

In Defense of Marxism

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Special Double Issue:
Sectarianism vs. Revolutionary Marxism

World Socialist Revolution Today

by Ernest Mandel

- The Constituent Elements of Marxist Theory and Political Practice
- The World Situation and Its Main Dynamics
- What Does It Mean at Present to Prepare for World Revolution?
- The Fundamental Differences Between Dogmatic Sectarianism and Revolutionary Marxism
- What Is the Fourth International Today and What Is It Trying to Become?

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Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Racist Terror in Oklahoma

by Tom Barrett

At this writing over two weeks have passed since the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. One hundred sixty-seven people, including nineteen children, are confirmed dead, making this attack the worst case of non-governmental terrorism in U.S. history. (Massacres of Native Americans carried out by U.S. military forces had higher death tolls.) The victims were a cross-section of Oklahoma City's working class: they were disproportionately African American; they were children in day care because their mothers needed to work to provide for them; they were employees — and clients — of federal social service agencies. They did not deserve to die or suffer injury; they did not deserve to lose family members, especially children.

Evidence indicates that the bombing was carried out by fanatical members of the so-called "militia movement," in reality, armed white supremacists who gather for combat training on weekends. They tote real assault rifles, loaded with live ammunition. Their "officers" are often veterans of elite military units with links to the shadowy underworld which is euphemistically called the "intelligence community." Members of these groups claim that their enemy is the federal government; some may actually believe it. Their real targets, however, are the communities of color, the organized labor movement, and those struggling for sexual equality and freedom. Like-minded individuals carried out the murder of Dr. David Gunn and other abortion providers. Others are attempting

to set up an exclusively "Aryan" homeland in the Rocky Mountains.

The more open reactionaries in the U.S. government, from President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s to House Speaker Newt Gingrich now, have given varying degrees of encouragement to these forces, even as the government has turned its full repressive fury against those who pose a threat to ruling-class profits — such as the Professional Air Traffic Controllers in the early 1980s or African Americans protesting police violence today — but pose no threat to overall public safety. It is remarkable how silent the "law-and-order" chorus has become since the arrest of prime suspect Timothy McVeigh, who has links with right-wing paramilitary groups.

The capitalist media have been promoting the notion that the motive for the Oklahoma City bombing was revenge for the government's attack on the Branch Davidian cult's compound in Waco, Texas. That confrontation ended in a fire which destroyed the compound and killed nearly everyone inside. Evidence indicates that the fire was started at three locations inside the buildings. Whatever outrage individuals in the "militia movement" may express or even feel about the Waco incident, the attention paid to it is a diversion from the real danger posed by ultraright paramilitary groups.

Muslims: The Initial Scapegoats

It serves no purpose to deny that among those organizations classified under the misleading label of "Islamic fundamentalist" are groups

capable of carrying out a terror bombing on the scale of Oklahoma City's. An entire generation has been born and grown to maturity in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, and the Israeli-occupied West Bank which has known nothing but day-to-day brutalizing violence at the hands of the Zionists, Lebanese fascists, and other repressive forces. Among this generation are individuals for whom violence and terror have become a way of life, and even if that is true of only a fraction of a percent of a population (which is the case), it takes only a very small number of people to carry off a terrorist bombing.

The responsibility for the four decades of civil war and communal violence in the Middle East lies squarely with the imperialists, foremost among them the United States and Britain. If the decision makers in Washington and London ever thought that the Middle East's violence would not overflow into the rest of the world, including into the imperialist countries, they were sadly mistaken. If those convicted of the World Trade Center bombing actually did it, it is the U.S. and British governments which are in reality guilty.

It is not so far-fetched an idea that terrorists of Middle Eastern origin would choose a target in the American Southwest, including Oklahoma City. Nearby Norman, site of the University of Oklahoma, once contained a very large population of Iranian and other Middle Eastern students, who came to study geology, chemical engineering, and other disciplines related to the petroleum industry, which dominates Oklahoma's economy. It is within the realm of possibility that among the thousands of Middle Eastern students who have studied at O.U. and lived in Norman that there might be two or three individuals who might be motivated to blow up a building in Oklahoma City.

However, in the initial hours after the blast, there was speculation involving the entire Is-

From the Editors

With this special issue, we are responding to the opportunity to publish a document of major importance by Ernest Mandel, the internationally renowned Marxist economist and leading figure in the Fourth International. While this pamphlet-length article by Ernest Mandel originated in a debate held in New York City last November between Mandel and a representative of the Spartacist League, its importance goes well beyond that. It is a powerful restatement of many of the fundamentals of Marxism, of Trotskyism, as against the sectarian caricatures of our historical current. While we do not normally carry articles of such length, the special importance of this document we feel justifies doing so in this case.

Ernest Mandel's major article provides a context and focus for other debates about and within the Fourth International, which is holding its World Congress this month

(June). Such debates are reflected in this issue in Frank Lovell's answer to Alan Wald's 3-part series "The End of 'American Trotskyism'?" and in Marilyn Vogt-Downey's "Critique of the 1992 Manifesto of the Fourth International." While some may view part or all of this material as excessively polemical, in our opinion this kind of discussion is unavoidable in the process of finding the way to successful socialist revolution on a world scale, the fundamental task still facing humanity as the 20th century ends.

The obituary of Lou Guohua, a Chinese Trotskyist for nearly 70 years, is a reminder of how tenuous the survival of the Marxist legacy can sometimes be and how valuable the few who manage to preserve that legacy.

On a more modest scale, in this issue we continue to carry first-hand reports on ongoing class struggles in the United States and in other countries. Tom Barrett comments on

the bombing in Oklahoma City; Michael Livingston on the Qubilah Shabazz case; Joe Auciello on Louis Farrakhan and his call for a Million Man March in Washington in October; and Hayden Perry on protests against the "Contract on America." Rosendo Mendoza continues to analyze the Zapatistas' battle and the general crisis in Mexico. Albert Ayler, recently returned from Haiti, brings us up to date on the situation in that country under U.S. occupation. And from Russia we carry Renfrey Clarke's account of a major trade-union protest. Finally, Arthur Maglin's review of an anarchist's biography reminds us that many of the issues debated and fought over by Trotskyists are not unique to our movement but are faced by all who have chosen the cause of world socialism as the meaning of their life.

lamic population in the United States — Middle Eastern immigrants, non-Middle Eastern immigrants, and even the Nation of Islam. The scape-goating was so blatant and so racist that even President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno had to caution against it, though it would have been far too much to ask that these representatives of the American ruling class would acknowledge their responsibility for Middle East violence. It should not have been necessary that representatives of Islamic groups felt it necessary to disclaim responsibility for the bombing, even if it had been the work of a very few militants bringing the Middle East's violence home to roost in the United States.

The "Militia Movement" — Neo-Nazi Scum

However, it was not the work of Middle Eastern militants. The evidence clearly points to ultra-right wing terrorists of the so-called "militia movement."

The prime suspect in this case, Timothy McVeigh, was observed driving the truck which held the ammonium nitrate-diesel fuel bomb. McVeigh signed the rental agreement for that truck. Residue of ammonium nitrate fertilizer was found in the clothing McVeigh was wearing at the time of his arrest. McVeigh's name is on a receipt for a sufficient amount of ammonium nitrate fertilizer to make the bomb which blew up the Murrah federal building.

McVeigh, along with Terry and James Nichols, who are being held as material witnesses in this case, has been linked to a group called the Michigan Militia, one of many right-wing paramilitary groups operating in the United States. At present, McVeigh claims to be a "prisoner of war" and is responding to FBI questions only with "name, rank, and serial number." Though he has not been convicted beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law, political conclusions about the responsibility for this terrorist act can justifiably be drawn.

One could make the claim that those joining militia groups are fighting their oppression in the same way that Arab militants are, but the claim would not be very credible. The ranks of the U.S. paramilitary groups are not drawn from the communities of color or from the most poorly paid sectors of the working class. In fact, it is remarkable how many of their leaders make their living as gun retailers. The greatest threat they face from the government is a loss of profits — not even being forced out of business — by restrictions on the sale of semi-automatic assault weapons, guns with which it is already illegal to hunt in all 50 states.

The white males who join militia groups may claim that "unqualified" people of color and women are taking jobs away from them, but few in fact are unemployed. They may claim that the U.S. government restricts their liberties, but few if any have ever been arrested for a crime they did not commit, let alone been the victims of police violence. They complain about feminists and homosexuals, about African Americans and Latinos, about Jews and socialists, but they

would be hard pressed to demonstrate how any of those groups has had a directly negative impact on their lives.

In fact, the militia members tend to enjoy a far higher standard of living than those about whom they complain. If African Americans and Latinos are taking jobs away from white men, why is unemployment so high in the communities of color? Are the militia members concerned when cops gun down young African Americans in the street? Or do they cheer? Yet whose liberties are being threatened?

No, the militia movement is a collection of racists, sexists, anti-Semites, and labor haters, who kill people. Is it different from the Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan? Are they "fascists"? Does it matter? Whatever precise classification one may give them, they are a physical threat to organized labor, to people of color, to women, to homosexuals, and, as Oklahoma City shows, the government cannot be depended on to stop them. Furthermore, as we shall see, the Clinton administration is using the cover of the ultra-right to move against the civil liberties of the workers movement.

A Side Note: Talk Radio

The past decade has seen a proliferation of radio stations on the AM band changing over to a "talk" format, since they cannot compete with FM in quality of music broadcast. Typically, the announcer editorializes about this or that news item and invites telephone calls from listeners. Many announcers respond rudely and sarcastically to those who dare disagree with them. They red-bait, queer-bait, call them stupid and any number of other names, all for the entertainment of their listening audience. Rush Limbaugh has become the best known of these talk-radio announcers, having become nationally syndicated on both radio and television; he is by no means the most hateful or reactionary. G. Gordon Liddy, whose commitment to freedom was demonstrated by his participation in the Watergate break-in, has a talk radio show, as does Iran-Contra scandal star Oliver North. Among the worst — and most widely heard — is Bob Grant, a New Jerseyan who spews his racist filth from New York's WABC.

President Clinton caused quite a stir among the right-wing radio announcers when he suggested that the inflammatory rhetoric used over the airwaves could push an unstable individual to carry out an act of violence like the Oklahoma City bombing. To be sure, there is no way to prove one way or another any connection between talk radio and the attack on the Murrah building. Furthermore, freedom of the press must include freedom of the airwaves. Conceding the right of the government to suppress the most right-wing of the talk-radio announcers would give it a free hand to move against those using radio to organize for progressive social change — networks like Pacifica, which depend on listener donations for their survival and which have no money to spare for expensive legal defense.

Nevertheless, Clinton has a point: the right-wing talk radio announcers have given racism and sexism a legitimacy which they had lost during the 1960s and 1970s. They are able to lie with virtual impunity. Their pronouncements have an inescapable logic: when they say that people of color, feminists, homosexuals, and socialists are destroying the United States of America and that the government has been taken over by "left-wing McGoverniks" like the Clintons who encourage the destruction of the country, it must follow that the only possible way to save America — save it for the white males — is to take violent action. The announcers leave the conclusion unspoken, but there is no mistaking it. Ultraright talk radio is a very real threat to the workers movement and to the communities of color, and we have every right and responsibility to consider and carry out strategies to counter that threat. We can have no faith in the capitalist government to do it for us.

The Threat of Government Repression: The Experience of the Black Panther Party

Clinton is proposing legislation to Congress which will widen the powers of police agencies such as the FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) to spy on and repress organizations deemed to be "terrorist" — by the government's peculiar criteria. The Republican leadership in Congress is proposing its own set of new laws, with only minor differences from Clinton's. In fact, the Democratic administration and the Republican congressional leadership are using the opportunity of a right-wing terrorist attack to enact repressive measures to be used against the left — and not necessarily against groups which engage in violence.

It is not paranoia but harsh experience from which such conclusions may be drawn. With only a few exceptions, the racist paramilitary groups have functioned with virtually no interference from law enforcement agencies of any kind for over ten years now. The government's policies toward them stand in stark contrast to its war to the death against the Black Panther Party during the 1968-72 period.

The Panthers often used provocative slogans like "pick up the gun" and "off the pig" and postured as guerrilla fighters — a policy which was certainly misguided. However, at no time did they carry out acts which can even remotely be called "terrorist." They never advocated attacks on white people or anyone else because of their race or religion. Even though they advocated armed struggle against the police — in response to daily police violence in Black communities throughout the United States — virtually every confrontation involved the Panthers defending themselves against police attack.

The Panthers represented no threat to the overwhelming majority of people in the United States. Certainly, the Panthers never committed any violent act even remotely on the order of the Oklahoma bombing. Nevertheless, then-FBI director J. Edgar Hoover targeted them as the

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The Oklahoma Bombing, Hate Mongering, and the Question of Free Speech

by Hayden Perry

This article reviews, in the light of recent events, the book *Hate Speech: The History of an American Controversy*, by Samuel Walker (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994; 217 pages).

While a stunned nation was still counting the casualties of the second major terrorist bombing of this decade, measures to prevent a third attack have been proposed by the White House, Congress, and citizens throughout the nation. One suggestion is to shut the hate mongers up.

Why should we let right-wing fanatics spew out racist venom, together with directions for making a bomb? The right to free speech is enshrined in the Constitution, but it does not permit a fanatic to yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater.

Where is the line to be drawn between speech that enrages and speech that must be repressed? Samuel Walker, author of *Hate Speech: The History of an American Controversy*, is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). He describes how the ACLU and the American people have had to wrestle with this question periodically over the last 70 years.

The First Amendment, proclaiming the right to free speech, was adopted in 1791, but it was frequently violated as abolitionists, labor organizers, and proponents of birth control were censored or silenced by local authorities. No significant movement to defend the First Amendment developed for 120 years.

World War I made the issue of free speech a national question as opponents of the war were silenced and jailed for speaking out. Then the Russian revolution galvanized the liberals and the left into defense of their civil rights. In 1920 the ACLU was founded to challenge any attack on our right to speak, write, and circulate unpopular views.

In 1921 the ACLU found itself defending the rights of a notorious anti-Semite, Henry Ford — of all people. The auto manufacturer expressed his racist views in his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, which printed every anti-Semitic slander from the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion to the alleged cabal of Jewish bankers. Alerted by the Jewish community, authorities in Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, banned the paper, citing its inflammatory articles. Walker explains why the ACLU challenged the ban. This ban could be applied to the "content in any publication," including a union paper.

Relations between the ACLU and many of its Jewish supporters were now strained. But the coming case of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) would convince many of them the position of the ACLU was correct.

In the 1920s the KKK was a dominant power in much of the Midwest, controlling city councils in a number of towns. According to Walker, the KKK's principal target in the North was the Catholic Church. They saw dark "papist plots" everywhere, starting with the parochial schools. The Klan tried to have them closed down.

The Catholics were strong enough, in 1923, to pass laws in New York and elsewhere demanding that the KKK register and publish the names of all its members. Liberals and minorities applauded these draconian laws until they noticed that the state of Alabama was applying almost identical laws against the NAACP.

While the Jewish and African American communities were learning that censorship was a two-edged sword, something described by Walker as the "rights revolution" was occurring in American jurisprudence. For decades the Supreme Court had supported the "bad tendency" doctrine that said any speech or action that had a tendency to stir up unrest could be banned. Certainly, one would assume, the public swearing of allegiance to a hammer and sickle on a red flag would stir unrest.

In California in 1931 a member of the Young Communist League did just that, parading with a red flag and of course outraging conservative citizens. She was convicted of a felony under California's "criminal syndicalism" law.

On appeal the Supreme Court struck down her conviction, declaring "maintenance of the opportunity for free political discussion" was "a fundamental principle of our constitutional system."

Samuel Walker observes that this turnaround by the Court did not evoke serious protest. No one of importance charged that the justices had sold out to the Communists. Later, when the Court upheld the right of a citizen to publicly burn the American flag, this decision was accepted after some initial shock.

This indicated, Walker believes, that a growing tolerance of dissent was being nurtured by the crisis of the Great Depression. But progress in this area did not flow in a straight line.

World War II and the Cold War threw the civil liberties movement back, but the fight against Jim Crow laws in the 1960s, with its sit-ins and Freedom Riders, gave it a vigorous rebirth. The youth rebellion and the women's liberation movement combined to defy all restraint and censorship.

The use of words that formerly were never used in polite society now came under scrutiny. The "F-word" controversy reached the Su-

preme Court when a Vietnam war protester walked through a Los Angeles courtroom with the phrase "Fuck the Draft" embroidered on his jacket. He was charged with disturbing the peace.

In reversing this conviction the Court recognized that a political opinion was being expressed: the language in which it was couched was a question of emphasis, and was directed at no specific person who might personally take offense. The Court recognized also that strong language is often the only means by which the powerless express their anger.

Next Walker introduces us to the "fighting words" controversy. When Arthur Terminiello, a defrocked Catholic priest, made a virulently anti-Semitic speech in Chicago, the hostile audience became violent, broke chairs, and threw rocks. The police arrested Terminiello, saying he had caused the riot.

The Supreme Court reversed his conviction. Justice William O. Douglas explained the reasoning of the majority. He argued that provocative speech should even be welcomed: "It may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, creates dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger." In rendering this verdict the Court was ignoring the specific content of Terminiello's anti-Semitic remarks.

Many felt the limits to free speech rights were reached in 1978 when a band of neo-Nazis decided to march in the predominantly Jewish community of Skokie, Illinois. Their purpose was not to persuade, but to intimidate.

The Skokie City Council drafted ordinances that enabled them to deny the Nazis a permit to march. Amid strong controversy the ACLU appealed the Nazis' case to the Supreme Court. To the dismay of many, the Court struck down the Skokie ordinances.

The Court declared the ban on parades to be too loosely worded and subject to various interpretations. The ACLU argued the Skokie officials had given themselves the power to ban any group they disapproved of. In the end the Nazis did not march. The aroused community promised them too hot a reception.

The question of freedom for hate speech has not been definitely settled. It is not likely to be, as class and race relations shift in our unstable society. Today college campuses — where the right to free speech has rarely been questioned — are facing a resurgence of racism. Controversy rages over "civility codes" that bar certain racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic expressions.

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Turmoil in Mexico

Who Will Fill the Void?

by Rosendo Mendoza

At the offices of the army chief of staff, it is pretty obvious what war the Mexican military is gearing up for. Photographs of demonstrators interspersed with charts on forms of social protest line the walls, betraying the subject matter of this month's main course for the top brass: Social Unrest 101.

As the administration of President Ernesto Zedillo forces through implementation of its draconian economic plan, the government's dirty war in Chiapas is beginning to spill over into other regions of the country.

It is not just the protesters chanting, "We are all Indians. We are all Marcos," who understand that Mexico's future hinges on the outcome of the Chiapas conflict. As Wall Street bankers issue repeated warnings that "Chiapas" must be nipped in the bud, the PRI government appears increasingly bent on using force to stem the threat of broader outbreaks of social discontent.

The military offensive launched by the Zedillo administration on February 9 has begun the first stage of a counterrevolution in that state. As the first civilians who fled from the army last February returned to their villages in March, in what was once EZLN-controlled territory, they discovered that entire homes had been leveled. Everything of value had been stolen from those huts left standing and what little had been left behind had been destroyed. Army troops also removed the livestock and basic tools of area residents in an effort to break down their will and ability to resist.

Under the cover of the massive troop presence, thugs hired by local owners of *fincas* (large landed estates) and by the movement of the most reactionary and racist sectors in Chiapas, based in San Cristóbal de las Casas and known as the *auténticos coletos* (the "real non-Indians"), have stepped up their attacks against peasant organizers. Non-Zapatista villagers who fled the combat area after the January 1 uprising last year were kept in camps in nearby municipalities and used as fodder for protests organized by Chiapas cattle ranchers and land barons. Now they have been shipped back into what was once Zapatista-held territory. Playing on religious and ethnic divisions in the region, the Mexican army has encouraged the returning villagers to inform on their neighbors and in some cases to drive suspected Zapatista sympathizers from their homes.

Military units are also active elsewhere as reports continued to filter out of peasant villages regarding military harassment and occupations of villages where residents are suspected of

opposition activity. Such raids have been reported in states as far away as Morelos, Puebla, and Hidalgo, in the center of Mexico.

Ruta-100

Calling out the troops and riot police is a tactic employed not only in remote villages. On the morning of April 11, just as the Easter week vacations began, riot police sealed off work sites and union offices of Mexico City's public bus drivers, clubbing and arresting several members of the union leadership and activists who attempted to come to their aid.

Employing a scam used to perfection under the Salinas administration, of declaring companies bankrupt in order to break union contracts (for example, the 1989 "re-registration" of Aeromexico airlines), the government declared the Ruta-100 city bus company broke, offering no evidence to back up this claim. The financial status of the company has changed little in the last six years. Declaring a state-owned company bankrupt is in itself illegal, but under the "rule of law" anything is possible. The city officials, who are truly bankrupt, morally and politically, immediately announced they had rented buses and drivers to offer free public transport for an indefinite period of time.

To add to the farce, officials blamed widespread corruption within the public transport system for the "bankruptcy" and resuscitated fraud charges filed in 1991 against the leadership of the union — in an attempt to justify the beatings and imprisonment of union leaders. Despite the fact that documentation has been available for years indicating that government officials were involved in corruption and that such operations frequently line the pockets of PRI multimillionaires, such as the family of former Agriculture Minister Carlos Hank Gonzalez, the only arrest warrants were for union representatives.

The Ruta-100 bus drivers union was no run-of-the-mill labor organization. It is the main affiliate of the Independent Proletarian Movement (MPI), a political grouping led by ultraleft currents with a certain affinity for "third period" Stalinism and the teachings of Peru's Chairman Gonzalo (leader of the ultraleft Maoist group Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path). Though several social and political organizations have expressed their solidarity with the Ruta-100 workers, defense of the union is complicated by the MPI's hardened sectarianism, having routinely expelled union members suspected of sympathizing with leftist organizations other than the MPI and of generally

refusing even to participate in united-front demonstrations with other forces. While isolating its ranks under reams of "revolutionary" proclamations and rhetoric, the MPI presided over a 5-year period of retreat in which the Ruta-100 workforce was cut almost in half, from 23,000 to 12,000 union members.

Another factor weighing against the drivers is Mexico's spiraling unemployment. According to a Mexico City daily, 45,000 people applied for work as bus drivers the first day city officials started taking applications following the lockout. But officials admitted that virtually no members of the Ruta-100 union had applied.

The May Day Factor

The government has had the MPI and the Ruta-100 union targeted for several years, and even attempted to break the union as early as 1989. Throughout 1994, officials occasionally leaked reports alleging direct ties between the MPI and the EZLN. But another factor helps explain the timing of the current attack. Despite its sectarianism, the MPI has frequently mounted significant mobilizations, including May Day events involving tens of thousands of unionists and members of neighborhood organizations. At the time of the lockout, the organization was reportedly considering the possibility of breaking with past practice and participating in a unified opposition May Day march. The lockout came only days after the official labor bureaucracy announced it had suspended this year's May Day march.

For decades May 1 has been marked by massive, though tightly controlled, parades in which union members were forced to march carrying banners thanking the Mexican president for the blessing of having a job or some other inane sop for which the regime gladly took credit.

The trade union bureaucracy has traditionally used May 1 as an opportunity to flex its atrophied political muscle by demonstrating its ability to force hundreds of thousands of workers (as many as a million regularly marched in Mexico City, according to official figures) to obediently file past smiling government officials.

Those workers who tried to use the occasion to raise wage demands or protest any aspect of government policy routinely confronted squads of riot police, troops, and the government's goon squads, all under orders to keep protesters out of the main parade.

But this year the bureaucracy is convinced that threats, clubs, tear gas, and attack dogs may not suffice to keep union members in line. Though Fidel Velazquez, the head of the CT-CTM union confederation that is dominated by the PRI government, claimed the May Day march was being put on ice because of the expenses it entailed, everyone recognized the true motivation — fear of the likelihood that workers would ignore orders from above and protest the government's draconian economic program, massive layoffs, and Capital's extended rollback of wages and job benefits.

Velazquez's decision generated a brief spat with some sectors of the union bureaucracy

concerned that the cancellation would leave the field open to dissident unionists and opposition groups, allowing them to convert May Day into a day of mass protests against the regime. In the end, virtually all unions agreed to settle for the equally or more expensive rallies in closed stadiums that Velazquez proposed as an alternative to the May Day parade in the streets

Meanwhile the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution], some small independent unions, and other social organizations announced plans for a march and rally at the Zocalo, the center of Mexico's capital, on May 1.

[As things turned out, tens of thousands of opposition-minded workers and others took to the streets and did occupy the center of the city on May Day, in a resounding rebuff to the Zedillo regime and its agents in the union bureaucracy. — Eds.]

The heads of the chambers representing big business also expressed alarm concerning the CT-CTM decision to cancel the march. Carlos Abascal, president of the Mexican Employers Confederation, warned that the official unions were leaving the field open to the opposition and cautioned that the CTM had better "transform itself or it will disappear."

The problem isn't just one of organizing demonstrations but of the union bureaucracy's inability to act in defense of its members' interests. The union tops have kept a lid on strike activity, with a mere 34 registered in the first quarter of 1995. While the number of strikes fell 17 percent compared to the first three months of 1994, the number of individual suits filed by workers with the official Conciliation and Arbitration Board jumped 45 percent in March. Most of these complaints involved firings and failure to pay retirement benefits. This reflects the fact that workers increasingly find the unions irrelevant to the defense of their interests.

"There Will Be No Revolution"

Although the prospects are growing for more significant outbreaks of social discontent, a serious challenge to the PRI regime and the current capitalist offensive does not at present exist.

A highly placed official of the Finance Ministry (SHCP) was told recently that the domestic effect of the economic emergency would be brutal and the government should anticipate resistance. "There will be no revolution," he responded, "because revolutions have gone out of fashion."

While this response reflects the technocratic view characteristic of the Zedillo administration, it contains an element of truth. With social movements in disarray and the remnants of the left demoralized and lacking a strategic project, it is increasingly likely that resistance to the attacks on living standards will take the form of outbreaks of unfocused rage similar to the supermarket sackings in Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina.

The only political force with the moral authority to lead the formation of a credible left

alternative to the PRD is the EZLN. But the Zapatistas have neither the military power nor the national scope needed to bring their political weight to bear in a direct way. So far, little headway has been made by the small groupings that constitute the remnants of the left in creating a broader political formation that could provide leadership to the tens of thousands of social activists who not only support the Chiapas rebellion but are the motor force behind the scattered defensive struggles of the mass movement in Mexico today.

Even the Convención Nacional Democrática (CND), the umbrella organization formed in Chiapas last August by ostensibly pro-Zapatista political and social activists, has been paralyzed by infighting and now appears on the verge of a split. Although the CND was able to call mass demonstrations of up to 100,000 in the wake of the government's military offensive in February of this year, Convención activities have waned since then.

Wide layers of radicalized social activists, who strongly identify with the EZLN, have abandoned the CND, convinced that the organization is incapable of offering a minimal framework either as a united-front, action-oriented alliance or as a forum that could facilitate far left regroupment.

Efforts by the CND leadership of Rosario Ibarra to outline a consistent mass-action perspective for the CND have been constantly sabotaged by a totally unprincipled alliance of ultraleft groups (including currents tied to the MPI) and right-wing PRD members allied to Heberto Castillo, who is the main representative of the "Cardenistas"* to the Chiapas "peace process." Castillo opposed Zapatista demands in April for a withdrawal of Mexican army troops from formerly rebel-occupied territory as a condition for resuming peace talks, as well as Zapatista proposals that negotiations take place in Mexico City because the massive troop presence and violence promoted by armed gangs hired by local bosses made it impossible to hold talks safely in Chiapas.

PRD Seeks Alliance with Government

PRD leaders have also criticized Zapatista efforts to include national political issues on the agenda for peace talks, despite the fact that from the outset the Chiapas rebellion was focused on a call for the overthrow of the PRI regime and a platform of political demands that were by no means local in character. While the officially recognized parties try to maintain essentially that only they have the right to discuss and determine national policy issues, the fact remains that the demands and policy proposals of the EZLN enjoy more support among Mexico's disenfranchised millions than the posturing of the major political parties. Despite official efforts to downplay coverage of the talks, the Chiapas negotiations occupy national attention

far more than the endless and sterile rounds of "political dialogue" which the PRD, the PAN, and the PRI regime periodically schedule, claiming that these will conclude the reform of the state and the democratization of Mexico.

While the PRD's constant march to the right is part of an ongoing process of assimilation of the "Cardenistas" by the state, two factors help explain the strengthening of the PRD's alliance with the PRI government and against the EZLN.

First, the PRD is seriously concerned about blocking the emergence of a left alternative that could seriously undermine the PRD's own pretensions to monopolizing the "center-left" of the political spectrum. Mexico City PRD leader René Benjarano has publicly stated that the PRD must do everything possible to avoid the emergence of a Zapatista-led political formation outflanking the PRD to the left.

Second, PRD leaders appear increasingly bent on replacing the conservative National Action Party (PAN) as the chief ally of the PRI government. The PAN has recently managed to squeeze more out of its de facto alliance with the government, including a key cabinet post, while at the same time adopting a more oppositional stance toward key aspects of Zedillo's policies, including the current economic program. With the PAN clearly setting its sights on winning the presidency in 2000 and poised to sweep state and local elections from the PRI this year, the PRD is increasingly anxious to get a piece of the action.

During the Salinas years the PAN was given preferential treatment in state and local elections, while federal officials orchestrated fraud operations to make sure the PRD never won a major state election. Now, with the PRD racked by infighting and losing support, the Cardenistas are, amazingly enough, looking to get a helping hand from — the PRI regime, whose popularity is plummeting amid the muck of assassinations, massive fraud, and increasingly obvious connections to drug trafficking, not to mention its economic fiasco.

The Zedillo administration is clearly interested in using the PRD overtures to help further domesticate that party, the country's third largest. Some PRI leaders have recently observed that the ruling party has a lot more in common on an ideological level with the PRD than with the PAN and speculated on the possibilities of a new, privileged relationship with this party of the "center-left." For the time being, however, in regard to the PRD, Zedillo can have his cake and eat it too, having neither to make any significant concessions or allow himself to be locked in to a radical realignment in his policy of alliances.

The Business Class on the Move

The absence of a strong left alternative, despite the opportunities created by the current crisis, leaves a void that other forces are anxious to fill. Despite the wonderful deal business got out of

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*Supporters of PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

French Elections Won't Solve Social Crisis

by Keith Mann

The elections which brought Jacques Chirac a narrow victory in the second round of the 1995 French presidential elections reflected important changes in French politics and society.* Four themes, the division of the right, the crisis of the left, an alarming show of support for xenophobic, racist platforms, and an energetic round of social protest dominated French politics during this campaign.

The Issues Facing the French People

The context in which the elections took place was a particularly heated social atmosphere. Never before have presidential elections been accompanied by such an intense round of labor and social struggles. Workers at Renault and other large manufacturing plants launched aggressive and often successful strikes for wage hikes, while other workers, especially in the public sector, struck against layoffs. These demands were fueled by reports showing substantial profits registered by companies like Renault over the last period and a slight upturn in the capitalist economy, involving an estimated 3.3 percent growth of the economy for 1995, as well as sharp gains in productivity and a continuing stream of layoffs. Just days before the first round of elections on April 23, over 30 strikes broke out, involving mail carriers, bank employees, transportation workers, and others. Commenting on these strikes, the big business daily *Le Monde* wrote in its April 15 issue that while these strikes were "incontestably influenced by the political context, they often reveal a dissatisfaction within enterprises which will not end with the elections."

The depth of the social crisis in France has been reflected by important mobilizations over housing, employment, and racism. The homeless advocate organization Housing Rights (DAL) has carried out a number of spectacular and well-publicized occupations of unoccupied dwellings that have received wide public support. Over one hundred organizations, including the trade unions, DAL, and the anti-layoff organization "AC!" sponsored demonstrations throughout the country on April 8 calling for a variety of social demands, from measures to end unemployment to calls for decent housing for the homeless.

The measures taken by Minister of the Interior Charles Pasqua against immigrants have exacerbated the racist climate in the country. This was reflected in the campaign itself. The campaign of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front (FN) in particular was full of violence and hate in both words and deeds. Early in the

campaign, a squad of FN activists pasting campaign posters in Marseilles shot and killed a 17-year-old French youth whose parents had immigrated from the African country Cameroon. The FN claimed they were acting in self-defense even though the victim was shot in the back. A few weeks later, a caravan of FN activists attacked a group of high school students in the southwest city of Auch. Two FN leaders, including Samuel Maréchal, the son-in-law of Le Pen, were fined and given 8-month suspended prison sentences as a result.

On May Day in Paris, which fell between the two electoral rounds, a group of skinheads marching in the FN's annual "Joan of Arc" demonstration split off and pushed a 29-year-old Moroccan immigrant into the Seine River before rejoining the march. Carried away by the current, the young man drowned almost immediately. Every political figure in France condemned the attack except Le Pen, who dismissed it as an "incident." These and other attacks were met by massive demonstrations. In Marseilles, 20,000 marched to protest the assassination of the youth there. Over 20,000 in Paris came out for an emergency demonstration called to protest the murder of the Moroccan immigrant.

A Weakened Left Against a Divided Right

This was the context in which an extremely weakened left faced off against a divided right this spring. During the coverage of the second round of the elections, which saw the right-wing candidate Jacques Chirac narrowly defeat Socialist Party (SP) candidate Lionel Jospin 52.4 percent to 47.6 percent, political commentator Alain Duhamel correctly noted that Jospin "registered a score that was unimaginable for the left only a month ago."

How did the once powerful SP lose a huge chunk of its electorate in recent years, yet manage to register a more than respectable score in these elections? The answer to the first part of this question lies in the SP's record in office. The 14 years of Mitterrand's presidency, which included two rounds of "cohabitation," in which legislative elections gave the right a parliamentary majority and hence control of the government (1988 and 1993), were years of increasing disappointment for the left following the heady first days of Mitterrand's first victory in May 1981. The first government appointed by Mitterrand in 1981, led by Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, instituted several mildly progressive reforms, including a brief reduction in the workweek (from 40 to 39 hours) and the abolition of the death penalty. But successive

governments, including those of Laurent Fabius, Michel Rocard, Edith Cresson, and Pierre Mauroy, set a tone noticeably marked by the abandonment of the program of mild Social Democratic reforms in favor of a clear "free market" orientation.

The austerity and growing social inequalities that accompanied these pro-market policies resulted in a gradual erosion of the SP's working-class electoral base. Several warning signals reflected this. The March 1993 legislative elections saw a decisive victory of the right, which led to the second "cohabitation," this time under the leadership of the dour Edouard Balladur, who became prime minister.

But it was the June 1994 European elections which reflected the full force of the SP crisis. SP standard-bearer Michel Rocard, long touted as the "natural" successor to François Mitterrand as president, led the SP to its worst showing in decades, garnering less than 15 percent of the vote. But rather than move back to the left and reestablish the SP as a progressive force serious about attacking France's social problems head-on, the SP leaders, like their British counterparts in the Labour Party, further distanced themselves from their left-wing origins. The popularity of Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission in Brussels, where he cultivated the image of a competent technocrat conveniently sheltered from day-to-day French politics, spared the SP somewhat from the necessity of coming fully to terms with its own crisis.

Polls consistently placed Delors, who is to the right of the SP on most issues, in a strong position in the event that he was to be the SP's candidate. No other SP figure was considered as capable of even coming close to winning. As such, a debate failed to materialize in the SP over the reasons for its decline. Such a debate could have given left-wing critics in the SP (like the current known as the *Gauche Socialiste*, or Socialist Left), a wide hearing.

In the wake of Delors's decision not to run, only a brief, pale debate occurred in the SP in the form of a struggle between SP general secretary Henri Emmanuelli and Lionel Jospin for the candidacy of the party. But this debate between Emmanuelli, who favored a more radical discourse, and Jospin soon ended in a special congress which chose Jospin over Emmanuelli.

Though Jospin trailed far behind in the polls, the divisions of the right worked in his favor. Balladur and his mentor Jacques Chirac both presented their candidacies. This unprecedented example of two candidates from one party, the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic

*Under the French electoral system, a second round is held in the event that no candidate receives 50 percent or more in the first round. A second round has been held in every presidential election since the Fifth Republic was founded in 1958.

(RPR), became a source of bitter debate within the right-wing camp. Many voters who usually voted for the right were disgusted by this, especially since apart from several nuances (like Chirac's demagogic speeches promising to work to repair the "social fracture"), their programs strongly resembled each other.

Socialist Victory in First Round

These divisions, as we will see below, partly explained the electoral success of the National Front. It was also a key factor in Jospin's surprise victory in the first round of the elections on April 23, when the SP candidate received 23 percent, to 20 percent for Chirac and just over 18 percent for Prime Minister Balladur. At the beginning of the two-week period separating the two rounds, polls indicated the likelihood of a Chirac landslide of over 60 percent in the second round. How then did Jospin manage to make up that great distance and finish within a few points of Chirac?

Unemployment the Key Issue

The environmentalist candidate Dominique Voynet offered a convincing explanation for the outcome when she told French TV on the night of the elections that Chirac "won by default." A review of the positions of the two candidates on the question of unemployment, which is at the center of French social and political life, supports this analysis. Chirac's plan for fighting unemployment is the classic liberal "solution" of reducing the "social charges" that companies pay. The idea is that lesser labor costs and tax breaks will make French industry more competitive, which will lead to more jobs.

This dogma, which has never borne fruit as far as creating jobs is concerned, has been applied by every French government, whether of the left or the right, over the past few years. Today, all political forces to the left of the SP, from the French Communist Party (PCF) to the far left, as well as most unions, call for the immediate application of the 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay to reduce unemployment. Lionel Jospin, however, called for a 37-hour workweek to be applied on a company-by-company basis in 1997. These proposals were widely diffused during the second portion of the campaign.

Two contradictory things were therefore clear to French workers on the eve of the second round: on the one hand, there was a distinct difference between the two candidates on this important issue, with Jospin's proposal clearly corresponding more closely to their own interests. On the other hand, in spite of the real differences between the two, Jospin's timid proposal was far from the audacious measures needed to tackle unemployment. This most likely meant that while many workers viewed Chirac as enough of an enemy to vote against him and therefore for Jospin, Jospin's proposals coupled with the SP record in office failed to mobilize enough of the working-class voters who remain disgusted with the SP to make the difference. Jospin's strong showing may have

the effect of leading the right to proceed with caution in applying its program of continuing privatizations and cutbacks in social services. On the other hand, the more than respectable score of the SP might once again spare it from a thorough review of its rightward drift. The intensity of the labor and social struggles currently taking place will weigh heavily on all these questions.

Other Candidates

Apart from Jospin's upset victory in the first round, the most noteworthy aspects of that portion of the campaign were the scores of other candidates on both the left and the right.

Change in the French Communist Party (PCF)

The PCF, which accounted for about 20 percent of the vote in 1981, has long since seen its influence — electoral and otherwise — greatly eroded. But the campaign of PCF candidate Robert Hue, Georges Marchais's successor as secretary general of the party, was noticeably more dynamic than PCF campaigns over the last few years. Since becoming secretary general of the party a year and a half ago, Hue has sought to reverse the declining influence of the party by giving it a new image of openness. While the actual practices of the party have not measured up to the verbal declarations of its leader, real change has nevertheless taken place. Public oppositionists are now tolerated, and the party no longer presents itself as the sole political expression of the interests of the French working class. It has even recognized Trotskyist groups like the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR — French section of the Fourth International) as an occasional partner in certain struggles.

Though not a great orator nor very articulate, Hue comes off as earnest, affable, and "sympa" (nice). His numerous rallies were well attended and attracted surprising numbers of youth. For the first time in years, well-known artists, actors, and intellectuals gave the PCF candidate their public support. Most importantly, the party put forth several concrete proposals, including support for a 35-hour workweek with no reduction in pay to help fight unemployment, as well as a 1,000-franc raise for all wage earners paid less than 15,000 francs a month. The PCF consistently attacked the SP from the left, criticizing the governmental record of the SP and Jospin's timid program. Hue's 8.7 percent of the vote represented a gain of over 2 percent from the 1988 elections. This score probably underestimates somewhat the PCF's real support, since given the possibility of a second round consisting of two RPR candidates, many left-wing voters who might have voted for Hue cast their vote for Jospin to assure that the left would be present in the final round.

The coming period will be an important one for those hoping for real change in the politics and practices of the PCF. Hue's vote was enough of a success to calm the most vociferous of the hardened Stalinist old guard in the party, but not enough to give him all the authority he

will need if he really wants to help bring about qualitative change. It is not at all clear, however, what type of change Hue wishes to effect. For over a year now he has talked about his United Pact of Progress (PUP). The PUP could turn out to be a mere rehash of the Union of the Left of the 1970s, limited to electoral wheeling and dealing with the SP. Or it could be the type of opening to other left forces that could be an important step forward for all forces to the left of the SP.

The French Greens

The Ecologists were represented by the energetic 37-year-old Dominique Voynet. Some forces on the left and far left, including the LCR and several groups of former PCF members, hoped that Voynet and her supporters would agree to a joint campaign that could be a rallying point for those hoping to rebuild a serious force to the left of the SP and the PCF. However, Voynet was not interested in this and rejected being classified on the far left. In spite of this, hers was quite a radical campaign. She called for environmental sanity as well as concrete progressive social measures like housing, the 35-hour workweek, and a promise to repeal Pasqua's reactionary anti-immigrant laws. She scored a respectable but disappointing 3.3 percent.

Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle)

The most exciting aspect of these elections for revolutionary socialists was the campaign and vote total of Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière (LO), a sectarian workerist organization of Trotskyist origin. The LO campaign was even more enthusiastic, energetic, and well organized than usual. Arlette's score of 5.4 percent was truly outstanding. Over 1.6 million voters cast a ballot for a Trotskyist candidate who openly placed the blame for the increasing misery of France's working class on the shoulders of French capital and the "free market" policies of the Social Democracy. Most importantly, LO began to gradually add concrete proposals to its usual, often dated, general critique of capitalism. Arlette called for a 1,500-franc-a-month raise for workers, a 50 percent tax on corporate profits, and the requisitioning of companies who lay off workers.

Yet many of LO's traditional weaknesses remain. In spite of several hesitant first steps in the direction of elaborating a program of demands that could mobilize workers for concrete campaigns leading to a real showdown with the capitalists and their state, LO's message remained largely a mix of general propaganda and traditional transitional demands, which don't always correspond to current realities. The organization's workerist bent still leads it to conceive the class struggle as almost purely a struggle at the point of production, leaving aside other aspects of the class struggle, such as the fight against racism.

The question of racism, which is in fact at the center of French politics today, is only discussed by LO in general terms as a by-product of the

capitalist system. The organization is virtually absent from antiracist committees. And if Arlette's concrete demands in favor of wage earners and the defense of jobs is a big step in the right direction, LO had almost nothing to say for France's 3.5 million unemployed workers. LO's success will pose a real challenge for the organization. In a televised interview on the evening of the first round, Arlette called for building a "large party." If LO really intends to use its success to build a large far-left party, it will have to review many of its practices. LO functions in a manner more consistent with the needs of a party operating under a dictatorship than those of a small group which is operating in a bourgeois democracy with ideas that have real resonance. LO has no public headquarters or bookstores. Militants use only their pseudonyms, give out only their work numbers to sympathizers, and demand a level of activism that only a highly devoted revolutionary with few outside interests or responsibilities could accept. LO will have to seriously review these practices or risk letting a splendid opportunity to increase its influence and build a large revolutionary organization slip by.

The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR)

The LCR, French section of the Fourth International, did not run a candidate in the 1995 presidential elections. As in 1988, when it participated actively in the campaign of former PCF dissident Pierre Juquin, it hoped to be part of a campaign involving a platform to the left of the SP and the PCF that would call for unity and recomposition of far left forces. But as was the case in the June 1994 European elections, no agreement and hence no campaign materialized. The absence of the LCR from the presidential campaign was unfortunate, given the quality of its interventions in, and analyses of, such burning social questions as unemployment, housing rights, racism, etc., which were highly visible this spring — the very areas where LO is absent.

Though candidates to the left of the SP were eliminated by the electoral system from the second round, it is significant that nearly 18 percent of those voting cast their ballots for such candidates. This, especially with the remarkable vote for Arlette Laguiller, indicates that the social dissatisfaction reflected in determined strikes and other social struggles, can find a reflection in a coherent, energetic revolutionary political force.

On the Right

On the right, the most significant aspect of the first-round vote totals was the 20 percent registered by National Front (FN) president Jean-Marie Le Pen, who received over 15 percent, and Philippe de Villiers, who garnered slightly under 5 percent. De Villiers hoped to match or increase the 12 percent plus he scored in the June 1994 European elections. His score was a big disappointment for him, especially since with under 5 percent he did not qualify for

matching funds. Yet around 1.5 million voters did vote for this candidate of the traditionally conservative Vendée region in western France and his reactionary, xenophobic campaign of traditional "values."

The FN score was the objective of extensive and widely varying analysis. All observers have noted that this vote was slightly better than that registered by the FN in the 1988 presidential elections and considerably better than the 10–12 percent the FN has received since then. Le Pen's campaign hammered away as usual at the demagogic links it draws between immigration, immigrants, "security" (crime), and unemployment. The FN also posed as an alternative to the base corruption in French political life. Scandals involving highly placed officials have dominated the news for months. Three ministers were forced to resign under the cloud of corruption scandals, and two have been jailed.

The 20 percent garnered by these two far-right parties is quite disturbing. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that 20 percent of the French electorate consists of fascist sympathizers. The De Villiers vote is sociologically quite different from Le Pen's, which is quite heterogeneous. De Villiers tended to attract anti-Maastricht voters (both Chirac and Balladur were pro-Maastricht) of a high socio-economic standing, who, though they might tend to blame immigrants for crime, view Le Pen as a thug. The FN vote does contain a far-right pro-fascist core, but it also involved this time considerable numbers of voters who usually vote for the mainstream bourgeois parties but were either anti-Maastricht, disgusted with the divisions of the right whom they wanted to sanction, or both. The most disturbing aspect of the FN vote is that it is now the party which receives the largest number of working-class votes. That is, more workers vote for this party than for any other. This alone attests to the depth of the crisis of the traditional left parties in France today, and the depth of the social crisis in general and its disorienting effects on working people and sentiments of human solidarity.

Post-Election Social Struggles

The right now controls the presidency, both houses of parliament, and most local governments. But the intensity of the social crisis and the increasing unity of French trade unions will wash away the taste of champagne from the right's supporters' mouths quite rapidly. The more astute politicians of the right recognize this. Conservative politician Philippe Séguin, president of the National Assembly (the French lower house of parliament), stated on election night that Chirac's task will be a "rude" one. He certainly had in mind the famous "third social round" of labor struggles which have already begun and which will undoubtedly increase sharply before the month of May is over.

These strikes occur at an important juncture in the French trade union movement. One of the most promising developments in this regard has been the unmistakable signs in favor of increased unity in action between the coun-

try's chronically divided trade union federations, especially the PCF-led General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the SP-led Democratic French Confederation of Labor (CFDT), and Force Ouvrière (FO — Workers' Strength), traditionally the "Catholic" unions. The presence of CGT general secretary Louis Viannet at the recent congress of the CFDT was indicative of this trend. It was the first time in years that a CGT leader participated in a CFDT congress. More concretely, the strike of gas and electrical workers on the eve of the elections was the fruit of a joint appeal by the CGT, the CFDT, and FO, and the CGT and the CFDT marched together in several cities during May Day demonstrations.

Likewise, the stakes for all will be high in the municipal elections in June. The SP will certainly benefit by Jospin's strong showing. This, coupled with an increasingly tense social climate and Le Pen's showing, will place the FN in a position to dictate conditions to the "respectable" right in return for support in close races. This will present at least three types of dangers. The first is the possibility of FN victories in a number of cities. Second is the possibility that the right, despite promises to the contrary, will succumb to the temptation to bloc with the FN against the left. Thirdly, "republican alliances," in which the SP would join with parties to its right in "defense of democracy," would pull the SP even further to the right, rendering workers even more vulnerable to the rule of the right. The PCF, too, will be tempted to tone down its left criticism of the SP in the name of preserving the 1,200 municipal governments it controls. This could weaken the chances for winning the militant demands — such as the 35-hour workweek — it has supported at a moment when strikes and worker mobilizations can make this and other demands possible. On the other hand, the support for electoral campaigns to the left of the SP, especially the vote for Lutte Ouvrière, reveals the potential for building the type of revolutionary force that workers in France need, as current events are so dramatically showing. □

May 10, 1995



Russian Union Day of Action Makes an Impact

by Renfrey Clarke

Renfrey Clarke is an Australian left journalist living in Moscow. The following article by the was posted on Internet by the Australian publication Left Green Weekly (Internet address: austgreen@glas.apc.org).

At least half a million workers took to the streets of Russian cities on April 12, in some of the largest coordinated labor demonstrations in the country's history. Further millions took part in workplace protest meetings.

The "day of all-Russia united collective trade union action" was organized by the country's mass labor movement body, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (Russian initials, FNPR). According to FNPR leaders, protest actions took place in 78 of the country's 82 administrative regions, with 40 of the federation's 42 affiliated unions taking part. Also participating were 8 unions outside the FNPR structures. The overall level of activity, FNPR Chairperson Mikhail Shmakov observed, was "much greater" than on a similar day of action last October.

In building the April 12 protests, the FNPR leaders restricted themselves to raising economic demands. These centered on calls for the government to make funds available to ensure the payment of huge wage debts — many workers have not been paid for several months — and to take effective measures against unemployment.

But local union bodies often added demands of their own, and these as a rule were bluntly political. The result was that most of the demonstrations on April 12 had a clear anti-government thrust, whether expressed in the official slogans or simply in the red flags and bitterly worded placards carried by demonstrators.

Popular calls were for the immediate resignation of the government, for early presidential elections, and for redirecting the course of reform so as to defend the interests of working people. In St Petersburg, these slogans were officially endorsed by the local labor movement's Intersectoral Strike Committee. In Vladivostok, Kemerovo, and many other centers, similar demands were put to a vote during mass meetings, and were overwhelmingly adopted.

In various regions the all-Russia day of action merged with local strike waves to produce a high pitch of labor militancy. Meanwhile, rallies in the Siberian industrial city of Omsk and in three provincial centers in European Russia adopted motions stating that if the authorities again failed to respond to union demands, more decisive measures would be needed — including a general strike.

The April 12 protests have made it possible to draw a series of important conclusions about the present state of the Russian labor movement. The first such conclusion — voiced with relief by pro-government commentators — is that in most parts of the country the movement is not yet able to mobilize its ranks in a massive and determined fashion. The FNPR has more than 50 million members; even according to the most generous estimates, only a small minority took an active part in the April 12 actions.

Nevertheless, April 12 also showed a widespread readiness to mobilize among workers in regions and occupational groups that have been hit especially hard by the collapse that has accompanied capitalist "reform." Analysis also suggests that where workers failed to take part in protests, the reason very often was not innate passivity. In regions where local union bodies showed seriousness in organizing for the April 12 actions, the turnout was usually impressive. Finally, it is clear that in most regions there are significant numbers of workers who are no longer content with simply placing economic demands on the government, but who see political campaigning by workers and their organizations as essential.

The message of April 12 might be summed up as follows. Russia's labor movement still has a long way to go before becoming a powerful, independent force in the country's society and politics. But it is making up ground fast.

Assessing the results of the day of action in various regions is made difficult by the frequent practice in Russia of exaggerating the size of public gatherings by as much as four or five times. But it is clear that the protests were especially vigorous in the Russian Far East, now largely abandoned economically by Moscow and beset by crippling energy shortages. Reports from Vladivostok describe one of the city's main squares as having been filled to overflowing with demonstrators despite pouring rain. Impressive actions also took place in many other Far East cities.

In the Altai region of central Siberia, demonstrations and picket lines were reportedly held in 36 cities and towns. Here the day of action was combined with a one-day strike by agro-industry workers, as well as with an extended strike by teachers. In Samara on the central Volga, a column of demonstrators reportedly stretched for two and a half kilometers; the marchers carried coffins symbolizing the death of the Russian defense and aerospace industries.

The largest demonstration on April 12 took place in St Petersburg, where the FNPR claimed that 80,000 people rallied on Palace Square. Other centers where relatively large rallies and marches took place included Omsk, Yekaterinburg, Saratov, Kemerovo, and Stavropol.

In Moscow, the picture was less bright. Here the FNPR's regional affiliate, the Moscow Federation of Trade Unions, made no effort to draw workers to a large gathering, limiting itself to a 4-hour picket line at the main government office complex. Although many unionists came in buses from nearby cities to join the picket, total participation was only about 5,000.

In many provincial centers where sizable demonstrations took place, the so-called "intellectual proletariat" — economically hard-pressed teachers, health workers, and students

— played a prominent part. In Irkutsk in eastern Siberia, several hundred students were arrested by police after trying to break through to the building of the local administration.

A further notable feature of April 12 was that for the first time the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Russia's largest political formation with a claimed membership of 500,000, threw itself seriously into helping build trade union protest actions and mobilizing its supporters to attend.

Observing that many of the largest protests were time-zones away in remote provinces, and that the Moscow picket line was unimpressive, various pro-government spokespeople since April 12 have tried to dismiss the day of action as a failure. But a more careful look at the actions and statements of government leaders shows that the trade union protests caused genuine alarm in the official camp.

Shortly before the day of action, First Deputy Premier Anatoly Chubais made a point of claiming that the delivery of funds to pay wages at defense industry enterprises was on schedule — a statement met by union leaders with scorn and disbelief. Trying to redirect workers' anger away from the central authorities, Labor Minister Gennady Melikyan accused regional officials of delaying the distribution of federal payments. On the evening of April 11 Chubais held extended talks with FNPR Chairperson Shmakov, promising to present a new schedule for the payment of defense industry wage debts. Money was also promised to pay the wages of teachers.

The union protests, Shmakov argued to journalists on April 12, were having an impact and forcing the government to act, even though this response still included "far more minuses than pluses." But as the FNPR chairperson stressed at a press conference two days later, the issue of delayed wage payments will be resolved only when the money is actually in workers' pockets.

Experience has shown that unless the Russian government is kept under pressure, it will persistently fail to meet its agreed-on obligations. The temptation for the authorities to delay wage payments is likely to be especially marked from now on, as the government struggles to meet burdensome conditions for a US\$6.8 billion loan from the IMF [International Monetary Fund].

With only limited power to force concessions through conventional strike action, workers in Russia will need to defend their interests through a combination of mass protests and organized political campaigning. As the lackluster performance of the Moscow Federation of Trade Unions indicates, there are still many labor leaders in Russia who do not understand this lesson, or who shrink from the break with the authorities which it implies. But the April 12 actions show that a certain progress is now being made along the necessary path. □

April 20, 1995

Changing of the Guard in Haiti?

by Albert Ayler

"We will not — repeat, will not — have another Cuba in the Caribbean," a senior administration official told a Reuters reporter September 1.

When I traveled to Haiti at the end of February I saw a low-profile occupation. Truly, the U.S. neo-liberals have mastered the art of imperialism since they first landed in Port-au-Prince last September 19. The standard U.S. armored vehicles, the "Humvees," are seen only occasionally, and street soldiers are rarely present in the capital except near the presidential palace.

"Operation Uphold Democracy" could not have been accomplished without the naive faith many have in President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the ex-radical politician who only months before the occupation told Haitians his position on intervention was "Never! Never! Never!"

Now the UN has officially taken over, as of March 31, signalled by Bill Clinton's gala visit. Haiti, Clinton said, "demonstrated the effectiveness and the benefits of international peacekeeping." The hoopla went on so long that Clinton had only 20 minutes left to meet with the Haitian president.

The sham multinational UN force will consist of 6,900 soldiers and police, 2,900 from the U.S., the rest from some 30 countries. The occupation will be under the command of U.S. Major General Joseph W. Kinzer, the first U.S. officer to command a UN force. Kinzer previously served in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and Panama, where he took part in the 1989 invasion. Replacing the international police force will be the Canadian Royal Mounted Police commanded by Neil Pouliot, a force infamous for its persecution of not only Québec separatists and radicals, but immigrant Haitian organizations as well.

On March 31 Aristide led the Port-au-Prince crowd in a call-and-response chant, "Has President Clinton been good to us?" "Oui!" cried the Aristide faithful.

Manipulating the News

A few days before this blissful meeting was a political assassination timed so closely to Clinton's visit that many believe it to have been CIA-inspired. At the time of writing, the political flak has not died down and clearly showed that the U.S. and its mighty propaganda apparatus in the U.S. media is still the real boss in Haiti.

On March 28 the rightist Mireille Durocher Bertin, a lawyer for ex-military dictator Raoul Cedras and at one point his chief of staff, was killed in a burst of machine-gun fire. Also killed was her client, Eugène Baillergeau, a former pilot for Baby Doc Duvalier and more recently for Cedras, who has been linked to the Medellín drug cartel.

The "hit" was done with high-tech radios and weapons. It took place in the capital, during the day, guaranteeing international press coverage. Bertin was a longtime foe of Aristide and demanded he stand trial for supposed "crimes." Bertin recently formed the Movement for National Integration party to run in the upcoming national elections scheduled for June. The U.S. government has said that Haiti's Interior Minister, Mondesir Beaubrun, appointed by Aristide, "masterminded" Bertin's murder, a charge Beaubrun strongly denies. Aristide has gotten the FBI to investigate the killing, in violation of U.S. laws that restrict it to domestic matters.

Accusations and insinuations against the Aristide government have reached a peak, seemingly timed by Washington and the U.S. media to discredit his movement (nicknamed *Lavalas*, "the flood") just before the national elections for parliament and local offices scheduled for June. The April 7 *New York Times* reported a Pentagon cable to the U.S. Embassy in Haiti that listed 27 political opponents of Aristide possibly selected for assassination and in "highly extreme danger." The Defense Department spokesperson said the biggest threat "could be pro-Aristide elements." These were "not necessarily linked to President Aristide," but the implications were clear. Perhaps not coincidentally the *Times*'s front-page Haiti article was continued inside below another article entitled, "Kidnappings Soar in Latin America, Threatening Region's Stability," creating an image of a wild and unruly hemisphere out of control.

The alleged "hit list" has gone through several permutations, like Senator Joseph McCarthy's list of Communists in Washington. Right-wing columnist Robert Novak claimed on April 3 to have unearthed an "enemies 'hit list compiled by Aristide supporters'" consisting of 30 names. Novak also asserted it is "common knowledge" that former Haitian Prime Minister René Préval heads a "shadow government" and a "commando unit greatly feared by the political opposition." Also on April 3 the Associated Press reported that the slain Bertin was on a hit-list of "more than 100 people." Other reports say 96.

An interesting web of probable CIA figures has emerged from the incident. *Haiti Progrès*, a radical Haitian weekly, revealed in its April 5-11 issue, two "left-wing" figures with a shadowy history, Eddy and Patrick Moïse, who the Haitian government says are known "agents provocateurs." The Moïse brothers are leaders of a group called Front of United Militants (FMR) which participated in a 1991 destabilization campaign called "*Vent de la Tempête*" (Wind of the Storm) against the Aristide government. After the 1991 coup, the FMR staged a bizarre occupation of the Canadian embassy

to discredit those seeking asylum. The two were arrested, but quickly released — at a time when real Aristide supporters were being tortured and killed. The two also appeared on a television show during the coup. Eddy Moïse called on his partisans to bum down the U.S. and Canadian embassies. He ended his appearance saying: "Long live Qaddafi! Long Live Castro! Long Live Aristide!"

The Moïse brothers were picked up by the U.S. with four others four days before Bertin was killed. After the killing the U.S. now says the six accuse Interior Minister Mondesir Beaubrun of heading the plot to kill Bertin. Beaubrun strongly denies the charge. The *Washington Post* reported April 4 that the Moïse brothers were riding in a jeep registered to Beaubrun, were in possession of an Uzi sub-machine gun, and had Beaubrun's private telephone number with them, plus several thousand dollars in cash. Also they had the infamous "hit list" in their possession. The *Post* article asserted that the brothers plotted with Beaubrun and that Haitian officials tried to pay them off not to testify against them.

The whole scenario strikes leftist Haitians and solidarity activists as absurd, given the unwillingness of the Aristide government to mount military actions against the coup. In addition, Aristide has placed all his hopes on a "reconciliation," in large part a strategy aimed at placating Washington.

Whatever the political fallout from the Bertin murder, it is clear that the blame for letting the wolf in the door falls on Aristide. Now U.S. support for right-wing forces in the Haitian elections will be greatly bolstered as support for "democracy."

A murder which is certainly more typical of politically motivated killings in Haiti, and rarely mentioned in press reports following the Bertin assassination, was the death, March 1, of Faudner Simon, a member of the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP), since 1989 Haiti's largest grassroots organization. He was a trusted driver who was shot twice on his way home. The killers did not steal his money or vehicle, making it clear his death was political. Said the MPP, "This cowardly murder is further proof showing clearly that the Macoute forces are not interested in reconciliation. On the contrary, they continue to kill, intimidate, terrorize in order to block the route of change, to block the route of democracy."

The Occupation Begins Flexing Muscle

Outside the nation's capital — beyond the view of the media — the U.S. occupation takes on a more overtly oppressive character. In the northern town of Limbé residents attacked a police station which housed many coup supporters. In the struggle, a police lieutenant was killed. On February 16 heavily armed U.S. troops, supported by helicopters circling overhead, surrounded the poor neighborhoods. They kicked down doors, sprayed tear gas and pepper gas, and arrested dozens. Those arrested were iden-

tified for the U.S. forces by known coup supporters, enraging residents.

The U.S. Special Forces raided the headquarters of the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP), during a meeting on February 17, in the Central Plateau. (MPP leaders have openly opposed the U.S. intervention.) The Special Forces troops threatened "to destroy this entire place in five minutes." Such U.S. intimidation has generally gone unreported. Said a February 20 MPP press release, "They warned that should there be any violence whatsoever, they would move immediately against the MPP."

Capt. Bowling of the U.S. Special Forces said the raid was prompted by "reports" the MPP was planning violence during the Carnival in March. Continued the MPP statement, "They leveled serious threats against the MPP leaders and complained they were 'sick and tired' of hearing these kinds of rumors while they had no complaints regarding FRAPH, the Macoutes, and the attachés."

Louise Bowditch, a Boston resident who was working at the MPP office at the time, verified that Bowling told MPP members, "We have the weapons to destroy this entire place in less than five minutes."

Such threats are not new. When MPP leader Chavannes Jean-Baptiste in October returned from the U.S. to his headquarters in Hinche he told his fellow MPP members, "Haiti is not free," drawing warnings from U.S. forces for being "anti-American." Clearly, the MPP is being targeted. MPP members report seeing fake MPP leaflets praising Saddam Hussein and Libya's Muammar Qaddafi and denouncing U.S. forces. Recently a U.S. official barred MPP members in Hinche from taking U.S.-designed exams to get into the police academy.

Uninvited Guest: Jimmy Carter

Only a month before the March 31 U.S. "withdrawal," Haiti received an uninvited visit February 23 from President Jimmy Carter, architect of the agreement with the coup makers done wholly without consulting Aristide. Anti-Carter graffiti were visible on virtually every block in the capital during my visit. Carter was in Haiti to help unite the 17 center-right parties opposed to Aristide for the elections. Carter also asked Aristide if he would be "neutral" during the election, cynically pretending that a U.S. president would remain "neutral" during a Congressional election. The graffiti said in English clearly for the benefit of the U.S. media and Carter himself, "Jimmy Carter, Fuck You"; "Carter: Lawyer for the Army."

One graffiti artist, Carl Mario Loiseau, was detained for three days and beaten by U.S. troops, according to a report in the excellent English-language biweekly *Haiti Info*.^{*} Loiseau told Associated Press, "They came here promising to restore human rights and violated mine just like the Macoutes. The Americans acted like Macoutes."

During the Carter visit, the Haitian Religious conference (CHR), complained of the "many foreign organizations" giving money to candidates, "In these conditions we are seriously questioning [the possibility] of holding really free elections to the advantage of the people."

A New Haitian Army and Police?

On February 20, Aristide "retired" two officers, Brig. Gen. Pierre Cherubin and Lt. Col. Pierre Neptune, under pressure from the U.S., which claimed the two were "human rights abusers." However, Aristide used the opportunity to retire all officers above the rank of major, thus breaking the back of the "old" Haitian army. Previously, he purged the highest ranking coup supporters in the army after his return to Haiti. Although Aristide's latest purge alarmed the State Department and Pentagon, the "new" Haitian army of 1,500 is to be trained mainly by U.S. troops. This is the "democratic" façade behind which U.S. and international imperialism operates. Imperialist strategists know this is the bottom line that transcends Aristide's latest decision. Even though much of the army's upper ranks were trained in the U.S. and were on the CIA payroll, including the coup makers themselves, one U.S. official diminished the impact of Aristide's move by saying, "We had the goods on a few folks, but the rest were no great shakes either."

Filling in for the depleted Haitian army, which is really not functioning as an independent entity under the occupation, is the 3,000-strong Interim Public Security Force (IPSF). A report was issued recently by the Human Rights Watch/Americas Watch and the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, the latter an openly pro-intervention organization. The report, entitled "Haiti: Security Compromised — Recycled Haitian Soldiers on the Police Front Line," criticized the IPSF as consisting of "former members of the same military whose brutal human rights record initially galvanized the international effort to restore democracy." The report went on to note that the U.S. government wanted to "preserve whatever could be salvaged from the army, an institution with which the U.S. has had long-standing contacts and influence, and one seen as a check on President Aristide."

The IPSF had been given a six-day training course by the U.S. Justice Department's International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), which also trained police in Guatemala and El Salvador. The report cited a lack of proper "screening" of IPSF forces on duty until at least November 1996. Out of 7,000 names, the Aristide government objected to 900, which the U.S. rejected and came up with 300. As a result, IPSF personnel have been involved in acts of brutality and extortion. Many ex-soldiers have been directly recycled into IPSF while some 2,600 other ex-soldiers are receiving job training by the International Organization of Migration (IOM),

contracted by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a CIA conduit.

The World Bank Plan for Haiti

The Aristide government signed on to a World Bank/IMF austerity plan last year, shortly before the occupation (although in the past Aristide had supported mobilizations against such plans). Part of this plan includes the privatization of state industries. Slated for privatization are the Port Authority, the cement factory, the water department, flour mills, the electricity department, and the national phone company. Very active in Haiti now is the well-known CIA labor front organization formed in 1962 called the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). AFL-CIO President George Meany was AIFLD's first president. While I was in Haiti I met with several unionists from the public sector who told me that AIFLD had offered them tens of thousands of dollars to accept their "consultation." The union activists told of an encounter with AIFLD in which unionists were told, "If you don't accept privatization you might as well go up into the mountains." On March 4 the public sector unions formed a united front to oppose privatization. Said a joint statement, "Thousands of jobs will be lost in a country which suffers from unemployment. Also, those enterprises offer the population many services...They have a big importance in the economy of the country."

The Development Gap, an independent research group specializing in Third World economies, recently pointed out that the World Bank's Haiti plan, "...is the same model that led Mexico down the road to collapse by undermining the production of small farmers, building export industries on poorly paid labor, and concentrating wealth and resources in the hands of a very few. Since the beginning of Mexico's adherence to this model, the number of billionaires had increased from 2 to 24, while poor people's wages and per capita GDP have dropped." More money is being spent on programs to feed the poor rather than provide peasants, who constitute 70 percent of the population, with agricultural tools, credit, and education. USAID will spend \$40 million to feed 1.2 million people. Said the Development Gap, "the bulk of the productive assets and infrastructure investments financed by donors will benefit the export oriented industrial sector, which in 1990 provided only 40,000 jobs at below subsistence wages."

Several recent protests have taken place against the World Bank/IMF "Structural Adjustment Program" (SAP) austerity measures.

On March 22, reports *Haiti Info*, several hundred took to the streets in Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second largest city, protesting the occupation, high prices, and the privatization of state enterprises. *Haiti Info* reported that the demon-

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^{*}For a year's subscription (in the U.S.), send \$20 to Haitian Information Bureau, c/o Lynx Air, Box 407139, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33340. E-mail: hib@igc.apc.org.

The Nation of Islam's Call for a Million Man March on Washington

by Joe Auciello

In a notable departure from past practice, Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam have issued a call for a Million Man March on Washington for Monday, October 16, 1995. The initial statement for the march appeared in the Nation of Islam's weekly, *The Final Call*, last December, and building support for the march has been a central theme of Farrakhan's recent speeches.

Demands of the March

The program of the march has become clearer in the last few months. In an April 1 speech, for example, to an audience of about a thousand in Symphony Hall in Springfield, Massachusetts, Farrakhan made the following points. (1) The march is a protest against the oppression of Black people and a declaration of "our right to justice and our right to determine the future of ourselves and our people." (2) The march is "a day of atonement" in which the Black Man will apologize to the Black Woman for his sins, his sloth, his personal failures, and will pledge to live up to his personal responsibilities. (3) The march is a work stoppage and an economic boycott. The date is specifically set for a Monday so that Black men will not go to work that day; Black women will support the march by staying home, buying no products. This boycott will show the power of Blacks in the American economy ("this modern-day Babylon") by refusing to participate in it for one day. (4) The march makes a political call to all Black people to leave the Democratic and Republican parties, which have failed to address Black issues and needs, and to re-register as independents. (5) The march is a call for unity among Black people in the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality.

Revolutionary socialists certainly support many of these demands, but overall the weaknesses of the Nation of Islam's vision and program are too integral a part of the call for a Million Man March on Washington for socialists to support it unreservedly, without criticism.

Potential Significance

Nonetheless, it would be short-sighted to downplay or ignore the potential significance of the Nation of Islam's plan for a march on Washington. This march is a serious call by a significant organization, one whose influence is increasing. As Ron Daniels wrote in *Z* magazine (June 1994):

Louis Farrakhan has emerged as the most revered leader among the Black masses. And, his appeal is widespread...Farrakhan has developed a mass following because he is a militant voice tapping into the depths of the agony, pain,

and aspirations of many within the African American community at a time when it is clear that Black people are "the wrong complexion to get the protection" in terms of government policies...A recent *Chicago Sun Times* poll reveals a pronounced rise in what might be termed nationalist tendencies in the...African American community. The poll shows a very favorable approval rating for Louis Farrakhan and strong sentiment in favor of a Black political party.

The Million Man March on Washington seeks to mobilize some of the most oppressed sectors of the American population against their oppression. Given the absence of leadership from traditional civil rights organizations, this march could become the means by which Blacks, especially Black youth, raise their voices *most powerfully* for freedom, justice, and equality.

Political Implications

If successful, this march would alter the political landscape in America. A powerful turnout for the march would place the Nation of Islam in the forefront of Black organizations. If the Nation's call is heeded by significant numbers of Black men and women, then the Nation of Islam could leapfrog over the NAACP, which is financially paralyzed and politically divided.

This march, with its call for Blacks to leave the Democratic Party, could also affect a Jesse Jackson presidential campaign. Jackson has recently speculated publicly about a possible run in the Democratic primaries to oppose Clinton. If the Nation of Islam convinces large numbers of Blacks to re-register as independents, then Jackson's political base would be diminished and Farrakhan's would be strengthened. Jackson would need to turn to Farrakhan for support. This scenario, no doubt, is not lost upon Farrakhan.

(Interestingly, *The Final Call*, in its February 8 issue, printed an article by Ron Daniels criticizing Jackson for not breaking with the Democratic Party. Daniels calls for "a multi-racial force" led by Blacks and people of color "to fight for fundamental change in this country." He praises the role of Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, as far as it went, in 1984 and '88 — for "educating people about the ill effects of racism, sexism, homophobia and religious bigotry on American society...[and] educating people about...the contradictions of the extremes of wealth and poverty in the American capitalist system." But, he says, Jackson "squandered the opportunity.")

(Daniels points to the great potential for "a mass based, democratic, independent, progressive political movement for fundamental

change" engaged in "an independent presidential crusade in 1996." "Having learned the lessons from his past mistakes, Jesse Jackson could utilize an independent presidential campaign to shake up America and fundamentally change the political process." But, he says, it is "extremely unlikely that Jesse Jackson will break with the Democrats and build a *real* Rainbow Coalition" [emphasis added]. He concludes that "we cannot and must not depend on Jesse Lewis Jackson to undertake this vital endeavor. We must decide to do it ourselves. We are the leaders we've been looking for.")

Hindrances and Limits

There is no guarantee that the Million Man March will be successful. Some of the demands and strategies for building the march are likely to hinder its success and limit its impact, despite the imperative need for massive Black protest.

The Nation of Islam's call for "atonement" and the emphasis on moral self-improvement tends to reduce the appeal of the march to those who are already convinced of this point of view. Telling women to remain at home is a further handicap; it reduces the possible numbers for the march and promotes antiquated social relations between the sexes. Black men need to march side by side with Black women, not for them and in place of them.

Despite the Nation's fervent appeal for Black unity, and the objective need for such unity, no coalition for the march is seriously projected. "Unity," apparently, is to be achieved on the basis of the Nation of Islam's program. It is difficult to imagine how other Black organizations could enter the march on this basis.

In Contrast: Malcolm X's Strategy

Malcolm X's strategy of separating religious and political issues in order to achieve the greatest unity and strength in action is an approach that would benefit this march. Instead, the Nation of Islam has conceived the march in a way that will require demonstrators to support the Nation's own perspectives, when a less narrow approach would draw in far more people and make a stronger statement against oppression. Malcolm's strategy remains timely and necessary.

The contradictions of the Nation of Islam's call for a March on Washington reflect the contradictions of the Nation of Islam itself: a conservative religious organization whose defiant opposition to white racism and the U.S. government wins it increasing support from radicalizing African Americans, especially the youth.

Still, what remains to be seen is whether the response to the appeal for the Million Man March will extend significantly beyond the members and supporters of the Nation of Islam. Certainly there is a need for massive Black demonstration and protest. But will the need for a march be strong enough to overcome the weaknesses of the Nation's strategy in building for it? □

April 9, 1995

An Appraisal of the Significance of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam Today

by Joe Auciello

Minister Louis Farrakhan has emerged as among the most significant leaders in the African American community, and the Nation of Islam (NOI) has become one of the most influential organizations in that community.¹

This development is apparent to the U.S. government, which in the prosecution of Qubilah Shabazz continues its longstanding repression of Black activists and organizations. As the prosecution's case against Qubilah Shabazz has unraveled, the evidence has pointed to a government policy aimed at polarizing the Black community by using the legacy of Malcolm X against Farrakhan in an effort to isolate the Nation of Islam politically and reduce its influence.

This government aim will not be easily accomplished; in fact, it seems already to have backfired. Farrakhan's prominence is genuine and earned; his support is wide and deeply felt. Journalist Salim Muwakkil has observed of Farrakhan: "He remains the only black leader capable of attracting thousands to his speeches. Alone among contemporaries, Farrakhan is able to command the attention and corral the energies of the so-called hip-hop generation." Ron Daniels has commented: "What people have to understand is that fundamentally Farrakhan is the mass leader in the African-American community. Barring none."³

What are the reasons for Farrakhan's appeal? What accounts for his growing influence? Why is the Nation of Islam flourishing, especially when other Black organizations are wracked by crisis and on the decline? How can a man whose policies are in many ways highly conservative become the champion of Blacks who are angry and fed up with oppression?

Given Farrakhan's stature in Black America, it would be useful to examine the substance of his ideas. This is particularly so because his stature is only likely to increase as he moves toward rebuilding a positive relationship with Malcolm X's widow, Dr. Betty Shabazz.⁴

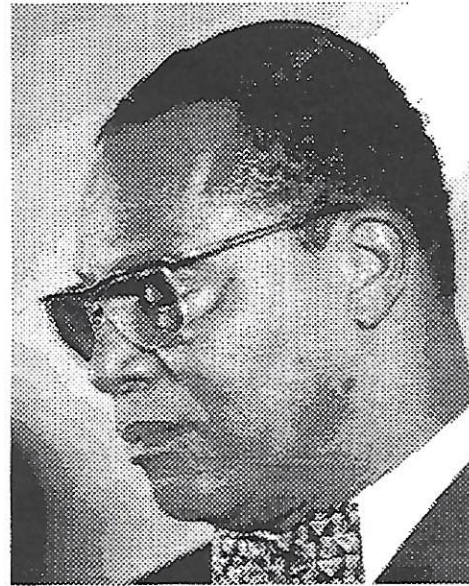
A Sample Farrakhan Speech

The speech Farrakhan delivered last April in Springfield, Massachusetts, provides a good opportunity to explore the contradictory ideology of the Nation of Islam and to show why, despite the contradictions, the NOI is becoming increasingly attractive to Black Americans.

While Farrakhan takes a conservative stand on a range of issues, he is openly defiant and unafraid to denounce the racist history and practices of the U.S. government in the fiercest, most uncompromising terms. For this reason Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam have become the vehicle for a mass Black nationalist sentiment demanding the "freedom, justice, and equality" which is long overdue.

When Farrakhan spoke for more than three hours in a nearly filled Symphony Hall in Springfield, he gave what, if he were a politician, would be called a "stump speech," an all-purpose talk that outlines key points and positions. His lengthy address repeated familiar themes and presented some newer ideas which have appeared in speeches given at the Nation's Chicago headquarters during the last several months. His talk was intended to inspire the faithful, to recruit to the Nation of Islam, and to build the Million Man March on Washington. (For an analysis of the proposed march, see p. 12 of this issue of *BIDOM*.)

In some portions of his presentation, Farrakhan sounded as conservative as any of the Republican presidential candidates. "What's going on?" he repeatedly asked, denouncing the social ills and moral failures that, in his view, bedevil America — the increased visibility of gays, indecent dress among women, the prevalence of nudity in Hollywood films, condom distribution in high schools, the legality of abortion, and especially the lack of parental consent laws to restrict abortion for teenagers. He criticized feminism, rap music performers and videos, and grunge culture ("You young white people with your head full of dope and your damn guitar and your long hair...You don't



Louis Farrakhan

even know whether you're a man or a woman — an earring in your damn ear, one in your nose..."). And he praised religious fundamentalism, Christian as well as Islamic, especially that of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Yet this conservative emphasis on morality and self-improvement is not entirely negative. It is an antidote to the advertisers who have made the African American community the special target for liquor and tobacco sales. (For instance, the new "X" brand of cigarettes designed by white entrepreneurs was recently withdrawn as a result of Black protest.) The Nation of Islam has helped rehabilitate many individuals whose lives have been condemned to the margins of American society. Crime, alcohol, drugs, violence, and promiscuity in the age of AIDS produce wasted lives or early death. For many, the NOI has been the only available alternative, as any reader of Malcolm X's autobiography will realize.

1. The increasing significance of the Nation of Islam is no surprise. A document adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1975 stated: "[The Nation of Islam is] still in the process of evolving... Given [the NOI's] widespread influence, there is no question that any turn toward more direct involvement in political or social action will have an important impact on the Black community." (See "The Fight for Black Liberation: The Current Stage and Its Tasks," in *Prospects for Socialism in America*, New York: Pathfinder, 1976, pp. 190-191.)

2. "Call to Order," *In These Times*, April 17, 1995, p. 29.

3. "Black Politics Under Clinton," *Against the Current*, January-February 1995, p. 20.

4. See "Malcolm X Widow Will Appear with Farrakhan," *Boston Globe*, April 27, 1995, p. 3; and "Farrakhan and Shabazz Will Meet," *New York Times*, April 28, 1995, p. B3. Also, the Associated Press report headlined "Malcolm X's widow, Farrakhan mend ties," *Boston Globe*, May 8, 1995, and "An Unlikely Matchmaker for Shabazz and Farrakhan" [the U.S. government being the "matchmaker" referred to], *New York Times*, May 8, 1995.

Obviously there are limitations to the strategy of self-help. Blacks did not create the general social conditions under which they live, and no amount of individual rehabilitation will solve the larger social problem, although it may make individuals more effective in working toward such a solution. A fundamental political and economic transformation, not merely a personal or spiritual one, will be required to get at the root of the social problems facing the Black community.

The themes of morality and self-improvement were only a preliminary, however, for the main ideas in Farrakhan's presentation. The heart of his speech was a survey of 20th-century American history, which was intended to explain the causes of Black oppression in "this modern-day Babylon" and provide a positive alternative.

Unfortunately, Farrakhan's analysis is deeply flawed. His is a history that derives largely from right-wing conspiracy theories typically touted by reactionaries like the Reverend Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition. Robertson's book *The New World Order* is among the most recent and best-known works of the extreme right, and Farrakhan's views — at least in part — are quite compatible with Robertson's.

Both Robertson and Farrakhan see history not as the result of different classes acting in their own self-interest but as largely the result of actions by evil, immoral individuals, Jews especially, who wield tremendous power in highly secret societies and who control world banks and governments in a massive conspiracy dating back hundreds of years.

Here are only a few of the ideas Farrakhan expressed. He claimed that Woodrow Wilson deliberately implemented part of the *Communist Manifesto* by instituting the income tax. Bolshevism itself, and especially the Russian Revolution of October 1917, he described as financed by international bankers. Both world wars were said to be the result of these same evil men, these satanic forces, who financed the opposing sides in order to reap maximum profits. When President Kennedy, decades later, tried to prevent the spread of war, supposedly planning to withdraw U.S. advisers from Vietnam, he was assassinated by these same evil forces, so that bankers could continue to harvest their filthy profits. Former President George Bush's "new world order" means, according to Farrakhan, that America will be stripped of its power, will have to "bow down to a new power," a one-world order, such as the United Nations. And heartless bankers are today plotting new wars in order to drive the United States even deeper into debt and, finally, bankruptcy.

Parallel with Pat Robertson

All of these ideas parallel the delusional theories of Pat Robertson, who writes of "a tightly knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers."⁵ Robertson's work has unmistakable anti-Semitic sources.⁶

Insofar as Farrakhan's views are derived from reactionary sources, as Robertson's are, Farrakhan cannot help but register his protest against Black oppression in anti-Semitic tones. He forthrightly and indignantly repudiates the accusation of anti-Semitism; his denials sound honest and heartfelt, and certainly his audience is convinced of his sincerity. Yet Farrakhan will not escape the accusations of anti-Semitism as long as he bases himself on right-wing conspiratorial notions of history.

Farrakhan's condemnations of international bankers invariably bring up the names of the Rothschild family, Paul Warburg, etc. Farrakhan states that these men are evil beings who suck the blood of the oppressed, including the poor of their own people. Therefore, Farrakhan explains, he is not attacking Jews as a people, only those Jews who are exploiters and oppressors. (Yet he does claim that 75 percent of the Jews in pre-Civil War America owned slaves.) Despite Farrakhan's denials, the taint of anti-Semitism clings to his speeches because his vision of history and politics is inescapably mired in anti-Semitic sources, especially those of the "religious right."

No Understanding of Capitalism

Farrakhan denounces individuals and groups who are capitalists or who serve them, but in his account of world history, capitalism itself is not faulted. Herein lies the key error of Farrakhan's analysis.

In brief, Farrakhan does not understand capitalism as a system: he does not understand capitalist relations of production and how imperialism has developed on a world scale. He does not, for instance, understand that war is the outcome of the competition inherent in monopoly capitalism. Or, as Ernest Mandel has recently written, "The increasing susceptibility of imperialism/monopoly capitalism to crisis forces monopoly capital to seek a way out of this crisis through counter-revolution and war. This is a universal tendency..."⁷

This expansionist tendency of capital, with all its catastrophic consequences for the human race, asserts itself regardless of the personalities of the political and economic leaders of the capitalist system.

In Farrakhan's vision of the world there could exist beneficent, kindly capitalists who provide

jobs and goods, and bad capitalists who are characterized by miserliness and excessive greed. In fact, the Nation of Islam, with its new Salaam Restaurant and the farms and trucks which supply it, presents itself as an example of how Blacks might prosper through capitalist methods.

Farrakhan eloquently and passionately describes the oppression and exploitation of Black people, and his hatred for that oppression is unquestionable. But his efforts to liberate Black people will be misdirected as long as he misunderstands the roots of that oppression, which are deeply embedded in capitalism itself.

A Contrast: Malcolm X's Views

In this regard, Farrakhan's perspective falls short of the insights Malcolm X had developed, especially during the year before his death. Even when Malcolm X was a member of the Nation of Islam, when, for instance, he viewed the Russian revolution as an expression of "white nationalism," he knew that it was an authentic revolution, not a conspiracy of Jewish bankers. In "Message to the Grassroots" Malcolm pointed out that the revolution of October 1917 was a real revolution because it was based on the struggle for land.

Toward the end of his life, Malcolm X's concepts of Islam and politics evolved.⁸ Malcolm began to name capitalism and imperialism as the common enemy of the oppressed of the world. He was convinced that capitalism could not be reformed in any substantive way, and he urged Black people to break from the capitalist political parties in the United States, particularly the Democrats, with their stranglehold on the Black vote.

In his political work Malcolm X collaborated with socialists who were collaborative with him, and he began to speak favorably of socialism as a solution and goal for liberation movements throughout the world. "All of the countries that are emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning toward socialism. I don't think it's an accident," he noted in May 1964. In February 1965, only a few days before his death, he made some key statements that have often been quoted since then:

We are living in an era of revolution, and the revolt of the American Negro is part of the rebellion against the oppression and colonialism which has characterized this era...

It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.⁹

5. Quoted by Anthony Lewis in "The Crackpot Factor," *New York Times*, April 14, 1995, p. A15.

6. For an analysis of the anti-Semitism in Robertson's work, see Michael Lind and Jacob Heilbrunn, *New York Review of Books*, April 20, 1995.

7. See Ernest Mandel, *Trotsky as Alternative* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 17; also, Ernest Mandel, *The Meaning of the Second World War* (London: Verso, 1986).

8. See George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967), especially Ch. 3, "Radicalism." See also Ruby M. and E.U. Essien-Udom, "Malcolm X: An International Man," in John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (New York: Collier Books, 1969; reprinted by Africa World Press, 1990). Breitman's interpretation of the direction of Malcolm X's evolution is frequently disputed. A recent example is Michael Eric Dyson, *Making Malcolm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Dyson asserts that it is not possible to make definite judgments about the direction of Malcolm's thought. This is not the place to sift through the arguments; nonetheless, Breitman's position is generally more convincing.

Malcolm's Continuing Influence...

As a symbol of Black protest and as a thinker, a strategist of Black liberation, Malcolm X's work has not disappeared or been left behind by history; on the contrary, his ideas have enjoyed a resurgence of popularity.¹⁰ The memory of Malcolm X refuses to go away, as witness not only the Spike Lee film but a growing number of documentaries and videos, such as "Malcolm X: Make It Plain," "Brother Minister: The Assassination of Malcolm X," and "The Real Malcolm X."

In fact, the ghost of Malcolm X still haunts Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. Malcolm's criticism of Elijah Muhammad, the Nation, and the course of its political development sharply rebuke Farrakhan and the NOI of today. The U.S. government has exploited and exacerbated the differences between Farrakhan and his former mentor, but the government did not invent those differences.

... And Farrakhan's Response

Malcolm's popularity, his endurance as a symbol of Black liberation, can be viewed as setting limits on Farrakhan's own achievement. The respect and attention which young Blacks, especially, pay to Malcolm X is a threat to the growth of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan must respond to Malcolm's undiminished popularity and influence, and he has been troubled by how best to do so. He has not been sure whether to claim Malcolm's legacy or to denounce Malcolm — at various times Farrakhan has done both.

In a speech given in Boston in March 1994, Farrakhan tried to portray Malcolm and his legacy as merely an internal matter of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan berated the audience for admiring Malcolm, claiming that Malcolm had betrayed Elijah Muhammad. "And if we dealt with him like a nation deals with a traitor, what the hell business is it of yours?"

But Malcolm X's place in history and his prominence in the struggle for Black liberation cannot be pushed aside by rhetorical tricks. His speeches are too easily available and their analysis is still all too relevant. His words continue to stir and provoke. Malcolm X cannot be reduced to an internal affair of the Nation of Islam; his significance is obviously and undeniably greater.

Farrakhan took an entirely different tack in his speech in Springfield — he appealed to the audience's sympathy. Farrakhan likened Malcolm's break with Elijah Muhammad to a divorce between parents whom he adored. Farrakhan likened himself to a confused, hurt child who had to choose to remain with only one parent. In this account, Farrakhan portrays himself as the victim, and he minimizes his own harmful role in calling for and justifying Mal-

colm's death. Perhaps because Farrakhan was closely associated with Malcolm X within the NOI, Farrakhan felt it necessary to distance himself from his former mentor by employing the most violent rhetoric, thus leaving no doubt of his loyalty to Elijah Muhammad.

The Qubilah Shabazz Case

At the same time, Farrakhan can strike a more conciliatory note. In an ABC-TV interview with Barbara Walters last year, Farrakhan conceded that Betty Shabazz was right to say that he helped create the atmosphere in which Malcolm X was assassinated. "Farrakhan told Walters that Malcolm X's widow, Betty Shabazz, 'never said that Farrakhan was a plotter in the death of Malcolm. But she said that Farrakhan helped to create the atmosphere. And that I can agree with... But don't leave out the United States government. Don't leave out the FBI who had worked for years to separate Malcolm from the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.'"¹¹

Further, Farrakhan has refused to criticize or blame Qubilah Bahiyah Shabazz, who has been indicted for allegedly trying to hire a hit man to kill him. (On the alleged "hit man," the U.S. agent and informant Michael Fitzpatrick, see the article elsewhere in this issue "U.S. Government Backs Off from Case Against Qubilah Shabazz.") Farrakhan has relentlessly condemned the U.S. government for creating this alleged plot and for trying to deepen divisions within the Black community, a strategy which the government has pursued successfully in the past.

The government's prosecution of Qubilah Shabazz has provided an opportunity for Farrakhan to effect a reconciliation with the Shabazz family, and he has seized the opportunity. Farrakhan and Betty Shabazz appeared together on May 6 at a public meeting in Harlem's Apollo Theater to raise funds for the defense of Qubilah Shabazz and the Shabazz family's needs. This meeting, broadcast via satellite to NOI mosques all over the country, may lessen the differences between the followers of Malcolm and Farrakhan, and will certainly enhance the credibility and appeal of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan's role as a leader of the Black community can only be strengthened by this event.

Farrakhan's Audience

What about the Black community and its attitude toward Farrakhan? Who attends a Farrakhan meeting, and what do they think of what they hear? At Symphony Hall in Springfield, Farrakhan's audience, as might be expected, included many Nation of Islam members, but most were probably unaffiliated. C. Eric Lincoln has written that those who turn out for Farrakhan's speeches are not ghetto youth but

are largely "ordinary middle class Afro-Americans."¹² Judging from appearances, some in the audience may indeed have been well-to-do. But in Springfield, as in Boston the year before, Farrakhan attracted Blacks who were primarily young and working class.

They are attracted because Farrakhan gives voice to their feelings as no one else does; he articulates a respect for self, both as individuals and as part of a larger community. His right-wing theories about the causes of Black suffering were listened to, and seemed to be taken as useful only because they provide a rationale to explain centuries of slavery and discrimination. But what galvanized the audience was Farrakhan's description of Black oppression, his demand that it be ended, and his insistence that Black people rise up for their freedom.

A Voice for Black Protest

Farrakhan's call for a Million Man March on Washington was electrifying as, spurred on by the audience, he created a vision of the power that can be forged in unity:

"Look...if you will walk with me...[Yes, sir!] I want a million [Come on!] Black men...[Yes, sir!] Listen, listen, listen! I want a million Black men not to read history [All right!] or to be on the sideline of history [Come on!] but I want a million Black men to make history [That's right!] with me. [Yes, sir!]

"If a million Black men [Yes!] show up in Washington [Come on! We will!] what is your purpose? First, we want to call for a day of atonement...for failure [Yea!] to take up our responsibility as men to become the providers for our families and the leaders [Yes, sir!] of our own communities. You have to atone for that."

Farrakhan continued, explaining the need for the march in both religious and secular, nationalist terms:

"See, God is choosing you today, us today...The Book says He will choose the despised and rejected. He would choose the bottom rung and bring it to the top. Thou shalt no more be the tail, but the head. Who is the tail? Who is the bottom? Who is the least? Who is the foolish? It is we! God has chosen us..."

"And if a million of us show up in Washington — we're not drugged, we're not going there unintelligent. We're in ranks like a solid wall proclaiming our liberation and our willingness to take up our responsibilities as free men."

"And there we're going to call on America to atone for her wickedness, for her evils done. You got to make America know her rottenness. And I don't think there is anybody that can make her know it better. Make her to know her sins, then call on America..."

Continued on page 17

9. *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Pathfinder, 1965), pp. 69 and 217.

10. Joe Wood, ed., *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

11. "Plot to Kill Farrakhan Is Alleged," *Washington Post*, January 13, 1995, p. A20.

12. C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 3d edition (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co./Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1994), p. 270.

Defense and Prosecution Strike a Deal

U.S. Government Backs Off from Case Against Qubilah Shabazz

by Michael Livingston

This article is based on published news accounts. Citations to specific facts and statements in this article are available from the author, who can be contacted care of Bulletin IDOM.

The complicated legal chess game between the U.S. government prosecution and Qubilah Shabazz's defense team ended in a draw — or a win — depending on whom you talk to. The deal, an agreement known as a diversion, was reached late on the night of April 30, as all participants were preparing to start the trial on May 1. Under the terms of the agreement, Shabazz signed a sworn affidavit acknowledging "responsibility" for her role in the alleged plot to assassinate Louis Farrakhan, but she maintains her "not guilty" plea. In exchange, the government will drop the prosecution of the case in two years if Shabazz satisfies several conditions: first, she spends three months in a Texas chemical-dependency treatment facility; second, she goes into an after-care psychiatric and drug/alcohol program; third, she finds employment or enrolls in school; fourth, she engages in no criminal activity during the two-year period. The Texas treatment facility was selected by Shabazz and attorney Percy Sutton. Sutton has family in Texas with whom Shabazz will be staying during her treatment.

Win, Lose, or Draw?

Diversion agreements are very rare at the federal level and typically involve minor personal or property crimes, never a crime as serious as "murder for hire." Diversion agreements most often occur in the early stages of a case, almost never on the eve of trial. These factors lead many legal observers to comment that the agreement was "extraordinary." Said prominent Twin Cities defense attorney Earl Gray: "That's the same as the government saying, 'I give up.'"

On the eve of the trial the government had a 50-50 chance of winning a conviction, according to most legal observers. The videotape of Shabazz giving money to government informer Michael Fitzpatrick was ruled inadmissible, but Shabazz's signed statement acknowledging "responsibility" for the scheme, along with taped conversations of calls between Shabazz and Fitzpatrick, were going to be used as evidence.

A conviction, however, would not necessarily have been a win for the government. The trial, in which a single FBI informer with a notorious past was the key witness, threatened to put the FBI and Justice Department on trial. The present settlement allows the government

to drop the case while permitting it to "save face" and engage in public relations efforts to justify its actions. In addition, the signed affidavit gives the government additional evidence of Shabazz's alleged role in the scheme, thus strengthening their case against her should they decide to prosecute her at any time during the next two years.

"Scumbag"

Trying the case would have proved politically damaging to the government. The trial would have exposed and publicized the actions of FBI informer Michael Fitzpatrick, a person whom former U.S. Judge and Prosecuting Attorney Miles Lord called a "scumbag." In a series of media investigations and a pretrial hearing it was revealed that:

- Fitzpatrick bargained with the FBI and would not turn over his first tapes until he secured a payment of \$45,000, a place in the federal Witness Protection Program (in which he is given a new identity, food, housing, and other perks), and a promise that Shabazz would be prosecuted;
- Fitzpatrick used cocaine shortly before and possibly during his efforts to entrap Shabazz;
- Fitzpatrick had been implicated in a federal investigation of fraudulent practices in the coin business shortly before he began working with the FBI on the Shabazz investigation. Fitzpatrick claimed to earn more than \$100,000 in the coin business in 1993 and 1994. Yet in 1993 he also declared bankruptcy. Examination of invoices by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* showed that Fitzpatrick was either defrauding his customers by selling expensive coins to them but then giving them inexpensive ones, or he was using the coin business to launder money he earned from drug sales or government police agencies;
- Fitzpatrick was arrested in 1981 as a counterdemonstrator at a protest against a South African rugby team. Police found a bayonet, tear gas, clubs, and a metal pipe in the trunk of his car;
- Fitzpatrick has also been accused of burglarizing his former residence, stealing client lists from a coin firm where he worked as a broker, making terrorist threats, and

carrying a butterfly knife. He has never been arrested for any of these crimes;

- Fitzpatrick was convicted for illegal possession of a firearm in New York in 1981;
- Fitzpatrick may have edited the tapes of his conversations with Shabazz and only turned over certain tapes to the FBI;
- Fitzpatrick was making romantic overtures to Shabazz on some of the unrecorded tapes (according to defense attorneys), encouraged Shabazz's son Malcolm to call him "Dad," and proposed marriage to Shabazz;
- Fitzpatrick urged a friend who was a reporter to call Shabazz in New York City and offer her a job as a writer. The reporter called her and suggested that she could find work with her paper;
- Fitzpatrick took an FBI lie detector test on October 11, 1994 (several months after the "investigation" began), which showed that he lied to federal authorities. The report on the test, obtained by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, indicates that Fitzpatrick was asked if he initiated the conversations to assassinate Farrakhan (he apparently answered no). Fitzpatrick was also asked if he was lying about Shabazz's initiating the conversations to assassinate Farrakhan (he apparently said no again). The report stated, "It is the opinion of this examiner that the recorded responses were indicative of deception."

Combined with the revelations about Fitzpatrick described in the April issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, we have a picture of a government informer operating outside of the law and a justice system little concerned with justice.

Spin Control

As information about the case came out, a number of unnamed sources at the Justice Department and FBI expressed misgivings about the case. On March 25, the *New York Times*, in its lead editorial, called on the government to "weigh carefully whether this evidence deserves a trial or is too tainted by entrapment" to continue with the case. When the diversion agreement was announced, it was greeted with a wave of relief from officials and media commentators.

The prosecutors declared that they had "served justice" in the case. To bolster their position with the media, U.S. Attorney David Lillehaug released to the public the transcripts of the taped conversations between Shabazz and Fitzpatrick. Defense attorney William Kunstler lashed out at the government's release of the transcripts, saying his release of extensive files on the alleged plot was a violation of the court's sequestration order because the case was still pending for two years.

The coverage of the transcripts by local TV stations supported Lillehaug's spin on the case. Every local TV news played brief excerpts from the earliest tapes, in which Shabazz talks about an obsession with Farrakhan and seems anxious to carry out a plot against him. The full transcripts, analyzed by the *Minneapolis Star Trib-*

une and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, showed that while Shabazz seemed to be a willing participant at first, she seemed to lose interest in the scheme, expressed frequent hesitation and doubt, and was fearful of what Farrakhan might do to her mother because of her mother's public criticism of him, and tried to discourage Fitzpatrick's seeming obsession with killing Farrakhan.

After the settlement, Qubilah Shabazz spoke to the media for the first time. In statements given to TV reporters the evening of May 1, Shabazz said that she had not plotted to kill Minister Farrakhan and that the scheme had been the idea "all along" of Michael Fitzpatrick, the man she thought she was going to marry. Shabazz also told the TV reporters that her statement to the FBI in December (which the government continues to characterize as a confession) was written by the FBI and not by her, and that in signing it, she was trying to

protect Fitzpatrick. Shabazz said she signed the FBI statement in December because, "I was under a lot of pressure when I was interviewed," and she signed the diversion agreement because, "It's better than being incarcerated." In an interview with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Shabazz said, "Michael Fitzpatrick was seeking some sort of glory. From day one, I feel he sought to entrap me. He was playing a really sick game and out of love for him, I fell for it."

While the government could restart the prosecution against Shabazz, it appears unlikely to do so. At present, Qubilah Shabazz will be starting her treatment program in Texas. She has yet to be reunited with her son Malcolm — the government took her son away from her in November and placed him in the St. Joseph's Home for Children. Malcolm is currently living with relatives, and Shabazz stated that she greatly missed him. One important piece of

information has not yet been revealed. Federal Magistrate Judge Franklin Noel granted a defense motion to have copies of the taped phone conversations between Shabazz and Fitzpatrick examined by an independent technical laboratory for evidence of tampering. Results of the examination may now never be revealed.

Qubilah Shabazz was twice a victim in this case. Once a victim of a manipulative, out-of-control informer and once a victim of a Justice Department rife with incompetence, bent on controlling and punishing, and more concerned about public relations than justice. We can all learn from this case about the role of informers in the legal system and the nature of the so-called criminal justice system. □

May 5, 1995

Fightback News From San Francisco

by Hayden Perry

The pall of apathy and despair that has loomed over San Francisco and the rest of the nation lifted on May 6 as an estimated 10,000 people marched in brilliant sunshine to protest the Contract On America.

Observing the sea of banners flowing for block after block through the city's streets, a marcher said, "This looks like the Vietnam war protests again." The broad range of participants — young and old, white Americans and Americans of color — reflected all the various people who are targeted for loss and injury.

Banners and placards reflected the concerns of the marchers. "No Cuts in Senior Housing!" "Stop Bashing Immigrants!" "Defend Affirmative Action." "Money for Schools, Not for Prisons!" Almost every San Franciscan present had a particular reason for demonstrating.

Speakers, who held the crowd for nearly four hours after the tiring march, covered most of the issues inscribed on the banners. They pointed out that San Francisco was not alone. Protesters were marching in 39 other cities.

The featured speaker, Jesse Jackson, was a disappointment to many who had heard him before. He did not call for breaking with the Democratic Party. His moral exhortation to "stop the anger that leads to violence and scapegoating and start working together" was too vague and generalized to stir the crowd.

The tone of the day was accurately expressed by a marcher who said, "I haven't been to a protest in a long time. This brought me out here because I feel like what's going on in Congress is evil. This is the beginning of a long fight."

An Appraisal of the Significance of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam Today

Continued from page 15

"We are the representatives of 40 million people. We are saying to America...you got a whole lot of land out here; you ain't doing nothing with it. It's going to take about 50 million acres for us to feed 40 million people and clothe them. Since you got government land that you ain't doing nothing with, give it to us for what we have done to build your country and to defend a freedom that we have never enjoyed! We want reparations. You got to do something to repair the damage that 400 years of injustice has done."¹³

Some of the young Black men who listened to Farrakhan's speech (not members of the Nation of Islam) even spoke of him as the new Malcolm X. They were not inspired by the elements of anti-Semitism in his talk. In fact, they were at pains to deny it. Instead, they were inspired by

his impassioned exhortation of American society's mistreatment of Black people.

This is Farrakhan's importance — that he articulates the anger of Blacks against injustice, that he calls on Blacks to protest and fight for their liberation.

A Living Icon

He inspires pride in his audience, a pride in Blackness, both by his word and his example. In Farrakhan his admirers see a living icon, a man not afraid to condemn America for its inhumane treatment of Black people. The nationalist sentiment, the sense of solidarity in sharing a common oppression, that Farrakhan ignites is the source of his appeal and growing popularity. As his authority grows he is increasingly seen as the leader who can bring about greater unity in the Black community and aid

that community in closing ranks against its common oppressor, the white racism of American capitalist society.

Minister Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam represent a contradictory phenomenon — a conservative force which, in opposition to white racism, captures a radicalization going on among Blacks in America today, the revolutionary spirit of the nationally oppressed.

The flaws in Farrakhan's beliefs are terrible and undeniable. Still, because of the masses he influences, Farrakhan's ideas and the growth of the Nation of Islam are increasingly significant. For this reason alone, anyone who wants to understand the political trends within Black America and their implications for the political life of this society is obliged to assess Farrakhan and the organization he heads. □

13. Taken from an audiotape of Minister Farrakhan's speech of April 1, 1995, in Springfield, Massachusetts. This and other audiotapes are available through *The Final Call*, 734 W. 79th Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60620.

Sectarianism vs. Revolutionary Marxism

World Socialist Revolution Today

by Ernest Mandel

- The Constituent Elements of Marxist Theory and Political Practice
 - The World Situation and Its Main Dynamics
 - What Does It Mean at Present to Prepare for World Revolution?
 - The Fundamental Differences Between Dogmatic Sectarianism and Revolutionary Marxism
 - What Is the Fourth International Today and What Is It Trying to Become?
-

The following is the original text written by Ernest Mandel in advance of a meeting in New York City on November 11, 1994, in which Mandel debated a representative of the Spartacist League and which was organized by the Spartacists. For reasons of proletarian democracy — allowing enough time for speakers to intervene from the floor in a broad debate — Mandel agreed to cut his initial text to half an hour.

The author has introduced some additional remarks in the editing of the present text.

This is not a final version. It is expected that a revised and expanded edition of this article will appear in pamphlet form in several languages.

The birth act of Marxism is Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world. The thing is to *change* it."

This is the main contribution of Marx and Engels to the theory and practice of socialism, after Marx's theory of surplus value. This last theory is based upon his perfected labor theory of value, encompassing his discovery that commodity production corresponds to private labors performed independently of each other.

The class divisions under capitalism ultimately result from the fact that the wage-earning class has been cut off from its material means of production, the means of producing its own livelihood. These have been appropriated by the bourgeoisie. Hence the obligation of the wage earners to sell their labor power (which has become a commodity) to the owners of these means.

Capitalism therefore corresponds to a precise relation between human beings (classes) and not to a relation between human beings and things.

This is a more general thesis of Marx and Engels, true for all forms of human society. These are always specific, in function of specific social relations of production, which generate specific laws of motion.

The Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, when its central idea is developed in a precise way, transcends the limitations of utopian socialism. A precise analysis of class society leads to the conclusion that class struggles, determined by antagonistic interests of classes or major class fractions, dominate history.

They especially dominate bourgeois society. In order to defend consistently the interests of the exploited and the oppressed from the many forms of material and moral misery which that society inflicts upon them, it is

necessary to overthrow the capitalist mode of production and replace it by a society of freely associated producers.

While a correct understanding of capitalism is indispensable for its overthrow, it is not enough. This task has to be realized in practice. Only the class of the wage earners, as defined by Lenin and Plekhanov in the first program of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party — "all those who are under the economic obligation to sell their labor power" — is capable of breaking the hold of the capitalist class over the main means of production and exchange by their expropriation.¹ Where the big landowners are still a class apart from the capitalists and control the land, their expropriation has to be combined with that of the capitalists.

These expropriations cannot succeed without the destruction of the bourgeois state machine and its replacement by a workers state, by the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Engels defined it in his comments on the Paris Commune and his polemics against the followers of the German socialist Ferdinand Lasalle, who succeeded in introducing part of their wrong ideas on the subject into the Gotha Program of the united German Social Democratic Party.

The classical analysis of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the one by Lenin in his book *State and Revolution*. While a genuine workers state is still a state, it is a state which starts to wither away from its very inception. Generalized self-administration and self-activity by the mass of the toilers implies that human relations based upon compulsion begin to be replaced by relations based upon voluntarily accepted discipline and habit.

But there is a series of preconditions for this to occur as rapidly and as smoothly as possible. Most of the elements of the new society should already have ripened in the womb of the old one. The wage earners should

1. The most striking example of the importance of this understanding is the case of Jean van Heijenoort, Trotsky's most gifted secretary and after Trotsky's death, secretary of the rump FI outside Europe. Once he began to think that the revolutionary potential of the working class did not exist, he broke with Marxism and socialism. (See Jean Van Heijenoort, *With Trotsky in Exile*.)

already be the great majority of the active population. They should already have acquired on average a high level of skill and a relatively high level of political experience, as well as a sufficient level of culture.

In other words, the first workers states should arise in the economically most developed countries.

However, as Trotsky correctly predicted as early as 1905–06, this was not how the real process of world revolution would develop. This process has been characterized by the law of uneven and combined development, probably Trotsky's most important contribution to Marxist theory.

The first nationwide victorious socialist revolution occurred in relatively backward Russia, not in Germany, France, Britain, or Italy, not to speak of the USA. While the Russian proletariat had a great advantage in political audacity and will, and did take power under the leadership of the Bolshevik party headed by Lenin and Trotsky, it was only a small minority in an essentially peasant country. Even if one adds to it the poor peasantry, the proletariat remained a minority of Russian society.

Furthermore, the Russian proletariat was culturally underdeveloped and without experience of long-term mass political activity. Were the Mensheviks then right to say that under these circumstances it was wrong to take power? They were not. The alternative was not, "Either the dictatorship of the proletariat or bourgeois democracy." The alternative was, "Either the dictatorship of the proletariat or a vicious semi-fascist/prefascist dictatorship."²

The fear expressed by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* that under these conditions "all the old crap" would automatically reappear proved to be exaggerated. Much of it did. All of it did not.

The Bolsheviks hoped to overcome the burden of Russia's backwardness, which weighed so heavily on them, by a rapid extension of the revolution, in the first place to Germany, Austria, and Italy. This extension took place — that is, proletarian revolution came to Germany, Austria, and Italy in the period 1918–1920/21 — but this was many months later than Lenin and Trotsky expected. The main culprits for this delay — for which they later paid dearly themselves — were the leaders of the right wing of German Social Democracy, as well as, to a lesser degree, the leaders of the Austrian Social Democracy and part of the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party and trade unions. And this extension did not win.

As a result of the interplay of all these factors, the first victorious socialist revolution remained isolated in a backward country, with all the consequences flowing therefrom.

World revolution became an internationally desynchronized process. It will probably remain so. Under these circumstances, the first victorious socialist revolution had to defend itself against internal counterrevolution supported by many imperialist powers. It had to defend itself later against the savage aggression of German imperialism under a fascist leadership. In the case of China in 1949 and after, when socialist revolution came to that country, it had to defend itself against savage aggression by U.S. imperialism. Earlier as a semi-colony it had to defend itself against the savage aggression of Japanese imperialism.

While these revolutions succeeded in overcoming military aggression, in the long run the pressure of the capitalist world market proved to be more dangerous for them. The bureaucratized Russian and Chinese workers states were unable to overcome that pressure. But even a qualitatively more democratic workers state in these countries would have been unable fully to realize that goal. A radical solution could only occur by a victorious extension of world revolution to at least a sufficient number of the industrially leading countries of the world.

The basic cause of this desynchronization lies in segmented markets for labor power, not only on a world scale: the huge wage differential between the imperialist countries and the Third World countries is their crudest manifestation. But income differences exist likewise inside the imperialist and Third World countries: between male and female workers; between skilled and less skilled ones; between adult labor and child labor; between unionized and nonunionized workers — with the growing emergence of miserable, marginalized layers.

We have to struggle to overcome this segmentation. This is not an easy task. The material conditions that lead to it are combined with the weight of different political traditions and ideologies — often reactionary prejudices against women, against "foreigners," sometimes pure racist prejudices. Given the desynchronized process of world revolution, the key task for revolutionary Marxists is therefore to a large extent the struggle to forge growing working-class solidarity and unity on a world scale — *solidarité sans rivages*, as we say in French, solidarity without frontiers. It is essentially an internal struggle, one inside the working class, although it cannot be detached from the actually unfolding class struggle between capital and labor. From it flows the key importance of building an international revolutionary Marxist organization.

Objective Reality of Social Classes

Another leap forward of socialist thought by Marx and Engels was their definition of social classes as objective realities, independent of how, for example, the exploited classes see themselves.

Slaves were a social class in function of their performing slave labor, although no "slave ideology" existed, properly speaking. The American proletariat is a social class in function of its performing wage labor even if a significant group of it considers itself to be "middle class."

This does not imply that the way in which the exploited and the oppressed see themselves is irrelevant or unimportant. Their degree of what is called in German *Selbstbewusstsein* (self-consciousness) is very important for the successive stages that workers mass organizations pass through.

The wage earning class's self-consciousness codetermines the way it reacts to the forms of compulsion it is exposed to by the capitalist system.

An individual worker is practically helpless and therefore to a large extent demoralized when confronted with his boss in the plant and by the boss's state in society at large. He can only overcome that helplessness by organizing, first of all at plant level, i.e., by organizing a union with a minimum of financial means.

Stages of Class Consciousness

Trade union consciousness is therefore the first elementary form of class consciousness.

After organizing against the bosses in the plants, it was logically necessary to oppose workers parties to the political parties of the bourgeoisie, inasmuch as sectors of the working class had already some form of franchise. Regardless of the ideology of these parties, this was a giant step forward. It has not yet been realized in important countries in spite of the existence of strong trade unions, for example, in the USA, India, Argentina, Turkey.

Finally, there comes the stage of workers parties with an anti-capitalist, socialist consciousness. This stage was attained by and large by German Social Democracy from the 1880s on, by many European countries following the German example, on a smaller scale by Japan during the same period. Australia, New Zealand, the USA (before 1914) on a limited basis are intermediate forms.

Underlying this theory of stages in class consciousness is an understanding of the key importance of practice.

Living, creative Marxism is always *open* Marxism, open to verification by new empirical data about the past and about the present. It is always self-critical. Marx once stated tongue-in-cheek — but only very partially tongue-in-cheek — that his favorite motto was: "*De omnibus est dubitandum*": "You have to have doubt about everything."

This is not a falling back into some form of insipid theoretical eclecticism. We defend all the theoretical conquests of Marxism tooth and nail, as long as no irrefutable evidence is advanced that some of them have proved to be wrong, as long as no more coherent theory of history and society has been proposed, which is certainly not the case today.

What underlies the position opposed to the Marxist one of social classes as objective realities is a leap backward from scientific socialism to utopian socialism. Somehow the working class is not defined by its place

2. See my Amsterdam notebook, *In Defense of the October Revolution*.

in society but by its ideology. If workers have reactionary ideas — which they often have — they cease to be workers. They “objectively” become “bourgeois.”

The Difference Between Marxism and Sectarianism

Here we are at the heart of the difference between revolutionary Marxism and dogmatic sectarianism.

Sectarians are fanatical addicts of the Gospel according to St. John: “In the beginning was the Word.” Everything depends on the right word being spoken or written everywhere. The belief in the power of the word becomes like a belief in magic. Any consideration of actual time and place disappears. Terrible consequences are supposed to flow from a wrong formula here, a wrong headline there.

When you publish hundreds of pages every month, some mistakes are inevitable. This happens with our press [i.e., of the Fourth International], as it happened with the press of classical Social Democracy under Engels and Bebel, with the press of the Communist International in the time of Lenin and Trotsky, with the press of the Trotskyist movement when Trotsky was alive.

Indeed, some of these mistakes were much worse than ours. Let us just mention the many articles in favor of reactionary right-wing anti-Versailles Treaty forces in the press of the young German Communist Party, including in the official press of the Comintern, Karl Radek being the main culprit there.

From the mid-1890s on, some Social Democratic papers carried articles with ugly anti-Semitic innuendos. This became scandalous during the Dreyfuss affair. There Jean Jaurès saved the honor of the movement. Of course, Engels and Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, and Trotsky (in chronological order) were totally immune from that poison.³

One of our comrades made a mistake by writing favorably about the Estonian “Forest Brothers,” who were real pro-fascists during World War II. This is not a minor mistake. There is today no danger of fascism coming to power in Estonia. But propaganda in favor of pro-fascist figures of the 1940s makes it easier to have existing chauvinist groups glide over in the direction of neo-fascism.

However, the effects of that comrade’s mistake on Estonia were literally nil. Nobody there knows our press or reads it. And its effects in our ranks were nearly nil. Perhaps a couple of readers were confused. But 99.99% of them know our record as systematic, relentless, and merciless fighters against fascism and neo-fascism, from 1929 to today. When the *Workers Vanguard* (September 16, 1994) writes that as an organization we had adopted a single comrade’s mistake about the “Forest Brothers,” this is of course a total lie.

What starts as a lie becomes an outrage when the Spartacists insinuate that somehow the FI is “weak” on understanding the danger of neo-fascism or fighting it in general. Tell that to our French and Belgian comrades, who mobilized literally thousands of youth in the streets against the neo-fascists!

In the Beginning Was the Word? No, the Actual Workers Movement

Revolutionary Marxists reject the idea that in the beginning was the Word. They are convinced that in the beginning there was the actually developing class struggle, with all its contradictions. During World War I Lenin explained in “Against the Stream” that whoever believes that somehow the socialist revolution will oppose one camp of “pure” socialists to another camp of “pure” counterrevolutionaries and their hangers-on will never see a socialist revolution, not to speak of influencing or leading it.

This ties in with the definition by Marx and Engels of what under capitalism the struggle for socialism is all about. As we already stated, from the *Communist Manifesto* on, the founders of Marxism specified precisely that in essence it is the setting free of all the elements of the new society already developed in the womb of the old one. Communists just do that. They don’t try to impose preconceived schemas on the actually developing movement for the emancipation of the working class.

Public, large-scale democratic self-activity of the wage earners is, therefore, an indispensable condition for a successful building of socialism.

That building presupposes socialist planning. This is a centralized process. But it is a process for which no perfect blueprint exists in advance, as Rosa Luxemburg so clearly demonstrated in 1918, and Trotsky repeated in his polemic against the Stalinists during the first 5-year plan. It is to a large extent a process of trial and error, in which mistakes are unavoidable. The real utopia is the belief that some “perfect” plan exists, or worse, that it is more important to avoid grave errors with their tremendous costs than to pay the “excessive” price of genuine workers democracy.

Democracy in the Workers Movement

No real workers democracy is possible without the workers being able to choose between alternative coherent plans of economic and social development, i.e., between alternative priorities. There is therefore a real dialectical interaction between the existence of a *de facto* multiparty system and gradually more and more efficient socialist planning, i.e., fewer and fewer mistakes and quicker and quicker correction of them.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky stated unambiguously:

The prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions. The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders. The police-manufactured monolithism of the party resulted in a bureaucratic impunity which has become the source of all kinds of wantonness and corruption. [Pp. 104–105 of the New Park Publications Edition, London, 1967.]

In the Transitional Program, Trotsky likewise speaks out clearly in favor of a multiparty system:

Democratization of the soviets is impossible without legalization of soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves, by their own free vote, will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties. [P. 10 of the Pathfinder Press edition, New York, 1973.]

Trotsky deliberately defines soviet parties not by ideological criteria (parties which are in favor of the soviet system, or of building socialism as defined by some Supreme Judge on Ideological Purity, etc.), but by a factual-political criterion: all parties for which workers and peasants actually vote under full freedom of choice.

Anybody’s attempt to impose a different way of operating in the name of some “higher” priority implies repression — not repression against the bourgeoisie but repression against the working class.

The Stalinist Bureaucracy

One of the most important contributions of Trotsky to the development of Marxist theory is his concept of the Stalinist bureaucracy (and this applies to the post-Stalinist bureaucracies as well) as a *specific social layer* with particular material interests to defend.

For sure, in the long run, the bureaucracy objectively furthers the restoration of capitalism. But for a whole historical period, roughly from 1929 to 1988, it acted contrary to that historical role. It prevented the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. It suppressed capitalism in Eastern

3. There are precedents from the classics. Lenin sent an enthusiastic telegram of support to the South African mine workers, who informed him that, in the course of the general strike, they had set up a soviet. It so happens that this was a racist general strike by white miners, trying to exclude black workers from working in the mines.

Marx approved of the annexation of California by the USA with the racist argument that since Mexicans were lazy, they could not bring to fruition the natural wealth of that region as the industrious Yankees would.

Engels spoke of the smaller Slav nations as “people without history” who had no right to independent statehood because they had taken the side of the Habsburg monarchy against the Hungarian revolution. Our teacher and friend Roman Rosdolsky has convincingly proved that the Croatian peasantry had offered to support the revolution wholesale, if they received ownership of the land. The Hungarian landowners answered in the classical way: “First we must win the war against the Habsburgs. Then we shall talk about land ownership.” The results were inevitable. (R. Rosdolsky: “Engels und die geschichtslose Völker.”)

Of course Lenin, Marx, and Engels generally took a staunch anti-racist and anti-colonialist position. The cited cases represent exceptional lapses from this general line.

Europe after World War II. So did the bureaucratized Communist Party in China.

It did not act in this way out of any commitment to socialism. It acted in order to extend its power and privileges, as Trotsky specifically stated in *In Defense of Marxism*. But suppressing capitalism is not identical to maintaining it. Whoever denies this, like the state capitalist sect (British SWP), defends the preposterous position that there was no structural difference between Mao's China and Chiang Kai-shek's China, between East Germany and West Germany, between Eastern Europe before and after 1949, between North Korea and South Korea. You will not find a single capitalist anywhere in the world who believes that nonsense, who thinks that somehow his class remained in power in the countries just enumerated.

Bureaucratized Workers States and World Revolution

The Trotskyist theory of the nature of the bureaucratically degenerated workers states raises two vital questions about the connection between the existence of these states and world revolution.

First: does the defense of the remaining conquests of October take precedence over tasks of revolution in other parts of the world, as the Stalinists/post-Stalinists for a long time asserted with their theory and practice of the USSR being the central bastion of the workers of all countries, and proletarian internationalism equaling the defense of that bastion, and as the Spartacists tend to assert today?

Second: can world revolution march forward and achieve victories outside the "socialist camp," through its own momentum in given countries, provided there exists a leadership, not necessarily a genuinely revolutionary Marxist one, which is ready to lead such a process of destruction of the bourgeois state and of conquest of power?

Those who answer "yes" to the first question, whether they are aware of it or not, defend a pro-Stalinist, pro-Soviet-bureaucracy "campist" position, with all the implications for current class struggles that we have witnessed from the 1930s on.

Those who answer "no" to the second question, again regardless of whether or not they are conscious of it, in practice adopt a position parallel to the reactionary utopia of socialism in one country. Advances of world revolution are supposed to be impossible without a prior overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy. Everything depends in the final analysis upon what happens inside the Soviet Union.

We reject both these theoretical/political errors out of hand. We can base ourselves on solid historical evidence to do this.

It is simply impossible to deny that the subordination of the interests and the movements of the exploited and the oppressed in various countries at various moments to the maneuvers of Stalminist diplomacy has had catastrophic consequences for world revolution and for the USSR itself. An important political conclusion has to be drawn therefrom concerning the present situation in the ex-USSR, Eastern Europe, and the People's Republic of China.

Preventing Capitalist Restoration in the Bureaucratized Workers States

Ultimately, the only social force which can prevent a full restoration of capitalism in these countries is the working class. But in order to realize that goal, the workers of these countries have to reconquer their self-confidence and their capability to act politically on a broad scale. Decades of bureaucratic dictatorship have shattered them. Therefore, revolutionary Marxists have to help them to operate on two fronts simultaneously. On the one hand, they have to act against privatization of industry and of large-scale service and agricultural units, and against the suppression of surviving social benefits in the fields of education and, partially, health care. On the other hand, they have to fight for full democratic rights for the working class, the freedom of organization, the right to set up different political parties, the freedom of the press, the freedom of peaceful demonstrations, the right to strike, etc.

More generally, after the traumatic experiences with fascism, Stalminism, various military dictatorships, the world working class as well as the Soviet, Eastern European, and Chinese working classes are in favor of universal human rights, of unrestrained political freedom.

Trotsky took a clear stand on that issue. He ended his September 25, 1939, article "The USSR in War" with the following passages:

The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal...

And again:

We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution.⁴

"Communism and Freedom"

This is not new in the history of communism. The illegal Italian CP, after the beginning of the fascist dictatorship, expressed this idea in the final sentence it added to the traditional Italian workers' song "Bandiera Rossa" (The Red Banner): "Evviva il comunismo e la libertà" ("Long live communism and freedom").

The young CP of the USA, under the impulse of our comrade Jim Cannon, with his IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] libertarian tradition, applied the same orientation in an admirable way, when it organized the worldwide defense campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti. These anarchists were resolute opponents of Communism and of Soviet Russia. But they were workers, victimized by U.S. Big Business and its political personnel. Jim had no complex about organizing that defense campaign, which brought millions of people into action throughout the world. And he was totally correct in doing so. Class solidarity should not know any ideological restraints, except in a situation of real (not "potential") civil war.

This lesson from history should be generalized. We should resolutely stand in favor of fighting for basic human rights in *all* countries of the world, without exception.

Is the Fight for Democracy "Eurocentric"?

Some well-meaning advocates of recognition of cultural diversity claim that insisting on individual human rights is somehow a reflection of "Eurocentrism," or a product of the European "Greco-Judeo-Christian" tradition. They are mistaken on two counts.

A strong case can be made for the thesis that the defense of the individual's human rights (the right to life and to physical and mental integrity, to liberty) was born in the Middle East and not in Europe. It is especially true that to deny these rights to individuals in countries with different cultural traditions has grave racist implications for the individuals concerned, independently of the intentions of those who defend these concepts. For us, a black-skinned back isn't hurt less than a white-skinned back when whipped, even if such whipping corresponds to a specific religious-cultural tradition. A man or woman whose hand is hacked off in punishment of theft suffers everywhere in the same way, independently of the fact that such punishment is rooted in a specific religious-cultural tradition. Killing a so-called "adulteress" by stoning her to death makes her die under horrible suffering in an Islamic country, exactly as would be the case in the USA, Japan, or France.

Islamic fundamentalists claim that blasphemy laws are needed to preserve, defend, and stop discrimination against their religion. In this way, they justify their scandalous death sentence against the writer Salman Rushdie. The obvious answer from a revolutionary socialist — nay, from all sincere defenders of human rights — would be: scrap all blasphemy laws. Against Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Shinto fun-

4. *In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 17–18, 21.

damentalists, all who are committed to a principled defense of human rights should unite in a common struggle.

Marxism vs. the Established Church

The present Pope's attitude toward abortion and birth control is nothing but criminally irresponsible, especially in Third World countries. "Procreate, procreate, even if you condemn millions of babies and young children to death by starvation and disease": that is his credo. This confirms for us the correctness of the basic atheist commitment of Marxism.

Under the Pope's impulsion, the attitude of the Vatican delegation at the UN population conference in Cairo in September 1994 became an international scandal. One Spanish critic said the Pope had "become a traveling salesman of demographic irrationality." The Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng stated: "This Pope is a disaster for our Church." Henri Tinq, the religious expert of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, wrote: "The Church's refusal of condoms, even for saving lives, is absolutely incomprehensible. It disqualifies the Church from having any role in the whole debate over AIDS."

The Pope's attitude toward the alleged sanctity of human life is also utterly inconsistent. Why doesn't he call for a refusal to use and produce weapons? Are the lives of soldiers and civilians killed by weapons less sacred than those of unborn babies?

Our attitude toward the established Church is one thing; our attitude with regard to people who have religious convictions is quite another. Such people we judge from a class and humanistic point of view in the broad sense of the word. We feel much closer to a Christian, Muslim, or Hindu militant trade unionist who defends the interests of the workers in his plant than to the plant's boss and manager when these happen to be atheists.

Marxist Attitude Toward Religion

We have much more in common with Christian-inspired "base communities," who deeply care about the misery in the world and use great energy and drive to eliminate it than with cynical "left-wing" atheist politicians who give in to racist prejudices. We feel closer to Msgr. Romero [assassinated in El Salvador] and to the Chiapas "red bishop" [Samuel Ruiz] than to the "social democratic" former president of Venezuela, Pérez. We are in favor of guaranteeing full freedom of religion in a democratic workers state.

And we say to our sincere Christian friends and co-fighters for worldwide solidarity to alleviate Third World misery, including the adepts of Liberation Theology: let us fight in common for a world without hunger, without curable diseases, without war, without racial or national oppression and discrimination. The important philosophical debate between religious and nonreligious ideas will come into its own in a humanity which has emancipated itself from the pressure of social misery and despair.

The Need to Involve All Workers

We are facing here a deeper problem. You cannot organize an efficient strike committee without involving all the plant's workers, irrespective of their often reactionary ideas, with the obvious exception of real scabs (not so-called "potential" ones).

You cannot organize an efficient workers council (soviet) without involving all workers, indeed practically all citizens, in it, with the exclusion of outright pogromists (fascists). Indeed, in the revolutionary Russia of October 1917 at the Second Congress of Soviets (councils of workers', peasants', and soldiers' delegates), which decided in favor of the transfer of power to the Soviets, even bourgeois parties like the Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) were represented. They were not expelled. They left the Soviets of their own volition.

This involved understanding the dialectics of the united front. Indeed it is a textbook example of what we could call the higher school of dialectics.

The United Front Approach

The main task of the united front is not that of "unmasking" the "labor lieutenants of Capital," as Daniel DeLeon so aptly called them. That educational task remains of course present and is important. But it is a propaganda task. The main function of the united front orientation is to implement its declared goals in practice, in the interests of the working class as a whole.

So when we propose a united front simultaneously from below and at the top, we really mean it. What happens when this line is not applied can be studied in the light of the German disaster of 1933. The discussion on the issue will then be continued inside concentration camps.

Incidentally, we can lay bare here one of the roots of sectarianism among people claiming to be Trotskyists.

The founders of these sects broke with Stalinism after the Stalin-Laval agreement, the Comintern's turn toward People's Front policies, and the Seventh Comintern Congress.

But they remained less sensitive to Trotsky's passionate fight for the united front in Germany, which was one of his greatest political achievements.

Besides Program — Organizational Strength

In order to successfully overthrow capitalism, it is not enough to have a correct program. While this is a key element for success, you need in addition sufficient organizational strength and a sufficient implantation in the working class and the progressive mass movements, be it in large enough minorities of them.

Here we are back at our point of departure: the necessity to change the world. This is a practical task.

The precondition for its realization is not only a correct theory. It is likewise a given relationship of forces, a given organizational strength.

Let us illustrate this thesis by the balance sheet of Trotsky's political record from 1929 on. It is a magnificent achievement. Trotsky was 100 percent right in his struggle against the Soviet Thermidor, against the usurpation of power in the USSR by an anti-working class bureaucratic caste. He was 100 percent right in his fight against the rise of fascism in Germany and the terrible threat this would present to the European working class and to the USSR itself. He was 100 percent right in his fight against the disastrous Popular Front policies in France, Spain, and elsewhere. He was 100 percent right in his fight against Stalin's bloody purges in the USSR from 1934 on, killing nearly one million Communists and the cream of the Red army's commanders. But he lost all these fights. Why?

Because in order to win, it was not enough to have 100 percent correct political ideas. It was in addition necessary to have sufficient organizational strength. This the groups inspired by Trotsky did not have. That is why they did not even begin to realize in practice the tasks just outlined.

When Do Masses of Workers Become Ready to Break with Their Traditional Organizations?

The organizational weakness of the Trotskyist movement in the 1930s did not fall from the sky. It expressed a given state of the international working-class consciousness and political commitment. While the more advanced workers were sometimes highly critical of the class collaborationist policies of Social Democracy, and after 1934, of the Communist parties, as well as of their often common sectarian stances against the united front, they were not yet ready to break massively with these traditional apparatuses in their totality.

From the Russian Revolution onward, massive breaks with Social Democracy meant moving toward the CPs. Massive breaks with the CPs were rare. When they occurred, as after the conclusion of the Stalin-Hitler pact, they generally meant moving to the right.

The delay of world revolution partially provoked by these apparatuses reinforced these general trends.

It is true that after World War II, victorious socialist revolutions did occur in Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam. But they were led by bureaucratized CPs, suffering from many birthmarks inherited from Stalinism. This kept the masses of the advanced capitalist countries captive to "campism" in Italy, France, and Greece, and to Social Democracy in Britain — four countries where the possibility of a decisive break with capitalism was real in the immediate postwar period. As a result, revolutionary Marxist organizations could not grow beyond a very low ceiling.

It is true that during the 1960s and the early '70s there occurred a worldwide youth radicalization, which by and large escaped the control of the traditional apparatuses. This radicalization, which culminated with May 1968 in France, enabled the Fourth International to witness the greatest growth of its history.

But given our initially weak forces and the underestimation of the importance of this radicalization by some sections, it was only in France that we were able to play a major, partially even a leading, role in these explosions.

Even the big working-class explosions in France and Italy during 1968–69 were in the end contained by the traditional working-class parties. These explosions did not shake the relative stability of the other, i.e., the main, imperialist countries. And for a number of reasons — which we mistakenly underestimated or even misunderstood at the time — from the early 1970s on, the bourgeoisie succeeded in relatively restabilizing its rule in France and Italy, too.

Furthermore, we suffered greatly by the competition of influence over the radicalized youth from Maoism and semi-Maoism. It was difficult to compete with those who claimed to speak in the name of a billion Chinese.

This influence of Maoism was nourished by a completely wrong vision of the so-called Cultural Revolution. Its repressive character was largely misunderstood even when it started to turn against the working class and the youth. The disastrous economic consequences were also totally overlooked.

It is true that the 1960s and '70s were marked by new advances of world revolution, in Cuba, Vietnam, and Nicaragua. But in Vietnam, they occurred under a leadership originating from a Stalinized Communist Party and were therefore heavily bureaucratized from the beginning. The countries where they occurred had too little weight in the world to trigger a major mass upsurge in the main Third World countries, not to speak of the imperialist countries.

Furthermore, in their wake occurred the disaster of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, which strongly nourished the subsequent crisis of credibility of socialism.

Finally, even the more radicalized sectors of the international working class became aware of the growing bankruptcy of the “command economy” in the USSR, its inability to realize the third technological revolution, the grave consequences resulting therefrom for the masses in the USSR and Eastern Europe. This led at least partially to a questioning of the possibility of seriously shaking world capitalism. Less radical sectors of the working class were even more influenced by that fact — independently of bourgeois propaganda on the subject.

Sectarianism: A Knot of Contradictions

Like all similar sects, the Spartacists have tied themselves into an inextricable knot of contradictions. These hit them like so many boomerangs.

First contradiction: The international Trotskyist movement has existed from 1930 onward. During the 64 years of its existence, there have been innumerable mass strikes and general strikes throughout the world. There have been a great number of prerevolutionary and revolutionary explosions. There has been a series of real revolutions. If after more than half a century of revolutions, counterrevolutions, and wars, “real Trotskyism,” which the Spartacists claim to be the only ones to represent, is reduced to a couple of hundred people in the whole world, with no real durable implantation in the working class of any country, this would prove the basic historical failure of Trotskyism as a political movement, irrespective of the intrinsic value of its theoretical contributions.

Second contradiction: The Spartacists themselves have existed for many years. Yet they have completely failed to build the revolutionary party and the revolutionary International which, following Trotsky, they correctly claim to be indispensable for solving the burning problems of mankind. Why this obvious failure?

Third contradiction: The obsession with the correct formula leads to the pretense of Popish infallibility. This in turn implies a break with the Marxist-Leninist tradition of complete freedom of thought and discussion.

Engels wrote to the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party, when that party was more than a thousand times stronger than the Spartacists are today: the party needs socialist science, which can only develop under conditions of *full freedom of thought and discussion*.

When the Cuban revolution reached the culmination point of its progressive phase, Fidel Castro wrote: “The revolution must be a school of *unfettered thought*.” This implies that no thought should be subordinated to any supposedly higher party needs, to any supposedly infallible party leadership, to any state needs or “camp” needs.

Fourth contradiction: Again because of their search for political monolithism, the Spartacists develop a growing disdain for facts, for truth, i.e., for a scientific approach to reality and to politics. Lenin, on the contrary, stated: “Only the truth is revolutionary.” And he later added: “A person who believes anybody, including any party leadership, on their words and pretenses is a fool.” Long before Lenin, Marx had already stated that he had the greatest contempt for anybody who subordinates the results of free scientific inquiry to any so-called party needs.

Fifth contradiction: The Spartacists have increasingly reversed the classical Marxist distinction between objectively progressive mass movements and their treacherous or wavering leaderships. Trotsky gave full support to China’s struggle for independence against Japanese imperialism, even when this struggle was led by the fiercely anti-working class criminal gang of Chiang Kai-shek. It will be hard to argue, e.g., that the leaders of the Algerian mass struggle for national independence, the FLN leadership, or the Sandinista leadership, were worse than the Chiang Kai-shek gang.

It would be even more difficult to argue that the mass resistance movements against German and Italian imperialist super-exploitation and oppression in countries like Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, France, Belgium, and Denmark during World War II were not totally progressive and did not merit full support by revolutionary Marxists, irrespective of the class collaborationist policies of most of their leaderships.

The same remark applies to the national uprisings of the Indian, the Indochinese, the Indonesia, the Filipino, the Algerian peoples against British, French, Japanese, Dutch, and U.S. imperialism during World War II and at its end.

Isn’t that in contradiction with the theory of permanent revolution, which asserts that the classical tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution can only be realized in the twentieth century through the conquest of state power by the proletariat?

It isn’t. What Trotsky affirmed from 1905 on is that the realization of these tasks *in their totality* depends upon the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But a *partial* realization of these tasks — e.g., political national independence and other democratic rights — is possible before the dictatorship of the proletariat. Otherwise, Trotsky’s support to such struggles for the defense of the conquest of national independence and other democratic rights, as he explicitly did in the cases of China, Indochina, South Africa, the African Americans, would make no sense.

A Blot on Sectarians’ Record

In that respect, there is a terrible blot on the record of the so-called “International Committee of the FI” of Healy-Lambertist inspiration, to which the original leadership of the Spartacists adhered.

This blot is not a minor peccadillo. The Lambertists organized a military operation under Si Bellounis, in direct cooperation with French imperialism, in South Algeria, against the FLN-led Algerian national uprising. Lambert even boasted that this operation was planned in his Paris headquarters by his Central Committee.

The justification of that crime was that the FLN represented the petty-bourgeois or even bourgeois wing of the Algerian national movement, whereas the “International Committee” supported the presumably proletarian wing of that movement led by Messali Hadj.

Lambert was forced to hastily revise this position when Messali Hadj came out openly in full support of De Gaulle and the Gaullist regime. But we have never seen any public repudiation of that treacherous position of the “International Committee” by the original or even present leadership of the Spartacists. If such a statement exists, which to the very least should be accompanied by a serious self-criticism, let the Spartacists show it. We rather doubt that they can. There is a fundamental difference between such a treacherous position and pursuing a wrong line of *uncritical* support to the Ben Bella FLN leadership, as [Michel] Pablo [former FI leader] did.

Sixth contradiction: There is another grave blot on the Spartacists’ record. Under the pretext of defending the Polish bureaucratized workers state against capitalist restoration, the Spartacists supported General Jaruzelski’s military *coup d’état* of December 1981 against the Polish

working class. Jaruzelski banned the trade union Solidamosc. He suppressed the right to strike. He dismissed tens of thousands of trade unionists from their jobs. He clapped thousands of them into jail.

The Spartacists have tried to justify this anti-working class repression by claiming that Solidamosc was really a company union. This only involves them in a supplementary contradiction. In Poland, it was the Stalinist/post-Stalinist bureaucracy which managed the factories, not the capitalists. So the company unions were the anti-Solidamosc unions, controlled by the bureaucracy or subservient to it. Comrades of the Spartacist League: you will have a hard time defending this anti-working class repression.

Seventh contradiction: As in Poland, the Spartacists minimize the significance of the anti-working class measures of the Stalin/post-Stalin regimes and the terrible consequences of economic stagnation under Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev for the daily lives of workers, both female and male, in the USSR.

The Stalinist labor code was the harshest ever known in the 20th century. After 1930 the right to strike was suppressed and strikers were automatically deported. In addition, one can cite the example of the so-called "ukazniks." Under Stalin, hundreds of thousands of women workers were deported to labor camps for having stayed away from work for 24 hours, because either they or their children were ill and the doctor hadn't shown up in time to give them a certificate. They had no possibility of justifying or defending themselves. They were just automatically deported.

But even worse were the objective consequences of economic stagnation and decline for the Soviet working class under Brezhnev et al. Coal miners didn't receive soap. Women workers didn't receive sanitary napkins.

No wonder the overwhelming majority of the Soviet working class felt they had nothing in common with the decaying Stalinist/post-Stalinist dictatorship and threw out the baby with the bathwater. For them, Stalinism, Communism, Marxism, Socialism were rejected out of hand. "Everyone for himself" became predominant. Only when their situation deteriorated even more, with the beginning of the restoration of capitalism, did a broad strike wave occur, but it remained largely apolitical.

For Political Revolution, Not Self-Reform of the Stalinist Bureaucracy

The Spartacists try to cover up for this shameful apology by claiming that they, after all, stand for political revolution, whereas we are supposed to have abandoned that traditional Trotskyist position in favor of supporting self-reform of the bureaucracy.

This is a complete distortion of the historical record.

Since 1946, in every one of our writings on the Russian question, we clearly came out in favor of anti-bureaucratic political revolution. In our book *Beyond Perestroika*, a whole chapter is entitled: "No Self-Reform of the Bureaucracy Is Possible." We supported every working-class action against the bureaucracy, from the East German uprising of 1953 to the Hungarian revolution, to the Prague spring of 1968-9, to the mass protests at Tiananmen Square against the post-Maoist dictatorship in the People's Republic of China.

On the Reunification of Germany

A very similar distortion is the Spartacists' slander that we were wavering or only "wringing our hands" about the capitalist reunification of Germany. In reality, we condemned this reunification in the sharpest possible way. The November 1990 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International voted a resolution stating:

Since October 3, 1990, the absorption of the GDR [German Democratic Republic] by the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] is an accomplished fact. This implies the restoration of capitalism on the territory of the GDR, the conquest of political power by the West German bourgeoisie on the debris of the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship broken by the formidable popular and democratic movement of autumn 1989, the creation of a strengthened German imperialist state.

1) A political defeat.

We have underlined the gravely negative effects for the working class and all the oppressed, in Germany as well as internationally, of the realization of the *Anschluss*. The facts confirm that our resolute opposition to the capitalist unification of Germany and our warnings in that respect to the German and international working class were well founded.

The resolution ends with a series of tasks intended to counteract the effects of the defeat.

The Long Wave of Economic Downturn

Eighth contradiction: The Spartacists underestimate the gravity of the current long depressive wave of capitalism. They write: "The present period is marked above all by the impact of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe."

Wrong. The principal feature of the world situation is the worldwide offensive of Capital against Labor, with its main concomitants: the rise of permanent mass unemployment, a decline of wages (in Third World countries often a disastrous one), the development of a growing layer of casual workers and marginalized proletarians, a growing union-busting offensive, a potential weakening of the labor movement and working class's inner cohesion, the rise of extreme right-wing organizations and ideologies, including inside the working class, like xenophobia, anti-Semitism, radical nationalism/chauvinism, outright racism, and the threats deriving therefrom for basic working-class rights and freedoms. Muslim and Hindu fundamentalism and to a lesser extent Christian, Jewish, and Shintoist fundamentalism illustrate this.

The Spartacists have their chronology wrong when they say that all those things occurred after the beginning of restoration of capitalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe or in function of it. In reality, it started in the early 1970s, with the beginning of the grave crisis of capitalism, of a new long depression, at a time when the bureaucratized workers states were still very much alive in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

Socialism or Human Annihilation

More in general, the Spartacists gravely underestimate a turn in the world situation, which we were also late in recognizing but which has now been fully integrated in our program, thanks to the Programmatic Manifesto [*Socialism or Barbarism on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*], which came out of our last world congress.

For decades we defended the position of Rosa Luxemburg: either socialism or barbarism. But this position has become obsolete. The real dilemma today is: *either socialism or the physical annihilation of humankind*.

This is in the first place the result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, like nuclear weapons, and nuclear power plants, which would be transformed into so many nuclear missiles in case of wars conducted with conventional weapons.

For that reason, a traditional communist thesis — the workers have to turn the capitalists' weapons against the bourgeoisie — has become equally obsolete, nay, suicidal. Given the existence of the above-mentioned weapons, the demented Marshall Grechko/Mao goal of trying to win an atomic war has to be radically discarded.⁵ The strategic goal becomes the one of avoiding at all costs a nuclear war and of closing all nuclear power plants. You cannot build socialism with atomic ashes.

The Spartacists have never spoken out clearly on this issue. We challenge them to do so.

Our point of view does not reflect any pacifist illusion. Neither does it lead to mass passivity. Quite the contrary.

It starts from the recognition that one cannot disarm states possessing nuclear weapons by international military confrontation, without physically destroying humankind. The question of nuclear disarmament therefore becomes a question of mass mobilization *inside* these states — in the first place, the USA, the ex-USSR, Britain, France, and China.

5. In addition, Mao showed a well nigh unbelievably cynical disregard for his own people's suffering when he stated that 500 million Chinese deaths as a result of a nuclear war wouldn't matter so much, as there would still be 500 million Chinese who would survive.

Such a mass mobilization could and should be prepared from now on by systematic propaganda — and occasionally agitation — about what is really at stake: their own and humankind's physical survival.

That view of the new world reality — yes, it is new, compared to the time when the Transitional Program was written — is in no way “defeatist,” or “demoralizing,” or “demobilizing” for the exploited and the oppressed. Neither was Trotsky's view of the terrible danger of fascism, when he raised the banner of immediate priority to be granted to the struggle against that danger from 1929 on.

It never pays to play hide-and-seek with objective reality. Ostrich policies are self-deceiving and self-destructive.

One should rather reverse the argument. The existence of these threats to the very survival of human life gives a new and powerful stimulus to the struggle for socialism.

Capitalism and the disintegrating bureaucratic dictatorships are utterly unable to eliminate these threats. The building of socialism, the exercise of power by the working class, could eliminate them.

If all the workers of all countries producing these weapons decided in common to stop immediately the output of nuclear, chemical, biological weapons; if they decided likewise to destroy immediately all existing stockpiles of them; if all workers in nuclear power plants or in construction companies capable of building such plants did the same, the danger would disappear.

Is this a utopian proposal, since the majority of the workers concerned are at present obviously not ready to act in that way? It is in any case much less utopian than the illusion that in spite of the existence of huge stockpiles of such weapons, in spite of the existence and even the constant spread of nuclear power plants, and the growing resources of the nuclear power industries, the dangers here outlined could be avoided in the long run.⁶

It is less utopian than to believe that the cloud charged with nuclear fallout will somehow make a detour around the Spartacists' office and let them peacefully continue to cull quotes from our and other newspapers, without any regard for humankind's (and their own) physical survival.

Besides the nuclear threat and the environmental threat — including the greenhouse effect and atomic-biological-chemical warfare — the physical survival of humankind is also threatened by new pandemics, including but not limited to AIDS, which are erupting right before our eyes. These pandemics are poverty-related. They include an international spread of tuberculosis. In Vietnam, the cases of malaria have quadrupled in four years, since the “liberalization” of the economy. In sub-Saharan Africa, a real health disaster is occurring.⁷

The international bourgeoisie is cutting expenditures in investigating (and thereby trying to fight) the risks of such pandemics in the framework of its austerity policies. The growing health hazards resulting from such policies, not only in Third World countries but in the ghettos of marginalized people in the imperialist countries as well, are common knowledge.

Recently, a terrifying book has been published, written by Laurie Garrett: *The Coming Plague* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1994, prefaced by a world-renowned professor of epidemiology from Harvard University). It received a very favorable echo in the *New York Review of Books* (April 6, 1995). Ms. Garrett quotes quite to the point Rudolph Virchow's classical formula: “If disease is an expression of individual life under unfavorable conditions, then epidemics must be indicators of mass disturbances in mass life.”

Yet instead of turning these facts into new and powerful indictments of capitalism in that they are poverty-related, the Spartacists and other sects tend to keep quiet about them or even to dismiss them as “exaggerated,” exactly like some irresponsible bourgeois authors. We challenge these sectarians to state clearly: are these threats “exaggerated”? If so, how and why?

Ninth contradiction: Like all sectarians, the Spartacists suffer from an acute case of color blindness. For them the world situation is either black or white: let us grant it to them — either black or red. It is in essence

either a counterrevolutionary or a revolutionary one. Sometimes, they even seem to argue that it is simultaneously both.

A World Situation of Stalemate

World reality is different. It remains historically characterized by what one could call in the language of chess, a situation of stalemate. Both basic classes of bourgeois society remain for the time being unable to gain decisive victories. The capitalist class is objectively too weak to inflict crushing defeats upon the working class and the exploited and the oppressed in general. While these have suffered some serious setbacks, in most countries they have not been crushed like they were in the 1930s and early 1940s

On the other hand, the world working class has not yet overcome its crisis of class consciousness and revolutionary leadership. It does not seem on the verge of overcoming it.

So the crisis of mankind, of human civilization, will last a long time.

There is nothing “reformist” in recognizing that under these conditions, workers struggles are mainly defensive and that revolutionary Marxists have to give priority to winning these, as Trotsky did in Germany from 1929 on. What is on the immediate agenda today is not the immediate struggle for the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class, but the need to eliminate unemployment in a radical way in the West, in the East, and in a substantial way in the South.

Prioritize the Fight for Jobs

In the long run, you cannot beat the extreme right and the neofascists if there exists massive unemployment and this tends to rise more and more. This means to prioritize the struggle for an immediate radical cut in the workweek without reduction in direct and indirect weekly wages: say a 30-hour week or a 28-hour week.

It is true that contrary to the early 1930s, the working class of several capitalist countries has launched massive defensive struggles against the employers' offensive, especially in Italy, France, Brazil, and to a lesser degree in Britain, Belgium, Argentina, and Greece. We shall see what will happen in Germany. But how far these are successful in stopping capital's offensive remains an open question.

Credibility of Socialism

There is a worldwide crisis of credibility of socialism. It results from a growing number of workers understanding the historical bankruptcy of Stalinism/post-Stalinism/Maoism/Social Democracy, and petty-bourgeois nationalism in several Third World countries. But on the other hand, they do not see any credible alternative for radical overall social change. All defensive workers struggles therefore remain discontinuous, fragmented, and control over them can often be partially maintained or recovered by the traditional apparatuses.

There is an obvious interaction between that crisis of credibility and the inability of even the broadest current mass mobilization of the working class to wrest the political initiative from capital.

Revolutionary Marxists try to overcome that handicap. They struggle for the reappearance of class self-confidence and belief in the possibility of socialism. But at this stage, this is still essentially a propaganda task.

For sure, if the international working class decisively defeats the offensive of capital, it could quickly go over to the counteroffensive. The struggle for power could then — but only then — again be put on the agenda in several countries. But for the time being it isn't.

The combined effect of the economic depression — unemployment, fear of unemployment, priority given to finding jobs — and of the crisis of the credibility of socialism, including skepticism about the future of workers parties and of socialism, has led to a crisis of militancy. This has also hurt revolutionary organizations, including marginally the Fourth International. Fewer militants are ready to work full-time for the movement.

6. See Paul Le Blanc, *In Defense of American Trotskyism*, vol. 3 (FIT Publications).

7. Belgian daily *Le Soir*, March 10, 1995.

Effects of Increased Speed-up

There is, however, an objective dimension to this process of still quite limited "individualization" of work, which one has to pay great attention to from a Marxist point of view.

During a period of depression, capital steps up its efforts to increase the production of relative surplus value through the speed-up of the work rhythm, the increase in the rate of surplus value, the rate of exploitation of wage labor. This is one of the means of overcoming the decline of the average rate of profit, which lies at the basis of the long depression.

Some workers try to react against that speed-up by individual means, inasmuch as the trade union bureaucracy fails to organize an efficient collective fightback against that evil.

In many large-scale factories with advanced technology, the speed-up has become insupportable. Automobile workers cannot support it more than five or six years without endangering their physical and mental health. Recently, doctors and labor inspectors have revealed that people having to look constantly at electronic video monitors get seriously handicapped after two hours of work.⁸

Tenth contradiction: The Spartacists do not seem to understand the qualitatively graver threats which imperialism and the survival of decaying capitalism pose for the working class, all the exploited and oppressed, nay, for humankind in its totality.

These threats do not flow only from the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Barbarism is indeed already with us: witness the genocide of the Tutsi people in Rwanda, which nearly equalled the Nazi Holocaust against the Jewish people. The genocide was committed by Hutu semi-fascists with the direct complicity of French imperialism. Previously the Belgian imperialists had been responsible for installing the racist Rwandan anti-Tutsi government with the active support of the Catholic clergy.

The barbaric nature of contemporary capitalism/imperialism can be illustrated by two more examples.

Every year 20–25 million children are dying in the Third World from hunger and easily curable diseases. This means every 4–5 years as many children dying as all the people who died during all of World War II, including Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the Bengal famine, the Nazi massacres in the USSR, the massacres of Japanese imperialism against the Chinese and South Asian peoples, the destruction of the German cities by Allied bombers.

Every 4–5 years a world war against children: there you have the hideous face of imperialism today.

In Northeastern Brazil, a new race of pygmies has appeared as a result of decades of undemourishment. It is 30–35 centimeters shorter than the average Brazilian. The ruling class and its ideologues call them "rat people." One knows what is done to rats. Here again the hideous face of contemporary capitalism appears in all its ferocity.

Eleventh contradiction: In a typical case of the left hand ignoring the right, after having accused us of underestimating the impact of the beginning restoration of capitalism in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and the People's Republic of China on the world situation, the Spartacists and other sects accuse us simultaneously of underestimating the economic crisis of capitalism.

This is so outrageous that it borders on the grotesque.

We were among the very few people in the world who predicted the new long economic depression of capitalism from exactly the moment when it occurred: the beginning of the 1970s. We have written four books analyzing in great detail that economic crisis. So have several other comrades, members or sympathizers of the Fourth International. Nothing of the sort has been produced by the Spartacists or any other sect.

We can only pity people who have so little confidence in their own ideas that they must resort to systematic slanders and falsifications to try to maintain their petty sects.

Transitional Demands as a Bridge

Twelfth contradiction: Either unwittingly or deliberately, the Spartacists have altered a basic idea of the Transitional Program: the function

of transitional slogans is to create a bridge by which the workers can, *through their own experience*, move from the struggle for their immediate preoccupations to the struggle to take the fate of society into their own hands, i.e., to the struggle for workers' power.

But the Spartacists do not apply these teachings of Trotsky. On the contrary, they show nearly a complete disregard for specific needs and demands of specific layers of the exploited and the oppressed the world over, tending to condemn them as "reformist" or even "class collaborationist," sometimes bringing in the notion of "Popular Frontism" in matters where this notion is completely irrelevant. This does not endear them to the masses.

The Spartacists do not have any understanding of the way in which millions of overexploited people in "Third World countries" correctly raise the demand for an immediate and total cancellation of the foreign debt, especially the current service of that debt. This is a progressive anti-imperialist demand, which we have to support 100 percent. The fact that some (by no means all) capitalist governments in Third World countries raise the same demand does not reduce in any way its progressive character.

The same remark applies to the demands regarding the intransigent defense of social security provisions in imperialist and in some semi-industrialized "Third World" countries. Again the fact that Social Democrats (not all of them; in fact, fewer and fewer of them, we tend to think) also raise such demands under the miseducating slogan of "defending the welfare state" is irrelevant to the essence of the problem: is it or is it not in the interest of the toilers to defend these provisions?

Defense of Human Rights

The demand for intransigent defense of basic human rights, like the right to strike, the freedom of the press, the freedom to organize different political parties, the right to national self-determination (to which, however, the just-mentioned rights should not be subordinated), the specific rights of gays and lesbians, the right to abortion, are 100 percent progressive and merit the full support of revolutionary Marxists. This is, again, irrespective of the fact that reformist, petty-bourgeois, or sometimes even bourgeois forces also raise the same slogans. There is no "subordination" to the bourgeoisie in these demands for universal human rights, no guarantee for private property and profit. On the contrary: under the present world conditions, they have an obviously anti-capitalist and especially anti-bourgeois-state dynamic.

The real need is for revolutionary Marxists to try and participate in the leadership of these progressive mass movements or even lead them themselves. This of course depends not only on a correct political orientation, but also on the relationship of forces (both political and organizational ones).

The fact that these are generally "single issue movements" does not reduce in any way their progressive character. Revolutionary Marxists will carry on their general propaganda and the defense of their full program in addition to this concrete task, but not give the priority to general socialist propaganda, except in cases where they think that important sectors of the mass movement are already apt to accept that program.

The same approach should guide our interventions in cases of solidarity with "Third World" struggles, with defense of the victims of imperialist aggression, of initial attempts at international coordination of trade-union action against multinational corporations.

Thirteenth contradiction: Again unwittingly or deliberately, the Spartacists disregard an important passage of the Transitional Program:

The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat, all its layers, occupations, and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not by the fact that it frees the

8. *Time* magazine, December 26, 1994.

revolutionary party from day-to-day work, but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the practical tasks of the revolution.

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective.

Again, it is impossible to find a programmatic text whose every word corresponds more to what the practice of revolutionary Marxists should be today. Again, every word, and the way in which each sentence is built, is absolutely remarkable and has to be taken into account.

Note, for example, that Trotsky says: the indefatigable defense of the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers should be carried out "within the framework of a revolutionary perspective," not in the framework of propaganda for an immediate revolution, still less that this defense should be subordinated to such propaganda.

Note that Trotsky says that all sections, all layers, occupations, and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement; this is of course an idea already spelled out in greater detail by Lenin in *What Is to Be Done?* And note that Trotsky says "into the revolutionary movement" and not necessarily immediately into the revolutionary party. It would be wonderful if that could be achieved. But unfortunately, this depends on a lot of concrete conditions, which one can only disregard at the price of becoming a victim of wishful thinking and falling back essentially into propaganda-group practice.

The very way in which the Transitional Program is structured in its second part confirms the same approach in an even more concrete way. There are specific transitional demands for the imperialist (advanced capitalist) countries, for the backward countries, for the fascist countries, for the bureaucratized USSR, for women workers, and for youth. All this is not drowned as it were into a common melting-pot.

Likewise the sectarians disregard another important passage of the Transitional Program:

The strategic task of the next period — a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization — consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation).

Again, every word corresponds to what the practice of revolutionary Marxists should be today.

Note that Trotsky puts "agitation" before "propaganda" and "organization." Note that he puts "the immaturity of the proletariat" before that of "its vanguard." Note especially that he stresses that the *system* of transitional demands (a system, not a specific list valid everywhere anytime), should stem from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class. Today's must be understood literally, those of 1994 or of whatever specific year we are talking about, and not only those of 1938, although there will obviously be a lot of similarity, as the nature of the epoch has not changed.

For a Bridge, Not an Abyss

Without taking all these elements into consideration, there just is no bridge. The problem which has to be solved is considered already solved. Instead of fighting patiently to try and convince the "wide layers of the working class" through their own experience (struggles) of the need for taking power, you just retreat into preaching "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and "the need for socialism."

This is common to nearly all sectarians (with the exception of those who combine a specific brand of opportunism with sectarianism): the necessity of finding the bridge (which is not an easy task at all) has disappeared. Instead of finding the bridge, there remains an abyss.

Transitional Demands: Some Additional Proposals

We would propose the following transitional demands as *complements* — not substitutes — to those contained in the 1938 Transitional Program:

1. Reduction in the average work week to 30 hours (or 28 hours: four days of seven hours each), without reduction of weekly pay, in all industrialized and "threshold" countries. A general ban on overtime.

Obligatory hiring to insure that these measures eliminate unemployment in these countries.

Workers' control at plant level to guarantee the full implementation of these measures.

2. No speed-up. Workers' control, i.e., veto power, at plant level, over work rhythm and work organization.
3. Counterpose international consultation and cooperation of trade unions and class-struggle union militants to the efforts by multinational corporations to determine plant localization in function of wage differentials.
To a continuous downgrading of wages in "high wage" countries, counterpose a progressive upgrading of wages in "low wage" countries.
4. To the "export oriented" pattern of economic development in "low wage" countries, counterpose a pattern of economic development oriented to expanding the internal market, by giving priority to satisfying the unfulfilled basic needs of the people.
5. To the international division of labor, which tends to monopolize output and development of advanced technology-based equipment in the imperialist countries, counterpose a systematic transfer of such technology to relatively less developed countries at low cost.
6. Defend the social wage. No cuts in social security expenditure for health, education, etc.
7. Cancel all debt and debt services of less developed countries. Radical reduction of internal debts in all countries except for small bondholders up to a given ceiling, and use of the funds freed up in this way to meet the unfulfilled priority needs of the people.
8. Radical agrarian and urban reform in Third World countries.
9. Total ban on the production of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons. Destruction of existing stocks of these weapons under popular control.
10. Immediate ban on the building of new nuclear power plants. Gradual closure of existing nuclear power plants, without reduction of total energy available, through simultaneous development of ecologically "clean" power sources.
11. Obligatory popular referenda before the use of armed forces outside the national frontiers. "Let the people vote on war."
12. Ban on privatization of large-scale enterprises in former "socialist" countries. Veto power of people occupied in all enterprises there on precise forms of enterprise property.
13. Restoration of all social advantages to the people of former "socialist" countries in matters of free health, education, cultural provisions, existing before the change of political regime.
14. Full political freedoms to the people of all countries, including the ex-"socialist" countries: freedom of association, of peaceful demonstration, freedom of the press, the right to strike and form strike picket lines, a ban on the firing of trade-union officials and union activists.
15. Free election of parliamentary bodies with a multiparty system. Equal access of all parties beyond a certain threshold to the mass media. Ban on private financing of political parties and election campaigns in all countries.
16. Legalization in all countries of referenda based on popular initiative. Ban on referenda (plebiscites) by states and governments.
17. Defend women's right to choose abortion. No financial or other restrictions on this right. Free distribution of contraceptives.
18. Free child-care centers, permanently available to employees, in all workplaces.
19. Fully paid pregnancy and post-natal absence from work for at least four months.
20. Elected women's committees in all enterprises and institutions, with veto power on all decisions regarding women's conditions.
21. Statutory right of women to choose half work day without reduction of weekly minimum income, if requested by at least 20 percent of women concerned.
22. European Constituent Assembly elected by universal franchise to radically overhaul existing European institutions.
23. Latin American Constituent Assembly elected by universal franchise in order to create Latin American Federation.
24. Creation of similar bodies for Arab countries.

25. Creation of similar bodies for South Asian countries.
26. Creation of similar bodies for African countries.
27. Ban on private ownership of television and radio stations, as well as daily newspapers and weeklies, beyond a certain press run. Access of all workers organizations, and of all citizens, to publicly owned media. No government censorship of mass media.
28. Generalized trial by jury. Election of judges by universal franchise. Free access to lawyers for everybody.
29. Suppression of secret state and government security institutions. Opening of all existing files to all the people concerned.
30. Right to suspensive popular referenda in neighborhoods on all projects involving health and safety and ecological concerns.
31. Unrestricted right to travel worldwide for everybody, regardless of race, nationality, religion. Full political rights for all immigrants in all countries after two years of residence and acceptance — with choice — of jobs offered.
32. Ban on automobiles with internal combustion engines in inner cities.
33. World conference on emergency measures to be taken for the restoration of the ozone layer, fighting the pollution of the oceans, stopping the destruction of forests, and defending the human environment against any environmental hazard involving the responsibility of more than one country.
34. Replacement of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank by bodies representing proportionally the people (not the governments) of the five continents.
35. Collection of a world fund of solidarity to accelerate the development of poorer countries.
36. Lower to 16 years the right to vote and be elected.

The Source of These Proposals

These demands did not originate from the personal theoretical/political elaboration of the author of this essay. Except in a few cases, they are the product of the experience of the FI's leading cadres and many militants, in dozens of countries. Their capacity to provoke interest among advanced workers and left-oriented intellectuals is in the process of being tested. It will have to be tested more in the coming years, adapted, completed, changed.

The masses of practically all countries of the world are not yet ready to implement these demands. But to start discussions — and occasionally agitation — around some of them is increasingly possible. It is a necessary antidote to the tendency to depoliticization, especially among the youth, which is understandable given the rottenness of existing institutions, but which is dangerous for the future of humankind. It is an education in the possibility of another way of conceiving politics than through these discredited institutions: by do-it-yourself political activity.

A Comment on European Social Democracy

In that context, a distinction should be drawn concerning the situation and future of European Social Democracy.

As stated before, in several European countries — Britain, Germany, the Scandinavian countries — Social Democratic parties still have a big and stable electorate. This might even grow in function of “lesser evil” choices by voters, fed up with sharp austerity measures pushed through by conservative governments.

But these electoral successes stand in contrast to a radical decline in activity and a change in social composition of the parties as such. The main sector of their individual members is no longer composed of militants having risen from the ranks of organizations of the labor movement, let alone working-class militants. It is composed of careerists who attach themselves to administrative bodies of the state and para-state institutions, to cabinet ministers or candidate cabinet ministers, “experts” without political convictions, who choose in a purely opportunist way between social democratic, “liberal,” and conservative parties. In addition, once in power, Social Democracy applies austerity policies very similar to those of the conservatives.

9. See Paul Le Blanc, *In Defense of American Trotskyism*, Vol. 3 (FIT Publications).

For all these reasons, the presence of Socialist Party (SP) members in enterprises has become minimal, sometimes even below that of members or sympathizers of organizations to the left of the SP.

Antiwar and Anti-Nuclear Movements in ex-USSR

From time to time, the way of reinventing political activity can have spectacular effects. While we were editing this essay, thousands of people took to the streets of Moscow and other Russian cities protesting against Yeltsin's dirty war in Chechnya. Unlike the anti-Vietnam War movement, this was not a protest by politically motivated people. It came from ordinary people who just didn't want their sons and husbands to die for reasons of “national interest.” This gives them the potential to attract majority support.

Let it serve as an example for the American people, too. It shows that the demand “Let the people vote on war” could find mass response right now.

We should recall that the inhabitants of Semipalatinsk, where the underground nuclear weapons tests take place in the ex-USSR, decided they wanted an immediate ban on these tests. Of course, they will not receive satisfaction quickly. But they made the demand. They even addressed themselves to the inhabitants of Nevada, where U.S. underground nuclear weapons tests take place, calling upon them to conduct a worldwide campaign against any such tests and any production of additional nuclear weapons.

Again, this proves that at least some of the transitional demands enumerated above could become the objects of mass debate and mass approval right now.

Recently, not without some determining initiative by our comrades, the Swiss social democratic party has come out in favor of a referendum for an immediate 50 percent cut in defense expenditure. Likewise, an American author has drawn attention to the fact that no less than 111 referenda of popular initiative have taken place in recent years.

Final and supreme contradiction: All the sects supposedly intent upon “Leninist party building” haven't built anything resembling any really existing international organization; some have even abandoned all pretense of doing so. We and our cothinkers on the other hand, accused of “liquidationism” and other deadly sins, have built the Fourth International and assured its constant — though, to be sure, modest — growth for over thirty years.

* * *

Why Debate with Sectarians?

Some have asked: “You say yourself that the Spartacists are a tiny irrelevant sect. So why bother with them? Why devote so much space dealing with the contradictions in their publications?”

The objection would be well-founded if it was just the Spartacists with whom we were dealing. But that is not the case. We just use quotes from their newspaper as sticks to hit all the other sects claiming some relationship with Trotskyism.⁹ And these sects are not insignificant.

Taken all together, they number several thousand members. To be sure, their total membership is much smaller than that of the Fourth International. Their weight inside the mass movements is even more limited.

Occasionally they play a positive role, as did one of the wings of the British *Militant* grouping (which split in two) in taking initiatives for successful mass struggles against the poll tax. The Moreno grouping, also split in the meantime into several subsects, has in the past organized a substantial left trade union following, most of which they have subsequently lost.

Arlette Laguiller, as presidential candidate of the group *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO), got a very good result after a spirited campaign, more than 5 percent of the vote, in the first round of the French elections in April 1995. But the positive effect of this election success was partially flawed by Laguiller's refusal to come out clearly for critical support of the Socialist candidate Jospin against the conservative bourgeois candidate Chirac in the final round of the presidential election — a refusal which reflects *Lutte Ouvrière*'s general lack of understanding of the united front tactic. One

has to note likewise that there is no correlation between the electoral success and the weakness of Lutte Ouvrière as an organization. LO has not much more than 1,000 members, hence its inclination to downplay its own — positive — call for building a mass party in defense of the working class from among those who voted for Laguiller and for a “third round” of the elections in the form of massive workers struggles — two endeavors which with which we fully agree — its inclination to reduce all this to an attempt just to build a larger Lutte Ouvrière group. This will fall far short of the possibilities opened up by LO’s electoral success.

But the general balance sheet of all these sects is decisively negative. They project a false and disorienting picture: that of pseudo-Trotskyism masquerading as the real thing. Because of their dogmatic sectarian stance and their behavior toward the mass movement, which oscillates between abstentionism and disruptive interventions, they increase anti-Trotskyist prejudices among advanced workers and left intellectuals.

In addition they act as cadre killers, to be sure on an incomparably smaller scale than the CPs and SPs. Sooner or later most of their members leave them, when they notice that all their efforts lead nowhere except to the reproduction of the sect as a goal in itself. But disillusion then generates in them skepticism and cynicism not only toward “Trotskyism,” but toward socialism, the labor movement, and politics in general.

In addition, in Russia they create the myth about allegedly existing “different Fourth Internationals,” obscuring the fact that there is only one FI which really exists and functions as such on a worldwide scale. The confusion which results from that myth makes it more difficult for Russian supporters of Trotsky to rebuild a Russian FI organization, which would certainly have been Trotsky’s main purpose in his country.

One should add that several of these sects have a record of crude opportunism. The Moreno cult for years published its newspaper with the subtitle: “Under the command of Juan and Evita Perón.” The Militant grouping in Britain opposed the right of self-determination of the Irish people in relation to Ulster and defended the reformist illusion that one could abolish capitalism in Britain by an “enabling act” of Parliament. The Healy sect gave wholehearted support to the Qaddafi regime, suppressing the fact that in his infamous “Green Book” this “supreme leader” showed great understanding, if not open support, for Adolf Hitler, who had recognized the threat which “the Jews” represented to the German people. And these opportunists give us lessons on “Trotskyist orthodoxy”!

The Barnes Sect, and Clarification of Fundamental Issues

The case of another sect, the Barnes grouping, allows us to clarify a series of fundamental theoretical and programmatic issues. In the course of a debate he conducted with us,¹⁰ Doug Jenness, one of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), confused the law of uneven development, known since Marx, with the law of uneven and combined development, first formulated by Trotsky.

He accuses our movement of assuming that that discovery originated from Trotsky’s intellectual labor (“a falling back into utopian socialism and historical idealism”). In reality, Trotsky’s theory of the permanent revolution — that’s what it is all about — was a generalization of his practical experience as chairman of the first Petrograd Soviet and of the working class activity throughout Russia, including Russian Poland.

Jenness likewise confuses the historical tasks before Russia: mainly the classical tasks of the national-democratic revolution — and the nature of the state which would allow the implementation of these tasks.

A Debate About Lenin and Trotsky on Russia: The Barnes Sect Abandons the Theory of Permanent Revolution

Contrary to all historical evidence, Jenness denies that there existed a fundamental theoretical-political difference between Lenin and Trotsky

before Lenin’s 1917 April Theses. Lenin’s formula of a “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry,” which Jenness and Barnes conflate into that of a “workers’ and farmers’ government” — implied the permanence of a bourgeois state, nay, the building of a capitalist economy, not only in agriculture. That is why the “Old Bolsheviks,” educated in that spirit, were in favor of a compromise — nay, of a fusion — with the Mensheviks, who thought likewise. That is why in the beginning they rejected Lenin’s April Theses as... “Trotskyism” — similar to Jack Barnes’s present rejection of the theory and strategy of permanent revolution.

Trotsky deduced from the specific nature of tsarist Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century that not only would the Russian bourgeoisie be unable and unwilling to implement these tasks, that their realization required the conquest of power by the working class allied to the poor peasantry, i.e., the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He also predicted that given the specific nature of Russian society at that stage, the existence of “islands” of extremely advanced modern industry within a relatively backward economy, the victorious revolution would combine from the start the implementation of the national-democratic tasks with an initial implementation of socialist tasks.

Jenness feigns to deny (or glosses over lightly) the undeniable historical fact that Lenin afterwards adopted that thesis of Trotsky in a radical way. Lenin called the state born of the October Revolution a dictatorship of the proletariat. He opened his speech as representative of the Soviet government at the Second Congress of Soviets with the words: “We now begin with the building of socialism.”

Another important difference between Lenin and Trotsky concerned the question of the peasantry’s capacity to set up political organs independently of both the bourgeoisie and the working class. Lenin assumed just such a capacity. In his eyes, the workers’ and farmers’ government would be a genuine alliance between workers’ parties and a peasant party, or party-like organs.

Afterwards, Lenin rejected that proposition in an explicit way. As we quote him in the debate with Jenness, he categorically affirms that history has proven without any possible doubt that the peasantry politically follows either the bourgeoisie or the working class. Anybody who thinks otherwise is an incorrigible dreamer, says Lenin. Indeed, the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia was due to the fact that for a variety of reasons, the majority of the peasantry in the end preferred to follow the working class and not the bourgeoisie.

Evolution of the Barnes Sect

The subsequent facts bear witness to the Barnes sect’s incapacity of controlling its own political destiny.

In a report presented to the SWP National Committee on January 7, 1977, Jack Barnes demanded from the FI leadership a formal rescission of the Ninth World Congress’s mistaken resolution on Latin America, on which that leadership’s majority tendency had already made a self-criticism.¹¹

He furthermore demanded the creation of a nonfactional climate in the FI. He called on the next world congress to reaffirm the validity of the Transitional Program. Inside the FI, “we can go back to the norm in a Bolshevik organization of temporary alignments, give and take in leadership relations, the possibility of different line-ups on different questions. We can agree today, disagree tomorrow, agree the next day, after events show who was right and who was wrong.”¹²

But then comes a sensational reversal of positions.

In 1981 and after, the Barnes group introduced into the SWP “organizational norms” which abolished Barnes’s own correct definition of Bolshevik organizational norms. The “give and take” between members of the leadership was eliminated. Members of the leadership who had held such positions for decades were expelled for the “crime” of having had some consultations among themselves, an absolutely normal procedure

10. Doug Jenness, SWP International Internal Discussion Bulletin, No. 3, June 1982, which contains both my text and two texts by Jenness.

11. The line of the Ninth World Congress on the “strategy of rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale and for a prolonged period” was condemned as wrong by the Tenth World Congress, implying a formal self-criticism by the International Majority Tendency.

12. Jack Barnes, *op. cit.*

in the Bolshevik party and the Communist International under Lenin, and in the International Left Opposition and the FI, led by Trotsky.

This was not just a manifestation of authoritarian arbitrariness. It was a means to facilitate a political operation: to divorce the SWP from its programmatic basis and its organized relation with the FI.¹³ This operation occurred behind the backs of the membership, without being openly and honestly announced, by means of a party school with selected participants and reporters, without giving a voice to comrades whom the Barnes clique assumed would disagree with that revisionist course. The whole operation was in clear violation not only of the SWP's tradition but even of its formal statutes.

Barnes Claims Bolshevik "Continuity"

Barnes justified this course as necessary for making possible the "continuity" of Bolshevism. But this claim is fraudulent. Lenin never accepted the divorce of the Bolshevik organization from its programmatic content. He would have shown contempt for Barnes's cynical attempt to use the same organization first to reassert Trotskyist "orthodoxy" and commitment to build the FI and afterward for a rejection of Trotskyism (the strategy of permanent revolution is explicitly contained in the Transitional Program as a basic programmatic component of our movement) and of any intention to build the FI.

Barnes claimed the importance of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) for guaranteeing the continuity and the future of the FI. The LTF's struggle against the wrong position adopted by the Ninth World Congress on Latin America was positive for the FI. The International Majority Tendency (IMT) recognized that by making its self-criticism at the Tenth World Congress.

But there is obviously more involved in the LTF-IMT faction fight than the question of orientation in Latin America. Today, the great majority of the LTF's leaders have broken any relation with any variety of Trotskyism and have abandoned any intention of building the FI. On the other hand, the great majority of the IMT leaders who opposed the LTF during the faction fight continue to build the FI not without success (modest, to be sure), in spite of all the accusations directed against them of "liquidationism" if not of "degeneration." Let this be a lesson to anybody tempted to repeat similar unfounded accusations today.

Programmatic Debate and Results in Practice...

This is not a purely historical or academic debate. There is a direct connection between program and the gravest issues of day-to-day politics.

The nature of the state determines the nature of the army (incidentally, not the other way around, as some have argued and still argue). If you refuse to fight for the working class's conquest of state power, independently of your intentions you maintain a bourgeois state and a bourgeois army in power, with all the consequences which flow therefrom.

... The Example of Indonesia Since 1965

That is what happened in Indonesia. The unfortunate Aidit¹⁴ believed you could have a state which was neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but a combination of both. In September 1965, the army struck against the workers, the CP members and sympathizers, the progressive intellectuals, killing one million people, the greatest catastrophe the international labor movement had suffered since the Nazi conquest of power in Germany.¹⁵

It is true that Aidit was inspired to act in the way he did, refusing to try to set up his own armed forces independent of those of the bourgeois army, by Mao's fateful book *The New Democracy*, in which the theory of a state with a double nature, neither bourgeois nor proletarian, is defended at length. Happily for the Chinese revolution, Mao did not practice what he preached. He stubbornly maintained his *de facto* independent armed forces, whatever may have been his rhetoric to the contrary — incidentally, against the explicit advice of Stalin, who urged him to make a compromise with Chiang Kai-shek, "as the Chinese people were tired of civil war." The People's Liberation Army defeated the Guomindang's

army. The Chinese revolution ended in victory. Mao applied in practice the strategy of the permanent revolution and led the building of a workers state, be it a gravely bureaucratized one from the start.

The Example of South Africa Today

This link between program and day-to-day political problems does not end with the Indonesian tragedy. Today, on a much more limited scale, the same tragedy is unfolding in South Africa.

Fortunately, there are not likely to be anywhere near a million deaths. But the toll paid by the South African workers and peasants for Nelson Mandela's following Aidit's road, maintaining a bourgeois state and a bourgeois army, whatever the integration of ANC-originated elements in both of them may be, will be heavy.

And the Barnes group shamelessly apologizes and covers up for that suicidal line, with all kinds of sophistry. It hides the truth. It does not reveal that Mandela has made a fundamental deal with international Big Business and is even ready to use pressure against sectors of the masses, in order to implement that deal.

How Apply the Strategy of Permanent Revolution?

There exists some confusion about what we mean when we say that the strategy of permanent revolution remains completely relevant today in most Third World countries (with the possible exception of the poorest ones).

It is not a question of stating programmatic points to the broad masses (this remains, of course, indispensable in educational propaganda material). The broad masses do not understand what we are talking about if we speak of permanent revolution. And in the present world context, after the collapse of the "command economy" in the ex-"socialist" countries, even the Third World left is more than skeptical about "revolution" of any kind, not to speak of a "permanent" one.

So, let us speak more simply in "biblical" terms. Let us say: do you want to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to cure the sick, to house the homeless, to protect the children from violence (I would add: to educate the illiterate)? That is the language the masses can and will increasingly understand.

If they answer "yes" in, say, only partially democratic elections, then we ask: don't you have to set up a state which will protect these democratically chosen options against violent disruptions and antidemocratic "coups" from your internal and external enemies?

The implementation of these burning demands implies indeed a redistribution of at least 70 percent of national resources, taking them away from private national and foreign owners; in fact, more than that was taken away in Russia under the New Economic Policy (NEP). What is "reformist" about expropriating *de facto* 70 percent of private property? Was Lenin a reformist?

These resources will not be used only to implement these "biblical" demands. They will be used also to start creating an economy and a society going beyond capitalism. What we are then proposing is to apply the strategy of permanent revolution *in practice*, even without calling it such. That is applying the strategy of permanent revolution to the full, in a way which can be understood by the broad masses.

Economic Reform in China

Much more limited but not insignificant are the consequences of the stance taken by a mini-sect which has become an enthusiastic supporter of the "Chinese road to socialism," praising to heaven the big successes of the Chinese economic policy. Unfortunately, some good friends and comrades tend to go along with such praise.

It is quite possible to question the validity of some of the Chinese official statistics. But much more important is the fact that whatever may be the scope of output growth, the social cost paid by the Chinese workers and peasants for it is terrible. More than one million Chinese young girls have been forced into prostitution, sometimes being sold by their own parents.

13. When we speak about organizational links between U.S. comrades and the FI, this is always within the restraints imposed by the reactionary Voorhis Act.

14. Leader of the Indonesian Communist Party.

15. Since then, the Indonesian army has committed a near-genocide against the people of East Timor. [See the April 1995 issue of *BIDOM*.]

Tens of millions of poor peasants have not been regularly paid for their crops delivered to the state. They have been wandering around, trying to move to the cities in order to get a minimum meager livelihood. The minimum wage is dismal, whereas the "red capitalists" are enriching themselves in a shameful manner.

Corruption and nepotism are rampant in the party leadership. There is no right to strike or to set up trade unions independent from the state. Political repression is severe.

Recently — much too late! — we have become aware of another horrifying account, the book written by Harry Wu, which in 1994 received the TV documentary prize of Amnesty International Awards.¹⁶

Wu alleges that there exists in the People's Republic of China the biggest concentration camp system in the world, called the *Laogai* system. It numbers millions of prisoners condemned very often without trial to slave labor, hundreds of thousands of whom are political prisoners. Products of that slave labor are massively exported at dumping prices.

We have no way of knowing to what extent the figures given by Wu are correct or exaggerated. But even if they were only partially true, the facts they relate would be horrendous.

The Alternative: Workers Self-Management

Again: this is not simply a debate about facts. Precisely because of the worldwide crisis of credibility of socialism in the eyes of the working class, any association of "socialism" with such conditions can only have disastrous effects. That class can only recuperate a minimum of socialist convictions if socialism — or the break with capitalism — is clearly associated with economic, social, political, cultural conditions in which its basic rights and interests are guaranteed, furthered, expanded. When we defended our economic model against Prof. Alec Nove and his like, we were not engaged in an academic debate. These defenders of "market socialism" say "*tertium non datur*": there is no third way. It is either the despotic and inefficient "command economy" or market socialism.

We answered them: yes, there is a third way — an economic order in which the mass of the producers, with quality control exercised by the mass of the consumers, determine what to produce, how to produce it, and how to distribute its main components, i.e., a system of democratically-centralized self-management.

This debate is not unrelated to the present worldwide offensive of Capital against Labor. The neoconservatives' attempt to have everybody — including inside the labor movement — accept the market as the only efficient way of economic organization dovetails nicely with their effort to disorient, disorganize, paralyze any efficient "fightback" struggle by the wage earners and their allies. No price is too high to defend the sanctity of greed and profit — including gradual dismantling of civil liberties and democratic freedoms.

An Essential Contradiction

The essential contradiction of all pseudo-Trotskyist sects is this: Those who declare themselves totally dedicated to building the "real" Fourth International haven't built anything internationally. Our organization, presumably "liquidationist," has built the real FI, consisting of thousands and thousands of members throughout the world.

An objection could be raised: Why hasn't the FI itself up to now solved the crisis of revolutionary leadership and working-class consciousness, even if it does exist? Why hasn't it built revolutionary mass parties and a revolutionary mass international, capable of leading the world proletariat to decisive victories.

In order to give an adequate answer to that question, one has to make a distinction between what should have been achieved and what has been achieved.

We leave aside the slanderous argument that somehow we didn't want to build revolutionary parties and a revolutionary international based upon the Marxist program. Since the age of 15, I have devoted my whole life to that purpose. Younger leaders of the FI have done likewise from a

later date. We have written many books and pamphlets on that subject. So have they. To argue otherwise is to take a leaf out of what Trotsky aptly called the Stalin School of Falsification.

A Balance Sheet on the Fourth International

Two answers must be given to the balance sheet of the FI's activity. Why haven't we achieved more than we have? What have we nevertheless achieved?

We are as much aware as anybody of the many weaknesses and shortcomings of our organization. It is true that we are present in at least 50 countries in the world. But we are absent from some important ones. We are absent from South Korea, Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan. Of the 15 main industrialized countries in the world, we are absent from two, very weak in three, stronger, to various degrees, in ten. In several countries our existing nuclei are small and have no real implantation in the working class. The circulation of our central press is still too small, in spite of the fact that its content is generally excellent. We have made some serious political mistakes in the past which have undoubtedly impaired our growth, although we have made fewer mistakes than others and have corrected them more rapidly.¹⁷

Some Theoretical Shortcomings...

There are also several theoretical shortcomings. The documents coming out of our last world congresses are excellent. They continue the tradition starting from the Communist Manifesto, through the Erfurt Program of Social Democracy, the founding documents of the Communist International and the Transitional Program. This is especially true of the document "Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialist Democracy," which has rendered an invaluable service to the whole communist movement and the radical left worldwide, and it is true of *Socialism or Barbarism on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*, which came out of our last world congress.

However, we have not really come near to a fully adequate answer to the problem posed to communists by the ecological crisis. The document which is before our upcoming world congress will have to be further discussed, although we have now an important number of specialists who will help us along.

We all agree that a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the beginning of building socialism will not in and of itself eliminate women's oppression. An independent women's liberation movement will thus have to continue working with that purpose. But we have not yet completely tackled the complex dialectics of class and gender.

The way in which work, schooling (and reschooling), leisure, social activity should be correlated, timewise and regarding their substance, needs to be made more precise.

...And Some Impressive Achievements

However, once these shortcomings have been stated, the achievements we can outline are all the more impressive. While we have not yet led successful general strikes, not to speak of revolutions, we have already led successful partial struggles in many countries.

The recent Air France strike, which delivered a serious blow to the conservative French government, was led by one of our comrades. A comrade of ours was co-organizer of the best income guarantee for redundant workers anywhere in Europe, the Cassa di Integrazione, at Europe's largest car factory, the FIAT plant at Turin. The chairman of our Swedish section ran for convenor of all the shop stewards at Scandinavia's largest factory Volvo. Though he was not elected, he scored an important minority vote. Our comrade Jakob Moneta was elected member of the Central Committee of the Party of Democratic Socialists (PdS) in the former GDR, in charge of trade-union work. In that capacity, he has started to assemble a small but very militant group of independent shop stewards, the first in a long time in that country.

16. We have been able to read Harry Wu's book only in Flemish. One should add that in capitalist countries — in the first place India — children are subjected to inhuman backbreaking labor for meager pittance, *de facto* slave labor as well. Tens of millions of poor are starving.

17. *Inprecor*, November 1994.

Our Italian comrades were co-leaders of several rank-and-file committees which triggered the huge mass demonstrations of several million workers against the government's attempts to change the existing pension laws at the expense of the workers.

Our comrades in Brazil and in Sri Lanka have led many important strikes. Recently, a comrade of our section in Martinique (French Antilles) played an important role in the general strike in the capital city of Fort-au-Prince.

All these comrades openly state their adherence to the Fourth International. So do many leading trade unionists in Brazil. In Sri Lanka, there is a possibility that thanks to a close collaboration between the unions led by our section and the CMU under the leadership of Comrade Bala Tampoe, our movement will gain hegemony in that country's trade union movement.

In a series of countries we have become a serious force, with real long-term implantation in the working class and allied mass movements. Thanks to that implantation and our political initiatives, we can no longer be bypassed by any important mass action of the labor movement's left, sometimes by the labor movement in its majority.

Obviously, this is only the case of a minority of our sections and sympathizing organizations. But the fact that for them it is true is a big step forward compared to the past.

We have two MPs in Europe, one of whom, our Danish comrade Sören, is a member of the United Secretariat of the FI. Another central leader of the FI in Europe, comrade Louça, just missed by a few hundred votes being elected to parliament on a straight FI ticket in Portugal. Let us hope he will be elected next time.

We have one elected MP in Mexico — comrade Edgar Sánchez, who is also a member of the United Secretariat — and six in Brazil. We have dozens of municipal and regional councillors, among them one in my home town Antwerp, together with a sympathizer, a radical trade unionist.¹⁸

Important personalities have joined our movement: Willy Boepple, member of the Central Committee of the German CP (since deceased), Dr. Georg Motved, member of the Central Committee of the Danish CP and internationally acknowledged expert on Lenin (since deceased), comrade Axelrod, former editor of the newspaper of the Brazilian CP, after joining the FI, co-editor of our Brazilian newspaper (comrade Axelrod also died in the meantime), comrade Josip Piniör, one of the historic founders and leaders of Solidamosc in 1980–81, which numbered 10 million workers organizing spontaneously and stood at that time for workers' self-management, not for the restoration of capitalism.

Comrades Jesús Albarracín and Montes, both economists at Spain's Central Bank, and quite influential in left trade-union circles, have joined the FI. Prof. H. Sriyananda, dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at the Open University of Sri Lanka, has joined the FI and its Sri Lankan section, the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP). Prof. Sriyananda is especially known for his campaign in favor of human rights and their relation with economic development. He is in the forefront of defending the Tamil people of Sri Lanka against government repression.¹⁹

We should especially mention comrade Mounif Melhem, a leader of one of the largest revolutionary left-wing organizations in the Middle East, the Syrian Communist Action Party. Comrade Melhem has languished in jail, together with many of his comrades, since 1981, i.e., for 14 years. He has now joined the FI.

The best Marxist in Russia and the whole ex-USSR, comrade Alexander Buzgalin, without joining the FI, has expressed his general sympathy with our movement. He helps us with the Russian language edition of the equivalent of our central magazine *International Viewpoint* (*Inprecor* in French, Spanish, and German). He has just published a Russian translation of the programmatic manifesto resulting from our last world congress.

Books by Fourth Internationalists

The books published by members of our movement have reached a circulation of three million copies, translations included, and we will soon

increase that figure. We explicitly limit that list to comrades who are members of our organization, not including sympathizers, to indicate that there is no contradiction between being politically active and being capable of writing books. [See page 34 for the author's separate listing of books by Fourth Internationalists.]

Several of the comrades mentioned here, among them comrades Trotsky, Maitan, Löwy, Alan Wald, Daniel Bensaid, Pierre Rousset, Hansen, Vitale, Breitman, Tony Smith, George Novack, Hans-Jürgen Schultz, Helmut Dahmer, Moscato Winfried Wolf, and myself, have written many more books than those mentioned. So I would not be far from the truth in stating that the total of the books written by members of our movement is around 100. Not bad for a movement still so small as ours, is it?

Two borderline cases should be mentioned: the Black South African revolutionist I.B. Tabata had many strategic and tactical differences with the FI. The unity movement he founded, and all its offshoots, did us a serious disservice by projecting a sectarian image of Trotskyism in his country. But before he died, he formally applied for membership in the FI. And he is the author of a prophetic book, *Education for Barbarism*, which has objectively inspired two generations of anti-apartheid fighters. One cannot but admire him as an irreconcilable opponent of apartheid and its imperialist backers.

Comrade A.R. Desai, one of India's foremost Marxists, published *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, explaining how the Indian bourgeoisie was simultaneously relatively strong and capable of establishing its hegemony over the working class, but unable to overcome India's backwardness. The thrust of his books was that the only way forward for the working class and all the exploited and the oppressed was permanent revolution.

While not formally joining the FI, comrade Desai published resolutions of our World Congresses, documents of our Indian section, including "Communalism in India," as well as books by revolutionary Marxists like myself, at prices affordable to Indian militants. His own books have been published in practically all major Indian languages.²⁰

The merits of comrade Chris Gaffney's magazine *Labour Review* should be stressed. Comrade Gaffney is a staunch supporter of the FI, yet he does not encounter any difficulty in having that magazine, which carries many articles from the FI press the world over, published as an organ of the Victorian Labor College, controlled by more than a dozen officially affiliated unions.

Some Unsolicited Advice to Fellow Fourth Internationalists

I allow myself to sin against the eleventh commandment: "Don't give unsolicited advice." I advise my friend Livio Maitan to write a basic scientific book on the history of the Italian labor movement from its inception until today. The Italian labor movement has been among the most militant and radical in the world. Many valuable lessons could be drawn from its achievements and failures.

I know it is not easy to give priority to basic books over writings responding to immediate party needs. But in the long run, it pays to do that from every point of view, including that of party building.

I address the same advice self-critically to myself, to write my next basic scientific contribution to Marxist theory. *The General Theory of Wage Work, the Labor Movement, and Socialism* is more important for our movement than most of the texts I am writing currently.

I likewise advise my old friend and comrade Bala Tampoe to write a history of the trade union movement in Sri Lanka, centered around the role of the CMU, which he leads. Comrade Bala has the historical merit of having saved the honor of Trotskyism in Sri Lanka, when his country's section, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), entered a coalition government with the bourgeoisie and started on a treacherous course of discrimination against the Tamil minority and of mass repression. Now

18. *Ibid.* On the basis of wrong information, I stated at the Spartacist meeting that we had three municipal councillors in Antwerp. We hereby rectify that error.

19. See the Australian magazine *Links*, April-June 1994.

20. *International Viewpoint*, March 1995.

that we have again an important section in Sri Lanka, the NSSP, Comrade Bala could write the proposed book without misgivings or second thoughts.

We likewise call upon our dear friend Jakob Moneta to write a history of class struggle trade unionists in Germany from the end of the nineteenth century until today, and the role they played in assisting leftward moving forces inside the German labor movement. What was their weight in Rosa Luxemburg's agitation in favor of the political mass strike; in the emergence of a mass movement against the first imperialist war and in support of the Russian Revolution (the *revolutionäre Oberteile*); in the emergence of the USPD and the move of its left wing toward the Communist International; in the struggle for workers' control (1920–1923); in the struggle against rising fascism; in the successful general strike against the Kapp–von Lütwitz putsch; in the struggle for the united front against Hitler's seizure of power; in the passive resistance against the Nazis inside the German factories after Hitler took power; in the struggle against the dismantling of the Ruhr factories after 1945; in the East German workers' uprising of 1953; since then.

All this being said, there is no more reason for intellectual triumphalism than for programmatic-political triumphalism on behalf of the FI. There are important lacunae in regard to subject matter in the list of the books cited. They correspond roughly to those in our theoretical elaboration mentioned above.

Important Books by Authors Close to the FI

Furthermore, covering more or less the same ground as that of our movement's authors, there are important books written by non-members of our movement which are quite superior from a scientific point of view to those written by our comrades. We could quote quite a long list of those. I will limit myself to Perry Anderson's impressive series on the origins of the modern state; and the books by Anwar Shaikh, Robert Brenner, Amartya Sen, Pierre Broué, Elmar Altvater, and Adolfo Gilly.

Some of these books have been written by authors close to our movement: Daniel Guérin's book on *Class Struggles in the First Republic*, which plausibly projects the process of permanent revolution backwards to the French Revolution; and especially my teacher and friend Roman Rosdolsky's book on Marx's *Grundrisse*, which remains to this day the classic work on the subject.

Harry Braverman had been a long-standing member of our movement. His book *Labor and Monopoly Capital* has been very influential. It was written after he left the FI.

Comrade Neville Alexander, while not — or not yet, to put it more hopefully — a formal member of the Fourth International, is South Africa's foremost Marxist and the world's key expert on the importance of language in the history of humankind.

This necessary appeal to modesty should not remain platonic. Its outcome is a request for additional intellectual/scientific endeavor by comrades of our movement.

We believe we urgently need the following studies: one on the ways to compute environmental with labor-value costs, going beyond the crude solution offered by non-Marxist economists around the concept of "externality"; one on the dialectics of class, caste, and gender in today's Indian society; one on the specificity of Japanese capitalism, from its inception until today; one on the mediatization of society; and especially one on the historical roots and dynamics of religious fundamentalism, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and Shinto, with their inhuman dynamics.

Probably this is too formidable a task to be solved by a single comrade. A collective effort will be needed here.

Comrade Salah Jaber is one of the top leaders of the Fourth International. We believe he is best equipped to start working on the roots of religious fundamentalism, by building a team around that subject.

Charles-André Udry is together with François Vercammer my closest and dearest friend. Both are top experts in the political initiatives we count in our ranks, much superior to myself in that respect. I call upon them to start building a team in order to write an indispensable book for us and for all socialists: *Ecology and Socialism*.

Growth of the FI, Modest But Steady

In addition to this intellectual achievement, we have several factors operating in our favor, i.e., in the sense of a constant, be it modest, growth of the FI.

We have a central cadre which has withstood the pressure of the worldwide conservative and anti-socialist offensive in a remarkable way. Some losses have of course occurred. This is inevitable under the present world circumstances. More will probably occur. To expect this not to happen is to believe in Santa Claus. But our gains, admittedly modest, are bigger than our losses. We are quite confident that at our next world congress, our membership (including that of the youth organizations fraternally linked to FI sections and sympathizing organizations) will be larger than it was at the previous congress.

We have several important assets unique to our movement.

Our organization is the product of a tough selection process. It is not a one-man show or a cult. It is led by a collective leadership which is highly critical and self-critical. What our opponents consider our weakness has turned out to be our main source of strength. We do not have state power anywhere. We have no mass unions to back us up. This means that comrades join us not for careerism, not to get material advantages or positions of power or prestige.

They join us out of deeply felt convictions and an unlimited devotion to the cause of the working class and all the exploited and the oppressed. This positive selection turns out to be a basic source of strength. It has created a granite basis on which all our opponents will break their teeth.

The Only Existing International Marxist Organization

We are the only really international organization today in the world, both in the political and in the organizational senses of the word, two dimensions which cannot be separated from each other.

Politically, we defend the interests of the toilers and the exploited and the oppressed in the three sectors of world reality, without subordinating any of them to some "higher priority." Given the massive trend toward "globalization" of capital and of the class struggle, this makes us more sensitive than others to the needs and the initial possibilities of counterposing international coordination of unions and workers' action to the international operations of the multinational corporations.

In addition, we are the only really existing international organization functioning as such, in too few countries to be sure, but in a sufficient number of them to have a more realistic view of the world situation, a view based upon the activity of cadres and militants who know their national situations. You can't tell them tales of "rising class struggles" in countries where practically every single strike in the last years has ended in defeat; neither can you tell them tales of a "passive working class" in countries where mass strikes and mass demonstrations are proof of the opposite.

A Historic Victory: "Rehabilitation" of Trotsky in Russia

We have just scored a victory of truly historic dimensions. The Stalinst bureaucracy mounted the most powerful machine of falsification in all time against Leon Trotsky, his followers, and the Russian Old Bolsheviks. First they were slandered and accused of heinous crimes. Then an ice sheet of silence covered most of them.

But the ice sheet broke. The Supreme Military Tribunal of the USSR completely rehabilitated all the accused of the Moscow Trials, with the exception of the butcher Yagoda.

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of our Old Man, he was completely rehabilitated politically. *Izvestia*, the official daily paper of the Soviet government, wrote that Trotsky had been a great and honest revolutionary, second only to Lenin as builder of the Soviet state, undisputed founder of the Red Army, and the person who led that army to victory in the civil war, thereby assuring the survival of Soviet Russia.

There were many echoes of that rehabilitation. With 50 years' delay, a magazine in the GDR published a moving tribute to Trotsky by the great antifascist author Arnold Zweig: "Trotsky," he writes,

carried the most valuable and best organized brain which ever has been destroyed by an ice pick. During all his life, Trotsky fought for all of us who

A Listing of Books by Fourth Internationalists

We shall mention for the period since the end of World War II: the books by James P. Cannon; Winfred Wolf's book *Eisenbahn gegen Autobahn* [Railroad vs. Highway], which has become a worldwide classic in the struggle against the so-called "automobile society," which is increasingly making the large cities of the world uninhabitable. The book is an indispensable tool for the defense of railway workers and their jobs, and at the same time shows a way out for the automobile workers. It was written when comrade Wolf was still a member of the FI. (He has since left the FI. He has of late been elected to parliament in Germany as an independent candidate on the PdS slate.) Comrade Louça has written an outstanding book on the *Long Waves of Capitalist Development*, one of the most remarkable books I have read in the last years, much superior to my own book on the same subject.

Comrade Livio Maitan has written, besides many other books, an excellent work on the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Comrade George Breitman, who rendered an invaluable service to our movement by compiling and editing the 14-volume series *Writings of Leon Trotsky*, is himself the author of many books, among which is *The Last Year of Malcolm X — the Evolution of a Revolutionary*.

Comrade Michael Löwy has written many influential books: we mention just one — *Essays on Changing the World — Essays in Political Philosophy from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin*.

Comrade Stephanie Coontz has received widespread favorable publicity for her outstanding book.

Likewise, Comrade Jeannette Habel for her book about Cuba and Comrade Catherine Samary for her work on *Plan and Market*.

Comrade Salah Jaber has written a justifiedly passionate denunciation of imperialism's Gulf War against the Iraqi people.

Our late friend and comrade Pierre Frank, who is sorely missed, wrote a *History of the*

Communist International, which remains the best book on the subject.

Comrade Claude Jaquin has written a history of the trade-union left in South Africa, which will be a useful tool for building a genuinely socialist labor movement in that country. Jakob Moneta wrote, among many other publications, *The Rise and Decline of Stalinism*.

Manuel Aguilar Mora is the author of a seminal book on *Bonapartism in Mexico*.

Comrade Pierre Rousset has written a *History of the Vietnamese Communist Party*, which remains unique in its genre.

Comrade Helmut Dahmer has been editing Trotsky's Collected Writings in German, by far the most scholarly done in any language, with typical German "Gründlichkeit." He is the author of many important books, among which is *Analytische Sozialpsychologie*.

Comrade George Novack was the author, among other books mainly on philosophy, of a seminal book on the general phenomenon of transitional societies in history.

Hans-Jürgen Schultz has written, among other books, *Die geheime Internationale — Spitzel, Terror und Computer — Zur Geschichte des Geheimdienstes in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt 1982.

Comrade Jesús Albarracín is the author of the basic book on *The Long Waves of Spanish Capitalism*.

Comrade Daniel Bensaid has written an important book on *Marxism and the Theory of History*.

Comrade Tony Smith, one of the most remarkable American philosophers and probably the most outstanding Marxist one, is the author of *The Logic of Marx's Capital; Reply to Hegelian Criticism*.

Tariq Ali, when he was still a member of our movement, wrote a courageous and trailblazing book on the origins and future of Pakistan.

Comrade Luis Vitale is the author of an impressive *History of the Chilean Labor Movement*.

Comrade Alan Wald has written *The Responsibility of Intellectuals (Essays on Marxist*

Traditions in Cultural Commitment), one of the few — still too few! — books of our comrades on questions of culture and ideology.

Comrade Maxime Durand's writings on economic conjuncture are still an indispensable tool for our world movement.

Comrade Alain Krivine, the public leader of our French section, is the author of *Questions on Revolution*.

Our Canadian friend and comrade, the late François Moreau wrote the book *Combats et Débats de la IVe Internationale*.

Comrade Farrell Dobbs was the author of an outstanding 4-volume series on the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike, the subsequent building of the Teamsters union in the Midwestern United States, and the counterattack of the Teamster bureaucracy in alliance with the Roosevelt government.

Fritjof Tichelman was still a member of our Dutch section when he wrote *The Social Evolution of Indonesia — The Asiatic Mode of Production and Its Legacy*.

Comrade Paul Le Blanc is the author of *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party*.

Comrade Willem Bot, when he was still a member of our movement, wrote a biography of the great Dutch revolutionary Henk Sneevliet, who was shot by the Nazis in occupied Holland together with nearly the whole leadership of his organization. He died shouting, "We are the first ones to die for the International!"

Comrade David Mandel has written a history of the Petrograd working class in 1917–1918, which is regarded even in Russia as the standard book on that subject.

Comrade A. Rosmer, who was Trotsky's closest personal friend during his third exile, wrote among other books the classic *Moscow Under Lenin*.

Our Brazilian comrade Ricardo Antunes wrote *A Rebelião do Trabalho*, dealing with the strike wave of 1978–1980 in greater São Paulo, today the world's largest concentration of industrial workers.

love humankind, and whose nationality is just that love. His murderer tried to destroy that love. It is our common task to save Trotsky's inheritance from decline, for it remains always threatened. Whether or not you call his mission world revolution, as he did, expressed simply and without pathos, it meant the extension of human culture to millions of illiterates, or, as Lunacharsky put it, to assure a fundamental change in the expression of the eyes of all these human beings.

No less moving was the tribute which the president of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, the only one in the world who had granted asylum to Trotsky, paid to his friend. The day after Trotsky's assassination, he wrote in his diary: "People's objectives and ideals do not disappear with the death of their leaders. On the contrary, they become even stronger through the blood of the victims killed for their cause. Trotsky's blood will fertilize the heart of this fatherland."

Trotsky's Writings Published in Russia

Trotsky clearly does not need any political rehabilitation by the rulers of the USSR. His place in history is unshakable. But what is involved in this rehabilitation is not just a question of restoration of justice. It is a practical question: the possibility of having his books legally published in the ex-USSR. These books have already been printed by the hundreds of thousands there. They will continue to be.

This historical turn cannot but have a favorable effect for our world movement. Pierre Broué's biography of Trotsky has also been printed in hundreds of thousands of copies. Comrade Broué is not a member of the FI, but he is an avowed Trotskyist, recognized as such in France and internationally.

In the wake of all these changes, I was asked by the publishing house of the PdS in the ex-GDR to write a book with the title *Trotsky as the Alternative* (without question mark). It has already appeared in German and in English (Verso Press, London); it will be published soon in Portuguese and Spanish and — at least we hope — in French and Russian.

There is no element of boasting in the enumeration of all these facts. Facts are facts, i.e., either correct or false. The lack of knowledge regarding them is due above all to the lack of understanding (and of knowledge) of the media, including the radical press, rather than to a deliberate conspiracy of silence, although this factor certainly also plays a role. The cumulative effect they produce is undoubtedly impressive.

Anyone has the right to qualify their significance, by putting them in what one considers "the broader context." But nobody has the right to question them, except if one can prove that they are incorrect, i.e., based upon wrong information. In that case, but in that case only, I am ready to eliminate them from the record.

Comrade Arturo Anguiano has written *El Estado y la política obrera en el cardenismo*. Another Mexican comrade, Enrique Avila Carrillo, has written *El Cardenismo 1934-1940*.

Professor Nathan Weinstock was a member of our movement when he wrote the three-volume *Le Pain de Misère (The Bread of Misery)* on the Jewish proletariat's living conditions before World War II, which remains the fundamental work on the subject.

Comrade Pantelis Pouliopoulos, former secretary of the Greek Communist Party, had become a member of the Trotskyist movement when he wrote *Democratic Revolution or Socialist Revolution in Greece*. He was shot by Italian fascist officers during World War II, after having successfully appealed to the soldiers of the firing squad not to execute him.

Our Dutch comrade Herman Pieterse wrote, together with Menno Rekman, *Left Socialism [in Holland] Between the Two World Wars*.

Comrade Lidia Cirillo wrote *Sinistra e Podere (Left and Power)*.

Comrade Miguel Romero has written an Amsterdam Notebook entitled *The Spanish Civil War in Euzkadi and Catalonia*. Likewise, Comrade Robert Lockheed has written an Amsterdam Notebook on the bourgeois revolutions.

Our Polish comrade Zbigniew Kowalewski has written *Give Us Back Our Factories*, on the movement in favor of workers' self-management led by Solidarnosc in 1980-81.

Comrade Kergoat has written a very critical biography of the French "left socialist" Marceau-Pivert, which furnishes valuable material on the general strike of June 1936, complementing the basic book by our comrades Danos and Gibelin on the subject, written before World War II.

Comrade Treviso has written an excellent contribution to the problem of Marxism's attitude toward the Jewish question.

Comrade Art Preis wrote *Labor's Giant Step* on the mass unionization in the 1930s in the USA.

Comrade Hugo Blanco wrote *Land or Death*. Comrade Joseph Hansen wrote *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution and The Leninist Strat-*

egy of Party Building, (which we have already mentioned).

Before he left the FI to join French Social Democracy — another example of someone giving us lessons on how to "really build the FI" — Gérard Filoche had written an interesting book on the Portuguese revolution.

Two old Chinese comrades, both over 90 years of age, merit a very special mention: Zheng Chaolin, who has beaten the great French revolutionist Auguste Blanqui's record for political imprisonment. He stayed in jail for 27 years, under Chiang Kai-shek first, Mao, and post-Maoism later. His book was published by our German comrades in German translation: *Siebzig Jahre Rebell: Erinnerungen eines chinesischen Oppositionellen (Seventy Years a Rebel: Memoirs of a Chinese Oppositionist)*. Then there is Wan Fan Hsi's *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary*.

Both books were edited by comrade Gregor Benton, who has done himself an impressive job in writing a "Working Paper" for our Amsterdam International Institute for Research and Education: *Explorations in the History of Chinese Trotskyism*. He is the author of a monumental *History of the Chinese Red Army's Peasant War in South China 1934-1938*.

Comrade Geoff Pearce has written the book on the specificity of New Zealand's capitalism and its labor movement, which distinguishes it from Australian capitalism.

Comrade Kermel has written a book on the Kanak liberation struggle.

When comrade Peter Uhl was still a member of the FI, he wrote his book *Socialism in Prison*.

And finally we have to include our own books on this list. Abusing our power as author of this article — a seed of bureaucratic privileges? — we cite our most important books: *Marxist Economic Theory; Late Capitalism; The Long Waves of Capitalist Development* (second enlarged edition); *One Hundred Years of Controversy around Marx's Capital; The Meaning of the Second World War* (including in the German edition a denunciation of the efforts to "relativize" the Nazi crimes) — *Power and Money: A Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy;*

Trotsky as the Alternative; An Introduction to Marxism; The Place of Marxism in History.

It would be quite legitimate to extend this list to the pre-1940 era. It would then include some of Leon Trotsky's main books written after his expulsion from the Soviet Communist Party, above all his monumental *History of the Russian Revolution*; Christian Rakovsky's writings during the same period, which include his seminal essay "On the Professional Dangers of Power"; Leon Sedov's denunciation of the first Moscow Trial; C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*; Daniel Guérin's *Fascism and Big Business*; the German comrade Franz Jakubowski's book, *Der ideologische Überbau in der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* [Ideological Superstructure in the Materialist Conception of History] and our teacher and friend Abram Leon (Weinstock)'s *The Materialist Interpretation of the Jewish Question*.

Harold Isaacs (who was at that time a member of our movement) wrote the important book *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*.

Comrade Jabra Nikola, who translated The Communist Manifesto into Arabic, broke with the Palestinian CP in 1939 and became a Trotskyist. He was instrumental in educating and bringing a whole generation of Middle East militants to Trotskyism.

Our Israeli comrade Jakob Taut wrote *Judenfrage und Zionismus*.

One should not fail to mention Isaac Deutscher's monumental three-volume biography of Trotsky. Whatever the political differences we have with Deutscher — who had been a member of our movement until the 1938 founding congress — there is no doubt that Deutscher succeeded in breaking the Stalinist/Maoist conspiracy of silence on the Old Man and made him again into a subject of historical/political inquiry among left intellectuals on a world scale.

We apologize in advance if we have omitted any comrade's name from this list. This is exclusively due to lack of information and/or lapses in memory.

Regroupments and Fusions

It remains an open question whether the FI will become the revolutionary mass International necessary for leading the international working class and allied mass movements to victory through simple linear progress. We very much doubt it. This was not the way the Third International was built in its best period either.

Regroupments and fusions will most probably occur, not necessarily from the start on a world scale. There is nothing wrong with that, provided they occur on the basis of a correct program and fully respect internal democracy, the right of tendency, and the non-prohibition of factions (factions which we ourselves consider bad, but their banning is a cure worse than the illness).

If a real mass International were to be set up by forces much larger than ours, we would have no sectarian reluctance to function in it as a minority, provided internal democracy was guaranteed. We would continue to fight for what we consider the correct program, the correct political line, and the correct political practice, while remaining perfectly ready to learn from an open and frank dialogue with our associates, in the light of current class struggle/mass struggle experiences and without believing that we have already the right answers to all questions.

Some comrades might think that the continuous existence of the FI as a structured organization with international discipline on issues like major

wars, revolutions, and counterrevolutions, constitutes today an obstacle to such wider regroupments. In addition, some may believe that it is just an illusion to think that the FI can grow, be it on a modest scale, under the present world circumstances.

It is their right to think so. But it is in turn our right and that of a majority of our sections, cadres, and members, to think otherwise.

No Other "New International," and the Problem of "National Communism"

It is not by accident that no move in the direction of such a mass International has been made by any significant force anywhere in the world. These wider forces all suffer from the disease of "national communism," i.e., they subordinate the interests of parts of the world proletariat to what they consider to be the priorities flowing from the needs of building the party in their own country.

We are convinced that this is profoundly wrong. In the long run you cannot correctly intervene in the class struggle in your own country or even "build the party" there, if you base yourself essentially on the class struggle experience of that country alone. As we already stated, this is especially true in the present period characterized by a growing "globalization" of capital.

The argument used by the British SWP (state capitalist sect) that you first have to build the basement and the floor before you can build the roof (the International) is a crude sophism. What architect or group of construction workers could ever build a roof without knowing, from the beginning of the building process, what it is going to be and how it is going to be built, not just through a blueprint but through the current experience of building.

Many left organizations and tendencies seriously underestimate the worldwide nature of poverty and marginalization. These result from more than twenty years of depression, characterized by constantly growing unemployment, irrespective of the ups and downs of business cycle fluctuations which continue during the long depressive wave.²¹

The "national communist" options of these organizations and tendencies make them underestimate this global trend. Sometimes they even deny it, as is the case with some radical "third worldist" or extremist feminists, with full support of the employers.

Poverty in Rich Countries As Well As Poor

In March 1995, a summit meeting of the representatives of 184 countries, among them more than 100 heads of state or governments, took place in Copenhagen. Organized by the UN, it was supposed to deal with the problem of "social development" — to speak more bluntly: of poverty. It was centered in the first place on the growing gap between the "fifth of mankind," as was said (the rich countries) which controls 85 percent of the world's assets, and the 1.3 billion people who live in poverty.

But these formulas contain a large element of misrepresentation, if not mystification. It is not true that the "rich countries" control 85 percent of the world's assets. These assets are controlled by the ruling classes of these rich countries, not by their wage earners, their unemployed, their marginalized poor.

Neither is it true that the ruling classes of the Third World countries live in poverty. Often their standard of living equals that of the imperialist countries' rich. It is in any case qualitatively higher than that of the workers of the rich countries, not to speak of the poor of the West.

When the representatives of the industrial entrepreneurs of the West state that the hourly wage in their countries is \$18 against \$2 in China and in the poorest countries, they feign to forget that in the West the people struck by poverty live far below the standard of living assured by that average hourly wage.

These are not small minorities. In Belgium, a study of the highly "respectable" King Baudouin Foundation estimates that 20 percent of families live under precarious conditions, at the border of not being able to survive.

Colette Braeckman and Michel De Meulenaere quote the figure of 55 million people struck by poverty in Europe alone (*Le Soir*, March 1, 1995). The real figure is probably around 100 million people for all the Western countries. And these 100 million poor exercise a downward pressure on the wages of hundreds of millions of other workers in the "wealthy" countries.

Inge Kaul of the UN Development Program Bureau (UNDP) believes that \$30 to \$40 billion a year are necessary to satisfy the basic needs of all people in the world. This figure is much too low. But cutting military expenditure in half would give a cumulative "peace dividend" of \$1 trillion in five years' time — without reducing the Western workers' wages by one cent.

Other sources of additional resources have been suggested. Taxing speculative gains by less than 1 percent would give another \$1 trillion, according to Nobel laureate Tobin (*Die Zeit*, March 3, 1995).

All these measures are objectively feasible. But to believe that social forces — concretely the capitalist class — intent upon maximizing profits will implement them is utterly utopian.

21. Dan Gallin, general secretary of the International Union of Food Workers, has written an interesting article on the "world labor market," a somewhat exaggerated notion if it is supposed to describe the present situation instead of an obvious trend. He notes that the multinationals' "delocalization" policies tend to lead to a global downward trend of wages, a global loss of jobs, and a global weakening of trade unions. (We have only the Spanish version of this article, in *Iniciativa Socialista*, December 1994.) But all this creates a growing pressure for the unions to react in an international (internationalist) way.

22. *Inprecor*, November 1994.

23. *Ibid.*

An International That Defends the Poor

The Fourth International is the only organization in today's world which consistently defends the interests of *all* the poor everywhere, without discrimination. It thereby defends the interests of the world working class in the only way this has to be done today.

It is ready to conclude all necessary alliances to start implementing the measures necessary to fight poverty everywhere. The trade unions should take the cause of the unemployed, the marginalized, the old pensioners into their hands, leaving it up to them to set up their own independent organizations if they deem this necessary.

Dangers of "National Communism"

"National communism," even when proclaimed by the best of comrades with the best of intentions, is but a variant of the reactionary utopia of "socialism in one country." The additional idea that it is easier to build a strong International with a minimum of discipline on key international issues as enumerated above, when you first have strong national parties, is totally erroneous.

The stronger a national party, the more difficult it becomes to implement the abandonment of sovereignty necessary for such an International, if preparatory education has not been strengthened by internationalist action. And if you don't have that practice, you risk, in the case of major wars, to apply the cruel but realistic formula of Rosa Luxemburg: "Workers of all countries unite in times of peace and cut your mutual throats in times of war."

FI Members in Mass Workers Parties

So for the time being we shall continue to build the FI here and now, in spite of all the objections raised. In practice, this will not be an obstacle to broader national regroupments (regional ones are very unlikely to actually occur rapidly). That this is perfectly possible is demonstrated by the example of the two mass parties in which we participate loyally, the Brazilian Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT — Workers Party) and the Italian Refundazione Comunista, while at the same time building our own forces. Two leading members of the FI, who have never hidden the fact that they are members of the FI leadership, comrade João Machado and Livio Maitan, are at the same time members of the top leadership of these mass parties.

Of late, this has also been confirmed, on a more modest scale, in Turkey, where a new left socialist organization was set up with the participation of the Turkish section of the FI, a still small organization. Comrade Erdal Kara, a leader of our section, has been elected one of the five vice presidents of the United Socialist Party (BSP). And our comrade could state:

Our partners respect our political and programmatic contributions. They also know our international links, but this does not embarrass them. On the contrary, the different [successful and unsuccessful] experiences of party building in which the sections of the FI throughout the world are involved...are considered as useful contributions to the process of building the BSP.²²

It is interesting to note what one of the leaders of the Kurtulus groups, a major component of the BSP, has to say about our comrades:

Speaking about Yeni Yol [our section]...it is radically different from all other Trotskyist groups in Turkey. It tries to find solutions to the problems which are posed to us in daily practice, whereas the other groups have an approach which one can characterize as theoretical sectarianism.²³

Of late, our Algerian cothinkers have confirmed the importance of knowing national reality, by the courageous and concrete stand they took on the current wave of terror in their country.²⁴

Capital Still on the Offensive...

One should not misunderstand the meaning of the information about the FI given here. It does not contain an ounce of complacency, not to speak of triumphalism. One would have to be blind and deaf not to see that the world situation is still very bad for the wage-earning class, that Capital is still clearly on the offensive the world over. The shameful way in which the leaders of the political mass organizations of the working class and the trade unions (with a few honorable exceptions) have capitulated to Capital's austerity policies has increased divisions in the workers' ranks and objectively strengthened Capital's offensive.

... But There Are Factors in Our Favor

But from a longer-term point of view, several important factors are operating in our favor.

On a world scale, the wage-earning class is still growing, and growing in an impressive way, although not in all countries and all sectors at the same pace. Internationally, it has long passed the one billion mark. If you add to it the semi-proletariat of landless peasants in important third world countries, you will probably reach the figure of two billion.

Capitalism is clearly in a blind alley.

The depressive long wave of the international capitalist economy, which started in the early 1970s, is not due for a "soft landing" in the foreseeable future. It is to last for a long time.

Besides the resistance of the masses to a radical reduction of their living standards in key imperialist and some threshold countries, the absence of a hegemonic imperialist power plays an important role in that respect. This results in the absence of any currency being "as good as gold." From this flows an increase in permanent monetary disorder, of which "hyperliquidity," the universal "debt economy," and the increasing reprivatization of money, are the main causes.

World Currency and Stock Market Crises

Growing monetary and financial disorder on the world market is one of the important features of the world situation and its main trends of development. As well for political-military reasons as for that reason which to a certain degree anticipates future developments, there is no "new world order." There is a growing "world disorder."

The stock markets are increasingly shaky. In the wake of the new Mexican "crisis," Latin American stock prices collapsed. This was followed by a collapse of stock prices in Italy. There came a sharp decline of stock prices in Britain in the wake of the collapse of the House of Baring. This shook stock prices in Japan and Hong Kong. Then the accelerated decline of the dollar put the French franc and other European currencies under strong pressure.

Interestingly, the Hong Kong collapse was actually triggered by the arrest of one of mainland China's key business figures linked to ruling CP families. The shakiness of the ex-"socialist" countries' tendency to restore capitalism thus was combined with the shakiness of the international capitalist economy to increase world disorder.

Are we at the eve of a worldwide collapse of stock markets, nay of a 1929-31 type bank panic, including in the USA? It is too early to answer "yes." But the possibility is certainly greater than thought before.

Crisis of Bourgeois Leadership

Revolutionary Marxists correctly consider the importance of the unsolved crisis of proletarian leadership and consciousness as a key factor to explain why world disorder lasts for so long.

They should, however, not fail to notice a parallel crisis of international bourgeois leadership and consciousness. This not only reflects inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist international competition and the weakening of national states' power with regard to the multinational corporations. It is also visible inside capitalist countries themselves.

The bourgeoisie is faced with grave, if not agonizing choices, given the present crisis of its system and the fluidity of basic class relationships of forces. The divisions reflect its incapacity to make clear-cut "rational" choices under these conditions.

The Fightback Is Rising

In addition, we believe that we have passed the lowest point of the working class's and mass movement's retreats. The fightback is now rising.

In the framework of this rising, an important role is played by those layers of the wage earning class which work in sectors like telecommunications, banking, and other (often misnamed) "service industries," as well as in semi-automated industrial plants.

Contrary to a myth defended by all and sundry, it is easier for these wage workers to paralyze the capitalist economy by mass strikes than it was by mass strikes in "classical" mines, steel plants, or auto plants.

Capitalism could survive a six-month strike in the mines. It could never survive a six-month strike in telecommunications and banks.

The mentality of these wage earners is summarized in the formula: those on top are corrupt and incompetent. The knowledge about corruption is as old as bourgeois society. The awareness of incompetence is new.

Workers Attitudes Toward Us Are Changing

Slowly the attitude of the wage earning class toward radical politics will be changing. Already prejudices against revolutionary Marxists, including against sections of the FI, are disappearing. They are not yet ready to join us organizationally. But they respect us as honest and incorruptible people, an image which we have to defend as the apple of our eye. They are ready to collaborate with us in a series of countries — granted, still a minority of them — provided we show ourselves to be efficient defenders of their immediate interests, which are not always and not necessarily economic ones; just consider the intransigent defense of the right to strike and other basic democratic freedoms. The next step will come later.

As I wrote many times in the past, it is during nonrevolutionary conjunctural phases of the class struggle that revolutionists conquer the capacity to lead their class when the possibility of revolution begins to appear. It was in the period 1912-1914 that the Bolsheviks gained the capability of leading the revolution of 1917. Our very close friend and comrade François Vercammen, one of the top leaders of the FI, is preparing a book on that subject. That's how our hour will strike, too.

Another trend working in our favor is the increased sensitivity of many political tendencies to the respect of democratic norms. This was illustrated recently by developments inside the Filipino CP.

An International to Be Proud Of

I have never felt as proud and as confident in the Fourth International, that great movement of ours which we are collectively building through the combined efforts of thousands of comrades.

Fanatics attract fanatics. Screwballs attract screwballs. But the overwhelming majority of humankind is composed neither of fanatics nor of screwballs. It consists of normal human beings, inasmuch as people can be normal in the inhuman society we are living in. A revolutionary organization composed of normal people, that is what we strive to become.

We stress in this article that following Marx, our basic drive is to change the world. But Marx also taught us that we want to change the world with a specific purpose: to realize what Marx himself called the categorical imperative to eliminate *all* social conditions in which human beings are debased, downtrodden, mutilated in their possibility of developing all their human potential.

Forward to a More Human Society

Given the threats weighing upon the future of our species, never in history was there a cause more worthy of defending than this collective endeavor of ours, more worthy of devoting one's whole life to it.

So, comrades, to the World Socialist Federation that will safeguard the survival of the human race and usher in the higher and more human civilization of socialism, of emancipated labor.

Forward! Vperyod! Adelante!

Summary

[Note by the Author: This summary is different from the speech itself inasmuch as it does not essentially consist of material written before I

went to New York. It does take up some of the remarks made by the Spartacists' spokespersons during the meeting. For readers of the text, the reason will be obvious: we want to hit the sectarians and hit them very hard. Their interventions during the meeting offer additional material to do just that. The fundamental difference between dogmatic sectarians and genuine Trotskyists, revolutionary Marxists, comes out all the clearer. But part of the summary was also prepared before I went to New York.]

Comrades of the Spartacist League: you have heard irrefutable evidence that your leadership's allegations are slanderous falsifications on at least two issues.

Contrary to what they claim, we have come out clearly and without any equivocation against the capitalist reunification of Germany. We have called that reunification a serious defeat for the German and international working class.

Likewise, contrary to what your leaders allege, we have stated clearly and without equivocation that self-reform of the Soviet and any other ruling bureaucracy is impossible. Their elimination in favor of the working class can only occur through a political revolution.

Ask yourself, at least those among you who are still able to think independently — and I am sure that there are some valuable cadres among you — why does your leadership resort to such obvious slanderous falsehoods? Why does it hide from you the serious blots on its past record, which we have revealed? Demand an explanation from them. Ask yourself whether the harsh, authoritarian cult-oriented regime they impose is not related to their fear that members might ask awkward questions.

Demand internal democracy! Demand the right to form tendencies inside your organization! Remember what Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* about the banning of factions and tendencies:

The inner regime of the Bolshevik party was characterized by the method of democratic centralism. The combination of these two concepts, democracy and centralism, was not in the least contradictory. The party took watchful care not only that its boundaries should always be strictly defined, but also that all those who entered these boundaries should enjoy the actual right to define the direction of the party policy. Freedom of criticism and intellectual struggle was an irrevocable content of the party democracy. The present doctrine that Bolshevism does not tolerate factions is a myth of the epoch of decline. In reality, the history of Bolshevism is a history of the struggle of factions. And indeed, how could a genuine revolutionary organization, setting itself the task of overthrowing the world bourgeoisie and uniting under its banner the most audacious iconoclasts, fighters, and insurgents, live and develop without intellectual conflicts, without groupings and temporary factional formations? The farsightedness of the Bolshevik leadership often made it possible to soften conflicts and shorten the duration of factional struggles, but no more than that. [Trotsky: *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 94-95.]

We can promise you one thing: the text of my speech and of this summary will be distributed free of charge to any of your members who continue to harass us at our public meetings. What will your leadership do about that? Tell your members to refuse to read it? Let them read it and have at least some of them start to pose critical questions? Anyway, your leadership will pay a price for the systematic use of slander and falsifications.

I also note that the spokesperson for the Spartacists did not answer our precise questions about the gravity of the dangers threatening the very physical survival of humankind. Have we exaggerated these dangers? If so, in what way? If we didn't, shouldn't they occupy a central place in the thinking and action of anybody who calls himself a Marxist or Leninist or even simply a socialist?

In that context, how can the leaders of the Spartacists justify keeping silence, or at the very least minimizing, the criminally irresponsible actions of the Soviet bureaucracy with regard to the use of nuclear waste and experiments with biological weapons? These actions put in danger the survival not only of the peoples of the Soviet Union, but of all humankind.

Soviet Bureaucracy's Environmental Crimes

One has witnessed the worldwide effects of the catastrophe of Chernobyl. Does the Spartacist leadership deny that the Soviet bureaucracy started experiments with the biological weapon anthrax, which could poison the whole of humankind?

Does the leadership deny these criminals endangered the future of the peoples of the USSR and of the whole world by massively burying nuclear waste material without any regard for the ecological disasters they were engineering?

Does it deny that since the 1960s, they have systematically poisoned the world's largest reserves of pure water, lakes Baikal and Aral? That they have already created a large stretch of the USSR which has become uninhabitable? That four million people living around Lake Aral suffer increasingly from cancer?

Does the Spartacist leadership deny that northern Russia has been transformed into a gigantic ecological wasteland, harboring dangerous underwater nuclear canisters, massive oil spills, and burning gas, according to figures and official studies released in Moscow on November 14, 1994?

"Northern Russia guarantees the world's climactic balance, and its polluted regions pose a grave danger," warned Russian deputy environmental minister Alex Pryadin.

The greatest threat is nuclear. The Barents and Kara seas hold two-thirds of the world's submerged nuclear waste. And Russian scientist Vyacheslav Yastrelov added:

This continuous holding nuclear fuel represents a global ecological danger, particularly as the most recent tests of their radioactivity date back to 1967. Fish have virtually disappeared from more than 200 northern waterways, while in the Barents Sea fish reserves have fallen five to seven times in the last few years [*Agence France Presse*].

The fact that the international bourgeoisie has committed similar outrages — although one has to admit, on a smaller scale — in no way justifies minimizing these crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Lack of Honesty

The Spartacist leadership's lack of honesty — a minor issue — is revealed in the following fact: we challenged them to let us address their own audience, after the harassment they inflicted upon our audiences in several European cities and in Mexico, harassment which has as a result the restriction of free debate by their trying to monopolize the discussion and then driving away part of the audience, which is not interested in the Spartacists' slanders and falsifications. They accepted our challenge — of which this meeting is a result — with several letters carrying the formulation: "Dear comrade Mandel" and "Fraternally yours."

What now? I am supposed to be the "Kautsky of the Trotskyist movement," if not the super-traitor. Are you Kautsky's brother? Is a traitor dear to you?

The Stalin-Tito Split

It now appears that our Original Sin is the position the Fourth International adopted in support of the Yugoslav CP against Stalin.

The Spartacists forget the historical origins of the Stalin-Tito rift. When Stalin and Churchill tried to carve up Eastern Europe between themselves, Stalin granted British imperialism a free hand against the Greek resistance movement. In exchange, Churchill offered Stalin the deal of a 50-50 regime in Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav CP did not accept that. A few thousand Communist youth in 1941 had started the struggle against German and Italian imperialism and against the Croatian Ustashi fascists who, if that were possible, were even more cruel than the Nazis themselves.

The Yugoslav CP in the end built up a partisan army of several hundred thousand fighters, including what they themselves had called a proletarian brigade, which numbered hundreds of German, Italian, Hungarian, and other non-Yugoslav fighters in its ranks. They were intent upon their national liberation struggle growing over into the conquest of power, the establishing of a workers' state, i.e., into a socialist revolution.

For sure, they were a heavily bureaucratized party. In consequence, the workers' state they established was in turn heavily bureaucratized from the very start. But it undoubtedly enjoyed mass support among the broad majority.

Stalin Confronts a CP with Its Own Power Base

Stalin was furious about this development. He alleged that it was jeopardizing his deals with Western imperialism, the so-called "great anti-fas-

cist alliance." But that was not the real reason for his fury. For the first time since the Soviet bureaucracy had usurped power in the USSR and transformed the Comintern into its servile tool, there now existed a Communist Party with its own independent state power and its own independent mass base, which he could not control. He tried in vain to subvert it, to establish a pro-Moscow faction in its ranks. This failed, although undeniably Tito's lieutenant Rankovich used crude Stalinist methods to crush it.

The Yugoslav Example and Other CPs

Furthermore, the Yugoslav example threatened to become attractive to left oppositional forces inside several CPs. Why could that which the Yugoslav CP had done successfully not be repeated in other countries: the transformation of a national anti-imperialist resistance movement into the starting point of a struggle for working-class state power?

The CPs' cynical acceptance of the reconstitution of the bourgeois state and the capitalist order in Western Europe (cf. Maurice Thorez's famous formula: "In France there is room for one army and one police" — the Gaullist, i.e., the bourgeois one), has often been justified by the presence of the American army, and the impossibility of badly armed masses to confront it. But this apology forgets that there was a widespread movement among the GIs to go home immediately, a movement which the U.S. high command and government could not defeat.

About the importance of that now nearly forgotten movement, see the book by our comrade Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step* (pp. 273-4):

In Paris, January 8 (1946), thousands of GIs marched down the Champs-Élysées to gather in front of the American Embassy, shouting, "Get us home!" Speakers at a GI January 9 demonstration in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany declared that the commanding general was "too scared to face us here."...

Thousands of American troops demonstrated...in Manila...One of the leaders of the Manila demonstration was Emil Mazey, former president of the UAW [United Auto Workers] Briggs Local, who had led the opposition to the no-strike pledge at the 1943 UAW convention. He was named to the soldiers' committee elected at a delegated convention, representing 139,000 GIs in the Philippines.

Stalin's Anti-Tito Show Trials

When Stalin publicly denounced Tito, he used against the Yugoslavs outrageous slanders to which we Trotskyists should be particularly sensitive. He called them a "fascist gang." What do the Spartacists have to say about that? Was Stalin "objectively" right? We challenge them to give an unequivocal answer to that question.

How can one forget that the anti-Tito campaign culminated in the show trials against Kostov in Bulgaria, Slansky in Czechoslovakia, Rajk in Hungary? Shouldn't these have been condemned as vigorously as Trotsky and the Trotskyists condemned the Moscow trials?

* * *

Carried away by our exuberant temperament, we interrupted their speakers several times during the summary at the New York meeting. The Spartacists answered by making a mock pretense that they would be threatened by repression in a non-bureaucratized workers state where we would have the main political influence.

We don't know if there will still be a Spartacist group around in such a state. Sects have an undeniable capacity for self-reproduction, be it on a very small scale. If the Spartacists survive in a democratic workers state, they might be the object of total indifference or even of occasional ridicule. They have the perfect right to consider that a fate worse than death.

But in view of their apology for harsh anti-working class repression in several bureaucratized workers states, it is a bit hypocritical of them to accuse our movement of wanting to repress them. We can make them a solemn promise: as long as the Fourth International has influence, not to say majority influence, in any workers state, it shall relentlessly protect the Spartacists' right to exist as an organization, to keep their jobs, to do anything they want except use physical violence or call for the use of such violence. On that point, the masses and our movement will put their feet down.

Defense of Soviet Union against Imperialism

There is one issue on which we agree with the Spartacists: the full justification of Trotsky's stand in favor of the military defense of the Soviet Union against any imperialist aggression.

On January 18, 1991, I had the honor of being the first Trotskyist since the funeral meeting for comrade Joffe, whom Stalin hounded to suicide, able to speak in public in Moscow and to address the Soviet mass media. I stated:

As a citizen of a country occupied by German imperialism in May 1940, as a militant from the first hours of the popular antifascist resistance in my country, as a former prisoner in the Nazi camps, I consider it my duty to express here my recognition of and admiration for the indomitable courage of the Soviet army and the citizens and peoples of the Soviet Union, and above all for the workers of Moscow, Leningrad, and Stalingrad. Thanks to their heroic resistance, the attempt at world domination by German imperialism under the Nazis failed. All humanity owes an eternal debt to these heroes and heroines. Hitler wanted to exterminate 100 million people in Central and Eastern Europe and in the USSR. Additional tens of millions would have been killed in Africa and Asia if he had been able to break the resistance of the USSR. It is above all the Soviet Union which foiled this bloody and barbaric project.

The efforts of the Soviet workers between 1941 and 1945 [in defeating Nazi Germany] are the material and moral product of the socialist October revolution. Here that revolution finds an incontestable historic justification. But the bureaucrats who usurped and monopolized power from 1923 on, who stifled the real power of the Soviets, who strangled democracy within the Communist Party and the trade unions, in order to defend their exorbitant material privileges, undermined and discredited the work of this great revolution.

They discredited it with their monstrous crimes against the communists, the workers, the peasants, the oppressed nationalities of the USSR, against the peoples of Eastern Europe, against the workers of many countries. They undermined it by suffocating the creative initiative of the masses and of the intellectuals, by causing a generalized irresponsibility and indifference in the economy. The failure of their "command economy" is obvious today for all to see. The economic, social, political, and moral crisis which results from it is extremely grave.

On the same occasion, I was able to speak at the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR. I made the following statement:

The Fourth International, in whose name I speak today, continues the fight of Lev Davidovich Trotsky and the other militants of the Left Opposition against bureaucracy and Stalinism, against capitalism, imperialism, and fascism. We pursue the struggle for emancipation and for direct democracy which inspired the October revolution. Stalin considered the Opposition to be his principal enemy. He assassinated all of its militants, practically without exception. He assassinated a million communists, using the pretext of Trotskyism, or of an alliance with Trotskyism. These are the crimes of counterrevolution, not the products of revolution.

Today, the historical truth about Trotsky and the Opposition is coming to light. This work of moral and political importance must be completed. We demand of the USSR's judicial authorities that they lift from Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov all the infamous accusations made against them as part of the verdict of the first Moscow trial in 1936. We demand that all the works of Trotsky and of the other spokespeople of the Opposition be published.

As you know from my speech to the present meeting, if not from previous publications of our movement, a large part of these demands have in the meantime been implemented.

Workers' Aid to Tuzla in Bosnia and Spartacist Support for Milosevic

The Spartacists have attacked the operation "Workers' Aid for Tuzla," organized by British, Belgian, Danish, Dutch, Austrian comrades of ours, as some form of "people's front" or "bourgeois coalition" politics.

One cannot make head nor tail of this bizarre accusation.

We want to help the miners of the town of Tuzla, who are opposed to the nationalists' war and ethnic cleansing. They are in desperate need of food and medicine. What's wrong with bringing that to them and, incidentally, receiving the support of the local trade union and women's liberation movements, also opposed to the chauvinists' war?

The Spartacists make their position even more outrageous by giving "critical support" to mass murderer Milosevic, responsible for killing thousands and thousands of women, children, and babies for reasons of ethnic cleansing, for organizing and covering up mass rapes. They justify this position with the allegation that Milosevic has a blockade imposed upon him by imperialism. They go so far as to demand arms for the Serbian government. What a splendid choice!

- No toothpaste for Tuzla's babies!
- No drugstore products for Bosnian women!
- No help to the Tuzla trade unions, which oppose chauvinism!
- But, yes, weapons for mass murderer Milosevic!

If Trotsky had read statements like these made by alleged "orthodox Trotskyists," he would surely have replied, in an analogy with a well-known statement of Marx: "If these are Trotskyists, then pardon me, I am not a Trotskyist." The Spartacists don't even have the excuse of "anti-imperialism," for, as *Le Monde* of February 16, 1995, stated precisely, the imperialists are quite ready to lift the sanctions against Serbia if Milosevic formally recognizes the independence of Croatia and Slovenia (which he has no difficulty in doing). Then he gets away with his hideous crimes in Bosnia, whether committed by his own army or by various Serbian fascist gangs which outflank him in "ethnic cleansing" for the purpose of creating a Greater Serbia.

* * *

"Substitutionism"

The Spartacists take issue with our struggle against substitutionism. This is supposed to be "anti-Leninist." But they seem to forget its historical origins: Marx's Inaugural Address to the founding conference of the First International, centered around the formula, "The emancipation of the workers will be the work of the workers themselves." The same idea is expressed in the German version of the third stanza of "The Internationale": "*Es rettet uns kein höheres Wesen, kein Gott, kein Kaiser, kein Tribun; Uns aus dem Elend zu erlösen können wir nur selber tun*" [We won't be saved by any Higher Being, no God, or Caesar, or People's Tribune; we ourselves are the only ones that can free us from misery.] "No Tribune" implies no parties, no workers state apparatus. These are all necessary instruments for the emancipation of labor, the emancipation of all the exploited and the oppressed. However, they are no substitutes for the *self-emancipation* of the toilers.

The Spartacist leaders likewise forget the profound wisdom in another one of Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" — to wit, that there exists no party, let alone party leadership, endowed with omniscience — that the educators (of the masses) in turn need to be educated.

Objective Conditions for Socialism

But then the Spartacists make a remarkable flip-flop. Embarrassed by the question of why they haven't succeeded in building anything even approaching a revolutionary mass party and a revolutionary mass International, they make objective conditions responsible for that failure. However, the objective conditions they refer to are here to stay. So what they actually say is that the solution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership has become impossible. Here you have real revisionism, real liquidationism.²⁵

25. In the first chapter of the Transitional Program it is stated that the objective conditions for socialism not only are already ripe but that they have even started to rot. The first part of the sentence was obviously correct in 1938, as it is correct today. But the second part of the sentence was only partially correct in 1938, and is only partially correct today.

If the objective conditions for socialism started to rot in 1938 and continued to rot for 55 more years, does not socialism then become less and less possible?

This question is linked with that of the development of the productive forces, with which we have dealt in our speech. We should never forget that for Marxists, the concept of productive forces includes the human productive force, i.e., the proletariat, the wage earning class.

As we said before, today there are more than two billion wage earners in the world, many, many more than in 1938.

26. Here, for example, is the school's program for 1995: Economic Seminar, in English and Spanish — March 1995; Arab region session, in Arabic — August 1995; Youth school on the foundations of Marxism, in English, French, and Spanish — September 1995.

We could do more schools if we were not restrained for financial reasons.

The school has published in addition some twenty Notebooks and Working Papers, on a great variety of subjects.

27. One of the best reports on these tortures is the book *La Gangrène*.

"Capitulation" to Stalinism and Social Democracy?

The Spartacists accuse us of "capitulation" to Stalinism and Social Democracy — presumably both at the same time.

We published a spirited defense of the October revolution in a notebook of our Amsterdam permanent cadre school, incidentally another of the achievements of our movement of which we can be proud and which we put at the disposal of many friendly forces not members of our movement.²⁶

It is perfectly true that when we were invited by several European Social Democratic parties and by the Gorbachevites to participate in the publication of a magazine called *Socialism of the Future*, we eagerly accepted. In the article we submitted to that magazine and which was indeed printed in several languages, including Russian, we wrote that the Stalinists/post-Stalinists were responsible for terrible crimes. They had murdered millions of innocent people, communists, workers, the cream of the Red Army's commanders, thousands of communists outside the USSR, many comrades of ours, and other members of the labor movement. They had caused the death of probably at least 12 million people if not more.

The crimes of Social Democracy were hardly smaller. They had been responsible for mass repression against German workers to begin with. They had been co-responsible for the mass repressions in the civil war against Soviet Russia, which the governments in which they participated supported. Just remember the civil war in Finland, where the German Social Democratic leadership supported the butcher Mannerheim against their own Finnish comrades.

The governments in which they participated or which they led used repression on a massive scale against national liberation movements like those in India, Palestine, Indonesia, Madagascar, Kenya, Algeria, to name the best known.

In Algeria, in addition to conducting mass repression of the national liberation movement, one of the leaders of the French Social Democracy covered up for the use of torture.²⁷

One of the main leaders of Social Democracy in Latin America, Pérez, if I am not mistaken vice president of the Socialist International, former president of Venezuela, had a thousand people killed in a single day during a hunger riot, more than were killed during the whole final period of the Brezhnev-Chernenko-Gorbachev regime in the USSR.

Writing all that in the aforementioned magazine is obviously a perfect proof of my "capitulation" to Stalinism and Social Democracy. Or is it not?

One could ask: why do post-Stalinists and Social Democrats let us publish such an article in their magazine? Is it proof of their sympathy for us? Of course not.

In fact, they are very hostile to us. But what has occurred is the fact that they have to recognize that we have become a third tendency of the international labor movement, legitimized as a sector of that movement, be it of course much smaller than post-Stalinism or Social Democracy themselves.

This legitimation flows from our real implantation in the working class and allied mass movements in a series of countries. For that reason it is increasingly difficult to bypass us in serious political initiatives, as I explained in my speech to this meeting.

* * *

If I could get angry about one remark of the Spartacists during the debate, it is that which characterizes the Fourth International as "middle class people." This is an obvious insult to the thousands of worker members

of our movement, hundreds of whom are leading shop stewards or "non-official" worker leaders in the enterprises in which they work.

Karl Marx — A "Reformist Rogue"?

But how could one get angry at people who have made lying a way of life? One of the subjects resulting from the decomposition of the Healy cult have flouted ignorance to an indecent extent.

Reviewing our book *Power and Money*, they write:

Having outlined his view of capitalist economic success and power, when the opposite is the case, Mandel is reduced to writing about some future society in which the right and power to decide should be in the hands of the majority of producers/consumers/citizens. Such ideas were the stock-in-trade of the nineteenth century "utopian socialists" and fill the Sunday speeches of every reformist rogue.

It so happens that all the quotes I use in that respect in *Power and Money* are straight quotes from Karl Marx himself, presumably a "utopian socialist" and a typical "reformist rogue."

From the *Communist Manifesto* on through volume I of *Capital*, volume IV of *Capital* ("Theories of Surplus Value"), and especially through the *Grundrisse*, we find the definition of socialism and of communism as "societies in which the free development of all depends upon the free development of each [individual]."

Communism is defined as a society of "freely associated producers." But presumably, for the reformist rogue Marx this is "some future society," not socialism and communism.

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes:

The free development of individualities and hence the reduction of necessary labor time so as not to posit surplus labor, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labor of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific, etc., development of the individuals in the time set free and with the means created for all of them.

And again: "Real wealth is the developed productive power of the individuals."

Isn't it obvious that a regime of "freely associated producers" means that these producers themselves determine the workload they are ready to accept? If after a full public democratic debate they vote in their majority for a 20-hour week, who has the right to impose a 24- or 28-hour week on them? After all, they forego the possibility of developing their own free individuality in the way the *Grundrisse* describe this, by having to produce goods for all the citizens. Doesn't that give them the right to decide the extent of that sacrifice themselves?

If anybody believes that some "higher priorities" imply that they should work longer, he or she should try to convince them of this need, again through a public democratic debate. But majority rule prevails. No minority has the right to impose anything upon them.

"Impose" would mean repression. This is neo-Stalinism. You can be sure it won't succeed, once the toilers have tasted the "forbidden fruit" of a genuinely democratic workers state.

Lying As a Way of Life

The Healyite subset alleges that we reject "collective ownership of the means of production" as "outdated slogans." Anybody who has listened to my speech at this meeting or read my books knows that this is again an outrageous falsification. In fact we have used again and again (as did Marx) the formula of expropriation of the capitalist class. One can only repeat for these people, what I said about the Spartacists: for them lying has become a way of life.

I must apologize for the fact that I have been excessively talking about myself in answer to the slanders directed against me. In fact, the positions attacked are generally the collective positions of the FI. And to fight the use of lies and slanders in the labor movement is in the interest of all concerned.

Do FI Comrades Just "Give Advice"?

Various sects present here have raised against the Fourth International the accusation that it limits itself to advising other people on what they should do. They thereby project on our movement their own prevalent practice (advise, and criticize when the advice is not acted upon).

It is true that when you are too weak, you are forced to limit yourself to acting as a propaganda group. But the ambition of every revolutionary Marxist should be to go beyond that stage as soon as possible.

This is precisely what our comrades have begun to do in several countries. And in one country — Brazil — we are for the first time in our history faced with the fascinating possibility — a possibility, nothing more; nothing is still sure — of beginning the fight for hegemony inside the labor movement, the working class, and allied mass movements, by taking the key initiatives ourselves, with our allies, by ourselves initiating the mass mobilizations that will satisfy the most burning needs of the exploited and the oppressed. The cumulative effect of these initiatives could lead to a challenge to the survival of the capitalist regime.

We do not advise Lula. We act ourselves.

In order to reach that goal, several conditions will have to be fulfilled which haven't yet been fulfilled. How long it will take to fulfill them is hard to predict — certainly more than a couple of years. But the struggle to begin to fulfill them could and should start immediately. And the very fact that we can pose that task in a realistic way shows how much the Fourth International has progressed.

Trotsky and Pierre Frank

A spokesperson of the Spartacists unearthed a harsh attack by Trotsky against our comrade and dear friend Pierre Frank during the debates which divided our comrades in France in 1935 with regard to the tactics to follow after their expulsion from the SFIO (the Social Democratic party).

But they don't add that just before his assassination, in answer to Molinier's and Frank's appeal for re-entering the FI, Trotsky wrote them a nice letter, stating he also was in favor of such a re-entry, provided certain conditions were met. Frank and Molinier accepted these conditions. Reunification was achieved. Since then, Pierre Frank acted loyally in full conformity with Trotsky's demands. He became one of the FI's central leaders from 1946 until his death.²⁸

After all the lies and slanders they have heaped upon us, the Spartacists now suddenly shout "Gewalt." Where did they condone the counterrevolutionary Si Bellounis's cooperation with French imperialism, the national liberation movement FLN, they ask with tears in their voices?²⁹

But you will not so easily get off the hook, comrades. At least those who were already members at that time (we are talking about events during the second half of the 1950s), were members of the so-called International Committee of the FI. So were the Lambertists, who publicly boasted about their having organized Si Bellounis's treacherous actions. As the scholastics already knew, there are sins of omission besides sins of commission. We publicly condemned Si Bellounis. Did you?

A Closing Message

My final message to this gathering remains: do not succumb to despair, resignation, or cynicism, given the terrible odds we all have to face. Do not retreat into "individual solutions" (the fleshpots of the consumer society are still open for some, be it on a much more restricted basis than before) when you become aware of the fact that your sect's efforts lead to nothing. Never forget the moral commitment of all those who claim to be Marxists: the intransigent defense of the interests of the exploited and the oppressed on a world scale, everywhere, all the time.

Never content yourself with pure propaganda activities. Never forget the initial and final commitment of Marx: *Try to begin to change the world!* □

28. Raymond Molinier, *Trotsky Vive, 50 años después*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Letra Buena, 1992, pp. 112–114.

29. On Si Bellounis's military cooperation with the French Army against the FLN, see Jacques Kergoat, *Marceau Pivert socialiste de gauche* (Paris, 1994), p. 320; and Mohammed Harbi, *Le FLN, Mirage, et Réalité* (Paris, 1980), p. 157.

The “End of American Trotskyism?” — Some Comments in Response to Alan Wald

by Frank Lovell

A version of these comments has been submitted to Against the Current.

Alan Wald’s article in the March-April 1995 issue of the magazine *Against the Current* contains a number of innuendos and distortions that relate to James P. Cannon’s leadership of the American Trotskyist movement. The title of Wald’s article is “The End of ‘American Trotskyism?’ — Problems in History and Theory (Part 3).” [Parts 1 and 2 may be found, respectively, in the issues of *Against the Current* for November-December 1994 and January-February 1995.]

Wald starts off with a seemingly unassailable assertion: “There are methodological aspects of Trotskyism that the twenty-five years since the height of ‘The Sixties’ have shown to be still necessary and valid.” It may seem little more than a quibble to those who agree with the main point (Trotskyism is “still necessary and valid”), but it is wrong to leave the impression that “the height” of American Trotskyism was achieved in the 1960s, presumably as the decisive influence in the antiwar movement of that time.

Numerically and in terms of ideological and organizational influence in the mass movement the “height” of American Trotskyism was reached in 1938 with the founding of the Socialist Workers Party. The party never again had as many members as at the time of its founding. It subsequently fought many battle and won some important victories, but its ideological influence in the union movement and in the embattled radical movement never exceeded the 1938 high point.

Sectarianism

In discussing the charge of “Trotskyist sectarianism” Wald rightly observes: “From my experience, liberals and social democrats are quite capable of sectarian behavior equal to that of revolutionary Marxists.” He identifies liberals and social democrats: “*Dissent* magazine being a good example.” He fails to give an example of “revolutionary Marxists” who, he says, are equally capable of sectarian behavior. This obscures the meaning of both sectarianism and Marxism. Sectarianism is anathema to Trotskyism, which is synonymous with Marxism. Nowhere is there a better explanation of classical sectarianism, and how to fight it, than in the *History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon (chapters on the 1934–35 ideological struggle with Hugo Oehler in the Communist League of America, first over fusion with the A.J. Muste group and then over the decision of the Trotskyists to join the Socialist Party).

There are many other examples of Trotskyist struggles against sectarians in the post-World

War II history of radicalism in this country and elsewhere. To my knowledge there are no examples of Trotskyist “sectarian behavior,” unless this refers to actions of irresponsible individuals or groups who mistakenly call themselves Trotskyists. Certainly there is nothing in the 46-year history of the mainstream of American Trotskyism — that is, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from its founding in 1938 to its abandonment of Trotskyism in 1984 — that in any way resembles sectarianism. In fact, much of this history has been an almost continuous ideological struggle against sectarian tendencies. As for the term “revolutionary Marxist,” this is a rather recent distinction that has crept into radical terminology. It implies that there are “non-revolutionary Marxists.” (They of course wouldn’t really be Marxists if they weren’t revolutionary.) The term is used mostly by radicals who would like to be known as revolutionists but not as Trotskyists.

Wald grapples with such questions as revolutionary leadership, party building, and the role of the individual by referring vaguely to little-known incidents in SWP history. He says, “The goal of socialist political cadres must be the development of team leadership,” but adds that both experience and study teach that “all leaders are contradictory, including Lenin and Trotsky.” It follows, therefore, that “one of the most tragic features of the history of U.S. Trotskyism is the inability of individuals, who were once comfortable in an organization and then ‘on the outs,’ to recognize problems in theory, practice, and organization until ‘one’s own ox is gored.’” These generalizations have little meaning without reference to the specific incidents in question, nowhere mentioned in Wald’s selective review of SWP history.

Wald’s “Appreciation” of Cannon

He gets to the nexus of his grievances against American Trotskyism and the SWP by asking, rhetorically, “whether one should continue the Trotskyist tradition of lining up on historical factional sides, as if someone born in 1940 or 1950 or after was actually present as an engaged participant at the time of the ‘French Tum’ or ‘Auto Crisis.’” This surely is a gratuitous addition to “Trotskyist tradition,” heretofore unknown to serious students of the Marxist movement in the U.S.

But Wald hastens to explain: “This relates to some of the controversies about the so-called ‘Cannon’ tradition.” He asks, “Is the proper appreciation of Cannon, who certainly represents a good deal of what is most recuperable in

U.S. Trotskyist history, to be achieved by retrospectively reinscribing oneself as his right-hand man or woman in all the faction fights he ever waged? Is this the most effective way to combat vulgar and prejudiced anti-Cannonism?” Wald raises these questions in order to introduce his own “proper appreciation of Cannon.”

He explains his motives: “As a new generation of revolutionary socialist activists emerges, they will have to go back and reconsider these issues in order to develop a theory and perspective on the course of world history that is genuinely produced [?] and not a mechanical hand-me-down. If those from the Trotskyist tradition stand aside from such reconsideration, or, even worse, participate only as ‘seasoned experts,’ it will only heighten their irrelevance. They must, of course, bring their experiences to bear, but also genuinely listen to people from other traditions and keep an open mind about the possibility of genuinely new issues arising.”

What Will Produce a New Generation of Radicals?

Here it is necessary to ask the relevant questions that Wald does not address. What social contradictions and political struggles will produce a new generation of socialist activists? Will this new generation resemble and relate to Wald’s generation of socialist activists of the 1960s and ’70s? What are the “genuinely new issues arising”? Are these new issues not here now demanding attention?

In case Wald hasn’t noticed, the “new issues” can be reduced to the crisis of capitalism and the economic exploitation and political repression of the working class and other poor people. These, of course, are not new to students of Marxism. But the social context in which they now appear is new, and the new generation of revolutionists will most likely arise from the developing social consciousness and mass radicalization of the working class. How will the vanguard educate itself to organize and lead the coming class battles that can emancipate the working class and transform society? These are the questions that radical-minded workers today are beginning to think about, most of whom do not yet consider themselves “revolutionists” in any sense.

What Troubles Wald Most

Wald finally comes to what troubles him most. The concluding paragraphs of his essay include two rather lengthy quotations, one from Cannon and one from Morris Stein, “one of Cannon’s most trusted supporters.” Cannon stated, in his

talk on the SWP's *Theses on the American Revolution* at the party's 1946 convention, that the SWP "is the sole legitimate heir and continuator of pioneer American Communism" and that in the SWP "the fundamental core of a professional leadership has been assembled." Cannon added that the party's political task, as he saw it at that time, was "to remain true to its program and banner, to render it more precise with each new development and apply it correctly to the class struggle; and to expand and grow with the growth of the revolutionary mass movement, always aspiring to lead it to victory in the struggle for political power."

The Stein quotation comes from a talk by him at an SWP gathering during World War II when there were some signs of defection in the party leadership and unfounded hopes of merger with the Shachtman group that had left the SWP on the eve of World War II. Stein said that in the field of revolutionary politics Trotskyists "are monopolists," because the working class, "to make the revolution can do it only through one party and one program." [The relevant passages from Stein's remarks were reprinted in a recent issue of *BIDOM*.]

This is obviously a very bad attitude, according to Wald, and even if harbored, it shouldn't be expressed quite so openly and boldly. He says, "there are those who can sugar coat and speciously 'interpret in the appropriate context' such statements, or even try to minimize them in the light of the fact that both writers [Cannon and Stein] modified their views as time went on." But this won't do. Wald says that "the Trotskyist tradition has no hope of accomplishing anything more than the generation of small, sectarian groupuscules unless it breaks radically with the key features of this outlook [as expressed by Cannon and Stein]."

The Revolutionary Perspective

It is hard to reconcile Wald's demand with the revolutionary perspective of Marxism. Those who aspire to organize and lead a working class revolution must surely state their goal as clearly as possible and explain under all circumstances how they hope to achieve it. Cannon was called upon to do this when the Trotskyists were on trial for sedition in Minneapolis in the fall of 1941. Under these circumstances, when war was imminent, he expressed the same outlook, but in language the jury could understand and perhaps sympathize with. In the wake of World War II, with its terrible devastation worldwide, we in the SWP had reason to believe that working class revolution would break out in several countries, including the United States. At the 1946 convention Cannon was preparing the party for this development. It is true that history developed differently. But no one has yet blamed Cannon for this.

With the stabilization of capitalism in Europe (largely the result of the Marshall Plan, military suppression of working class resurgence, and the Stalinist policy of peaceful coexistence [collaboration between the imperialist powers and the Soviet bureaucracy]) the long period of

prosperity and class collaboration (1948-1976) began here in the U.S. During this time many things changed, including the labor movement and expressions of racialism. But through it all Cannon never modified his views on the need to work continuously, under all changing circumstances, to try to build a revolutionary working class party trained to lead the coming struggle for power. Part of the problem, as he understood it, was that most radicals abandoned the prospect of revolution in the U.S. anytime in the foreseeable future.

For a Party Like Lenin's — and Cannon's

With the decline and disintegration of the radical movement some who now hope to revive the mass protest actions of the 1960s and '70s are looking for ways to unite the remnants of the radicalism of that period. They share Wald's hope that the new, revived radical movement can be united in a single organization that is more ecumenical than any that ever before existed; and to make clear what kind of organization they hope to help create, they are adamant that it must *not* be a Leninist-type party, and certainly nothing like the Trotskyist party that Cannon built — although they are not opposed to "appropriating the best of U.S. Trotskyism."

To ensure that arguments over matters of this kind don't disrupt their work and threaten the future of their "unity project," they agree to forego this discussion except among themselves and with others who might lend a receptive ear without asking too many questions. I don't think "the new generation of revolutionary socialist activists" to which Wald wants to relate will be favorably impressed with his new "theory and perspective on the course of world history," whatever it turns out to be. Time will tell.

American Stalinism

Before quitting this matter, one more item needs attention. Wald thinks "the Trotskyist criticism of the U.S. Communist or 'Stalinist' movement has been inadequate and off base." Because, he says, "there is evidence that the struggles and impact of cadres of the CP-USA out-distanced [sic] by far any other organized socialist current"

As practitioners of "Trotskyist criticism" Wald lists Theodore Draper, Cannon, Shachtman, Irving Howe, Lewis Coser, Phyllis and Julius Jacobson, Bert Cochran, C.L.R. James, and Harvey Klehr, "a neo-conservative." All those listed, except Cannon, either became opponents of Trotskyism or were accidental figures in the American Trotskyist movement. So in order to identify Trotskyist criticism of the CPUSA or Stalinism it is necessary to consult Cannon.

Cannon wrote more perceptively and more extensively on the Stalinist phenomenon than anyone else except Trotsky. He said it was the most complex question of his time. On the early years of the Communist movement and the rise of Stalinism, Cannon wrote the following summary:

The degeneration of the Communist Party is not to be explained by the summary conclusion that

the leaders were a pack of scoundrels to begin with; although a considerable percentage of them — those who became Stalinists as well as those who became renegades — turned out eventually to be scoundrels of championship caliber; but by the circumstance that they fell victim to a false theory and a false perspective.

What happened to the Communist Party would happen without fail to any other party, including our own, if it should abandon its struggle for social revolution in this country, as the realistic perspective of our epoch, and degrade itself to the role of sympathizer of revolutions in other countries.

I firmly believe that American revolutionists should indeed sympathize with revolutions in other lands, and try to help them in every way they can. But the best way to do that is to build a party with a confident perspective of a revolution in this country.

Without that perspective, a Communist or Socialist party belies its name. It ceases to be a help and becomes a hindrance to the revolutionary workers' cause in its own country. And its sympathy for other revolutions isn't worth much either. [*First Ten Years of American Communism*, p. 30.]

Cannon on the CPUSA

About the further degeneration and final demise of the CPUSA and its "progressive" contributions Cannon wrote:

Of course, as everyone knows, the American Stalinists eventually fouled up the Negro question, as they fouled up every other question. They sold out the struggle for Negro rights during the Second World War, in the service of Stalin's foreign policy — as they sold out striking American workers, and rooted for the persecution in the first Smith Act trial, of the Trotskyists in Minneapolis in 1941, for the same basic reason.

Everyone knows that now. The chickens finally came home to roost, and the Stalinists themselves have felt impelled to make public confessions of some of their treachery and some of their shame. But nothing, neither professed repentance for crimes that can't be concealed, nor boasts of former virtues that others are unwilling to remember, seem to do them any good. The Communist Party, or rather what is left of it, is so discredited and despised that it gets little or no recognition and credit today for its work in the Negro field in those earlier days — when it had far-reaching and, in the main, progressive consequences.

Wald on "the Communist Tradition"

The above "condensed review" of Stalinist political influence and contribution to progressive causes was written in the late 1950s. Since then "left-wing scholars in search of a U.S. radical tradition, especially one that is anti-racist and rooted in the working class," as Wald tells us, "return again and again to the Communist tradition." They find oral histories of the good people who fought the good fight and lived in rewarding comradely ways inside the CP through many shifts and turns in political policy and activity. This is the way members of the CP generally saw themselves. They were oblivious to the Stalinist essence of the CPUSA (collabo-

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A Critique of the 1992 Manifesto of the Fourth International

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The present remarks have to do with the document *Socialism or Barbarism: The Programmatic Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Eve of the Twenty-first Century*, the English translation of which was published by “U.S. Supporters of the Fourth International” [including the Editorial Board of this magazine] in April 1993.

According to the introductory page to the English translation, 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.”

It has, apparently, also been translated into Russian for distribution in the former USSR. The next FI World Congress is coming up in June 1995. Therefore, a critique of the contents of this document is long overdue.

In my opinion, *Socialism or Barbarism* seriously departs from the historical materialism of *The Communist Manifesto*, written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848, or *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, the founding document of the Fourth International written by Leon Trotsky in 1938. While they were inspiring, universal, and timeless, *Socialism or Barbarism* is tiresome and turgid in style and Eurocentric and ahistorical in its method.

However, the worst aspect of *Socialism and Barbarism* is that it doesn’t communicate any of the political lessons that served as the basis for the founding of the Fourth International.

At a time when the bourgeois academics are promoting the myth that Marxism is dead, when Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution are being vilified by both the new Russian establishment and the traditional bourgeois ideological agencies, and when Leon Trotsky’s enormous contributions to Marxist theory and practice continue to be distorted or concealed by the powers that be, revolutionary Marxists — Trotskyists — have an unprecedented historic opportunity to refute all the lies and slanders. In fact, we have a historic responsibility to do so. On all of this, *Socialism or Barbarism* stands mute.

Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky are mentioned only in passing (Marx on page 30 and 44, Trotsky on page 41, Lenin on page 42 of the document’s 44 pages). Of course, these names don’t have to be mentioned. But their theoretical legacy, which

was developed, tested, and proven in the fires of history, has also been ignored.

This can be illustrated with reference to several key theoretical assets: the class struggle, the permanent revolution, internationalism, the vanguard party, the transitional program, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What Happened to the Class Struggle?

Many pages are devoted to describing the barbarism facing large sectors of humanity as a result of capitalism’s prolonged life, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, etc. But the fact that the class struggle — the struggle between the two major classes — is the ongoing, motive force of social development is obscured. The document uses a descriptive, nondialectical method. Because the class content is indistinct, the text acquires a pacifistic, moralistic character.

Take, for example, the opening section entitled “The Stakes,” where the document speaks of the “widening dangers” caused by the continuing arms build-up and the “barbarous consequences” of this destructive power:

“There have been more than 100 so-called ‘local’ wars since 1945 causing more than 20 million deaths. Imperialism’s brutal aggression against Iraq in 1991 revealed the full murderous consequences of this arms race” (p. 4). The origins of the “arms race” to serve imperialism’s counterrevolutionary global policies is not discussed. The implication is that the authors blame the arms race itself for these “local” wars.

However, it was not the growing weapons stockpiles that caused these wars, but disputes over territory, wealth, and resources. Most often, in fact, these “local wars” resulted from efforts by imperialist powers to overthrow or undermine movements in the colonial and neocolonial world for popular control or independence.

Although some such movements asked for and received support from the Soviet government, it was not “the Soviet threat” or the arms race that prompted colonial or imperialist military involvement. What prompted this involvement was the fear that local popular movements might successfully challenge the exploitation and privileges of imperialist investors and their allies.

As regards the Iraq war, certainly the U.S. government’s awesome war technology allowed it to quickly devastate Iraq without risk-

ing the lives of many U.S. troops or the growth of a massive antiwar movement at home. But this destruction was not the “consequence” of the arms race. It was a consequence of the drive of the U.S. rulers to reaffirm their political and economic hegemony in the region.

What Happened to the Permanent Revolution?

The theory of the permanent revolution is essential to understanding the dynamic of revolutionary developments throughout the twentieth century. The authors have not taken advantage of it to illuminate some of the biggest problems confronting the struggle for working-class power.

The theory of the permanent revolution was developed by Leon Trotsky after his experiences in the 1905 Russian revolution. It has been much maligned and distorted by the Stalinists and others who promote class-collaborationist politics.

The theory in its broad outlines explains that the local bourgeois classes in the colonial and semi-colonial states are not capable of establishing relatively stable, bourgeois democratic rule. They are too small and weak to be able to guarantee to the working masses basic democratic rights, land reform, national independence, separation of church and state, basic civil liberties, and parliamentary democracy.

The bourgeois classes in the colonial and semi-colonial nations, therefore, have to rely on imperialism, with its repressive colonial policies. They cannot uphold their property rights by democratic means. The only class in the colonial states that can lead a successful struggle for basic democratic rights for the laboring masses is the urban proletariat, even though it too is sometimes small. However, because it is concentrated in large industrial sites as a result of imperialist investments, the urban working class has the social and economic power to lead the poor urban and rural masses and set up a government in their interests — the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This dictatorship of the proletariat must dismantle the organs of repression of the old ruling classes that uphold the old order and that suppress civil liberties. This new workers government cannot content itself with overseeing an economic system based on capitalism. In order to ensure civil rights for the working masses and national independence and to begin to satisfy the material needs of the laboring masses, it will have to proceed to limit the rights of the capitalist class to exploit workers.

To defend their unfettered right to exploitation, the local capitalist classes rely on imperialist financial and military assistance. The proletarian dictatorship ultimately must begin implementing anticapitalist steps to expropriate the expropriators and put the major sectors of the economy under workers control. However, no such proletarian revolution can long survive without help from revolutions in the industrially advanced capitalist nations. The revolution must extend internationally.

The correctness of this theory was borne out first in the experiences of the Russian revolution and reconfirmed repeatedly in the experiences of the colonial struggles throughout this century. None of the former colonies of imperialism has succeeded in becoming an economically developed, independent, stable bourgeois democracy. Capitalist "development" in the "Third World" has been accompanied by severe police repression of trade union rights and other civil rights, enforcing the vast, growing gaps between the rich and the poor. Only where inroads were made against bourgeois property rights were nations able to break with this pattern to some extent. Still, all such efforts have become the victim of imperialist financial and military reprisals.

Understanding the dynamic of the class struggle that the theory of permanent revolution addresses is essential, among other things, to analyzing:

1. What is wrong with all sorts of reformist and pseudo-Marxist political strategies advanced by the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and a wide range of radicals who call for workers to rely politically on bourgeois nationalist or liberal forces.
2. Why revolutionists support united fronts and oppose popular fronts.
3. What is wrong with the "two-stage theory" for development of the neocolonial world.
4. Why it is wrong for worker or socialist leaders to form a government with the bourgeoisie or accept posts in bourgeois cabinets.
5. Why "socialism in one country" is impossible.

These lessons — so vital to the world workers movement — are not a thing of the past. They concern misconceptions that live on in the programs of the Social Democratic parties of the Second International and in the programs of most of the parties that have reconstituted out of the ruins of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other Communist parties since the collapse of the USSR. For example, the South African Communist Party is pursuing a program based on the ill-fated "two-stage theory" through the African National Congress and in collaboration with the former apartheid bourgeois rulers in South Africa.

Such ideas are no less counterrevolutionary today than they ever were. Class-collaborationism continues to be the biggest blight on the world workers movement.

None of this is explained in *Socialism or Barbarism*.

What is the Fourth International?

The document refrains from going into detail about the FI's history. The section "Relaunch the Struggle for Internationalism" states: "By creating the first workers' internationals over a century ago, the socialist movement was able to take the initiative" (p. 35). There is no indication as to what "internationals" are referred to or what became of them.

Even though an understanding of the betrayals by the Second and then the Third Internationals is critical to understanding the origins of the Fourth, there are only two sentences about

the FI's origins, almost at the end of the document:

The official revelations of Stalin's crimes by the Soviet authorities highlight the meaning of the unremitting struggle led by the Left Opposition after 1923 and the Fourth International since its foundation, in 1938, against the bureaucratic degeneration of the CPSU and the Communist International. Thanks to the steadfastness and courage of those who, in the USSR, took up the struggle against Stalinism, thanks to the determination of Leon Trotsky and those who, alongside him, contributed to founding the Fourth International, today we can look workers in the ex-Soviet Union, China or Eastern Europe in the eye without shame or guilt [p. 42].

Leaving aside the arrogance of this last remark by authors who haven't even devoted a single sentence in this document to the events in China in this century or the meaning of Maoism, this general reference to the FI can be meaningful only to the already informed. This is the document's sole reference to Trotsky.

At its very end, the document also speaks directly about the need for a revolutionary international. It states:

The construction at one and the same time of revolutionary organizations in each country — rooted as much as possible in their national realities — and of a revolutionary international is for us a question of principle which corresponds to objective conditions and to the needs of the imperialist epoch. For revolutionaries as much as anyone else, being determines consciousness. Simply participating in international solidarity, supporting struggles in other countries and exchanging experiences, however necessary, are insufficient by themselves.

This is hopeful as far as it goes. However, when the authors explain how the sections of the international will be organized, it becomes clear that they have rejected the perspective of building Leninist parties. They favor instead a vague left-regroupment strategy or a Menshevik-type organization:

We propose bringing all revolutionaries together in the same democratic organization on a national level, the better to take initiatives together towards reformist or left populist currents, propose unity in action at all levels against imperialism, the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy.

The revolutionary "partners" with whom they unite do not even necessarily need to agree on the importance of this international "project" (p. 43). There is not the slightest suggestion that there should be a cohesive Leninist cadre organized at any stage of this process. This is a prescription for liquidation.

What About Program?

What will be the program of this international? It will be "founded on a programme to defend the interests of the exploited and oppressed in every country and collective action along these lines." Along what lines precisely?

But the Fourth International has a program, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, which ends up, as the title states plainly, with the specific tasks of

a revolutionary transitional program. To be sure, it was written in 1938 at a particular juncture of history. Some aspects of it need updating. However, unfortunately, because of the crisis of working class leadership, the working class has not registered many political victories or progressed very far since 1938, and the program is remarkably applicable today.

Are the authors discarding this program? If so, why? They obviously propose nothing to replace it. Although two paragraphs on the concept of transitional demands are included on page 26, they are generalized with no reference to the founding program.

Obviously, since there is no reference to the need for a vanguard Leninist party, there is no reference to the need for a democratic centralist method of party organization and functioning. Nor is there any mention of the Marxist definition of the state as the organ of class rule, despite the importance of understanding this when formulating revolutionary strategy. Such issues, basic to revolutionary organizing, did not find their way into this document.

While the fact that revolutions have "failed" is referred to, the reader is given no examples of revolutionary attempts, let alone the reasons for any "failures."

What About "the Russian Question"?

Glaring theoretical shortcomings of the document, however, surface when the crisis in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are discussed. They are evident on the first page.

"The world is at a crossroads," says the opening sentence. The authors then begin presenting examples of human degradation, of the hunger and poverty that stalk the planet as the gap between the rich and poor widens with capitalism's prolonged survival in its death agony. It continues:

Yet despite continued opposition and struggles against oppression — taking different forms in each of the three sectors of the world: the imperialist countries, the "Third World," and the countries of the East — the international capitalist system (imperialism) that is the root cause of all these evils seems more strongly entrenched than it has been for decades....

Its ideological "victory over socialism" — falsely identified with the bureaucratically dominated societies in the USSR and Eastern Europe — is widely proclaimed.

This is above all due to a crisis of credibility for socialism as an international perspective in the eyes of the masses — a crisis that has been developing at least since the beginning of the 1980s. It is a result of the mass awareness that Stalinism/post-Stalinism, social democracy, and populist nationalism in the "Third World" have all proven bankrupt.

These assertions are astounding coming from alleged Trotskyists. They are relating history the wrong way around.

The fact is that socialism and communism have been falsely identified for decades with the horrors of Stalinism, not "at least since the beginning of the 1980s." The fact is that the

Two Stalinist Concepts Not Discussed

In ignoring the theory of the permanent revolution, the authors of *Socialism or Barbarism* have not only eliminated discussion of critical features of colonial and neocolonial revolutions. They have dispensed with discussion of the impact of two Stalinist concepts counterposed to the theory of the permanent revolution.

1. Revolution by stages (the “two-stage theory”), which says that the former colonial regions must first go through a bourgeois revolution to establish capitalism; then capitalism must develop; and only then should the workers organize to overthrow it. This theory of how the colonial revolution should develop was widely held by Marxists at the turn of the last century. But it was disproved by the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. In 1917, insistence on this theory would have led the revolution to default. Lenin’s *April Theses*, instead, expressed the essence of the theory of permanent revolution, which was borne out by the proletarian revolution of October.

Nevertheless, the “two-stage theory” was revived and advocated consistently by the Stalinist bureaucracy after Lenin’s death, to serve the bureaucracy’s own narrow political interests. To win the confidence of the imperialists, the Stalinists in the Comintern and in the leaderships of Communist parties worldwide held back working-class seizures of power as “ultra-leftist,” while giving political support to bourgeois liberal and nationalist forces. In so doing, the Stalinists misled many promising revolutionary movements into bitter defeats. This theory characterized the Comintern’s — the Third International’s — and the Kremlin’s policies for decades during and after the Stalin era from China in

1925–27, to the Spanish Civil War (1936), to Chile (1973), etc. The local bourgeois forces which the Stalinists — the Communist parties — had joined forces with or supported would first stabilize themselves and then, often with imperialist backing, violently crush the popular movements, including the local Communist party cadre, worker and peasant leaders, revolutionaries, and others who championed the cause of the oppressed.

2. Socialism in one country claimed that socialism could be built in the USSR without the need for revolutions in other countries. This concept, first advanced in 1924 by the self-serving, conservative bureaucratic layer represented by Stalin, claimed that a revolution in one country like the USSR could lead to the construction of socialism there without the need for help from revolutions elsewhere. The Communist parties of the Comintern implemented policies in their own countries calculated not to make revolutions but to meet with the momentary diplomatic needs of the Kremlin. In fact, revolutions elsewhere were sacrificed by the Kremlin to appease the imperialist powers and convince them that the Kremlin bureaucratic caste was a reliable ally. This contributed to tremendous working-class defeats in Germany (1933) and Spain (1936), for example, and led to neutralization of working-class revolutionary potential in Britain (1926) and France (1936 and 1968), to cite only a few examples. The collapse of the Soviet Union signified the collapse of this tragic and counter-revolutionary policy.

None of this is explained at all in the *Socialism or Barbarism* manifesto.

— M. V.-D.

Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and petty-bourgeois populists with their bankrupt class-collaborationist and reformist ideologies have unfortunately led mass workers movements into defeat after defeat throughout most of this century, at the cost of the lives of millions of revolutionary fighters. This horrible state of affairs — not a new issue confronting the Marxist movement — is what has really created “the crisis of credibility for socialism as an international perspective in the eyes of the masses,” a problem the Fourth International was formed to address over 50 years ago.

The Marxists who constituted the Left Opposition since 1923, almost alone throughout the bloody Stalinist purges, explained how and why the bureaucratized Soviet Union was not a socialist or communist society, as the Stalinists claimed it to be, what the origins of this crisis were, and how to overcome it.

Marxists have consistently counterposed a class-struggle program and class-struggle methods to the bankrupt reformist and class-collaborationist policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy,

as well as the social democratic and other misleaders in the workers movement. Their bankrupt policies have unfortunately consistently prevented workers’ struggles from becoming struggles for power, for workers’ rule. They were the major reason why the proletariat in the advanced capitalist states defaulted in its historic responsibility to overthrow the rule of capital and why “the international capitalist system (imperialism) that is the root cause of all these evils seems more strongly entrenched than it has been for decades,” as the manifesto puts it.

In fact, the Stalinists — and those who have consistently equated Stalinism with communism, Marxism, and socialism — have seriously miseducated generation after generation of workers internationally. The Marxist opposition, despite all its heroic efforts, with its tiny and often besieged forces, was not in a position to reverse this process.

The fact that Stalinism and Social Democracy have proven bankrupt is not a crisis for socialism but a crisis for *Stalinism and reformism*. It finally opens up a whole new array of

opportunities for us Fourth Internationalists! The authors of this “Manifesto” obviously do not understand this at all. The fact that they could conceivably have opened their document with such a distorted estimation of reality should immediately signal their deep ideological disorientation.

Trotsky’s Analysis Ignored

It should come as no surprise then that Trotsky’s Marxist analysis and explanation of the degeneration of the Russian revolution — the ideological basis for the founding of the FI — is totally ignored by this “Manifesto.”

Trotsky explained why the workers state in the former Soviet Union, established as a result of the October 1917 revolution, politically degenerated. The inherited economic backwardness, the vast destruction caused by World War I and the civil war imposed on the new republic by counterrevolutionary forces, and the republic’s international isolation all contributed to it. The Bolsheviks had counted for material and technological help on successful proletarian revolutions which failed to materialize in Germany and other industrially advanced economies.

As the population demobilized, in the conditions of generalized scarcity, a conservative bureaucratic minority was able to usurp power. But it could only consolidate its position of domination and impose policies that served its narrow interests by destroying workers democracy, by a totalitarian political system, and ultimately by the terror of the 1930s. All the new bureaucracy’s reactionary policies were carried out in the name of communism and the revolution even though they were opposite to both.

The abolition of capitalism and the nationalization of the banks and the means of production, the government’s monopoly of foreign trade, and the institution of economic planning that were made possible by the October 1917 revolution, however, did allow the Soviet Union to experience unprecedented economic growth and become the second most powerful country in the world, despite the reactionary Stalinist government. The system provided social benefit programs for workers unmatched by any capitalist country. However, the growth couldn’t last because of the bureaucratic nature of the planning and because totalitarian repression had crippled the society.

Trotsky explained that the Soviet masses could not make any renewed steps toward socialism except by organizing a political revolution. This political revolution would overthrow the governing bureaucratic caste which had stolen power and place the property and the planning under the workers’ direct political control. This was a prerequisite for socialist construction. But that political revolution would not by itself even be enough. The Soviet workers would still need the material and technological support of a proletarian, socialist revolution in one or several of the advanced capitalist countries. That is why international revolutions and a revolutionary International remained vital for the survival of the Soviet Union. That is why

the Fourth International was so necessary to it. This analysis has always been at the heart of what the Fourth International stood for, but it is absent from this current "Manifesto."

The bureaucratic caste, meanwhile, has had problems of its own. It could not turn to imperialism for help — military or technological — to maintain its power the way a bourgeois class in a colonial country could. Imperialism would not help the Kremlin unless it agreed to restore capitalist property rights and opened up the resources to unrestrained foreign exploitation.

The bureaucratic caste in the Kremlin, however, could not make such concessions. This caste, whose interests Stalin's policies represented, was a parasitic growth on Soviet society that could not agree to restore capitalism because the nationalized property and prevailing economic system were the host off which it fed. In fact, in order to maintain its political power and material privileges, the bureaucratic caste was forced to militarily defend the system based on nationalized property — as it did during the Nazi invasion — and to likewise nationalize property in regions it took control of, like the Baltics, Poland, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe.

This gave the Stalinist rulers in the USSR their dual and contradictory nature. While politically counterrevolutionary at home and abroad, in order to preserve their source of material privilege, they were sometimes forced to behave in the working-class's favor and defend the nationalized property they sat on and provide vital (but limited) aid to Third World liberation struggles (which were often used as pawns in their dealings with imperialism).

This dual nature of Stalinism was subsequently the source of imperialism's "Cold War" against it and of the "arms race." As long as the Stalinist apparatus defended an alternative system to capitalism, it was a threat to imperialism's hegemony. Even in its politically degenerated form, the Soviet Union remained a transitional society, a postcapitalist workers state, i.e., a system that was no longer capitalist, but it was still a far cry from being socialist.

Trotsky pointed out in his writings, however, that this transitional phase could only be temporary. The continuing degeneration of the Soviet system under Stalinist misrule without a revolution by the proletariat in the leading industrialized capitalist states would ultimately erode the gains of the October revolution and, under the continuing pressures of the world capitalist market, tilt the Stalinist bureaucracy toward the restoration of capitalist property relations.

The Fourth International's founding program stated this clearly: "Although it is impermissible to deny in advance the possibility, in strictly defined instances, of a 'united front' with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counterrevolution, the chief political task in the USSR still remains the overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy. Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration."

The endeavor to alleviate this "rot" is what motivated the bureaucracy under Gorbachev to initiate the market reforms. Despite the USSR's remarkable industrial and economic development, decades of bureaucratic misrule led to economic, scientific, and technological stagnation. The Kremlin's need for financial and technological assistance from outside — they could only turn to imperialism for help — was so dire that the rulers ultimately agreed to make the economic concessions demanded by international imperialism: privatization of the resources, an end to the state monopoly of foreign trade, and the dismantling of the economic plan. This is ultimately what caused the Soviet Union and its economy to collapse.

More Lessons Unlearned

The authors of *Socialism or Barbarism* never explain this, despite the centrality of the economic and political collapse going on in the Stalinized workers states.

They never employ any of Trotsky's Marxist terminology. For example, they never use the term "workers states" to refer to the USSR and the Eastern European states; they never define Stalinism in Marxist terms or explain its origins in class terms; they never refer to the Stalinist rulers as a bureaucratic "caste" and explain why this term is scientifically apt (although they do on one occasion use the term without explaining its significance when referring to the Soviet bureaucracy); they never mention the significance of Trotsky's call for political revolution, so imperative for the former USSR's survival.

Do the authors of this document think that the political revolution is necessary? If not, why not? Was the Soviet Union a workers state? What about Eastern European states? Does the class nature of those states have any importance? If not, why not? What does Stalinism represent? What does it have to do with Marxism? These issues are not discussed.

To avoid using any scientific terms that have been developed and used by Marxists to guide workers and the oppressed to understand the relationship of class forces, the authors resorted to unscientific terminology like: "the countries of the East" — meaningless to anyone east of Western Europe! — "the bureaucratically-dominated societies in the USSR and Eastern Europe" (p. 31-32), or "the bureaucratic societies" (p. 28), which could mean many things to many readers.

To avoid a Marxist analysis, the authors explain the crisis of the Stalinist regimes as follows:

"The crisis has been maturing for years." How many? No indication is given. There had been "a slowdown of economic activity," an increasing "technological backwardness compared with the imperialist countries," "social stagnation and regression," "the appearance of new, widespread poverty, deep moral and ecological crisis" and "the brutal loss of credibility of political institutions" (p. 9).

These descriptive phrases are not inaccurate; but they are nonetheless totally *inadequate*. For

example, although historians may quibble as to how long there was a "brutal loss of credibility of political institutions" in the former USSR, it is certainly not a recent development.

This "loss of credibility of political institutions" began in the 1920s with the repression of, for example, the soviets, the non-Russians, the supporters and leaders of the Left Opposition, and the most basic civil liberties for the workers and the popular masses; with the forced collectivization and intensified repression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was magnified as state terror, which intensified throughout the 1930s, repeatedly beheaded the political and all other institutions and organizations throughout the USSR, including the Central Committee of the Communist Party itself.

None of this is discussed in the document. There is only a passing reference to all these monstrous crimes: undefined "bureaucratic monstrosities — such as the Gulag" or in another section "the misdeeds of the dictatorship."

The document does state that the problems of the Soviet Union are a reflection of "a specific crisis of a post-capitalist transitional society, crushed by the weight of a privileged and parasitic bureaucracy which has usurped power from the workers" (p. 9). This is certainly true as far as it goes, but it is a pale reflection of all that has been learned by Marxists and other from the bitter experiences of the degeneration of the Russian revolution, the most decisive development affecting the class struggle in this century.

Trapped in Their Own Contradictions

The document has attempted to straddle obvious differences within the FI. Political clarity has been sacrificed to organizational unity. This is particularly obvious in the section "The struggle against national oppression." The section reads like a debate without a moderator. A paragraph sharply critical of nationalism "as a political ideology" follows one that makes a distinction between "the nationalism of the oppressed, whose struggles we support unconditionally" and the nationalism of the oppressor (p. 33).

The document actually declares support to no specific national struggles at all, confining itself to descriptive material. This includes taking no positions regarding the national struggles in the former USSR even though the national struggles there were the first mass struggles to emerge during the Gorbachev era, continue to be volatile today, and cry out for a Marxist analysis.

But then, the authors don't explicitly *oppose* any national struggles either. Their message varies from paragraph to paragraph.

Lenin's profound contribution to an understanding of the dialectics of the national struggles among the colonial or oppressed peoples is not examined at all. Nor is the traditional position articulated by the Fourth International and Leon Trotsky, which did not equivocate on the question but gave unconditional support to self-determination and independence for nationally oppressed peoples. This Marxist legacy, based above all on the experiences of the Russian

revolution and the Stalinist era, is obscured and ignored in favor of abstractions.

And What About the Revolution?

The Fourth International was established as the world party of socialist revolution. *Socialism or Barbarism* contains a section called "We are revolutionaries!" which attempts to take up the issue. It opens with: "The establishment of real and democratic socialism can come about only through a complete break with capitalist and bureaucratic regimes, their overthrow through mass mobilization — in a word, revolution. ...The masses act in a revolutionary fashion only on rare occasions, when driven by necessity...when they can no longer tolerate the intolerable" (pp. 38–39).

The section on revolution does not include any explanation of what role, if any, Marxist revolutionaries and the working-class vanguard should be expected to play. Instead, it relies on a series of crystal ball-type predictions.

For example, the document states that in Eastern Europe and the USSR, "new struggles will erupt on two fronts," "the strategic goals of a revitalized political labor movement will gradually emerge...."

In the imperialist countries, revolutionary strategy will combine the heritage of the first half of the century with that of the sixties and seventies [these are not explained]...We can expect to see more in the way of mass movements relying on their own strength and self-organization, including around working class struggles. ... (Emphasis added.)¹

All of this is possible. Upsurges will surely occur. But will revolutionaries be organized and prepared for them? The reason that most mass upsurges in this century have not led to proletarian seizures of power is because there was no revolutionary vanguard party organized and prepared to lead this process in a timely way, as the Bolshevik party did under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The document declares its support for "mass revolutionary parties." Such parties, of course, are necessary. But where will they come from? Will they arise by themselves? The document never explains.

The authors have evidently fallen victim to the massive propaganda maintaining that Marx-

ism and Leninism laid the basis for Stalinism. Thus, instead of a forthright defense of the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat to defend the gains of the masses, the authors sidestep the issue and advocate a "pluralistic democracy," a "self-managed economy based on the satisfaction of people's needs by freely-associated producers taking over the large-scale means of production" (p. 44).

At the end, the authors state frankly: "We do not proclaim any special principle with which we try to shape or mold the workers' movement...." Unfortunately, this has been amply demonstrated throughout the document.

The Failure of the Document

Who was this document directed at? It certainly seems to be directed toward former Stalinists and social democrats and their milieu, which is evidently why it avoids focusing on the decades of betrayal of workers struggles that resulted from Stalinist and social democratic policies of reformism and class collaboration.

What is achieved by glossing over these momentous crimes? Is it for the sake of a broader unity with left reformist circles? Is it that the authors believe that as new struggles unfold, the errors of the past can be gently pointed out and mistaken policies gradually corrected? But who will teach the youth and the rest of the world in the meantime if, for the sake of maintaining some conjunctural organizational bloc, those who have learned the lessons keep quiet?

Or is it that the authors really do not feel that these lessons have been so obvious or important?

The document is also clearly directed toward activists in the various movements — not the workers movements so much as the youth, women's, gay, and environmentalist movements, etc. Yet, they offer nothing to them except support — as the rear guard, not as the vanguard. They offer no way forward. They clarify nothing, except the authors' apparent good intentions.

The authors have not focused on the workers movements specifically. Workers struggles and trends in workers' organizations are not mentioned in sufficient detail, in marked contrast with the Fourth International's founding document and *The Communist Manifesto*.

The distraction of the authors from the organized working-class struggles and the rejection of dialectical materialism are twin weaknesses of this document. It ends up reminiscent of the writings of the utopian socialists that Engels contrasted to scientific socialism at the dawn of the Marxist movement.

With few exceptions, a Marxist analysis contrasts sharply with each paragraph of this document. However, to refute each paragraph would make this critique longer than the document itself. In truth, the authors have not vulgarized or distorted Marxism; they have simply abandoned it.

What Are the Political Implications of the Above?

The implications of the omissions described should concern all who still support and believe in the ideas of revolutionary Marxism and the Fourth International as it was founded. This concern should not only arise from the fact that some who claim allegiance to the FI could nevertheless compose and publish such material. Even more startling is the fact that it has not been criticized by others in the FI.

It was even praised as "A Needed Restatement of Marxist Principles" by reviewer Bill Onasch in the November-December 1993 issue of *BIDOM*.

Now, more than ever, Marxists need to be clarifying the causes for the developments in this century, like *The Communist Manifesto* and the Fourth International's founding program *The Death Agony and the Tasks of the Fourth International* did in no less trying times. Glossing over them is a drastic mistake for which there is a great price to pay.

Trotsky opened *The Death Agony of Capitalism* in 1938 by saying: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat...The historic crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership." The authors of this document offer no solutions to this problem. □

March 1, 1995

The Oklahoma Bombing, Hate Mongering, and the Question of Free Speech

Continued from page 3

Walker makes it clear that, in the ACLU's view, there should be some limits on public utterance or action. They oppose any parade by masked marchers; think that free speech does not include lessons in bomb making or burning crosses on someone's lawn. In Walker's opinion, hate

speech directed at a specific individual, who is present, will never be sanctioned by the ACLU.

Hate Speech does not cover all aspects of the fight against the right. It does not discuss the mass mobilizations that are needed to challenge the fascists in the streets. But that was not the projected topic of Walker's book.

Walker leaves us with a valuable generalization. Bourgeois governments will only reluctantly move against the right, but eagerly use any tool against the left. The fewer tools of censorship we put in their hands, the better. □

1. This "Manifesto" contains the false assertion: "Only yesterday [the preachers of 'lesser evilism'] were still claiming that 'under communism' the monster state had devoured and forever paralyzed society. But now we see this society reawakening and fighting back. It is overthrowing the bureaucrats and breaking their yoke."

The societies in the workers states were not "overthrowing the bureaucrats and breaking their yoke" in 1991–2 when the document was written; and, unfortunately, have not yet done so.

Lou Guohua, 1906–1995 — He Helped Keep Trotskyism Alive for a New Generation

by Wang Fanxi

Lou Guohua (Lou Kuo-hua), alias Zi Chum, Yi Ding, Shao Yuan, Ze Cheng, etc., who died on March 8, 1995, was born in 1906 in Yuyao, Zhejiang province. He joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), via the Communist Youth League, in 1927. He accepted Trotskyism in 1929 and joined China's first Trotskyist organization, *Womendu hua* ("Our Word"), in 1929. He was elected as one of the six delegates of the Our Word group to the Founding Conference of the Left Opposition of the CCP in May 1931 but failed to attend the conference because his wife gave birth to a daughter on the day that the conference opened. He was arrested by Chiang Kai-shek's political police together with all the members of the newly elected Executive Committee (save Chen Duxiu) nineteen days after the end of the conference, and sent to prison for six years.

Freed from prison in 1935, he continued his revolutionary work in the Trotskyist movement in Shanghai, from 1935 to 1937 under Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang; from 1937 to 1945 under the Japanese; and from 1945 to 1949 again under the Guomindang. In Shanghai he founded *Chunye chubanshe* ("Spring Swallow Publishers"), which published Trotskyist books, including translations of *The Revolution Betrayed*, *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, and *History of the Russian Revolution*, as well as a journal called *Dongxiang* ("Living Age"), of which the American Trotskyist Alexander Buchman was the official publisher. In 1949 he left for Hong Kong, shortly before the Maoist army entered Shanghai.

Lou Guohua was forced to spend the rest of his life in Hong Kong, where his main activity was to publish the literature of our movement. In the late 1950s, when Trotskyists were deported from the colony and Trotskyist literature was suppressed, he ventured to establish *Xinda chubanshe* ("Sincere Press"), which subsequently published a dozen or so books, some of them translations. He contributed to various legally published magazines in the colony his articles criticizing the policies of the Maoists. It was mainly through his contacts and influence that those Hong Kong youth who in the 1970s inclined to anarchism (and gathered around *Qiling niandai* ["Society of the 'Seventies'"]) were won to Trotskyism and launched the Revolutionary Marxist League, of which he was a leading member.

Throughout his adult life, Lou was a professional revolutionary, but at the same time he was a revolutionary with a profession. That is not to say that he was an amateur or part-time revolutionary. It simply means that he always had a job at the same time as working for the revolution and, in particular, helping other full-time comrades financially. All genuinely revolutionary organizations in poor countries — and especially the Chinese Trotskyist organization — have known financial hardship of a sort that comrades in the developed countries, and even young Chinese radicals in present-day Hong Kong, can hardly imagine. There were no donations, no dues, and no contributions whatsoever. Lou Guohua acted as a one-man MOPR¹ for the Chinese Trotskyists. He usually worked as a salaried accountant. He was exceedingly frugal, and saved from his income to help other comrades. For example, when the woman comrade Li Cailian died in the winter of 1936, Lou buried her. Almost every member of the earlier generations of our comrades was in one way or another his beneficiary.

Lou Guohua's elder cousin, Lou Shiyi, came to Communism at around the same time as Guohua. Shiyi remained a Stalinist and Maoist, but his relations with Guohua stayed cordial. In recent years, Shiyi, who became a senior editor in Beijing under the CCP, greatly appreciated Guohua's writings about Lu Xun, a giant of Chinese twentieth-century literature.

For apart from being the publisher of the Chinese Trotskyist movement, Lou Guohua was a brilliant author in his own right. Born in Yuyao, adjacent to Shaoxing, the birthplace of Lu Xun, he was a distinguished authority on Lu Xun's work, about which he wrote numerous articles and an important book.² In these writings, he exposed how China's Maoist authorities puffed up Lu Xun in order to obscure the founding role in China's New Culture Movement of 1915–1921 played by Chen Duxiu. For though Lu Xun was modern China's best-known essayist and writer, he actually played only a supporting role in that seminal movement, while Chen Duxiu was renowned as its "commander-in-chief." But Chen, who went on in 1921 to found the CCP, has been a non-person since 1931, when he fathered Chinese Trotskyism, so the myth of Lu Xun's role in the movement had to be invented in order to fill the resulting gap.

Lou in his book exposed the falsification by quoting all the relevant evidence. In it he also exposed the Maoists' slandering of Chen Duxiu in 1938 as an agent of Japan (to match Stalin's slandering of Trotsky as a Hitler agent) and advanced the hypothesis that Lu Xun's supposed "Letter to the Trotskyists" of 1936, in which the Trotskyist Chen Qichang and his comrades were accused of treacherously taking money from the Japanese, was not dictated, as the Maoists claimed, by Lu Xun (who was above such mudslinging) but written by the Stalinist Feng Xuefeng. Today both Lou's theses have been confirmed by new materials published in China. Lou's hunch about the "Lu Xun letter to the Trotskyists" was recently vindicated by the posthumous publication of an article by Hu Feng, Lu Xun's main discipline and the first victim after 1949 of the Maoists' policy on literature and art.

In Hong Kong, Lou also published *Zhiyanji* ("Speaking Frankly"), a book of essays criticizing Maoism from a Trotskyist standpoint, and numerous articles on many subjects.

Lou Guohua's death agony lasted two years. Before his final stroke, he lost the power of hearing. After it, he lost the power of speech. Finally, he lost the power of sight. He lapsed into unconsciousness ten days before his death. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, and three sons.

Lou Guohua was the publisher and "philanthropist" of the Chinese Trotskyist movement. He remained a Trotskyist and a supporter of the Fourth International until his death. He died loved and respected by the younger generation of Hong Kong radicals. □

March 12, 1995



1. MOPR is the Russian acronym for the International Organization for Assisting Revolutionaries set up in the 1920s by the Third International.

2. Yi Ding (Lou Guohua), *Lu Xun: Oi ren, gi shi, jigi shidai* ("Lu Xun: The Man, the Works, and the Age"), Paris: Centre de publication Asie orientale, 1978.

An Anarchist's Autobiography

Fragments: A Memoir by Sam Dolgoff. Cambridge, Mass.: Refract Publications, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Arthur Maglin

I read Sam Dolgoff's autobiographical memoirs in hopes of learning something about a side of the socialist movement that I knew very little about. I got more than I bargained for.

People from the Trotskyist tradition are used to thinking of socialist history in the twentieth century as being divided, in the main, along the lines of Stalinism, Social Democracy, and revolutionary Marxism. We often forget that there is a fourth branch of the movement: anarchism.

Dolgoff spent his life as an anarchist activist, organizer, and writer. For those of us who think we are now living through the dog days of the socialist movement, I heartily recommend reading Dolgoff's life journey through the century, because the dog days of anarchism have lasted since World War I. In the words of Peter Sabatini, writing in *Anarchy* magazine (winter 1995), after World War I "anarchism in general...dropped from the public domain."

Thus, Dolgoff, who has no regrets, can teach us all something about fortitude. And, dog days for anarchism or not, Dolgoff's life was full and very involved with the events of his times. He was involved with labor struggles, the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti, the defense of Spain during the 1936-39 fascist uprising and civil war, progressive movements in education, utopian living experiments, anarchist organizing efforts, and a whole lot more.

Anarchism differs from Marxian revolutionary socialism in two principal respects. First, anarchists believe the state can be abolished before socialism has been established on a world scale, whereas Marxists understand that a democratic workers state will be necessary until the capitalist class's ability to stage a comeback is definitively overcome.

Second, anarchists downplay the role of an organized and clear-headed leadership in favor of the spontaneous wisdom of the masses. Revolutionary socialists understand that the spontaneous revolt of the masses soon ends in confusion and demoralization unless an experienced and sizable leadership group with a solid, well-thought-out program of action is available to help move things forward.

So, in approaching Dolgoff's book I expected to have many political differences with him and the anarchist movement of which he was a part. And, of course, I found plenty, including some that were pretty disturbing. Examples include his participation in fingering Communist Party militants in a un-

ion situation, his defense of the anarchist participation in the 1930s' Popular Front government in Spain, his conditional defense of the U.S. government's war aims in World War II, and his unbalanced critique of and opposition to the Cuban revolutionary process.

What came as something of a surprise, however, were the many parallels between anarchism's ideological disputes and those of the broader socialist movement. Just as other socialists divided over important historical events and issues across the century, so did the anarchists. A few of these I already knew about, such as how the anarchist Kropotkin and the Marxist Plekhanov both managed to come up with reasons to defend their own capitalist government during World War I, whereas most anarchists and revolutionary socialists opposed their own governments. I also knew that the worldwide anarchist and Marxist movements split over support to the early Russian revolution. In addition, I also knew that there were anarchists who argued for armed self-defense of mass struggles, for pacifism, and for individual terrorist guerrilla activity, just as others in the broad socialist movement around the world have done.

There were other issues of division that I was less aware of or outright unaware of. I was not aware that there were still anarchists, Dolgoff among them, who were willing to justify the 1930s coalition with the Spanish bourgeoisie known as the Popular Front. I had thought mistakenly that it must be an aberration of the historical moment. This, of course, parallels the retrospective support still given to the Spanish Popular Front by many people from the Stalinist and Social Democratic traditions.

In reading Dolgoff I learned that anarchists divided among themselves over the meaning of the commune movement in Mao's China, with some arguing that the communes represented a vast democratization of the revolution, while others saw the commune movement for the bureaucratic dystopian scheme that it was. These were also very live issues in the rest of the socialist movement.

Third Worldism, namely, a relatively uncritical attitude toward seemingly "progressive" regimes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, has plagued the anarchist movement just as it has those who call themselves Marxists.

It seems that anarchists have had problems within their ranks with those who have allowed themselves to cozy up to trade union bureaucrats, just as has been the case in the socialist movement at large.

Anarchists have had trouble agreeing among themselves about what types of organization socialists need or even whether

any organization at all is required. As Dolgoff recounted these arguments, I kept thinking about parallels within the Trotskyist, Stalinist, Social Democratic, and New Left traditions. You can be as right as rain on a whole host of subjects, but if you aren't properly organized, you can implement nothing.

Anarchists also disagree about the issue of revolution versus reform. I had thought that the anarchist writer Paul Goodman was exceptional in being a reformist, but apparently the problem is more widespread than that. And, of course, this is perhaps the dominant issue in the broader socialist movement.

The issue of whether class struggle is the ultimate motor force for social revolution or whether some other means for social transformation needs to be found appears to have plagued the anarchist movement as much as it has the rest of the socialist movement. Dolgoff cites the well-known anarchist writer-activist Murray Bookchin as one who disagrees with the class struggle concept. I was reminded of all the Social Democratic and New Left thinkers who also take exception to this central revolutionary tenet.

Finally, within anarchism there has been a century-long disagreement over the role of science and industry. That is, will social revolution lead us to a society of material abundance or will it lead us back to nature? When Dolgoff first encountered the anarchist retros in the 1920s, they were referred to as "ox-cart anarchists." The grouping around the journal *Anarchy* represents much the same thing today. Other socialists under Maoist, Third Worldist, and Green influence have often argued very similar thoughts about how socialism will be a society of democratically shared poverty, rather than a society of abundant food, shelter, clothing, and education for all.

The lasting value of Dolgoff's book for me was how unintentionally revealing it was about the commonalities of socialist history. All currents are affected by historic events and political and social pressures. Opinions divide as a result. It might equally well be said that opinions often unite. The breakup of the Soviet Union has thus far brought about more convergence of thought among socialists than disagreement. There is probably more agreement today about civil liberties issues among socialists than at any time in the past. Opposition to racism and sexism is virtually universal among socialists at the end of the century — something which was certainly not the case at its beginning.

Small as the anarchist movement now is, a study of its history may help socialists from other currents to understand their own history in a more self-searching and objective way. □

Racist Terror in Oklahoma

Continued from page 2

number-one threat to domestic national security. During the Johnson and Nixon administrations, the FBI and local police in a number of U.S. cities harassed, spied on, and even murdered Black Panther Party activists. The government hired agents provocateurs to promote paranoia about police informers within the Panthers' ranks, a tactic which unfortunately proved successful. Ultimately the government succeeded in destroying the Black Panther Party through intimidation, imprisonment, and outright murder.

J. Edgar Hoover also gave his attention to the Trotskyist movement — to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, which in the '60s and '70s were growing in strength and influence in the radical movement. He and the capitalist media attempted to portray American Trotskyists as terrorists, despite their rejection of individual terrorism in favor of mass action and an orientation to the working class. *Newsweek* magazine included the Fourth International in its list of terrorist organizations, and threw in a quote from Ernest Mandel to support

its conclusions. It made no difference to *Newsweek* that Mandel never said the words it attributed to him.

The government's policies are not, of course, as illogical as they might seem. The Black Panthers, in spite of their mistakes, were *revolutionary* and represented a genuine threat to ruling-class power and privilege. They could have inspired African Americans, Latinos, and other oppressed people — and ultimately all working people — to fight for their rights and living standards against the capitalist class and its government. That was their true "crime," for which they paid a terrible price. The "militia movement," along with the anti-abortion terrorists, neo-Nazis, and skinheads, are *reactionary*, and ultimately *defend* the interests of the ruling class and its government. They are the enemies of people of color, of women, and of any working people who are unwilling to capitulate to the bosses' drive to lower living standards. It is irrelevant how many people they kill or maim; they will never be the victims of the kind of police onslaught which was directed against the Black Panther Party.

President Clinton, the first U.S. president in over a generation to have signed execution warrants (as governor of Arkansas), has called for the death penalty for those convicted of the Oklahoma City bombing. However much the perpetrators of this crime may deserve to die, it will do more harm than good if they are executed. Conceding the government the right to kill can only work against the oppressed in this country.

Ultimately the best defense against reactionary violence is a strong and militant labor movement and a revitalized struggle by the Black community and all the communities of color. We can all learn from the example of the feminist movement, which has stood its ground against Operation Rescue and anti-woman terrorists of all kinds. A massive demonstration of strength and unity by working people can intimidate the purveyors of racism and sexism to the point where they no longer dare threaten the lives of any oppressed people, in the streets or on the airwaves. □

May 8, 1995

Changing of the Guard in Haiti?

Continued from page 11

stration "comes at a time of growing disillusion and discontent from a population showing clear signs of fatigue as they wait for unrealized promises and live under atrocious conditions."

Peasant Congress

During March the National Peasant Movement of the Papay Congress (MPNKP), a national organization affiliated with the MPP, held a "Special Congress." It is the largest mass organization in Haiti and in many ways reflects the contradictions within the mass movements. The MPKNP continues to speak out against intervention, yet the MPP head, Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, remains an adviser to President Aristide. Below is a summary of resolutions passed.

1. Justice: Judge all Macoutes, bureaucrats, section chiefs (village sheriffs). Remove all Macoute judges and bureaucrats. The Haitian government must disarm Macoutes. Reparations for coup victims. Distribute state lands by taking them away from large landowners. Conduct tribunals on land issues in general.
2. Food: "It is used to dominate and exploit so-called Third World countries. Food is used as a weapon to destroy agricultural production in impoverished countries, so that they will remain dependent on the rich countries... We have concluded that humanitarian aid is a poison for impoverished peasants such as ourselves... We wish to let it be known that Haiti is capable of producing enough food for everyone to eat and then

some." The Aristide government should create a credit bank for agriculture.

3. Participation (in the Aristide government): "Our organizations should have a say in choosing the people who will direct the state administration." Include popular organizations at their base to make state enterprises profitable. [Another section called on the government to "stop selling the state enterprises."] Regarding "insecurity" — the state should provide a framework for training the people to provide for their own security.
4. Election: "The Macoutes must be blocked at the ballot box."
5. Reforming the police: "We demand a police academy in each department... There should be a police post in each communal section."
6. The occupation: "We are against a U.S. occupation in all its forms... They have come to protect the Macoutes, FRAPH, the attaches and thieves. For example, when we catch a thief and turn him over, they release him and even give him money. They are the father of the Macoutes. They don't carry out disarmament. They serve no purpose for us."

In a critical passage the suicidal "Lavalas" multi-class strategy that led to three years of bloody dictatorship is once again put forward, "We call upon the whole Lavalas family to come together in unity in order to block the Macoutes." And further, "We must form complete unity in order to make a solid block."

Captain Paul Thome, U.S. Special Forces, Central Plateau region, in questioning peasant leaders of the MPNKP after their March Congress, wanted to know if words like "fight"

were used in any speech to the congress. Interestingly, Thome also told peasant leaders, "Our presence is not a consequence of the coup. If it were a consequence of the coup, we would have come here the day after."

SAJ (Solidarité ant Jen) and Konbit Veye Yo, two grassroots organizations with a national presence and a longtime relationship with Aristide, spoke out plainly against the occupation. The groups report, according to *Haiti Info*, that people originally cheered the arrival of U.S. troops "because they thought the debarkation was not an occupation." Today, reports *Haiti Info*, the groups say it's easy to see that the army and paramilitary are being protected by the U.S. troops, who are "trying to control the elections," and that there has been little disarmament. "President Aristide never stops saying, 'Hope makes you live,' but today, we realize that that kind of hope is only making the Macoutes and bourgeoisie live. The American imperialists are mocking us. Organization and action for the liberation of Haiti!"

Trotskyist Organization in Haiti

The Socialist Workers League identifies itself as Trotskyist. They have existed in Haiti since 1986. Under the coup they were actively organizing against the military regime. They organized primarily in the student and labor movements. They are active in the industrial park in Port-au-Prince and also participate in the anti-privatization campaign in the public sector. They are seeking support from socialist organizations. □

April 12, 1995

In Lieu of a Letters Page

Some Corrections

There were several errors in our March and April issues that we wish to call to our readers' attention.

Interview with Genora Johnson Dollinger

A number of errors appeared in the interview with Genora Johnson Dollinger about the role of women in the Flint, Michigan, sit-down strikes, and in the accompanying article by Kathleen O'Nan. We scheduled that interview for our March 1995 issue, in commemoration of International Women's Day. Our normal procedure of having the interviewee read over and approve the transcript and related materials was suspended due to time factors involved in obtaining the interview, transcribing it, and copy editing it to meet the schedule for the March issue. It was our misunderstanding that the author had given her approval to this procedure. In our next issue we expect to print a

letter from Genora Johnson Dollinger correcting the errors.

"Capitalism and Your University"
The article "Capitalism and Your University," also in our March 1995 issue, had an error in regard to authorship. The article, we learn belatedly, was written *not* simply by Robert Nowlan but by the **Marxist Collective at Syracuse University (MCSU)**.

Since it was the product of collective work, recognition should be given to all the other men and women who shared in the conception and writing of this text. Here are the names of those who were members of the MCSU: Sam Barry, Bryan Bates, Jennifer Cotter, Rob Cymbala, Ed Daly, Brian Ganter, Terri Ginsberg, Bronwen Heap, Rosemary Hennessy, Michelle Jensen, Adam Katz, Amitava Kumar, Jerry Leonard, Alex Lindgren, Minette Marcroft, Rajeswari Mohan, Robert Nowlan, Mad-

hava Prasad, Mark Redding, Amrohini Jennifer Sahay, Max Stevens, Vic Taylor, Christine Thompson, Stephen Tumino, Chris Webster, Mark Wood, and Robert Young.

\$100 Million for Informers

Finally, there was an error in a subhead in our last issue (for April 1995), in the article "Further Revelations in the Case of Qubilah Shabazz" by Michael Livingston. It referred to the sums the U.S. government admits paying to informers (\$97 million). When an editor is wrestling with subheads into the wee hours, unfortunately it can happen that an extra digit creeps into the mind's eye. The subhead that read "\$1 Billion for Informers" should have said: "Nearly \$100 Million..." □

— the Editors

Who Will Fill the Void?

Continued from page 5

Zedillo's new economic package (no increase in corporate taxes, with all tax hikes pushed onto the consumer, disproportionate rises in prices for basic food items such as tortillas, and wage increases held down to a fraction of inflation), it was business organizations and the conservative PAN that took the lead in organizing protests against the government's program.

Needless to say, neither riot police nor troops were called out to respond to these protests.

Although most analysts were puzzled by the aggressive stance of the country's business chambers, the message should be clear. They aren't waiting around for the PRI to get its act together. They intend to parlay their new economic weight into direct political power. Decades of PRI rule served to guarantee political

stability and helped nurture the formation of a powerful bourgeoisie. For most of those years, the private sector was expected to enrich itself and stay quiet. Public policy matters were to be handled by the PRI. But with the regime proving to be an increasingly unreliable guarantor of stability, business leaders are looking to take the helm in their own hands. □

April 15, 1995

The "End of American Trotskyism?" — Some Comments in Response to Alan Wald

Continued from page 43

ration with the "Democratic" wing of the U.S. ruling class and subservience to the dictates of the Soviet bureaucracy), and unable to understand the consequences of the political policies they embraced. The scholars Wald mentions, "mostly middle-aged professors of history [who] have been in or around the CP-USA," tend to ignore or discount the Stalinist cloud that hung over the halcyon days of their youth. Party life, in the telling of it, may seem happy and

purposeful. But to see life in the American Communist Party at any period in its post-1928 history without seeing Stalinism is to see a mirage.

This is not to say that there were not admirable people in the CP and its periphery, and that along the way many proved capable of discerning the debilitating and corrupting influence of Stalinist policies. Many of these comrades found their way into the ranks of the American Trotskyist movement, because Trotskyism al-

ways distinguished between the ill-informed and miseducated CP rank and file and the cynical, corrupt leadership. Of course, there is a large body of Trotskyist literature on this subject, including Cannon's excellent pamphlet *American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism*, from which Wald might benefit if he were to reread it with a "partisan but objective" attitude. □

March 11, 1995

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The Manifesto of the Fourth International

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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In Defense of American Trotskyism

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edited by Sarah Lovell, 328 pages (1992) — \$10.00

This book consists of selected documents mostly produced by a political tendency that was organized in the Socialist Workers Party to defend and advance the revolutionary perspectives of Trotskyism. This tendency, which began to develop in the party in 1979, waged a struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party until the expulsion of its adherents in 1984, when they established a new group called the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. Also represented here are oppositionists who became prominent in other groups — Socialist Action and the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity. Included are materials produced by two of the oldest and most prestigious veterans in the SWP, Tom Kerry and George Breitman. A substantial introductory essay by Frank Lovell, "The Meaning of the Struggle Inside the Socialist Workers Party," provides valuable back-

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

Volume Two:

Revolutionary Principles and Working-Class Democracy

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.

Volume Three:

Rebuilding the Revolutionary Party

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.