fit its program. The same applies to all parties, including the capitalist parties. They too are molded by their program. It is their program to maintain themselves in power, by deception, bribery and force, and this is exactly how they function. The members of the capitalist parties have no control over the central bodies of their organizations. Wall Street controls them. Similarly, the Stalinist party. It is built for a purpose: to serve the Master in the Kremlin regardless of program and principles. They must be ready for sharp turns at a signal from the top. Democracy would stand in their way, and so they swept democracy out of their organization.

We need both democracy and centralism. We need democracy not merely to give expression to the membership, not merely to give the membership a chance to govern the policies of the party, and to select the leadership. We need democracy also for the development of the membership. At the next stage our comrades will be called upon to lead masses and to make decisions in important matters. They must learn to stand on their own feet. The democratic process of the party presents an important medium for the development of leadership qualifications.

The Relationship between Democracy and Centralism

How do we adjust democracy to centralism and, conversely, centralism to democracy? This is one of the most delicate problems. It can be resolved only on the basis of experience. Legitimate differences are often possible on this question. For example, some comrades have felt that we over-extended democracy in the pre-convention discussion, that we published too many internal bulletins, that the minority in the party received too much consideration. Out of 395 pages of mimeographed material we turned out, 219 were critical in character, devoted to opposition arguments. The argument might be made

that a small minority is given too much of a hearing in our party.... This is one argument.

Another argument is on the other side. Why didn't we get out the Morrow document when Morrow presented it some ten months ago, when the comrades went to jail? "You are violating democracy in the organization" — that is what we have heard. "You want a monolithic party" — that is what we have heard. "You are stifling discussion in the organization" — that is what we have heard. "You are introducing germs of Stalinism" — that is what we heard. Why? Because we didn't get out the Morrow document. You know why we didn't get out the Morrow document... I know in Chicago when I presented the reasons, the comrades who have been most vociferous against us had to admit, "Well, you have a case." In fact we had so much of a case that Morrow himself withdrew his request to publish his document. He presented it to the National Committee members only.

In adjusting democracy and centralism, we proceed by and large from the conception that in pre-convention discussion democracy is the watchword. This is why we placed no restrictions or limits on the discussion. When in a period of action, the emphasis by and large is on centralism. When the party functions freely under normal conditions, we have more democracy of course.... We are functioning under conditions of war-time reaction and persecution. Such conditions of necessity impose restrictions on unlimited expression in the organization. Summarizing the conduct of our movement over a period of sixteen years, the conclusion is unmistakable that our party didn't suffer from too much centralism, but from the abuse of democracy. This was the balance sheet at the time Comrade Trotsky had a word to say on it during the struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition [i.e., the faction led by Max Shachtman]. He told them very plainly: "You do not see that our American section is not sick from too much centralism — it is laughable even to talk about it — but from a monstrous abuse and distortion of democracy on the part of the petty-bourgeois elements." This was the balance sheet of our movement in 1940 and

remains the balance sheet of our movement by and large today.

Now whenever we discuss, we discuss for a purpose — and not for the self-expression as some comrades sometimes think. Some comrades have the notion that whenever an idea pops into their heads they must immediately spill it before the party and demand a party discussion on it. No. We discuss for a purpose: for the purpose of arriving at decisions. For this reason we organize our discussions so that we *can* arrive at a decision. Once the decision is reached, discussion of the same question is out of order. Should anyone desire to reopen the discussion, such request must be placed before the National Committee for decision.

So this is, by and large, the method by which we proceed. We discuss to decide, and we decide to act....

We are Monopolists in the Field of Politics

We are monopolists in politics and we operate like monopolists. Either through merger or irreconcilable struggle. We have proved this by the whole history of our movement. When we saw a formation on the working-class scene that looked as if it would compete with us, that looked as if it were going to peddle wares similar to ours, what did we do? We said, "Listen, either you unite with us or we'll put you out of business." This was the case with the American Workers Party [led by A.J. Muste]. We did the same thing with the left-wing of the Socialist Party. We made the bold move of entering the Socialist Party in order to merge with the left-wing inside this party. We can't stand competition. We can't tolerate other parties in the same field with us.

How do we decide our attitude toward opponent parties, whether we take the line of merger or the line of irreconcilable struggle? Well, as Marxists we apply the method of dialectics in this question as in everything else. First of all

we try to establish the program of the organizations, to see where they stand at the moment. Then we try to find out their origin, where they come from. Then we establish the direction in which they are travelling. In the case of the Muste group, the AWP, the program was, to be sure, centrist [i.e., wavering between revolutionary and reformist positions]. Thus we established: Here is an organization with a centrist program. What was their origin? They were trade union militants, by and large, and leaders in the unemployed struggle. What was their direction? They were moving toward the left. That is just what we wanted.

At the same time that the Muste group was in the field, there was another group, the Lovestoneites [known as the Communist Party Opposition, led by Jay Lovestone — who later became a Cold War anti-Communist]. They had a more revolutionary program than Muste at the moment. What was the origin of the Lovestone group? That is the next question we asked ourselves. They came out of the Communist movement. And the direction in which they were travelling was to the right. Therefore this was the group we were going to fight irreconcilably. The Muste group, on the other hand, is the one we sought to merge with. Similarly with the Socialist Party. Here too we were confronted with a centrist group moving to the left. That is why we were interested in them. They were moving from the right to the left, in our direction, while the Lovestone group was moving from the left to the right, away from us....

Leadership Requires Responsibilities

I spoke earlier of the problem of leadership and the need of developing in our comrades the capacity to lead masses. This involves first and foremost a sense of responsibility. No worker is ever going to follow anyone who behaves like a screwball, who shoots wild. Workers can sense it. They will listen to you and follow you if you have that necessary balance, that neces-

sary capacity to act responsibly. That is what we demand of the Chicago comrades, a responsible attitude, not a campaign of slander.

What is a slander? If you say there is a bureaucracy in the party and you have no basis for your charge and you can't prove your point, then it is nothing but a slander. If you say there are germs of Stalinism in our party when it is false, that, too, becomes a slander.

To lead the successful revolution we need a program — and this we should repeat tirelessly — we need a revolutionary program. We need a revolutionary policy. But we also need a revolutionary party that is firm, strong, that knows how to act unitedly. We need a leadership that has the respect and the support of the organization. If you feel the leadership does not deserve your confidence, throw it out and get another leadership. But you can't get along without a leadership. This is why those who denigrate the leadership actually undermine the party. Especially when the leadership has consistently proved over a period of many years that they have stood up, that they have met whatever tests the situation presented....

Now, comrades, Comrade Cannon once said very pointedly, democracy has three parts to it. One third of it is the right to criticize. We never deprived anyone of this right. Our party provided the platform and the internal bulletins for criticism. The second part is the right to answer criticism. And that is what we are here for. And I believe we have answered the various criticisms. There is yet a third part, and that is the right of the membership to pass judgment on the criticism and the answers, and that is what you are here for, comrades, in convention, to pass judgment on the critics and those who are criticized, to pass judgment on the content of the criticism and the content of our reply. And it is your decision that we are concerned with. It is your decision that will decide the course of the party. □

Ben Chavis, the NAACP, and African American Leadership

Continued from page 15

we practice and what we preach." Rojas confirmed a *New York Times* article which quoted a charge by Board members that Chavis had lobbied Congressional Black Caucus members to vote for the North American Free Trade Agreement — even after the NAACP Board had taken a position against it at the Indianapolis convention of 1993. Said Rojas, "Yes it's true, and he should not have done it. We had sharp debates on the issue among us four. I was very opposed to endorsing NAFTA. But Chavis went ahead and, behind the Board resolution, lobbied for it... What we practice and what we preach must be in sync at all times. Never practice individualism while preaching collective leadership."

Concluded Rojas: "It was really quite tragic what happened. The progressive movement, for a brief moment in historical time, had a chance to lead and transform the nation's oldest civil rights organization into a dynamic and effective

force for social change in this country. Unfortunately, we lost that opportunity. Such a chance may not revisit us for a long time."

For an Independent Black Political Party

Ben Chavis stumbled, but his successful drive to recruit masses of young people makes it clear his team and supporters were objectively building a mass base for transforming the largest Black political organization in the country. And the National African American Leadership summits with their program of self-funding are the very initial steps toward building a national self-organized base.

Every struggle for self-organization by African Americans (and other oppressed peoples) should be supported unconditionally. But the question must be asked: Can Black corporations and the Black middle class really finance the needs of the African American community? A

consistent self-determined effort to solve the crisis confronting Black America will inevitably lead to using our nationally coordinated organizations to rebuild a mass Black movement; one that can, in the words of Frederick Douglass, "keep their grievances before the people and make every organized protest against the wrong inflicted upon them." A mass movement would in turn provide the base for a Black political party that can fight for the power to appropriate the resources African Americans require.

The African American Development Fund needs to collect money to build the mass movement and the political party necessary to fight for the *real* money — that's in Washington. It will take a leadership with the unbending integrity of Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X to demand, and win the ultimate fight to take back, the stolen wealth created by 400 years of Black labor. □

A Sailor-Eyewitness to the Bay of Pigs

Continued from page 17

Q.: How did you know that?

A.: Because I know how to read a chart and tell what the position is, and my job was up on the bridge and I could see where we were, and we were beyond the base. Everybody figured they'd come back and report some figures or other information, that they were going out onto Cuban territory, because Cubans were coming onto the base and they were probably getting information. Well, they went and dropped them off and we never saw them again.

Q.: Six Marines on a rubber raft?

A.: Yeah, with all kinds of radio gear. I think now they were probably part of that Bay of Pigs operation, and they probably went down there. They were highly mobile. Maybe they got picked up by somebody on the beach.

Q.: Let's go back to Key West then. You left Key West and got the announcement from the captain that you were going to be in a conflict and you were approaching the coast of Cuba, somewhere.

A.: We went out that night. In the morning we joined up with this task group, led by a carrier. And there were subs out there, because we got messages from them at night, on the radio. We knew they were there. Nuclear submarines. We knew that because nuclear submarines always have something special when they send a radio or visual message out, so you know they're nukes.

So we went with this task group to a location off of Cuba.

Q.: And you looked at the charts again and determined that you were off the coast of Cuba?

A.: Yeah, then when we separated from the task group, we went up into the Bay of Pigs. Our ship, alone. We were not that far from the task group. They were still in international waters, but they were in proximity, where they could have supported this assault.

Q.: But your ship went into Cuban territorial waters.

A.: Yeah, we went into Cuban territorial waters. There's no doubt in my mind about that, because I could see the beach. So anyhow this Cuban transport ship was there, and that was what the brigade was on.

Q.: This was a ship that had no official U.S. navy insignia on it, it was made to look like a civilian ship?

A.: It was a civilian ship, but it was part of this naval armada.

Q.: How close did your ship get in to the shore?

A.: Oh, I'd say we were a good two miles, to a mile and a half, to a half mile from shore, in and out.

Q.: In and out? As close as a half a mile?

A.: Yeah, when they went onto the beach we were that close.

Q.: What was your function in relation to this landing?

A.: I assumed that we were in support of them, that we were in close for artillery support, because we had 5 inch 38's, we had six of them on there. Plus we had radar control fire. That's when I thought maybe those beach jumpers were there up in the hills, because they could give you fire control.

Q.: By radio?

A.: And observing. But we were close enough where it was at point blank range with those guns

Q.: Were they armed and ready to be used?

A.: Oh yeah. We had six five-inch 38's and we had five 3-inch cannon on each side. We had dual mounts and there'd be like 7 or 8 guys in the turret, not counting the guys down in the ready room and down in the ammunition room. Yeah, they were armed and they were trained too. Never fired a shot, though.

Q.: So this was like an amphibious assault exercise?

A.: Yeah.

Q.: And then the Cuban brigade went in from the transport ship?

A.: They had micros, and other kinds of boats.

Q.: How many individuals?

A.: Four or five hundred of them, that hit the beach. With their equipment. Then they went across the beach, where there were these scrubby hills. They went onto the beach and they started going up the hills. Some of them got up there, but some of them stopped to make a radio transmission. And then up on top of the hill there were forces with tanks, and they started shooting down on the beach with their cannon.

Q.: The Cuban army presumably?

A.: As far as anyone knows it was the Cubans. Who else would it be? Anyway you could see artillery hitting the beach. Gray clouds would go up. And the Cubans were running all over the place trying to get up into the hills. Their equipment was all on the beach and got shot up. And that transport ship they had out there got hit with an artillery round. There was a big black puff of smoke. A lot of their equipment was on there. I knew it was on there because I was up on the bridge and I heard the officers talking. And the captain said, They won't be able to get their heavy equipment off. See, I could eavesdrop on all this, because that was my station, up there in officers' country, in the pilot house where the captain was, and that's where all radio communications came in over a loudspeaker, unless you didn't want them to, but there was

combat going on and messages were coming in, oral messages, and written messages. And he was talking to his officers and saying they wouldn't be able to get their heavy equipment off that ship now, whatever their heavy equipment was. They had been ferrying back and forth, picking up stuff, because they didn't have that many boats.

So then I thought, Well, they're getting the shit shot out of 'em, so now the task force will come in and support them. And they didn't. We made two or three passes up and down the beach. One time was real close. That's when I saw them, some of them were laying on the beach, and I saw one artillery round come down, and I don't know, maybe it's my imagination, but I swear I saw a couple of people flying through the air. Then a couple of their micro boats got shot up, with shrapnel, close hits. And it was pretty heavy. It wasn't as dramatic as you see in the movies, because we were pretty far away from it. But I saw some of them were running in the water, aiming to swim back to their boat maybe. But most of them went up into the hills and you couldn't see them anymore. But you could hear a lot of shooting. You could hear a lot of small arms fire, and you could hear big guns, 50-caliber machine guns, and they must have had mortars too going out there. When we made the last pass that's when I saw all that stuff, and then we left.

Q.: You went back to Guantánamo?

A.: Yeah, but first we went back out into open water. And the task group wasn't there anymore. By the chart we were back to that position, and they weren't there anymore. So we joined up with the rest of our squadron and we went in a column into the base. And on the way in we had an aerial sweep made over us by the Cuban air force.

Q.: But there was no shooting?

A.: No shooting. I thought there was going to be, though. Scared the shit out of me. One guy sat up there and took a picture of them.

Q.: And the Cuban pilot waved at him?

A.: Yeah, he came in about 75 feet high.

Q.: When you got back to Guantánamo, did they give you any explanation of what this was all about?

A.: Not really. They still had this "condition of readiness." When we went in there, there was nobody there. The whole base was damn near empty. Usually there's a lot of Marine Corps troops and sailors all over the place, but they were all gone. We were told they were up at "the wire." So that's about it.

Of course later the unit found out this brigade had surrendered, been captured. They had pictures of them being taken prisoner.

Q.: Did the media report that the U.S. navy had been there in support?

A.: No.

Q.: Did anyone tell you that you weren't supposed to talk about that?

A.: They never said you weren't supposed to, there just wasn't any talk about it. You were just never there. It never happened.

Q.: When did you find out that you weren't there?

A.: During the Cuban missile crisis they were giving medals out to people.

Q.: That was a year and a half later. The Bay of Pigs invasion was in April 1961 and the missile crisis, October 1962.

A.: Yeah, they were giving out medals for the Cuban missile crisis, if you were there.

Q.: Were you there?

A.: No, I was in Norfolk. We stayed in Guantánamo only a week or less after this happened. And then we went back to Norfolk. So a year later they were giving out medals for service in the Cuban missile crisis on the ship one day. So a couple of days later I went up to the executive officer and I asked him for my medal. "Were you there in the missile crisis?" he asks. I say, "No, I was there at the Bay of Pigs." "There was no Bay of Pigs," he says. "You were never there."

You know, I kind of remember what they said to us. You have to understand that when we got back in there to Guantánamo all we were looking for was a beer. We didn't think about that stuff much.

Q.: But you started thinking about it afterward? It stimulated some thinking on your part?

A.: Well, first, I thought it was a hell of a thing to do to those people out there, to promise to support them and then leave them there. I thought that was a bunch of bullshit. And then I thought, Why try something like this if you didn't think you could do it? Obviously they couldn't do it. I mean, when we went in there I thought, If that's what they're going to do it with, they're not going to make it. They had too few people. They said that some uprising would support them. But I always thought that Castro would come in there and smash them.

I started wondering what sense did it all make? It's just working people on both sides. What's going to come out of it? What's the purpose?

Q.: Then you started telling other people what you thought?

A.: Yeah, the chief petty officer and people like that. [Laughs.]

Then they started isolating me once in a while. They couldn't so much on the ship because the guys there knew me. So they transferred me.

Q.: Because you were talking about the Bay of Pigs?

A.: Well, I didn't know it at the time. Really it didn't start until later, when the Vietnam war was going on. I started shooting my mouth off.

Q.: What would you say?

A.: We gotta get out of Vietnam. Because we haven't got any business there.

Q.: When was this, around 1964?

A.: Yeah, I didn't do it all the time. They'd engage me in conversation and I'd tell them what I thought.

Q.: Was that affected by what you saw in Cuba?

A.: Absolutely.

Q.: And that's when the real repercussions started with the brass?

A.: Well, I was in San Diego during the Vietnam war, and I got transferred to an attack transport ship that was going to take troops to Vietnam. I didn't want to do that.

Q.: Why not?

A.: Well, I didn't want to go to Vietnam. And I didn't want to take cannon fodder over to Vietnam. And I told them that. I told the officers that. I told them I didn't want to go. So they said, Why don't you transfer out of here? So I said, I will, and I transferred to Seattle, Washington. I got transferred to a reserve ship, as a petty officer. I got put in charge of ten guys and a school bus. Clean the school bus every morning, that's what I did. That's all I did too.

Q.: Is that when you decided you didn't have a future in the navy?

A.: Yeah, I got out of the regulars and went into the reserves. Then I came back here, still in the reserves. So once a month I'd go to reserve meetings, but when I shot my mouth off down there, I got sent off somewhere else for communications classes. I was told that this was a mechanical division, and I was the only communications guy in there, and since I didn't fit in, I had to go attend my reserve meetings at the base. But they didn't have any people of my rating there either, so I went and sat in an empty room.

Q.: Looking back on it, do you think they were isolating you?

A.: Yeah, they didn't let me talk to anybody. Even though I wasn't that radical, I didn't think.

Q.: What did you think about the antiwar movement?

A.: I had mixed feelings. The guys that were over there getting shot up? I didn't want to be against them. I didn't want them to be there. But I felt I couldn't go against them. You know, coming from a military background and all that. And all my peers were for the war. Everybody I worked with and stuff—they were for the war.

Q.: You didn't have any connection with the antiwar movement?

A.: Not really.

Q.: But your local president sponsored an antiwar resolution?

A.: Yeah, at the Central Labor Council. I read about it in a journal.

Q.: A resolution presented at the Labor Council, and it passed?

A.: Yeah, and one on national health care.

Q.: Did anyone talk about this at work, about what the union president did?

A.: No. There wasn't that much interest.

You know, when I was in Cuba I didn't think the Cubans wanted to fight us, and I didn't think our boys there wanted to fight the Cubans. I sure couldn't see any reason for doing it. Because they were just like me.

Q.: Even though they were Black and you weren't?

A.: They were just people.

Q.: You also went to Haiti?

A.: Yeah, with the Navy Seals, the demolition guys. They were ensconced in the best hotel there. And I was up there drinking with them one time, and I asked them what the hell were they doing there. They were out there blasting the harbor to make the harbor bigger, so the tourist ships could come in. And they were in the Navy. I asked them what kind of bullshit was that. You're working for some tourist company, blowing up obstructions, who's paying for this? The Navy was paying for it. See, that's what would happen. I'd get into these discussions, then people would start looking at me funny.

Q.: So what do you think they're doing in Haiti now?

A.: Maybe they're finishing that demolition project. What a laugh. Maybe they're blasting the harbor so they can bring carriers in.

Q.: What do you think Clinton's objective in Haiti is?

A.: Well, there's always been a big interest there. I think they're there to protect U.S. corporate interests. To install a puppet government, and it's not Aristide.

Q.: Your union endorsed Clinton for president?

A.: Not unanimously though.

Q.: Tell us about your experience as a delegate to your union's international convention?

A.: Well, it was in Honolulu. The union wanted to endorse Clinton for the office of president, and they wanted to take a vote. We had electronic voting devices at our little tables, but they weren't working, so they wanted to take a voice vote. One of the delegates stood up and said, Why don't we make it a standing count, so we all know it's unanimous.

I'm sitting there thinking, This guy doesn't deserve a unanimous labor endorsement. He's never done anything for labor. He has to earn it. Why should we give him a unanimous vote? And I thought to myself, There'll be fifty to a hundred people here who won't vote for him. So I talked to my brother that's sitting next to me, and I said, Let's abstain from this, so it won't be unanimous and we won't have to be a

part of this. We were sitting there, and they took the yes vote, and everybody stood up, I guess. And the union president says, Well, it looks like it's — oh, I see some brothers sitting down. Then he called for the no vote. And I thought, Aw, f— it, I'm going to vote no. And I nudged my brother gently, and I stood up and said no. And there was this big TV screen there, and I looked up and I saw myself standing alone. And actually I thought to myself, I'm not so much of a Crusader Rabbit now. I'm kind of a Chunky Chicken Soup. I hope I get out of this hall alive. I was scared to death.

Q: It was about 500 to 1?

A: Yeah, and the president said something like, Well, we're ninety-nine and forty-four hundredths percent pure. But I didn't get any flak from the delegates there. A couple of them asked me why I voted no, and I told them. I was surprised there was no flak, because I thought I'd really get ridiculed.

Q: Did you tell them you thought we ought to have a labor party?

A: There was a guy from Cleveland who stood up at the convention and talked about it. He didn't make a motion; it was just a point of information. I had the courage of my convictions, but when I saw myself all alone on that TV screen it was evaporating fast. Looking back at it now, though, I'm glad I did it.

Q: Do you think if there was a real functioning labor party, U.S. policy on Cuba and Haiti might be different?

A: Absolutely.

Q: What would it be like?

A: I would say this: If we had a labor party that was in control and they sent troops in to Haiti, I think they'd be sending troops in there for working people, not for the corporate pigs that own the place now. I've been to Haiti and I saw first-hand how these people live. And they're good people. You can see it in their faces. I've been to some cruel places. Maybe other people have seen worse. In Vietnam or something. But that's the worst poverty and mistreatment of human beings that I've ever seen. It was absolutely vicious. And that always stuck in my mind.

If we had a labor party, I'd support them going in and overthrowing a vicious dictatorship like that, if they went in there to help working people.

Q: That would be a different kind of army.

A: It certainly would. It's like Somalia. We wouldn't wait till they were all starving to death.

Q: Do you think this is like when the Marines went into Haiti in 1915, and stayed there for 19 years?

A: Absolutely, they're there to protect U.S. Fruit, or whatever company it is.

Q: You don't think they're there to create democracy?

A: Absolutely not. I think they're there to create Pax Americana. It's just like the Bay of Pigs.

Q: Do you think that experience made you a better union person?

A: I think so. When I came back and got back into the working thing again, I was a union person from the get-go, as soon as I hit the ground. I went to all the union meetings, never missed one. I liked going to the union meetings because of the camaraderie. I wasn't so much of an activist, but if there was a strike or something, I'd always go there. So I think that Bay of Pigs experience, it just started something. It started me thinking that working people everywhere are all the same. There's no difference. Some have it worse and some have it better than others, but we're all the same. We all live from paycheck to paycheck.

Q: So you think we've got more in common with working people in Haiti than with U.S. businessmen?

A: Absolutely. I think if you want to look at the word "exploitation," go there once and you'll really see what it means.

If you think you're being exploited here, it's nothing to what they get. It's absolute arrogance there.

After the Bay of Pigs, when I thought of those Cubans going in to work there at Guantánamo, I guess you'd say it started the fires burning, the spirit of solidarity with international workers. □

Support for Democrats Erodes — Prospects for Labor Party Brighten

Continued from page 11

- Delegates to the July 1994 convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, after a spirited one-hour debate, voted 65 percent in favor of a labor party and support for Labor Party Advocates (LPA). This rail union has 50,000 members and its action enhances the possibility of other rail unions taking a similar stand. Railway workers have no love for the Democratic Party after Democratic politicians, by near unanimous votes in 1991 and by unanimous vote in 1993, broke rail workers' strikes and forced the workers back to work on company terms.
- The California State AFL-CIO convention in August voted to refer a pro-labor party resolution to its newly elected executive board, with the understanding the resolution would be reworded but acted upon favorably.
- At a recent national conference of the million-strong Service Employees International Union, the Union's president, John Sweeney, told delegates that the labor movement must reconsider its relationship with the Democratic Party because, he said, "We're not getting anything out of

the Democrats." Sweeney's remarks were warmly received by the delegates.

- LPA reports a spurt in membership growth, with several new chapters established. Tony Mazzocchi is in great demand to speak at labor conventions and meetings in many parts of the country.
- A labor educational conference scheduled for Toledo, Ohio, December 10–11, 1994 is drawing broad support [see sidebar]. Sections of the labor movement not previously involved are relating to the conference, and one of its central themes is "Should A Labor Party Be Established Now in the U.S.?"
- According to official statistics, 115,000 people in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, terminated their registration as Democrats after the May 3 primary. This is just one county in one state!
- A spate of comments by Democratic and Republican Party pollsters acknowledge the break-up of the two-party system. For example, Robert Luntz, a Republican pollster, is quoted in the July 18 *Newsweek* as saying, "The current structures are shattering; 1996 may be the last election in which partisan affiliation counts for much. The only people left who express strong party

loyalty are over 55. Few under 32 have any allegiance at all."

Even prior to the events of the past year, LPA-conducted polls showed a majority of workers in a number of different unions favoring establishment of a labor party. This trend is growing as the number of stalwart defenders of the Democratic Party in the ranks of labor continues to dwindle.

LPA Convention

LPA has projected a convention for Denver in late 1995 to consider forming a labor party. This convention can become a magnet for trade unionists and activists in the workers' movement committed to a workers' party to assemble together and chart plans toward the realization of such an objective.

The Denver meeting can give impetus toward the creation of a mass workers' party. Accordingly, the convention should be built and made as broadly representative as possible.

The immediate need is to set the date for the convention. At the LPA Midwest Steering Committee meeting held in Chicago July 16, 1994, it was agreed that this would be done by the fall. □

September 21, 1994

Letters

Reaction to Randy Shilts's *And the Band Played On*

Thank you for Mike McCallister's article on Randy Shilts, which correctly praised the contribution his writings made to the U.S. struggles for gay freedom and justice.

Of course, his writings on AIDS exposed to millions of people the criminality of U.S. administrations, drug companies, and media. In addition, though, I would like to sound a note of criticism. *And the Band Played On* tends to portray the gay community and in particular people with HIV very negatively. The construction of "Patient Zero" is not simply tenuous, fanciful, and unfair, but vilifies people with HIV internationally. The book does not portray adequately the enormous mobilization against discrimination, for safe sex, and for care and support of people with HIV. Instead Shilts defends his own partisanship in reacting against sex, sex venues, and promiscuity.

For this book Shilts was also criticized for racism: he defines history as the work of a few courageous individuals, in this case, heroic white men battling a contagion out of "darkest" Africa, and disproportionately affecting people of color (who are inadequately represented in the story). There is a blame-the-victim spirit bubbling away in a book promoted as the standard history of the early HIV epidemic.

Ken Davis
Sydney, Australia

Tremendous Potential for Cultural Struggle

I've been following, with increasing interest, your debate on the nature and relevance of contemporary Leninism. I don't think I've caught all the articles yet...but I've definitely been stimulated by what I have read, and encourage you to continue. I just reread an old favorite, Mandel's talk on Vanguard Parties versus vanguard organizations, and how one makes the leap from one to the other. Perhaps this might be a good time to reprint that? Seems timely to me.

Paul Le Blanc's initial contribution was quite good, although I differed, as did many of your readers and supporters, on several points. One issue in particular is that I thought his treatment of the role of culture in the work of building the working class vanguard somewhat shallow.

My main political focus these days is on the building and institutionalization of counter-hegemonic cultural institutions — theater, publishing, dance, electronic media, etc., etc. — an area that I think has received all too little attention on the far left, an area of struggle that has proved central in everything from the Russian to the Nicaraguan revolution in the role that it's played in helping to give a concrete taste and feel

and smell to the real lives of real people under oppressive conditions, and in imagining alternatives.

The early building of the U.S. socialist movement was no exception. We seem to forget that literature — for example, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* or Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* — like the *Appeal to Reason*, recruited countless thousands to the socialist banner when the drier and more analytical discourse of scientific socialism failed in reaching into and touching the heart of their lives.

As Cannon put it in his excellent short piece on his father,

"In my opinion, the modern movement, with its more precise analysis and its necessary concentration on the struggle, would do well to infuse its propaganda with more of the old emphasis on the ultimate meaning of the struggle; speak out, as the old pioneers did, for human rights and human dignity, for freedom and equality and abundance for all. That is what we are really fighting for when we fight for socialism."

The potential of cultural struggle is tremendous; unfortunately, it is, with few exceptions, unrecognized, much less given any priority. (To be fair, I haven't had the time yet to read Paul's piece on culture in the April issue; perhaps when I do, I'll have something more to say or write.)

Dave Riehle's contributions, as one would expect, have been uniformly excellent. I found the piece on the *Appeal to Reason*, and the accompanying Cannon text, excellent. His article on the Hormel strike was masterful.

Here's a buck. Please send me a copy of the Mandel pamphlet *Two Essays on Leninism and Trotskyism*. Soon...I suspect that I'll be tempted into subscribing — once again. In the meantime, keep up the good work.

As ever,

Chris Faatz
Vancouver, Washington

Israel and the PLO

I think I agree for the most part with Michael Steven Smith's characterization of the Israeli-PLO accords as a small step forward, provided the Palestinian masses resist PLO repression as vigorously as they still do direct Israeli repression, although he seems overconfident in declaring that "there will be a Palestinian state," unless one regards a Bantustan as a state. Even some Fourth Internationalists in the region seem not to share his optimism, according to *International Viewpoint*. But he misrepresents Yassir Arafat's position in the Gulf War.

I distinctly remember Arafat's insistence that he did *not* support Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but at the same time opposed the

Western intervention against Iraq. So far as it went, this was identical to the revolutionary Marxist position.

Perhaps he changed his mind later, but if so, I never heard about it.

Eric Hamell
Philadelphia

A Response to Howard Brown on "The New Party"

In responding to my article on the March-April 1994 *BIDOM*, "Time for a New Party," Howard Brown constructed a straw man, and then very capably knocked it down.

Of course I did raise the possibility of a "new labor party" in Ontario and Canada.

In fact, this possibility is raised by objective political events — especially the decline and marginalization of the New Democratic Party due to the treacherous, anti-worker policies and actions of NDP provincial governments over the past four years across Canada, not to mention the party's disgraceful performance in support of the Canadian establishment's regressive constitutional reform package, the Charlottetown Accord, and now the NDP's Quebec-bashing, in anticipation of the Quebec independence referendum.

But let's be clear. I did *not* propose, as Brown fancifully suggests, "a political realignment of leftist and progressive forces' organizationally independent of the unions."

The evident lack of leadership from labor officialdom in challenging NDP treachery does not for a moment mean that union rank-and-file activists should *abandon* efforts to win their unions to *either* challenging NDP leaders from within, or replacing the NDP with a new labor party, based on an anticapitalist program.

Is Brown wedded to some kind of mechanical/formalistic dogma that *only* when all unions (or at least all NDP-affiliated unions — which is only a small minority of the total English Canadian labor movement) are ready to leave the party should socialists advocate a left break in favor of a new labor party?

Well, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure what Brown wants, because there's some indication his position is even worse than that!

Brown writes, "The key task before worker militants today is turning the unions away from dead-end maneuvers in capitalist politics toward the direct action strategy labor needs in confronting the capitalist offensive...first and foremost through broad-based strike action."

But strike action is not synonymous with *political* action.

Thus Brown seems to prefer a *syndicalist* perspective, spiced up with a little “revolutionary workers’ party” rhetoric, rather than the perspective of confronting and fighting the NDP misleaders “where they live.”

He attacks the notion of a break by unions from the NDP, but he fails to propose a fight by unions within the NDP, or otherwise, to forge a class struggle alternative.

In fact, Brown’s only alternative to the crisis of political leadership within the labor movement as a whole is... “the con-

struction of a revolutionary workers’ party,” plus “strikes.”

These ideas are not new. Some people have been advocating this type of timeless prescription for decades. But with what results? A proliferation of tiny propaganda groups exterior to the labor movement!

I think we can afford to be a little more creative, and a lot more *politically* activist, than that.

Right now it doesn’t look like a new labor party will emerge — mainly due to the extent of worker demoralization.

But far from being a “diversion,” the struggle for a socialist program, for a new leadership, yes, even for a new party, is one means to gather and develop the “socialist militants rooted in the unions” necessary to fashion the class struggle alternative that our circumstances so desperately demand.

Barry Weisleder
Toronto

PRI “Wins” Mexican Elections

Continued from page 6

The hopes for extending the challenge posed by the Zapatista uprising currently hinge on the fate of the CND, an umbrella formation uniting a broad spectrum of pro-Zapatista identified social activists. It now faces several key challenges.

Though geographically and politically broad-based, the CND lacks the type of social weight and political cohesion needed to sustain a large-scale campaign of mobilizations. At the convention held in early August in the Lacandón rain forest, only 5 percent of delegates came from labor unions, most of them representing a few university and teachers locals or small opposition currents within other unions. A large percentage of delegates were drawn from the ranks of locally based non-governmental organizations.

The political currents intervening in the convention range from a variety of warring factions of the PRD to the small, competing socialist groups that constitute most of the Mexican left.

The political focus of the CND has also been seriously tested. Designed largely as a united front framework for launching a national campaign of civil resistance and mass mobilizations in the wake of the August 21 vote, the convention’s plans were undercut by the disillusionment provoked by the PRI’s successful election strategy.

Following several weeks in which the CND leadership grappled with the need to elaborate new tactics and resist the PRD’s move to negotiate the election outcome and make a political pact with the PRI regime, the CND has now launched a series of initiatives aimed at providing coverage for the EZLN and opening a new discussion among convention supporters. A series of mobilizations, including the 30,000-strong march held in Mexico City to commemorate the 26th anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre, are designed as a build-up to launch an aid caravan that will leave the Mexican capital for Chiapas October 9.

CND delegates have also been invited to an initial perspectives discussion to be held in

Chiapas in mid-October, in preparation for a second full session of the Convención slated to be held in the central state of San Luis Potosí the weekend of November 20, the anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. The prospects for maintaining a broad, united-front framework for solidarity with the Chiapas rebellion and an alternative to the rightward-moving PRD will hinge on the outcome of these discussions.

For the Zapatistas themselves, there is no turning back. Either they will continue to stimulate broader resistance to the PRI regime and encourage sections of the *campesinado* (the peasantry) and other segments of the mass movement to mobilize, or a counterrevolution will ensue throughout Chiapas. “We want to warn the people of Mexico, nothing stands between the federal army and [the EZLN]; once again we are alone, as we were in January,” said Subcomandante Marcos in a telephone message transmitted in Mexico City September 20. “The EZLN reaffirms its willingness to seek a peaceful offer that does not imply surrender,” Marcos said, adding that “the struggle is just beginning.”

Whether that counterrevolution takes the form of a massive military offensive or a return to the more selective terror of the hired gunmen of the cattle barons and plantation owners who rule the state, the outcome would be the same. The prospects for either response are already present.

Clear indications exist that the military high command is growing anxious. Indignant that their image has been undermined by investigations of human rights abuses and concerned that recent events from within the regime are contributing to greater political instability, National Defense Secretary Gen. Antonio Riviello has become increasingly vocal in recent weeks.²

Riviello has boasted troop strength in Chiapas from 20,000 to 50,000 men, according to EZLN estimates. Despite an agreement earlier this year to maintain their January 12 positions, military units have been sighted moving closer to Zapatista-held territory. Riviello told a congressional commission October 5 that the EZLN

is now equipped with highly sophisticated weapons from Nicaragua. Lacking any evidence, he was reduced to displaying catalogues of military hardware to demonstrate his point.

Meanwhile, the most reactionary sectors of Chiapas society, led by local PRI functionaries, have stepped up their campaigns against campesino communities, the indigenous population, and even Bishop Samuel Ruiz, who served as mediator in talks between the government and the Zapatistas. In early October, PRI-led demonstrators in San Cristóbal de las Casas surrounded a church where Ruiz was officiating at Mass, accusing him of being a “narco-terrorist” and demanding that he “take his Indians back to the jungle where they belong.”

Campesinos have been forcibly evicted from lands they occupied in recent months, and a PRD municipal leader was brutally assassinated in early September.

The PRI regime continues to insist on its willingness to find a negotiated, institutional solution to the conflict. The PRI’s gubernatorial candidate and governor-elect, Eduardo Robledo, has gone so far as to cynically claim that he agrees with the points contained in the EZLN’s Declaration of the Lacandón Rain Forest and to call for Zapatista participation in his administration.

But Salinas also warned campesino representatives from Chiapas in early September that anyone who provokes conflict will feel the full brunt of the law.

Though the regime is clearly concerned by the political impact of the EZLN and can hardly afford to allow the EZLN to maintain its military control over the Lacandón region, it may fear the political costs of a full-scale military offensive. For the time being, it has opted instead for a policy of military containment combined with its efforts to violently undermine radicalized campesino and indigenous sectors through selective repression. □

2. The military is emboldened, in part, by its greatly enhanced military might. Under the Salinas administration, the military budget has grown 100 percent, troop strength has doubled, and the army has been outfitted with a wide array of new equipment, including anti-riot tanks, modern air transport, and more sophisticated weapons.

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Socialism or Barbarism on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century

This document was adopted by a meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (FI) in 1992. It is the product of months of discussion within that world organization and an extensive process of rewriting and revision from an original draft proposed before the FI's World Congress in 1991.

The FI is an international organization of revolutionary Marxist parties and groups from dozens of countries throughout the world. It was founded in 1938 under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, dedicated to a consistent and forthright struggle for the common interests of working people and the oppressed in all nations — to their mobilization in struggle against capitalist exploitation, colonialism, and bureaucratic dictatorship, and against all forms of racial and sexual discrimination.

It should be clear, from the perspectives presented here, that the FI remains true to that purpose today. This, in itself, stands as a major accomplishment in a world where many former leftists and radical activists are rushing to embrace the "new realism" of a capitalism that has supposedly "triumphed over socialism" during the cold war.

But reality is a far cry from the "new world order" proclaimed by U.S. President George Bush after his victory against Iraq in 1991. It is, as the Manifesto points out, a world of increasing disorder — of insecurity, crisis, preventable hunger, poverty, and disease. These things are more the rule than the exception for most of the billions of people on this planet.

In short, we are living in a world that cries out for a renewed commitment to the fight for social change, for a more just and humane political and economic system. Just such a commitment, and a perspective on how those needed changes can be brought about, will be found in the pages of this pamphlet.

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ground information and places the volume in a larger historical perspective.

Volume Two:

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edited by Paul Le Blanc, 412 pages (1992) — \$12.00

This book focuses on the waves of expulsions which hit the Socialist Workers Party from 1981 through 1984. It provides an inspiring record — and reaffirmation — of the revolutionary ideas and commitments of those who were being forced out of the organization to which many had given "the whole of their lives." also included are: substantial pieces by SWP leaders Jack Barnes and Larry Seigle defending the expulsions; a critique by representatives of the Fourth International; letters and a talk by pioneer Trotskyist James P. Cannon, originally published under the title *Don't Strangle the Party*. A substantial introductory essay by Paul Le Blanc, "Leninism in the United States and the Decline of the Socialist Workers Party," relates the 1981–84 experience to

broader questions of "the vanguard party" and Leninism, the history and character of American Trotskyism, the development of the U.S. working class, and the realities of world politics in the 20th century.

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edited by Paul Le Blanc, 148 pages (1990) — \$9.00

This book consists of eight documents. The longest, written in 1983 by Paul Le Blanc and Dianne Feeley, is entitled "In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity" — a response to SWP leader Jack Barnes's attack on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Also included is the founding platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, a lengthy 1988 analysis of the SWP by Frank Lovell and Paul Le Blanc, and two major documents produced by the FIT when the Socialist Workers Party formally broke from the Fourth International in 1990. The volume concludes with three documents dealing with the need for unity among revolutionary socialists in the United States.