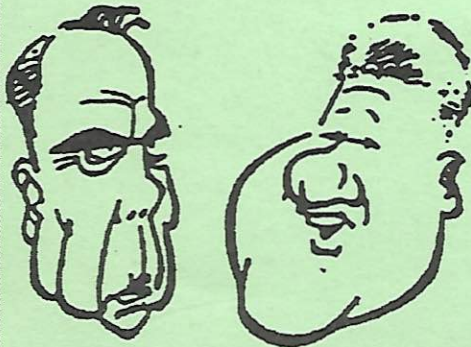


In Defense of Marxism

\$3.00

Labor and Politics in 1996



The U.S. Elections: This Was a Choice?

Evaluating the Present Stage of the Labor Party Movement
by David Jones

Class Education and the New Labor-Intellectual Alliance
by Frank Lovell

Also:

The War Against Children: Democrats and the Unions
by Charles Walker

An End to Corporate Welfare and a Constitutional Right
to a Job at a Living Wage

Labor Party Statement on the Welfare Bill

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From the Managing Editors

Owing to technical difficulties, what would have been our September-October issue is now appearing as November-December. To make up for the missing issue, we expect to produce by the end of the year a special number (BIDOM #135, undated), with a number of longer articles on U.S. labor history.

Labor Focus

This issue focuses on what's happening in the U.S. labor movement now in light of the real facts and actual developments since World War II. Frank Lovell's article on the labor-university teach-in at Columbia, for example, includes an analysis of the whole post-World War II period. The articles by David Jones and Don Fowler apply the same method and the same analysis. Joe Auciello's review of a book on American Trotskyism by George Breitman, Paul Le Blanc, and Alan Wald also includes an important discussion of the Marxist method.

The text of a Labor Party statement on Clinton's signing of the welfare bill, articles by Brian King, Jean Tussey, Peter Kellman, and letters by Jean Tussey and Ron Lare take up issues facing the labor party movement and the union movement in general, as does the material relating to the Michigan election campaign of Detroit newspaper striker Doug Young.

These articles harmonize with what's emerging from the labor movement and other movements for social change — especially with the rise of the "New Voice" leadership to the top of the AFL-CIO and the consolidation of the labor party movement at the founding convention in Cleveland. In these developments certain social forces are finding expression.

This issue also carries tributes to two men of different generations and different regions who were firmly committed to the cause of the working class, each in his own way — Bob Dullea and Bill Bader.

The Elections and Mass Demonstrations

Several articles, specifically by Bill Onasch, Charles Walker, and Don Fowler (on Bob Wages's endorsement of Clinton), take up the question of the 1996 U.S. presidential election, the ho-hum race between Clinton and Dole.

In contrast, an *important* election, whose outcome will affect the entire labor movement, is taking place in November with results to be announced in December — the election of the leadership of the Teamsters union. Two articles by Charles Walker bring us up to date on that key question.

A unique feature of the preelection period was the occurrence of mass demonstrations by Latinos/Latinas in Washington, D.C., October 12, and African Americans in New York City, October 16. These two massive marches on the eve of the elections showed that two major sections of the U.S. population, the two largest groups of oppressed people of color, which also represent two major components of the working class in this country, are deeply dissatisfied with the two-party system and other aspects of the status quo in this society. What the Democratic administration has given them is no better than what the Republican Congress offers.

These demonstrations embody a great potential. An independent Black party and an independent Latino party (similar to the La Raza Unida Party of the 1970s) would be the natural allies of an inde-

pendent Labor Party, along with Native Americans and other oppressed people of color. Combined with a women's movement independent of the bosses' parties, such an alliance would represent the vast majority of this country.

Against the Blockade of Cuba; No to U.S. Intervention in Mexico

Two especially noteworthy features of the October 12 and October 16 demonstrations were that: (1) the demand for an end to the blockade of Cuba was raised at both; and (2) at both, expressions of solidarity were made among Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans, along with other people of color (the Bangladesh community of Brooklyn was present October 12, for example). We hope to have more on these events in future issues.

The articles on Melissa Dullea and Cecilia Rodriguez echo the continuing movement to end the blockade of Cuba, and also to stop U.S. intervention against the Zapatistas and all those fighting for democracy and social justice in Mexico.

Other International Issues

While most of the union officialdom in the U.S. was mesmerized by the election hoax, the class struggle was not standing still in other parts of the world. Articles by Don Fowler and Barry Weisleder take note of intensified mass struggles by labor and its allies in Western Europe and Canada, while several articles deal with the situation in Russia. Mark Weber's review of the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, serialized in this magazine over several years, touches on the unhappy experience of the Stalinist system — the background to the present difficulties Russia is undergoing. Also an announcement from Marilyn Vogt-Downey tells of the third international conference on Leon Trotsky, to be held in Russia in November.

Tom Barrett looks at the continuing crisis of the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process" and the complexities of the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination, in the context of continuing U.S. imperialist intervention in the area.

No to U.S. Troops in Kuwait and Zaïre

Under Bill Clinton (the "lesser," who nevertheless is quite evil) U.S. troops have now been sent to Kuwait. And as we go to press, there are plans to send U.S. troops to Zaïre. Washington's aim is to intervene against radical guerrillas in Zaïre's eastern provinces who have made an alliance with Tutsi rebels against genocidal remnants of the former pro-imperialist dictatorship in Rwanda. We hope to have more on that development in future issues.

In a highly informative article about Taiwan, Linda Gail Arrigo and Jason Liu take up interrelated questions of the labor movement, democratic rights, and the struggle for national independence. And our international contributing editor, Zhang Kai, reports on significant ongoing developments in China.

An insert is being included with this issue, an appeal from the International Institute for Research and Education, the school of the Fourth International, located in Amsterdam. We hope that our readers can give generously in support of this school.

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The U.S. Elections — This Was a Choice?

“My Turn” Dole v. “Right Turn” Clinton: Others Need Not Apply

by Bill Onasch

Bob Dole was undoubtedly the sentimental favorite of the ruling rich in this year's contest for the White House. For decades, he never failed to respond to the needs of a special interest group — no matter how embarrassing for him — and he proved to be a tough negotiator who got the right things done in the Senate, regardless of which party held the majority.

But sentiment in U.S. electoral politics counts for about as much as sentiment for the livestock at the packinghouse. The business of American politics is business and Clinton has delivered the goods.

Certainly Clinton has been assailable in a number of “character” areas — Whitewater, the travel office fiasco, the mysterious suicide of a top assistant, forced resignations of cabinet-level officials, back-stabbing withdrawals of nominees under fire, even accusations of personal sexual indiscretions by Clinton himself. Had the ruling class been unhappy with Clinton, the media had ample ammunition to drive him off the stage in disgrace.

But, scandals aside, Clinton handled his watch astutely. He drove through NAFTA and GATT — an achievement that might have eluded George Bush. He accelerated the process of government downsizing and deregulation, launched by the last Democrat to precede him, Jimmy Carter, and continued under Reagan and Bush. He managed to tame the unions without

resorting to the kind of confrontations that can backfire. He often angered the leaders of civil rights, women's, and environmental groups but

When the question is posed, “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?” you'll find many negative answers, and even more anxiety, among working people. Dole answered, “I suppose some are.” He even pointed out that women's wages had gone down, and men's had remained stagnant.

But for those who really count in deciding the winner — Big Business — there is no doubt. They can't recall any time better. The stock market keeps setting new records. CEO compensation is also at an all-time high. They've shifted more of their tax burden off onto the workers. There are fewer government regulators on their backs. And they're still busting the most vulnerable anatomical parts of the unions.

Final Presidential Election Results

NAME	PARTY	POPULAR VOTE	% OF POPULAR VOTE
Clinton, William	Democrat	45,628,667	49.17%
Dole, Robert J.	Republican	37,869,435	40.81%
Perot, Ross	Reform	7,874,283	8.48%
Nader, Ralph	Green	580,627	0.63%
Browne, Harry	Libertarian	470,818	0.51%
Phillips, Howard	Taxpayers	178,779	0.19%
Hagelin, John Samuel	Natural Law	110,194	0.12%
Moorehead, Monica	Workers World	29,118	0.03%
Feinland, Marsha	Peace & Freedom	22,593	0.02%
Harris, James	Socialist Workers	11,513	0.01%
Collins, Charles	Republican	7,234	0.01%
Hollis, Mary Cal	Socialist	3,376	0.00%
White, Jerome	Socialist Equality	2,752	0.00%
Dodge, Earl F.	Prohibition	1,198	0.00%
TOTAL		92,790,587	99.99%
Total left vote		649,979	0.70%

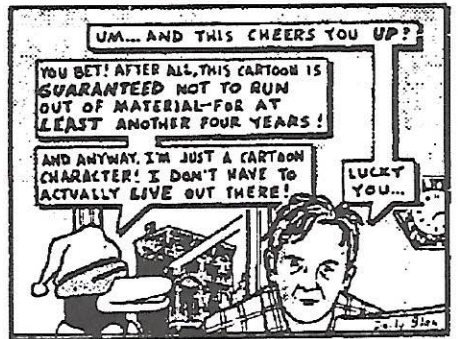
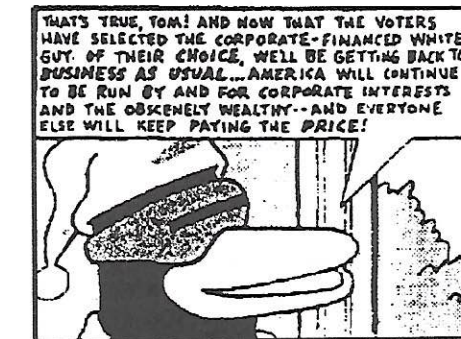
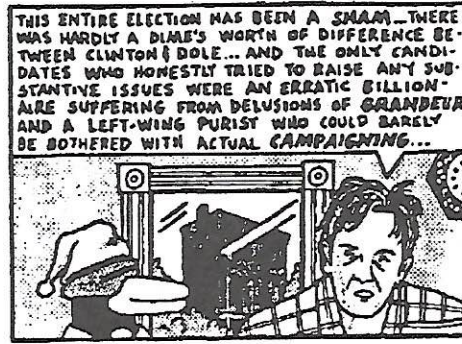
has largely — with some notable exceptions — kept them off the streets and in the lobbies. He even placated gay/lesbian activists despite his flip-flops on military morals and his signing of the ban on same-sex marriages.

Clinton to Business Execs: “A Mainstream American”

The day after the first debate, Clinton addressed an assembly in Stamford, Connecticut, of three hundred business executives who were supporters of his campaign. His campaign business outreach manager, Eli Segal, said “the president came to Stamford to show again that he is not a liberal, that he is a mainstream American, a mainstream president who has reached out to the business community.”

Speakers at this rally included United Technologies CEO George David — a Bush supporter in 1992 — and William Esrey, chairman of Sprint. Esrey, a Republican who has contributed money this year to Dole and Forbes, as well as Clinton, introduced the president to the gathering. Esrey told the assembled rich and powerful that Clinton's approach to his company for an endorsement “produced a dialogue within my company which I'm sure has been echoed in board rooms across America.” He added, “What's driven that dialogue is the growing realization by corporate America that Democrat Bill Clinton has been good for American business.” After the event the Clinton campaign released the names of 2,591 business executives across the country who support his reelection.

This warming-up to Clinton by many of Dole's traditional patrons brought pressure on
Continued on page 28



Palestinians Confront Netanyahu Government

by Tom Barrett

The Arab-Israeli "peace process" nearly crashed to earth in September, as Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing government staged such a deliberate provocation against the Arabs of Jerusalem and the West Bank that even the official police forces of the Palestinian Authority had to respond. The street violence has been so intense that it has threatened to undo everything that the Clinton administration had accomplished in stabilizing the region in the interests of the free flow of profits.

Though the spark which set off the uprising was the Netanyahu government's decision to open an additional entrance to an archeological tunnel under the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, it was hardly the cause. Arab frustration over the broken promises of the so-called "peace process" has been building up for months, even before the right-wing Likud victory in last May's elections. Expressions of that frustration by young Arabs no doubt caused many Israeli Jews to vote for Netanyahu; the victory of this man, who is perceived both by his supporters and his opponents as an enemy of peace with the Arabs, has only accelerated the breakdown of the Oslo settlement.

Ironically, the Oslo agreement was far more favorable to Israel than to the Arabs — Israel is giving up control of towns which take an increasing toll on its human and financial resources and which give little benefit to the state in return; whereas the Arabs are putting on hold their aspirations for national self-determination, including even the limited goal of an independent Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Netanyahu and his supporters have become so blinded by their own racism that they fail to see a golden opportunity when it is given to them.

Moreover, it should be understood that Israel has given up control *only* of the towns in the West Bank. The countryside — and the road connecting the towns — remain under Israeli control, and consequently, subject to closure by the Israeli Defense Forces. And since May of this year, Israel has in fact restricted travel within the West Bank, isolating the "autonomous" Arabs inside their town limits. None of this violates the letter — or spirit, unfortunately — of the Oslo agreement.

Israeli governments, both Labor and Likud, have recognized that opening the tunnel entrance near al-Haram ash-Sharif (the Dome of the Rock, one of the most revered sites in the Islamic religion), was an unnecessary provocation of the Arab community. It has virtually no scientific, historical, or intellectual value; its



PHOTO BY YASSER DARWESH

Demonstration at Kharameh checkpoint near Ramallah in the West Bank, September 25, 1996. Photo provided by Birzeit University and obtained from Internet site <http://www.birzeit.edu/palnews/war/photo2.html>. Used by permission.

purpose is only to promote tourism, or rather, to encourage tourists to spend money, since it is highly unlikely that the tunnel itself will bring about any increase in the number of tourists visiting Jerusalem.

Netanyahu's purpose was completely different, and his disingenuous excuses only serve to insult the intelligence. The tunnel opening was an assertion of Israeli authority over all Jerusalem and an additional signal — as if any were needed — that Israel will never give up Jerusalem or any part of it. Regardless of Jerusalem's religious significance to three major world religions, regardless of Jerusalem's Arab population, regardless of world public opinion — including bipartisan disapproval in Washington — and regardless of the threat to peace, Netanyahu insists that Jerusalem is an integral part of the Jewish state and that it must be recognized as its capital.

In the ensuing violence, the Palestinian Arabs achieved a level of unity which they have not known since before the Gulf War. The Clinton administration has made no secret of its displeasure with Netanyahu and his provocations. The close Arab allies of the U.S., Egypt and Jordan, expressed doubts that the progress

toward a negotiated peace could continue. And yet it appears that no one, not Clinton, not King Hussein, not Hosni Mubarak, not even Yasser Arafat — and certainly not the Israeli Labor Party — has the guts to call Netanyahu's bluff. At this writing, he has made not the slightest concession. He has not withdrawn any Israeli troops from Hebron, the last West Bank city still under Israeli military occupation, nor has he given any timetable for the troops' withdrawal. He has made no move to reopen the checkpoints to allow Arab workers to return to their jobs within the state of Israel. And the Jerusalem tunnel remains open. "Bibi" thumbed his nose at Arafat, at the United Nations, and at Bill Clinton, and he has gotten away with it. Clinton cannot afford a break or even a slight divergence with Israel in this election year, and Arafat has chosen to follow Clinton's lead. His continued leadership of the Palestinian people after this defeat is increasingly in question.

What Happened

Late at night on Monday, September 23, officials of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, a military escort, and Ehud Olmert, the mayor of Jerusalem, opened up an entrance to the West-

ern Wall tunnel beneath the steps of the al-Umariyya School, which is located on the Via Dolorosa, one of the main streets of the Old City. The next day a protest march organized by local community leaders stepped off from al-Haram ash-Sharif after noon prayers. Israeli soldiers blocked the marchers at Suleiman Street, and for 15 minutes march organizers attempted to persuade the soldiers to let them proceed. Then the troops attacked, beating the Arabs with clubs and charging into the crowd on horseback. Eight Arabs were hospitalized, including Hassan Tahboub, head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Palestinian National Authority.

On Wednesday, September 25, a protest march of thousands of unarmed Arabs in Ramallah was attacked by Israeli troops, using rubber bullets and live ammunition. The Israelis then entered a section of the city which, under the terms of post-Oslo follow-up agreements, is designated as "Area A," that is, under Palestinian control. This provoked a fire fight with Palestinian security forces. Four of them were killed, along with three Arab civilians. A total of 263 were injured in fighting that continued until the early evening. A general strike and demonstrations took place in all the Arab cities of the West Bank. Among demonstrators who were beaten by Israeli police in Jerusalem were a number of Palestinian Authority cabinet ministers.

The violence worsened on Thursday, September 26. Eleven Israelis and 37 Arabs were killed; the worst fighting was in Nablus and Gaza. On Friday, September 27, 7 more Palestinians were killed. Three of the deaths occurred in Jerusalem, when Israeli troops entered the compound of the al-Aqsa Mosque and fired on the congregation of nearly 6,000.

Protests and violence continued as Israel reopened the tunnel on Saturday, September 28. Fearing that the three-year-old process of diplomatic stabilization could come to a complete collapse, the Clinton administration directly intervened and called the principals to Washington to talk it out. It was Clinton's hope that Arafat's Palestinian Authority forces would restrain the Palestinians and that Netanyahu would be willing to make a significant enough concession to convince the Arabs to stop their protest demonstrations and to allow Arafat to save face among his own people. Closing the tunnel would have worked, but that would be too direct a concession in the face of Arab protest, which would cause Netanyahu political problems with his racist constituency at home. Clinton instead urged the Zionist prime minister to set a date for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron, the last Arab town in the West Bank still under direct occupation after nearly thirty years.

A Defeat for U.S. Diplomacy, a Defeat for Arab Conciliation

The summit meeting in Washington, attended by Clinton, Arafat, Netanyahu, and Jordan's King Hussein, was an unalloyed victory for Netanyahu and the Zionist Right. Clinton and his "spin doctors" attempted to portray the meeting in the best possible light, making a big point that Arafat and Netanyahu met one-on-one for three hours, asserting that progress was made in "restoring trust" between the Zionists and Palestinians. (One wonders what manner of "trust" ever existed between the oppressed Arabs and their Zionist oppressors; surely it never extended beyond the high diplomatic circles if it even existed there.) But the reality is that Israel made no concessions — not on Jerusalem, not on Hebron, not on opening border checkpoints, not on anything.

Arafat was clearly in a despondent mood as he prepared to return to Palestine to an uncertain future for himself and for the secular nationalist movement which he leads. King Hussein, who has the best understanding of, and commitment to, capitalist stabilization in the region, likewise expressed concern for the future of Middle East diplomacy.

How — and why — did Netanyahu defy the U.S., slight his closest Arab neighbors, and risk isolation and even war? The short answer is, in his defiance of the Clinton administration, Netanyahu calculated that his risks were in fact small. The United States will restrain the Arab states and Palestinian Authority from outright war, and at present Israel's Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians, are following Washington's lead. Both Jordan and the PLO — because of their support to Iraq in the Gulf War — have been saved from diplomatic isolation and financial ruin only by their willingness to work in complete cooperation with the U.S. in stabilizing the region.

Of course, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has been a close ally of Washington's since he acceded to power after the assassination of Anwar el-Sadat. The dominant influence of the United States in the Arab world ensures that, regardless of what actions the Zionists take, the Arab states will not go to war, barring the unlikely occurrence that the U.S. withdraws all diplomatic and military support to Israel.

Netanyahu, by contrast, owes nothing to Bill Clinton. He makes no secret of his admiration for Ronald Reagan and his connections with right-wing political forces in the United States, most notably the so-called "neoconservatives," such as Irving Kristol and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Clinton, for his part, made no secret of his preference for Shimon Peres and the Labor Party in the May election which brought Netanyahu to power. Those Israelis who support the U.S.-sponsored negotiations are not part of his constituency. Netanyahu is much more con-

cerned with maintaining his leadership of the Zionist hard-liners than with attempting to win converts among Labor supporters.

Netanyahu also gambled — shrewdly — that Clinton would not openly act against Israel in any way, especially as the U.S. presidential election was approaching. And he has so far been right. There has been no threat to reduce U.S. military or economic aid to Israel; there have been no repercussions with respect to private donations to Israel; and, most significantly, there has been no reduction of pressure from the United States on the Palestinian leadership to restrain the people from acting on their justified indignation.

Netanyahu has thus made it clear: the only possible foundation for peace is abject Arab surrender. Regardless of Arafat's personal wishes, he is well aware that the Palestinian people would reject his leadership completely if he followed such a course, as indeed many have already. The United States has painted itself into a diplomatic corner. The world's only superpower is forced, because of its own policies, to accept the dictates of a colonial-settler state of 2 million, which depends on foreign aid for its survival. And the only U.S. option likely to be considered by the Clinton administration — or the Dole administration in the unlikely event that he defeats Clinton — is to try to influence the next Israeli election, a questionable strategy at best.

However, that is not the only course open to the United States. This country could declare definitively that it will no longer support a state which illegally occupies territory and refuses to negotiate even when the other side is willing to compromise. Washington could, if it so chose, cut off all military aid to Israel immediately. Many of our unions hold Israel bonds in their treasuries; they could choose to divest themselves of Israeli financial securities, just as universities divested themselves of South African holdings under student pressure during the 1980s.

That is the course that Americans who wish to see peace and justice prevail in the Middle East should follow. We should demand that no U.S. troops be sent there, whether to "keep peace" or for any other lame excuse; we should demand a cut-off of all aid to Israel; we should call on our government, our unions, and our educational institutions to divest themselves of Israeli bonds and other Israeli financial securities. It is true that most American working people are not sufficiently informed of the issues involved to make such a campaign practical at this time. That is why this journal will work in collaboration with all who support Arab self-determination in Palestine to inform and explain what is going on and what we can do about it. □

October 27, 1996

The Situation in the Occupied Territories

by Walid Salem

The following article was prepared for the November 1996 issue of International Viewpoint, monthly publication of the Fourth International.

Three years after the Oslo accords, two years after the creation of the Palestinian Authority, and nine months after the first Palestinian elections, the situation in the occupied territories is more desperate than it has been for a long time.

The Netanyahu government has transformed the concept of redeployment in Jericho from a Zone A solution (transfer of control to the Palestinian Authority) to a Zone B solution (total Israeli control, with some civil matters delegated to the Palestinian Authority). Even this limited concession has a price: the Palestinian Authority must itself close down three Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem: the Geography Centre, the Topographical Centre, and the Youth and Sports Centre.

Redeployment has been frozen in Zone C, which covers 72% of the West Bank, representing territory effectively annexed by Israel. The Palestinian Authority controls about 9% of the West Bank, essentially the territory covered by six towns. These towns are effectively prisons. Even the Palestinian guards cannot circulate from one site to another in uniform. Israel can and does erect barriers at the exits from each of the towns, and controls entry and exit.

The colonization of Jerusalem has accelerated. The previous, Labour government managed to create a Jewish majority in the city of Jerusalem, including East Jerusalem (160,000 Jews and 155,000 Palestinians). The current administration plans to boost the Jewish population to 48% of the population of Greater Jerusalem (as far south as Gush Atsayun, as far north as Al Bira, as far west as Beit Shimish and as far east as Ma'ali Adumin) by 2010. By extending the colonization of Ma'ali Adumin toward the east, Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon hopes to create a band of continuous Jewish settlement from Jerusalem to the Jordanian border. Interior Minister Ely Suissa plans to annex adjacent West Bank areas of urbanization to Jerusalem proper.

This new band of settlement will receive financial and infrastructure support to develop industrial zones servicing Tel Aviv and the Jordanian capital Amman.

The elections of January 20, 1996, have not changed the nature of the Palestinian Authority. All power remains in the hands of the top leadership, which publicly ignores the decisions of the supposedly sovereign Palestinian Council. Over 90 Council decisions have been ignored or contradicted by the Authority. Arafat's power

is guaranteed by the "peace" accords, in which Israel gives the President the right to veto Council decisions. As consolation, Council members, most of whom come from Arafat's Fatah branch of the PLO, receive a monthly salary of \$2,500, a car (with driver) and a portable telephone.

Palestinians might have a representative body, but this hasn't stopped Arafat's campaigns of repression. Armed police have invaded the campuses of Birzeit and El-Najah universities to disrupt student organizing. Physical mistreatment and even torture are common in Palestinian police stations and prisons.

Arafat is not only President of the Palestinian Authority, of course. He is still the President of the PLO, which in April of this year deleted those parts of its charter to which Israel objected.

The Palestinian Authority has little room for maneuver. Either it reinforces its control over Gaza and the West Bank towns, and strives to develop political and economic institutions, and to generate relations with potential investors and foreign diplomats, or it must opt for confrontation with Israel. The first option can be followed only if Israel gives the go-ahead. Netanyahu continues to hinder the development of Gaza airport.

The other option would mean breaking with the current strategy of the Palestinian leadership. It implies breaking police cooperation, stopping the Israeli-orchestrated hunt for Hamas militants, and taking steps to advance the interests of the masses. The goal of such a strategy would be to create a new balance of forces on the ground, so as to be able, in a second phase, to suspend the negotiations with Israel.

Instead of leading the struggle, Fatah has transformed itself into a party-state. Fatah full-timers have become faithful civil servants. Those who remained faithful to their militant convictions were isolated and persecuted. The Islamic resistance movement Hamas faces the combined repression of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. There is a growing divergence between the movement's Gaza wing, which would like to become a legal political party, and West Bank militants who reject such a transformation. There is tension between the military and political wings, and between the emigre leadership and the leadership in the occupied territories. In reality, Hamas has frozen its military operations.

Part of the leadership wants to announce this publicly, part wants to overturn this unilateral ceasefire.

The Palestinian left (both the "Popular" and the "Democratic" Front for the Liberation of Palestine) is in deep crisis. Neither has democratized itself. The leadership is the same as before, and so is the mechanism of decision-making. The Palestinian People's Party (ex-Communist) has rallied to the Palestinian Authority, and been rewarded with the post of Minister of Economy.

Fortunately, there are signs of popular mobilization. A first conference of refugees in the Bethlehem region was held on 12 September, at the initiative of the West Bank Youth Union. The self-organization of refugees is spreading, and will soon culminate in a conference to be attended by representatives of refugees from across the West Bank. Within Israel itself, the Palestinian Committee for the Defense of Refugees now has over 600,000 members. And land defense committees have sprung up in many parts of the occupied territories, improving Palestinians' capacity to defend themselves in the regular confrontations with Zionist colonists.

As Likud increases the pressure, and Arafat follows his own interests, this independent popular mobilization is likely to grow. Refugees in particular are likely to develop independent representative organizations — unless Arafat can co-opt their leaders, as he has tried to do in Gaza. □



PHOTO BY NIGEL PARRY

One of many young Arabs injured by Israeli troops in Ramallah. Photo provided by Birzeit University and used by permission. Obtained from Internet address <http://www.birzeit.edu/palnews/war/photo13.html>.

Behind the Events in Iraq and Kurdistan

by Tom Barrett

At this writing, U.S. ground troops have been stationed in the Kuwaiti desert, and President Clinton has ordered two Cruise missile attacks on targets in southern Iraq. The Middle East is closer to war than at any time since George Bush's Gulf War of 1990-91, and thus far Clinton has not given anyone, least of all the working-class GIs on the front lines, a credible explanation as to why. We have been told that Saddam's troops moved into northern Iraq — a perfectly good reason to launch missile attacks on southern targets. We have been told that "we" are defending the Kurdish people from an Iraqi "invasion," which was somehow requested by Mass'oud Barzani, whose family has led the Kurdish struggle for national independence since before World War I. Then we are informed that the Iraqi army is attacking one *faction* of the Kurdish struggle, a faction supported by Iran, supposedly a sponsor of terrorist groups. So the U.S. Navy is hitting *southern* Iraq because of Saddam Hussein's policies in *northern* Iraq, where he is attacking a Kurdish faction supported by the "terrorist" government of Iran. And you thought Somalia was a complicated mess!

The Clinton administration's apparent decision not to commit U.S. ground forces to an attack on Iraq indicates a recognition that it would be very difficult in an election year to explain the reasons for putting American GIs' lives at risk in such a dubious endeavor. Whatever crimes Saddam Hussein has committed — and they have been many and serious — few if any of us feel that he is a threat to our security. And after the experience of Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia, not many of us believe that U.S. intervention does much good, even if the government convinces a few of us that its intentions are good.

American workers, then, have every reason to demand that Clinton withdraw U.S. forces from the Middle East and stop all military activity in the region. Young Americans should not die — or kill young Arabs — when their security and rights are not in fact threatened. The Clinton administration is responding not to a threat to working people's security but to a *perceived* threat to the multinational oil companies' profits. It is a perceived threat because Saddam Hussein has not during this latest crisis endangered the ability of any oil company to extract, transport, or refine oil in the Middle East. Iraq, like every other oil-rich country in the region, has every interest in ensuring the flow of oil out and the flow of money in.

In spite of Clinton's hypocritical use of the Kurdish issue as a pretext for threats against Iraq, the Kurds are justified in their struggle for independence and self-determination. However, it is not only Iraq which stands in the way of the Kurds' realizing their national aspirations: Iran, Syria, and — most importantly — Turkey also repress their Kurdish minorities. The territory of Kurdistan, the largest nation on earth which is still denied self-determination within defined boundaries, is divided among Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The imperialist policy of encouraging the Kurdish struggle in Iraq while supporting the oppression of Kurds in Turkey and (during the Shah's reign) in Iran has led to the tragic division of the Kurdish nationalist movement and to the violent confrontation between the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Ironically, Clinton's Middle East policy, which is a continuation of George Bush's, has served to strengthen Saddam Hussein's grip on power, despite Washington's explicit aim that "Saddam must go."

What's the Problem with Saddam Anyway?

In the spring of 1990 a group of American congressional leaders, including current Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole, visited Iraq and were effusive in their praise of Saddam Hussein. Surely they must have known what kind of tyrant Saddam was, since he had held power since 1968. Saddam would hardly be the first brutal dictator to enjoy U.S. support and protection. The Shah of Iran, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua (of whom Franklin Roosevelt said, "He may be a son of a bitch, but he's *our* son of a bitch"), Fulgencio Batista in Cuba, and Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan all received U.S. military and financial assistance. Augusto Pinochet, responsible for the slaughter of thousands in Chile, came to power through the intervention of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and intelligence departments of the U.S. Army and Navy. So Saddam's oppression of the people within Iraq's borders could hardly be a problem to Washington.

Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990 believing that the U.S. and its allies would acquiesce to the invasion, a belief encouraged by U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie. When Saddam recognized his miscalculation he agreed to withdraw on terms worked out by Jordanian King Hussein, but the U.S. and Britain rejected the

settlement and pressed for war. The U.S.-led alliance won a surprisingly easy victory in January 1991, restored the Kuwaiti monarchy to power, and imposed brutal sanctions on Iraq which remain in place today, despite Iraq's efforts to comply with the humiliating conditions dictated by Washington and London. This year, U.S. officials began admitting openly that the economic embargo, which continues to cause severe suffering in Iraq, will remain in place as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power.

None of this makes much sense to working people in this country. If "Saddam must go," why did the Bush administration deny logistical support to Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south who had taken up arms to overthrow Saddam in 1991? What right has the U.S. to decide who holds power in a foreign country anyway?

The answer, of course, is none. Though there have been no serious opinion polls (if there is such a thing as a serious opinion poll), nor has the crisis developed to such an extent that people have taken direct action in the streets against U.S. intervention in the Middle East, there are indications that American working people are opposed to the commitment of additional U.S. forces to the Arab-Persian Gulf region. The post-Gulf War economic recession, which cost so many Americans their jobs — including President George Bush — forced working people to realize that waving the flag doesn't pay the electric bill or put food in the refrigerator. The simplistic slogans which Ronald Reagan used so well to win support for his reactionary interventionist foreign policy have not worked well since the hollow victory against Iraq in 1991. An unquestionably decisive military success brought the United States no greater security nor prosperity. Working people can hardly be blamed if they have become more interested in their economic well-being than in Washington's leadership in world affairs. The recognition that our elected officials should pay more attention to domestic needs than to foreign adventures is an important step in the growth of class consciousness.

The Kurdish Struggle for National Independence

However, it is only a first step, for in spite of Clinton's policy of using Saddam Hussein's repression of the Kurdish people as a pretext for intervention and acts of war, the Kurds' fight for self-determination is just, and Saddam Hussein is completely guilty of oppressing them. They are not a familiar people to Americans. Unlike

the Irish, few have immigrated into this country. Unlike the people of the former Soviet republics, the Kurds were not players in the Cold War game. Unlike Black South Africans, no large segment of the U.S. population feels a direct kinship with them. Their history is for the most part not taught in schools, and their role in the world economy is not a significant one. Yet they are an ancient people with a proud heritage, and they are the largest nation on earth which has to this day achieved no measure of self-determination.

The territory of Kurdistan, as we have said, is divided primarily among three countries, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. It is home to some 20 million people. The region is dry, mountainous, and for the most part oil-poor. (There are working oil-fields near the city of Kirkuk, in Iraqi Kurdistan.) Though many Kurds continue to herd sheep and goats, as they have done for millennia, there has been a steady migration to cities and towns — in some cases outside of Kurdistan — throughout this century. In Turkey and Iran there have been tendencies toward assimilation — imposed by the governments — and conscious policies of settlement of non-Kurdish peoples in the Kurdish provinces.

The Kurds have inhabited the region for between two and three thousand years. Their language is closely related to Farsi — the Persian language — and in Iranian Kurdistan (which is formally constituted as a province), the Kurdish language has become mixed with Farsi to the extent that it has developed into one of several distinct dialects of Kurdish. Nearly all Kurds are Muslims; the majority belong to the Sunni branch of Islam. Though the overwhelming majority of Muslims throughout the world are Sunnis, Shi'eh Islam has its largest following in those countries with significant Kurdish populations. Most of Turkey's Shiites (called Alevis in Turkish) are in the eastern region. The majority of Iraq's population is Shiite, though most live in areas outside of Kurdistan. In Iran over 90 percent of the population belongs to the Shi'eh branch.

The question of Kurdish nationhood was not a relevant one so long as religion, not nationality, was the cause for loyalty to a particular state power. After the rise of Islam, Kurds had the same rights and opportunities as any Muslims. The most famous of Islamic leaders during the Crusades was a Kurd, Salah ed-Din, known to Europeans as Saladin. Kurds were always known for their fighting ability, and the Arab and Turkish armies throughout the centuries included large numbers of Kurdish soldiers. But throughout the centuries, they fought for Islam, not for any nation, whether Kurdish, Arab, Turkish, Persian, or anything else.

Things began to change during the 19th century, however, as the newly industrialized countries of Western Europe began encroaching on the Islamic world. By the second half of the 19th century, all of North Africa was dominated by Europeans. The non-Muslim peoples of the Ottoman Empire (Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians) had established nominally independent kingdoms under the "protection" of European powers —

Britain, Austria, and Russia competed with each other for dominance in Islam's former territories in Europe. Britain and Russia played the "Great Game" in Central Asia, with the tsar in an eternal quest for a warm-water port, and Queen Victoria trying to establish a secure overland route to India. The Asian countries whose trade had made the Middle East rich were as well under Western European control. India had become the keystone of the British Empire; the French and Dutch had extensive possessions throughout Southeast Asia.

The industrialized countries of Europe, as well as the United States and Japan, were *nation-states*, in which one language and culture predominated and in which secular state power was supreme. Nationality, not religion, was the unifying force — even to the extent that religion had become a matter of free choice in many of them. The god of economic might had replaced the god of tradition.

Within the Ottoman army and civil service, a growing number of officials began to urge that the Ottoman Empire emulate the ways of the Europeans, lest it too fall prey to the powers which could now properly be called "imperialist." Their plan was to break the power of all local and tribal authorities, to impose a single language on the Empire, and impose the power of the central government from the Bulgarian border to Kuwait. They thought they could do as Prince Otto von Bismarck had done to create the German Reich — force the minor German principalities to accept Prussian domination through a policy of "blood and iron." What they failed to understand is that Germans already had a common language and culture and that the boundaries which separated them were artificial and outmoded. They would have been better advised to remember the Austrian example, where non-German peoples — Hungarians, Croats, Slovenes, Czechs, and Slovaks — fought for and eventually achieved independence.

As the central government attempted to make the transition from the Ottoman Empire, based on Islam, to a Turkish empire, based on secular power, the non-Turkish peoples began rising in revolt, first among them the Kurds. A number of revolts broke out during the 19th century, in some cases encouraged by Russia and Britain. A center of Kurdish nationalism was the village of Barzan, where a strong leader named Mohammad emerged to lead the guerrilla fighters, known in Kurdish as *peshmergan*. His son Mustafa, who became known as Mustafa Barzani, assumed the leadership of the Kurdish struggle during the 1920s.

In 1909 a group of military officers known as the "Young Turks" staged a successful military coup and established a constitutional monarchy. They accelerated the process of imposing Turkish power throughout the Ottoman territories, causing resentment among the Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, and other non-Turkish peoples. When Turkey entered World War I on the side of Germany, Britain and Russia stepped up their attempts to exploit the resentment of the non-Turkish peoples, which in turn led to in-

tense repression by the Turkish government. The worst example occurred in 1915, when Turkey carried out the first act of genocide in the 20th century — against the Christian Armenians, who were suspected of being in league with the Russians. Atrocities on a smaller scale were also carried out against Kurds and Arabs.

After Turkey's defeat in World War I, a harsh settlement was imposed by the Allies: the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920. Its provisions were similar to those imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Among its provisions was an independent Kurdistan; the Treaty of Sèvres forms the basis in international law for Kurdish claims today.

However, Turkish forces were reconsolidated at Ankara under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Kemal led his forces in a reconquest of Turkish territories and by 1921 had driven all occupying forces from Asia Minor. He abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the modern Turkish Republic. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 recognized the Kemalist republic within the borders which exist to this day. The Lausanne Treaty essentially nullified the Treaty of Sèvres and the recognition of an independent Kurdistan. Kemal, who took the surname Atatürk, brutally repressed all expressions of Kurdish nationalism, going so far as to outlaw the use of the Kurdish language and any public reference to the Kurdish minority's existence. The Kemalist republic's policy was forcible assimilation of the people that it called "mountain Turks," and it remained in force until the 1980s, when it was relaxed somewhat by order of President Turgut Özal, who was of Kurdish ancestry.

In the chaos following World War II, an independent Kurdistan came into existence under Soviet protection. It was based in Kurdistan province in Iran (a parallel Azerbaijani republic was established just to the north in the provinces of East and West Azerbaijan). Its president was the veteran *peshmerga* Mustafa Barzani.

The Kurdish republic fell victim, however, to the machinations of Truman and Stalin. Stalin withdrew Soviet support late in 1946, and the Shah's forces reoccupied the Kurdish capital Mahabad (as well as the Azerbaijani capitals Tabriz and Orumiyeh).

Following the overthrow of the monarchy in Iraq in 1958 a state of tension bordering on war existed between Iran and Iraq. During that period the Shah encouraged the Kurdish separatists, organized in the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), led by Mustafa Barzani. The Shah — and the CIA — provided Barzani with weapons and a safe haven in Iran. (Hypocritically, the Shah allowed no expression of Kurdish nationalism in Iran itself.) However, in 1975 Saddam Hussein and the Shah came to an agreement, and the Shah withdrew all support to the Kurdish rebels. (Saddam, for his part, expelled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from Iraq.) The Iraqi army moved quickly and mercilessly to suppress the uprising; Mustafa Barzani went into exile under CIA protection. He died of cancer in 1979 in Langley, Virginia, but not before his

betrayed the Shah had been overthrown. Leadership of the KDP passed to his son Mass'oud.

In 1980, with the encouragement of the United States, Saddam Hussein launched an attack on the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the next eight years, Khomeini, like the Shah before him, provided weapons and political support to the Kurdish nationalists in Iraq while denying Kurdish national rights in Iran. In a sickening replay of 1975, Khomeini and Saddam came to terms in 1988; support for the Kurds was withdrawn, and Saddam Hussein launched an assault on Kurdistan which bordered on genocide. Thousands were killed as the Iraqi army used chemical weapons against Kurdish villages. When the U.S. decided in 1990 that Saddam Hussein was an enemy and no longer a friend, the Bush administration made an issue of Iraqi treatment of the Kurds.

As the Iraqi army was being driven from Kuwait, Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq and Shiite Muslim rebels in southern Iraq took up arms to overthrow Saddam. The U.S. made the decision to deny them air and logistical support, enabling Saddam Hussein to reconsolidate his power — which probably contributed to George Bush's electoral defeat in 1992. However, since the Gulf War the U.S. has imposed a prohibition on any Iraqi army presence in Kurdistan, allowing *de facto* autonomy for the Kurdish people.

Divisions Among the Kurdish People

Tragically, the five years of autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan have accentuated the political weaknesses of the Kurdish leadership rather than consolidated the foundation for a viable Kurdish independent state. Of the *peshmerga* organizations, only the Turkey-based Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK — Kurdish Workers Party) has a political program which attempts to relate to the reality of modern-day Kurdistan. Furthermore, only the PKK maintains the goal of an independent Kurdistan, uniting all the components of the nation, today divided among Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the former Soviet Caucasian republics. The PKK recognizes the necessity of struggling both for political independence and for wresting power from the old precapitalist tribal aristocracy and transferring it to the Kurdish workers and peasants. The PKK's program opposes traditional Islamic male supremacy and calls explicitly for socialism, though it does not define what it means. It has many similarities to Latin American revolutionary organizations such as the Mexican Zapatistas.

But in Iraq, Kurdish politics are dominated by the Kurdish Democratic Party, led by Mass'oud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Jalal Talabani, both of whom have acquiesced to a Kurdish autonomous region within the Iraqi state. Politically the leadership of both these groups has changed little over the one-hundred-plus years of Kurdish

nationalism. It is based on the same precapitalist class forces which ruled over a nomadic goat-herding people, the Kurds of the past. The KDP and PUK represent different regions of Kurdistan, where different dialects of the language are spoken and different clans predominate. Rather than representing differing political programs, they exist to promote the power of their respective leaders, Barzani and Talabani. Such divisions, as history has shown conclusively, are easily exploited by outside forces which have no interest in the good of the Kurdish people. That was the situation in 1914, in 1946, in 1975, in 1988, and it is the situation today.

During the Iran-Iraq war, the PUK allied itself with Iran and was able to exercise control over a considerable amount of Kurdish territory under Iranian protection, to the chagrin of Barzani and the KDP. The KDP has attempted since 1991 to gain the upper hand in the Kurdish autonomous region, and toward that end has made an alliance with Saddam Hussein. Talabani has accused Barzani of, in effect, selling his soul to the devil, and he has a point. But Talabani's words are of little avail. His military forces are no match for the Iraqi army, which has completely overrun PUK-controlled zones and taken the city of Suleimaniyeh on the Iranian border, forcing Talabani and the PUK leadership into exile.

Whatever short-term benefits and limited autonomy Barzani may gain from his maneuver with Saddam, the prospects for Kurdish self-determination have been severely set back. Barzani will exercise power in Iraqi Kurdistan only at Saddam Hussein's pleasure. Without support in other Kurdish regions, the PKK's struggle against the Turkish state will be that much more difficult, if not impossible to win. And the tendencies toward Kurdish assimilation will continue unabated in Iran. It is a seemingly hopeless state of affairs.

Working-Class Internationalism: The Only Hope for the Kurds — and for Ourselves

There can be no doubt of the Kurds' determination, courage, and fighting ability. They have been legendary in the Middle East since the days of Salah ed-Din. But that will not be enough. Isolated within their mountainous enclaves, the Kurds cannot win in a purely military confrontation with the armies of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. However, the Vietnamese could never have won a purely military confrontation with the United States, even in the Southeast Asian jungles. They achieved their victory as the result of a political struggle on a world scale, most especially in the United States itself. The Vietnamese recognized the importance of the international antiwar protests, and they actively intervened to bring about sustained and united action. The end result was the loss of support to

Washington's war policies among the very soldiers called upon to fight the war.

Greater awareness of the Kurdish struggle throughout the world, and an active campaign in support of Kurdish self-determination in the countries of the Middle East, can change the momentum in the Kurds' favor. Specifically: the Turkish Republic is one of the United States's closest allies, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Its land-based army is the second largest in NATO, only exceeded by that of the United States. The majority of Kurds live within its borders; they are denied national self-determination, and they have been brutally repressed when they have fought for it. American working people have the right to demand that our government stop supporting this repressive regime. Additionally, we can demand the truth about how Saddam Hussein built up the arsenal that he has used to carry out his genocidal attacks against the Kurds. The record of U.S. and Western European aid to Iraq through the 1980s needs to be brought out and made public.

Revolutionary-minded working people in this country, in the Middle East, in Europe, and every other continent need to be communicating with each other, working with each other, and learning from each other. We need a framework in which young Kurdish militants from Iraq can meet and discuss with Kurdish militants from Turkey — and with Mexican Zapatista fighters, Irish republican militants, Palestinian *Jedayeen*, and even American strikers from the Detroit newspapers or the Illinois War Zone.

The Fourth International, founded in 1938 under the leadership of the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, is attempting to construct that kind of world organization. Its program and human material are being severely tested at this time in the wake of the demise of what was erroneously called "socialism" in one-third of the world. However, its basic theories remain valid, and it is attempting to respond to the crying need for leadership felt by the oppressed people on all continents. It is doing so by taking its ideas and applying them in the real-life, on-the-ground struggles going on throughout the world, of which the Kurdish struggle for self-determination is one.

We can do our part by explaining what the truth is to people in our workplaces and neighborhoods, and working through our unions and other organizations to call on our government to stop meddling in the Middle East and to stop supporting those Middle Eastern governments who deny Kurdish self-determination. Too many people like us have died because of "great power" machinations. It's time that it stopped. □

October 7, 1996

Hundreds of Thousands of Russian Workers Strike, Demonstrate for Back Wages

by Renfrey Clarke

The following article was posted to a computer network conference on November 7 (79th anniversary of the Russian socialist revolution). It was written for the Australian Green Left Weekly. Renfrey Clarke lives in Moscow.

In one of the largest political gatherings seen in the Russian capital since the late 1980s, tens of thousands of workers demonstrated near Red Square on November 5 in a trade union-organized rally "For Work, Wages, and Social Welfare." The Moscow demonstration was part of a day of protest actions called for November 5 by the country's main labor body, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (Russian initials, FNPR). As well as the Moscow meeting, which according to Associated Press reports, drew 37,000 people, other notable gatherings took place in Vladivostok in the Far East, where a reported 20,000 people demonstrated; in the Kuzbass coal region and Omsk in Western Siberia; and in St. Petersburg.

Interior Ministry sources reported that a total of 320,000 people took part in 334 rallies and marches in cities around the country. In addition, well over half a million workers joined protest strikes lasting from an hour to the whole day. The main demand summoning workers into action was for the prompt payment of wage arrears that are mounting rapidly and have now reached catastrophic levels.

In a survey reported on November 1, more than half of respondents in St. Petersburg reported that payment of their wages, pensions, or scholarships was not up to date. In relatively well-favored Moscow, the corresponding figure was 39 percent. Most of the people interviewed blamed the federal government.

According to the FNPR, the total of overdue wages in Russia now stands at 42.8 trillion rubles, about US\$7.9 billion. This sum is close to a month of the country's total wage bill. Labor Ministry figures indicate that the wage debt is now 2.7 times its level at the beginning of the year, and in the past few months it has grown at a staggering rate. FNPR spokespeople cite rises of 17 percent in September, and 16 percent in October. Many workers have been left without pay for three and even four months.

Adds Force to Local Actions

In the struggle to force employers to meet their wage obligations, the FNPR's all-Russia day of protest is an important development. It has lent force to a swelling tide of local and sectoral labor action; during the first nine months of 1996, strike activity ran at about three times the level seen in 1995. Nevertheless, the movement is still only beginning; despite the dire situation, the absolute levels of labor action in Russia have been modest compared with strike waves in the West.

The State Statistics Committee recorded work stoppages at 3,767 enterprises and organi-

zations in Russia during the first nine months of 1996, with a total of 356,000 workers involved. The number of workers who went on strike during this period was not many more than one in 200 of the total workforce.

The FNPR's day of action on November 5 was much more impressive than similar coordinated protests that the federation has held in previous years. But the response from labor organizations was still patchy, even among the federation's member bodies. The FNPR reported on November 4 that 60 of its 122 affiliates were organizing demonstrations, marches, or pickets. Of 43 sectoral unions, 13 were calling for strike action, as were 28 of the FNPR's 78 regional federations. The most determined strikes were in the hard-hit education and health care sectors, as well as in the coal industry and defence enterprises.

Coal Miners Lead the Way

The outstanding example of militancy on November 5 was provided by the coal miners. Russian Independent Union of Coal Industry Workers chief Vitaly Budko reported that 460,000 miners had gone on strike, with 198 of 218 underground pits ceasing work along with 49 of 69 open-cast mines. According to union spokespeople, the miners were angered by the government's failure to observe a wage payment agreement reached after a bitterly fought coal strike in August.

While the FNPR leadership has sought to keep the demands of its "autumn offensive" within a strictly economic framework, labor activists in coal centers have often moved resolutely to develop the political aspects of their struggle. Leonid Astafyev, president of the Association of Mayors of Mining Cities, noted on October 31: "In some places such as the Kuzbass, alternative power structures are being formed, so-called salvation committees, which are attempting to take over the role of executive power."

Why the Wage Debts?

Meanwhile, why have the wage debts to workers in Russia reached such heights? Pro-government commentators blame privatized firms whose managers prefer to use company funds for speculation instead of paying wages and taxes. Such abuses are clearly very common; the government provides a strong inducement for managers to divert funds by offering sky-high interest rates to purchasers of state short-term securities.

The proportion of the outstanding wage debt owed by the federal government is only a few

percent of the total; the Kremlin's share was put recently at about 1 trillion rubles compared with 33 trillion for privatized enterprises and 7 trillion for regional and municipal administrations. However, Russians are not deceived when they insist that the federal authorities bear a key burden of responsibility for the plight of unpaid workers. Many enterprises that are legitimately unable to pay wages are victims of drastic cutbacks of state spending in areas such as defense procurements, and in some cases, of the arbitrary withholding by the state of payment for goods and services already delivered.

The link between wage arrears and government policy is suggested by the fact that wage debts have rocketed during precisely the same months when the government has been moving desperately to slash its outlays. In the early months of this year, the handouts of President Boris Yeltsin's re-election campaign were financed largely through the sale by the state of short-term securities at real annual rates of interest exceeding 100 percent. Six months later, the election campaign debts are falling due, and the cost to the government of servicing its internal debt has ballooned.

Outlook Grim

Particularly for workers in the so-called "budget area," the chances of seeing any pay in the coming period are grim. One of the most sensational information leaks from the Moscow bureaucracy in recent months has been a report, dated October 17, from Finance Minister Aleksandr Livshits to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. This document includes the ominous remark:

If the crisis situation...remains, October expenditures worth up to 7.8 trillion rubles could be left unfunded, which is tantamount to the non-payment of 85 percent of monthly wages, salaries, stipends, and other types of pay to all individuals who are funded from federal budget revenue.

It is interesting to note that Livshits did not present the shortfall in terms of the proportion of bondholders' profits that the government was in danger of being unable to pay out. For Russia's present-day rulers, allowing teachers, nurses, and miners to starve without their wages is clearly an acceptable if regrettable choice. But defaulting on the profits of securities-market speculators — even those set to draw many times the usual international rate of return — is something the government refuses even to contemplate. □

No to Both Evils

Leaflet of Russian Trotskyist Groups in July Elections

The following translation and brief introduction to it are by Simon Pirani.

Introduction

The following leaflet was published jointly by Trotskyists and anarchists in Moscow, and several thousand copies were distributed in the days prior to the second round of the Russian presidential election of July 3, 1996.

The leaflet calls for a vote against both candidates. It should be noted that in Russia there is specific provision on the ballot paper for a vote "against all," enabling voters to register hostility to all candidates rather than simply abstain.

In the second round of the presidential elections, the vote was 54 percent for Boris Yeltsin, 41 percent for Gennady Zyuganov, and 5 percent Against Both.

The title of the leaflet parodies the slogan "Vote — or Lose Out!" which was used in a publicity campaign by Russia's Central Electoral Commission with the aim of encouraging people, the young in particular, to vote. This same message was repeated not only in Yeltsin's campaign propaganda but also in TV, radio, and newspaper coverage, which was overwhelmingly and openly biased against Zyuganov. The president's camp believed that Zyuganov's supporters were far more likely to vote than Yeltsin's and that, from its point of view, a poor turnout was the greatest danger.

— Simon Pirani

Vote AGAINST ALL or Lose Out!

The second round of the presidential elections is coming up. But what is there to choose from? Don't go to the polling booth without thoroughly looking into it all.

Both Yeltsin and Zyuganov make many promises — above all, that life will get better if you vote for them. But how can these promises be believed?

Yeltsin has already shown what he is capable of. The results of his "wise leadership" are there for all to see: the former and present-day bosses, industrial directors, and "new rich" parasites grow fatter — while those whose labor is the basis for these people's appropriated wealth are forced to sit in factories where production has stopped, not having seen a pay packet for months, or to think up humiliating ways of earning money "on the side."

Yeltsin claims that there are goods in the shops and kiosks. But what is the use of that if millions of workers — unskilled workers, engineers, technical staff — cannot afford

even basic necessities? This doesn't worry Yeltsin, of course. The main thing for him is that the "master" has all he needs. And this

is Yeltsin's "stability," which we are being asked to accept for another four years.

And what can we expect from Zyuganov, the dyed-in-the-wool party apparatchik who has spent his whole life overseeing "ideology"? Or from his collaborators, aging dinosaurs from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), who dream of the "grand old times" when they possessed unlimited power and privileges?

Zyuganov promises to bring social justice, to secure for all the sort of living standards they deserve. But how can he do that if at the same time the Communist Party of the Rus-

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Russian Trotskyists Speak Out

Against the War in Chechnya

The following is a translation of a Russian-language leaflet distributed by the Committee for Workers Democracy and International Socialism (CWDIS). The translation is by George Saunders. The CWDIS has supporters in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Perm, Tula, and Belarus, as well as Saransk in Mordovia (central Volga region). Our previous issue of BIDOM incorrectly gave the group's box number in Saransk as "27"; it is in fact Box 21.

Comrade worker!

For more than a year the war in Chechnya has been going on, some 50,000 have been killed, Grozny has been wiped off the map, and Chechen villages have been destroyed. Who is to blame for this? What are people dying for?

The Russian government claims that the Chechens are to blame for the war. But the Chechen people, like any other, has the right to decide its destiny for itself and to live as it wishes. In December 1994 it was not Chechen units that attacked Russia but the army of the Russian bourgeois state that invaded Chechnya.

The government assures us that the war is being waged in the interests of Russia and the Russian people. But what have the ordinary people of Russia gotten out of the war? Still worse poverty and the deaths of their sons dressed in soldier's uniforms in a criminal, aggressive war.

Who Benefits from This War?

It benefits those who are carrying it out and who argue for it — the Russian capitalists who wish to obtain all the profit from Chechen oil, and the Russian government officials and generals who want to get bigger salaries and to be seen, besides that, as "saviors of Russia." It is for the sake of the Russian capitalists' profits and the bureaucrats' salaries that blood is being shed. It is for their interests that working people in uniform are laying down their lives in an unjust, criminal war of aggression.

We appeal to the workers, the farmers, the working intelligentsia. The war is bringing

you nothing but suffering and deprivation, greater poverty, and, for the mothers, bitter tears. You aren't reaping any profits from the oil of Chechnya. There is nothing you want to take away from the working people of Chechnya, who are fighting for their freedom.

Fight against this war by every means possible. Organize meetings demanding the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya. Raise this demand every time you go on strike.

Soldiers! Today you are being forced to shoot at the Chechen people, but tomorrow you'll be ordered to kill your own mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters — Russian working people — when they start to struggle for their own interests. You need to understand this and to draw the right conclusions.

Down with the war!
Long live the freedom and independence of the Chechen people!
Long live the fellowship of workers of all nations and countries!
Long live the world proletarian revolution!

For whose sake, are you going, proletarian, Echelon after echelon to the slaughter?
It's time to draw conclusions, proletarian, The rich folks — they are hiding behind your guns.

To hell with the war! They can do without us!
Let us turn our rifle barrels around.
We're led toward a different war, a just war, By the anger of the proletarian mass.

Our address: Box 21, Saransk, Russia, 430023

Slowed-down Growth in Grain Production and Growing Burden for Peasants

by Zhang Kai

This article and the following one on dissent in the Chinese Communist Party are edited translations in English from *October Review* (Vol. 23, Issue 4), the Chinese-language publication put out by Fourth Internationalists in Hong Kong. OR's mailing address is G.P.O. Box 10144, Hong Kong; e-mail address: or@johk.com

Grain Production Vacillating

After "reform" was launched in the late 1970s, with the people's communes being disbanded and constraints on peasants relaxed, grain production increased from 304.75 million tons in 1978 to 407.12 million tons in 1984, a 33.59 percent increase in six years. However, the advantages that peasants enjoyed have since then been gradually offset by increased burdens. Since 1985, agricultural development has slowed down.

Official figures quoted the 1995 grain production at 450 million tons, i.e., a total increase of 14.2 percent in eleven years. In these eleven years, four years witnessed a reduction in grain production as compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, in these eleven years, population growth was 16.8 percent. It is worth noting that while grain production saw an increase of 20 million tons from 1990 to 1995, rice production suffered a reduction of over 4 million tons. The structural contradictions are worsening: the share of rice production out of total grain production was only 40 percent during the 8th Five-year Plan (FYP), compared to 44 percent during the 7th and 6th FYPs. The absolute drop was 18 million tons.

The problems China's agriculture faces include constant decrease in arable land, rise in surplus rural labor, inflation of the prices of agricultural means of production, and a surge in costs. For instance, the prices of chemical fertilizers have increased by almost two times within the last five years. With peasants' income declining, and tariffs levied on peasants ever on the increase, peasants' initiatives for farming are much dampened. The hundreds of protest actions in 1993, in particular the drawn-out rioting of peasants from the Renshou County of Sichuan Province, expressed the grievances of peasants about their harsh realities. The effect of the 1993 protests was a move from the central party and government leadership to scrap 80 tariff items and readjust 10 abuses in collecting fees.

Peasants Still Under Burdens

At the beginning of 1996, the Central Government Rural Work Meeting concluded by stating

that one of the most crucial issues was the problem articulated by peasants, that prices of means of production were too high, the prices paid by the government for fixed procurement of grain were too low, and peasants' burdens were too heavy. The statement reiterated the central government's determination to alleviate the burdens heaped on peasants, and no regional or local authorities were allowed to exceed the 5 percent ceiling on the proportion of peasants' taxes to the total income of peasants.

The government's "determination" remained on paper. Reports by the official *People's Daily* in subsequent months demonstrated many thorny problems.

Example 1: The newspaper reporter Wang Huimin went on an 11-day visit with the Peasants' Burdens Investigation Team to check on two counties. It was found that invisible burdens on peasants were very heavy. Despite the 5 percent ceiling, the actual situation was grave. In some places, it was three times as much as the stipulated amount. Some serious violations indicated that the tariffs amounted to half the total income of the peasant family. (*People's Daily*, February 12, 1996.)

Example 2: In May 1996, the *People's Daily* began regular columns in the rural economy pages entitled "Burdens on Peasants" and "Open Discussions on Alleviating Peasants' Burdens," and since then has published letters from many places around the country. One letter complained about the tricks used by local authorities to get around the 5 percent ceiling. One trick was to submit reports on fraudulent inflated figures of peasants' net income so as to be able to increase the amounts of tariffs levied on peasants.

Example 3: An editorial in the above-mentioned feature pages told of trying to find cases where local authorities had been penalized for excessive tariffs levied on peasants, but found few such cases. (*People's Daily*, June 14.)

When government policies remain rhetoric, the situation remains grave. The central leadership is aware of this. As early as March 29, 1993, the State Council issued an Emergency Circular which admitted that "on the problem

of heavy burdens on peasants, the manifestations are in the countryside but the root causes lie in the various levels of authorities above." When various tasks for economic development or construction are assigned top-down, they all eventually come down to those at the bottom: rank-and-file cadres find that they have no other alternative than to enforce them with the peasants.

The 7 Percent–22 Percent Enigma

For years, the Chinese Communist Party leadership has prided itself internationally on miraculous statistics: China has only 7 percent of the world's arable land, but it sustains 22 percent of the world's population. But if we look at the unit production of grain, in 1979, China had 2,783 kg per hectare, ranking 25th in the world, after Japan (ranking first with 5,880 kg) and Romania (ranking 24th with 3,036 kg). The per capita grain production for the same year was 342.5 kg, which was only 22 percent of that of Australia (1,562 kg), and coming after Italy (ranking 24th in the world with 313 kg). The world average figure for 1981 was 369 kg per capita grain production, and China had 315 kg, i.e., 17 percent lower than the world average. (*World Economic Statistics Manual*, China Social Sciences Press, pp. 55, 56; *China Statistics Yearbook 1983*, pp. 171, 184, 570.)

The question then is, how can China's arable land be only 7 percent of the world's land?

The *People's Daily* of June 24, 1996, carried an article by Zhou Yuchuan, director of the State Land Management Bureau. It reported that after a detailed survey of land, it was found that China's arable land was in fact 40 percent more than the original official figures of 1.424 billion mu (1 mu = 0.0667 hectares). This means China in fact has 2 billion mu of arable land, almost 0.6 billion mu more than the 1994 official figures.

Nevertheless, in August, the same *People's Daily* referred again to this 7 percent–22 percent miracle. The myth continues. □

Dissent Impacting Top Leadership of Chinese Communist Party

by Zhang Kai

The Chinese Communist Party leadership has lately been stressing ideological, political, and ethical concerns. The target is both a general social problem of deteriorating social order and culture as adversely impacted by the market economy, and also specifically the problem of corruption and graft among the ranks of party members.

Jiang Zemin: "On Politics"

The party theoretical organ *Qiu Shi*, No.13, published an article by Jiang Zemin, the party's general secretary, entitled "On Politics." After a routine opening remark commending the majority of party cadres as politically conscious, Jiang goes on to criticize "some cadres" for the following: not reading any books or journals; not studying the documents; not considering issues or problems from political perspectives; lacking in political discretion and sensitivity; not implementing party policies they do not like; ignoring party instructions; and so on. Jiang points out that regionalism and protectionism in some areas and some departments have become very serious, and for partial or individual interests, even criminal acts have been covered up. Some cannot tell the difference between good and bad, and do not report on, reject, or fight erroneous ideas or deeds that violate Marxism and the party's basic lines. Some have brought abusive practices into the party, such as ingratiation and bribing. Some are fraudulent or formalistic. Some are indifferent to the hardships and pain of the masses, and even behave in a bullying manner. Some seek self-interest with the power in their hands, and even commit crimes. Some, in their external relationships, do not defend the interests of the state and the nation, and bring shame to the country and themselves. The list is long, though nominally referring only to "some" party cadres.

While Jiang Zemin's article talks of the problems in general terms, Xing Fensi, vice president of the Party Cadre School and deputy head of the party's Central Ideological Leadership Team, wrote a long article in the *People's Daily*

on June 6 entitled "Unwavering in Persisting with Marxism — Drawing a Clear Distinction Between Marxism and Anti-Marxism." The article admits that "there are indeed differences on some significant theoretical and practical problems," and that "there have already been rather significant interferences with the overall situation." He elaborates four major controversies.

Four Controversies

First, the issue of ownership. He refutes two "erroneous" views, one being that there is no more hope for state enterprises and the only way out is privatization; the other being that the shareholding form for state enterprises is also a form of private ownership. Xing argues that shareholding is not privatization.

Second, the issue of distribution. Xing tries to argue against the view that the serious polarization in distribution has caused the emergence of a new bourgeois class. (Three researchers from the People's University published a research paper, reprinted in *New China Digest*, February 1996, which finds that the Gini coefficient in China in 1994 is even higher than that in the USA in 1990, indicating serious discrepancies between the rich and the poor in China. According to the State Statistics Bureau, the registered capital of privately run and individual enterprises amounted to 441.8 million yuan (US\$1 = 8 yuan) in 1994, 9 times that of 1990.)

Third, the issue of the direction of reform and socialism. Xing argues that "it is not valid to negate the reform by socialism, or adversely, to negate socialism by the reform, the open-door policy, and the market economy."

Fourth, the issue of the relationship between the plan and the market. Xing tries to argue that China's socialist market economy is different from the capitalist market economy, in that for the former, public ownership serves as a pillar and there is macroeconomic control by the state. The overall tone of Xing's article is to use as reference Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. Xing's arguments, however, are feeble.

Debate over Foreign Capital

Apart from Xing's article, recent controversies in the media revolve around the question of the extent to which foreign capital should be utilized.

China has become a contending site for foreign investments. The July 14 *People's Daily*, on its front page, appealed for the people not to boycott foreign capital by resorting to uncritical defense of the national industries. The journal, *China's State and Strength*, No. 6, argues otherwise, saying that uncontrolled foreign capital will break the domestic economic "ecology," causing considerable social turmoil. Qiu Xiaohua, chief of the Economy Section of the State Statistical Bureau, also joined the debate. He said the balance sheet still shows that there are more advantages from using foreign capital, the seven advantages being more employment, stimulated economic development, increased taxes and capital, etc. Qiu also lists the four major disadvantages: (a) losing the domestic market, with 50–60 percent of domestic industrial consumer goods being related to foreign capital, and one-third of the industrial goods market being taken up by foreign capital; (b) unequal competition, which increases the difficulties of state-owned enterprises; (c) regional and district competition for foreign capital, which has caused a drain on state property; (d) structural imbalance in investments, with funds concentrating on high-priced property, entertainment facilities, and processing industries.

Intra-party struggle is heating up. Two anonymous papers have been circulating. One is entitled "Factors Affecting our State Security," and the other is against peaceful transformation. The papers warn that a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie and comprador bourgeoisie is emerging, and criticize the flood of bourgeois "liberalization" since 1992. However, the papers call for strict party ideological control. It appears that the papers represent the manifesto of a Stalinist faction within the party. □

Leaflet of Russian Trotskyist Groups in July Elections

Continued from page 6

sian Federation [of which Zyuganov is the leader] and the "national-patriotic bloc" [made up of Great Russian nationalist and Stalinist parties who supported Zyuganov's candidacy] try with all their might to please "national capital" and try to convince us that workers have just the same interests as the managers, the

"new Russian" entrepreneurs, and the military commanders?

What kind of unity can there be between workers, who can barely make ends meet, and managers, who are building their villas and raking in ill-gotten millions? If you are for one, that means you are against the other. There's no third way.

And it is clear whose side Zyuganov is on. Someone who publicly praises Stalin, Stolypin, and Tsar Alexander III can hardly be on the working people's side. [Pyotr Stolypin was Tsar Nicholas II's prime minister, 1906–1911, who presided over the suppression of the 1905 revolution and the subsequent period of reaction; Alexander III ruled Russia tyrannically from 1881 to 1894.] *Continued on next 2 pages*

Maine High School Valedictorian Visits Cuba

by Kim Marshall

The following article is reprinted from the Norway (Maine) Advertiser Democrat of August 15, 1996.

After graduating as Oxford Hills High School's valedictorian in June, Melissa Dullea might understandably have taken the summer off to relax. Instead, she headed to Cuba.

Melissa was a participant in the 1996 U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange, an organization which promotes personal contact in an attempt to break down barriers between the two countries. From July 24 through August 6 she toured Cuba with a group of approximately 143 American youths from 26 states — in total, [one of] the largest group of Americans to visit the country since prior to the beginning of the Castro regime.

"We were a big deal down there," she said in an interview Monday.

After more than four years of Spanish classes, Melissa was interested in visiting a South American nation. Her teacher suggested Cuba instead and put her in contact with Dr. Tom Whitney of South Paris, who has visited Cuba on several occasions, for guidance.

For Melissa, it was an opportunity to visit a nation to which entry is guarded carefully, and examine first-hand the results of an economic embargo the U.S. has maintained against Cuba for 25 years.

"I really don't agree with the U.S. policy toward Cuba. We're trying to starve these people to death to get rid of their leader, and from what I saw, it's not working," she said.

In Cuba, Melissa was able to visit historical sites, participate in holiday celebrations, tour museums, and discuss significant issues with

Cuban youths in forums. She spent time in Santiago, Guantánamo, and Havana.

She stayed with a local family in Santiago who had volunteered to be hosts. The reception she received upon meeting her host family was unexpectedly warm, but as she found, typical of the Cuban people.

The day she entered Cuba was her 18th birthday. To celebrate, her host family gave her a beautiful hand-crafted wall hanging — then continued to provide her with small gifts daily throughout her stay. Unfortunately, U.S. customs officials confiscated the hanging, essentially destroying it before her eyes, she said, because agricultural materials such as straw were used in its creation.

The Only Hassle — U.S. Customs

"People always think that Cuba is made up of these cruel, cruel Communist people, but the only hassle I got was from the U.S. Customs people," she said.

Melissa believes that the behavior of the U.S. Customs agents was prompted by a reluctance to allow Americans to visit Cuba. She found that the horror stories she had heard about Cuba in the U.S. were not necessarily true — she learned that the revolution is "not all bad," she said.

For example, although the Cuban economy is far from prosperous, Cubans receive free health care and free university education, said Melissa — the latter [point is] of particular interest to her, as she will face an approximate \$30,000 yearly tuition at M.I.T. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] this fall.

sian soldiers. Yeltsin is a murderer. To vote for him is to vote for murder, to bloody one's own hands. But Zyuganov, too — as is shown by the policy of his party's fraction in the Duma [parliament] — is for the war. More than that, the "Communists" blame Yeltsin for "starting the war too late" and "not waging it decisively enough." And no wonder. There is hardly a party in the world, excluding the Nazis, which has such a rich experience of mass butchery as the CPSU! Those who vote for Zyuganov must remember that they are also voting for a potential murderer, who justifies genocide and proclaims himself the continuator of Stalinist butchery.

Therefore:

In voting for Yeltsin, you vote for the bosses to have a fine life and to go on treating the

While Cuban dictator Fidel Castro is routinely condemned in the U.S., Melissa was able to witness the high regard in which Cubans hold him. Castro showed up at closing ceremonies for the Youth Exchange students, and waited ten minutes for the cheers to subside enough to begin his speech, said Melissa.

"He seems more of an icon than a leader," she said. "The people love him."

Not only did she shake Castro's hand, she had the unique experience of singing "Happy Birthday" to him with the crowd — a week before the actual date.

At the ceremonies, a declaration was read which had been prepared by the group during its stay, summing up a joint commitment to take action:

"We stand firm in our opposition to the U.S. government's economic war against the people of Cuba... We are returning home with renewed vigor to put an end to the U.S. government's cruel economic blockade of Cuba," read a portion of the statement, which also condemned the occupation of Guantanamo Naval Base by the U.S. and called for immediate withdrawal [of the U.S. military] from Cuban soil.

Melissa intends to honor this call to action. She hopes to organize a delegation from Maine and return to Cuba next summer for the 1997 World Youth and Students Festival. In the meantime, she will keep in touch with the American friends she made on her trip, a few of whom she will see in Boston this fall, and with her Cuban host family. □

It is enough to read the programmatic statements of Yeltsin and Zyuganov to be convinced that they have a thousand times more similarities than differences. This is only natural: both of them come from the nomenklatura [that is, the top layer of bureaucratic officeholders in the one-party Stalinist system of rule that prevailed in the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s until 1991]. Both of them serve "the masters of our lives." The differences between them are really nuances.

Both Support the War in Chechnya

The war in Chechnya gives us the clearest example. This bloody conflict, unleashed by Yeltsin at the behest of the oil monopolies and the military mafia, has already taken the lives of tens of thousands — Chechen citizens and Rus-

people like dirt, for the death of more tens of thousands of people in a senseless and criminal war. You vote for the power of the bourgeois nomenklatura and against the rights of working people.

In voting for Zyuganov, you vote for the same thing, only cooked up with a different sauce.

Is it worth making a choice between plague and cholera?

If you think it isn't, vote against all, vote against both candidates.

A vote against both these demagogues will show that the working people have had enough of the arbitrary rule of uncontrollable presidents, general secretaries, and tsars, be they "Communist" or capitalist. That the people will not voluntarily carry on their backs any cliques

Dullea Impressed by Resilience of Impoverished Islanders

by Judith Meyer

The following is reprinted from the Lewiston (Maine) Sun-Journal.

Melissa Dullea wanted to meet the people of Cuba and see for herself how the United States' 35-year embargo is affecting the families and the culture of that island nation. That need to know became a reality for this Oxford Hills High School grad who spent two summer weeks in Cuba a part of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange.

What Dullea found was that the Cuban people, although suffering under the strict embargo, weren't hostile toward their American visitors.

"They can see the difference between American policies and the American people," Dullea said, and [they] welcomed their visitors with open hearts and arms.

Dullea was part of a diverse delegation of 144 Americans, representing 26 states and ranging in age from 14 to 39 years old. The group was sponsored by the National Network on Cuba and hosted by the [Cuban] Federation of University Students, staying with families or with students on school campuses. Let Cuba Live, a Maine organization based in Brunswick and affiliated with the National Network on Cuba, provided some support for Dullea's trip.

The trip was planned as a way for the delegation to explore the culture of the Cuban people, with forums planned nearly every day during the two week visit. The group visited historical sites, museums, schools, and hospitals in Santiago and Guantánamo...[meeting] face-to-face with Cuban citizens to get a true feel for everyday life in that country.

Dullea returned home on Aug. 6 after spending the last three days of the trip in Havana. During these days, Dullea said, she and other young members of the visiting group got to-

gether and thanked the Cuban government for its hospitality, promising to return to the United States and do what they can to work against the blockade and normalize relations with Cuba. She plans to talk to as many people as she can about what she learned in Cuba and will try "to encourage other people to know what's going on with U.S. policies towards Cuba. We're basically trying to starve these people to death to get rid of their government," to the detriment of the families and young adults living there.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro addressed the group for about two hours on their last night in his country, Dullea said, thanking the Americans for their visit and for their efforts to teach the Cubans about American culture.

"And I shook Fidel's hand," Dullea said, surprised that the leader "seemed so accessible to the Cuban people." And while Castro was attending the group's forum, the American took an opportunity to sing happy birthday to the leader, who will be 70 years old only on [Aug. 13].

Unforgettable Generosity

This was Dullea's first trip outside the United States and she said she is interested in returning to Cuba, possibly next year for the World Youth Festival scheduled for the summer of 1997.

"I will never forget the generosity of my (host) family. Even though conditions aren't good in Cuba, they were so willing and ready to open up their home to me and give me anything they could."

The day Dullea arrived in Cuba was also her birthday and she was showered with gifts from her host family, which struggles to meet the cost of everyday necessities. Her host father is an

artisan, Dullea said, and made some small piece of art for her every day she was there.

"Unfortunately, some were seized by Customs as an agricultural hazard" upon her return to the States, Dullea said, noting that the only problems the delegation encountered during the trip were at the Customs desk when they were returning to the United States. The group never felt in danger while in Cuba, finding instead "an incredible population of young people who are trying to learn about American culture," said Dullea.

Every day that the Americans were in Cuba their activities were reported on Cuban radio and the country's weekly newspaper wrote articles about the visit, despite the severe paper shortage in that nation. This attention by the Cuban people to the Americans' visit impressed Dullea, because it was such a warm and welcoming gesture from a people who are desperately impoverished.

Dullea, who was the valedictorian for the Class of 1996 at OHHS, will be leaving Oxford Hills next week to start her freshman year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She plans to study engineering, but will also continue her effort to educate and liberate the Cuban people.

Dullea will be the featured speaker at a welcome home party at the StreetCar Cafe in Norway [Maine] on Aug. 18 from 3 to 5 p.m. She will talk about her experiences and will entertain questions about the trip. Literature on Cuba provided by the local Let Cuba Live members will also be available, as will refreshments and Cuban music. The public is invited to attend and a \$5 donation will be accepted at the door. □

of parasites who care only for those with power and wealth. That the working people themselves — without a bloated, rotten bureaucratic pyramid over them — are capable of taking control of the course of social change.

No one will solve our problems, except ourselves. No one knows the requirements and problems of industry better than those who work in it. No one can better solve the problems in the regions and districts, and in the whole country, than assemblies of representatives from the factory workers' collectives, the offices, the educational institutions — that is,

people we know and therefore trust. Instead of this, they palm off on us elections for the position of dictator responsible to no one, a "choice" between two representatives of one and the same system.

He who doesn't have the support of the ordinary voter is sure to suffer defeat in the end. That's clear to many people who voted "Against All" in the first round. The miners in Vorkuta [northern Russia] also set a good example: they didn't believe the hastily made promises they were given [that their wages, owed to

them for three months, would be paid] and have been on strike in the run-up to the elections.

There is a way to show that we are not a flock of timid sheep, that we are citizens, people, who demand respect. That way is to go the second round of the presidential elections and vote against all!

Socialist Workers Union
Organizing Committee of the International Workers Party
Confederation of Revolutionary Anarcho-Syndicalists □

Labor Rights and Nationalism: The Case of Taiwan

by Linda Gail Arrigo and Jason Chin-Hsin Liu

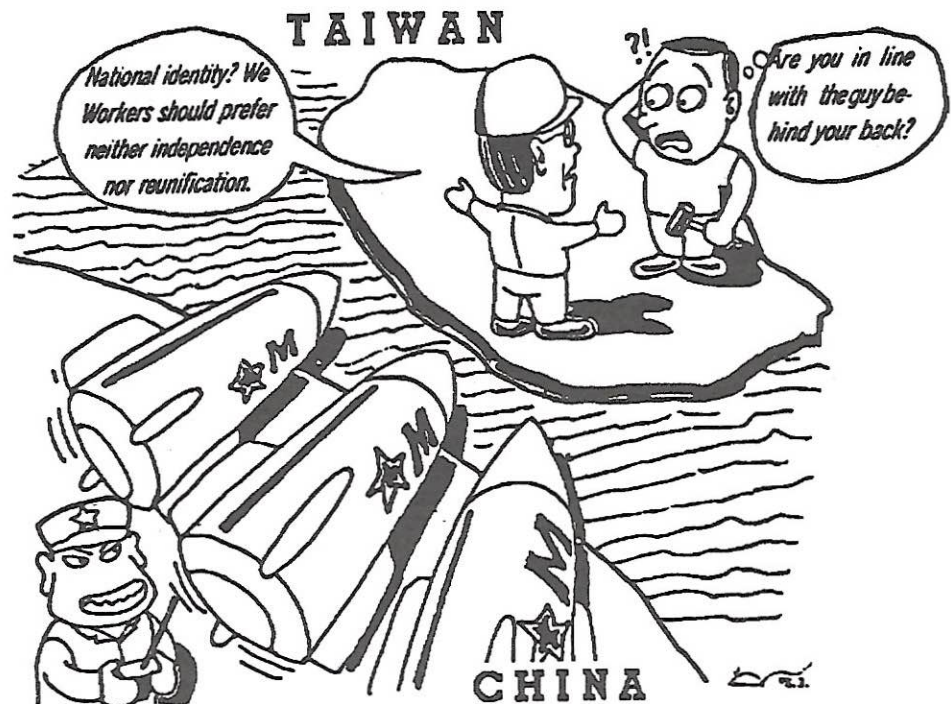
Nation and Left in the New World Order

For those of us on the left of the Taiwan Independence Movement, those who still believe that our time will come, it is an acute embarrassment that Senator Jesse Helms now speaks up for the self-determination of Taiwan. Of course his support is for the new KMT [Kuomintang] with a Taiwanese face, who are nevertheless heirs to his old pals of the World Anti-Communist League of the "Republic of China." And the KMT, still in power, now represents the Taiwanese capitalists, who have eased aside the stiff old militarists; democracy is a wonderful thing.

What is even more embarrassing is that many of the Taiwanese-American community, in the past a crucial support for the democratic movement in Taiwan and for Taiwanese nationalism, have paid court to Jesse Helms, now head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, forgetting that sixteen years ago he called those who spoke up for the imprisoned democratic movement leaders "terrorists." They also don't know that Helms lauded RENAMO, the bloody henchmen of white South Africa's attacks on Mozambique, as "freedom fighters." Taiwanese-Americans also cultivate Representative (now Senator-elect) Torricelli, Democrat from New Jersey, who has sponsored bills supporting Taiwan's international position; they ignore that he was one of the initiators of the jingoistic move to punish companies doing business with Cuba, now the Helms-Burton Bill.

With such embarrassments, it is difficult to know what to say to enthusiasts of national liberation movements, still living the Cold War bifurcations, who are convinced that the Taiwan Independence Movement must be a plot of the CIA to keep a piece of China's territory in the grip of American imperialism. We can tell them, and they may be surprised to tardily find out, that the Chinese Communist government dropped support of national liberation movements in Asia in the early 1970s and reverted to its own nationalistic jingoism. Even at that, we are still embarrassed that the Taiwan Independence Movement, insular like the island of Taiwan, is closed in upon its own problems and seeks international recognition while offering little solidarity to others.

Those of us who lived under the shadow of the Taiwan Garrison Command in the 1970s, who knew of the secret torturers in the Department of Investigation, who realized that the murders of Lin Yi-Hsiung's mother and twin little girls on February 28, 1980, could have been perpetrated by no other than the security agencies themselves, who understood U.S. complicity with the Chiang regime — we did not fully anticipate the softening of the dictator-



ship beginning in the late 1980s, the deft moves of the regime to coopt the liberal opposition, and the fading away of groups that had earlier announced a Taiwanese people's national liberation movement. This is the New World Order we live in.

The following discussion deals with a case that is rather distant from the better-known national liberation movements of the 1970s, but one which has in the past nevertheless been influenced in ideological direction by international debates. The topic is the relationship between nationalism and activism on the left. It will explain why, in both subjective and objective conditions, Taiwanese nationalism and not Chinese nationalism is the logical and correct position for those who seek a just society and the general welfare of the populace — despite the embarrassments that must be acknowledged.

The perspective of this article is in general that of the left wing of the Taiwan Independence Movement, a perspective that incorporates positions on social issues and on nationalism. Specifically this article will quote the published statements of the Taiwan Labour Front (TLF), an organization that has grown from providing legal services to labor beginning in 1984 (having handled nearly 1,000 cases of labor disputes) into a broad-based organization training activists and helping independent labor unions. The TLF is a major, though not the only, center of labor activism in Taiwan. Although many of the members of the Taiwan Labour Front are aligned with the Democratic Progressive Party (the major opposition party) in electoral poli-

tics, the program and goals of the TLF are not limited to those of the DPP. A brief historical review will explain the present situation of Taiwan and of the TLF in Taiwan.

Historical Background: Repression and Ethnic Divisions

It is nearly a universality that social conflicts are hung on and become identified with racial, ethnic, language, and/or religious differences. Such identity is all the more profound when ethnic groups occupy different positions of class and power. While it is not proposed that cultural differences *per se* are the source of conflict, it is relevant to include in this historical review some description of ethnic differentiation in Taiwan and its political significance today.

Taiwan is a large island, about 240 miles long, a hundred miles off the south coast of China across the wind-swept Taiwan Straits. It is mountainous except for the fertile alluvial western coast. The island was populated from the 17th century on by migrants from south China, who overran and largely assimilated the indigenous tribal Austronesian peoples. The migrants included two cultural groups from south China coastal areas, the Hokkien (from south Fukien) and the less-numerous Hakka (closer to Cantonese in language), peoples who also spread to the Philippines and elsewhere in Southeast Asia through the early 20th century. Their languages are markedly different from each other and from the Mandarin Chinese of north China, not mutually comprehensible, though they shared the written Chinese charac-

ters that were used traditionally all the way from Vietnam to Japan. The peoples who have lived in Taiwan for several generations are what have been referred to as "native Taiwanese" in English writings.

Taiwan, a loosely administered frontier area under the Qing Dynasty, was ceded by China to Japan in 1895 under a war settlement. Japan suppressed the locally proclaimed Republic of Taiwan, which tried to resist the settlement, and proceeded to brutally pacify the indigenous people in the interior. Gradually it developed Taiwan into a profitable colony producing rice, sugar, and camphor for Japan. The development of infrastructure and governance was much more intensive than under Western colonialism in Southeast Asia: a ratio of nearly half a million resident Japanese to 5 million Taiwanese, exhaustive population and police registers, railroads and telegraph; universal primary education and disease control.¹

Japan's domination ended in late 1945, and as a result of wartime agreements among the victorious Allies, carpetbagger representatives of the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-Shek were ensconced in Taiwan with American assistance. They took over the towering red brick building built by the Japanese colonial government in central Taipei; it is still the presidential palace in today's Taiwan. The ensuing pillage of the economy aroused native Taiwanese outrage. Suppression of the uprising of February 28, 1947 — emblazoned as "2-2-8" in the collective memory of Taiwanese nationalists — killed perhaps 20,000, particularly targeting doctors and the few other educated elites.² The native Taiwanese language was forcibly replaced by the official Mandarin Chinese in all educational and public institutions; the "mainlanders" obliterated the Taiwanese cultural heritage as much as possible, rather than preserving it as a genuine link to China.

Severe repression continued after Chiang's 1949 retreat to Taiwan, not only against Communists, suspected or real, but also against any requests for local self-rule or genuine civil rights. Officially "The Republic of China," or "Free China," in contrast to the "godless Communist" People's Republic of China (PRC), retained a rubber-stamp legislature brought along from China. Demanding democracy within Taiwan was equated with seditious advocacy of "Taiwan Independence" and punished with decades of imprisonment. Questioning the national purpose of "recovery of the mainland" was anathema. Martial law, at four decades the longest-running in world history, was not repealed until 1987.

It is not surprising that native Taiwanese, 85 percent of the population, perceived that Japanese colonialism had been replaced by a more vicious and arbitrary Chinese colonialism. Native Taiwanese language and culture remained strong among the farmers, market hawkers, and manual workers, as well as in south Taiwan, away from the seat of power in the capital, and thus took on an identification with the working class. A popular joke was that Taiwanese would be better off if the nuclear bomb had been dropped on Taiwan and Chiang Kai-Shek had been dropped on Japan.

Historical Background: Cold War and Cooptation

Although native Taiwanese suffered severely under an American-sponsored dictatorship, they did not develop an anti-American or anti-imperialist consciousness. American advisers designed a land reform program that gave Taiwanese tenant farmers title to their land, even while it disinherited the native gentry — potential opposition to the Chiang regime — and directed rice payments to the government to feed its bloated bureaucracy and military minions.

Later Taiwan served as a backup base, supply, and intelligence station for the American military mired in the escalating Vietnam war, but the censored newspapers allowed the populace little understanding of the international situation. The export-led industrialization of the 1970s, which the U.S. pushed to showcase its capitalist success on the frontline of the Cold War, brought a measure of prosperity, with rising wages and educational standards. President Chiang Ching-Kuo, successor to his father, began to incorporate native Taiwanese industrialists within the power structure. Political tensions subsided somewhat, and Taiwanese and mainlanders formed an intermarrying middle class, especially around the capital city of Taipei.

One outcome of new Taiwanese economic power was that a public democratic movement coalesced in 1979, and although it was suppressed at the end of that year, the demand for liberalization and long-overdue adjustment to international realities (the People's Republic had already ousted and replaced the Republic of China in the United Nations in 1971) finally resulted in several breakthroughs. The democratic movement was reborn in the form of the Democratic Progressive Party in September 1986, despite threats of arrest; later, in 1991, it adopted a platform advocating formal independence as the Republic of Taiwan. The formal end of martial law in 1987 opened the way for

a crescendo of protests and social movement activities that were championed by the opposition party — farmers' movements, labor strikes, protests against industrial pollution, associations of former political prisoners.

A parallel adjustment to realities tardily evolved within the ruling Kuomintang. In summary, the ruling Kuomintang both coopted and was taken over by the rising Taiwanese bourgeoisie, a development similar to that described by Nigel Harris for South Korea and South Africa.³

A native-born technocrat vice president, Lee Teng-Hui, succeeded Chiang Ching-Kuo in 1989. Lee was rumored to have spoken in favor of Taiwan independence during his Ph.D. studies at Cornell, and this placated much native Taiwanese sentiment, even though Lee publicly asserts an abstract Chinese nationalism. After the military-man-turned-premier, General Hau Po-Tsun, was purged from Lee's administration in 1992, the remnants of the Chinese mainland military and their technocrat second generation formed the "New Party," which continues to promote Chinese nationalism in general terms. More recently Lee has been quoted by a Japanese magazine as calling the KMT a "foreign-origin regime" (*wai-lai cheng-chuan*), a favorite phrase of Taiwan independence advocates, and has allowed investigation of the 2-2-8 massacres and promised a token compensation to relatives of those killed.

Lee's nods to the past, an implicit apology, have stolen the DPP's thunder to a considerable degree. The DPP, for its part, has rapidly become entwined in the piddling parliamentarian practices and big-money dependency of bourgeois democracy, and its previous base in social movements has shriveled. It has been gradually blunted as any real challenge to the Taiwanese-ified KMT, either in political ideology or in class position.⁴ Still, given its greater responsiveness to the populace and its need to champion issues to bid for votes, it has mobilized public pressure for national health insurance, indigenous peoples' rights,⁵ prosecution of corruption, and enforcement of environmental protections.

Despite the *de facto* sovereignty of Taiwan in territory, government, economy, and defense, the national question has not yet been settled on the international stage. Likewise, it has been resolved neither in Taiwan's Constitution (which still claims Mongolia as part of the Republic of China!) nor in the government structure (a redundant administrative level for Taiwan Province). Although sentiment and behavior has evolved rapidly in the last four years, during which the people of Taiwan have finally been allowed to elect their own representatives

1. An article by Bruce Cumings, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles, and Political Consequences," *International Organization*, 1984, Vol. 38, pp. 1-40, has ably described how Japanese colonialism provided the infrastructure for the postwar development of Taiwan and South Korea.

2. The authoritative account is George Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965.

3. Nigel Harris, "New Bourgeoisies?" *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 24, 1988, pp. 237-49.

4. See Linda Gail Arrigo, "From Democratic Movement to Bourgeois Democracy: The Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party in 1991," pp. 145-180, in *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, ed. Murray Rubinstein, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994.

5. Emphasizing the indigenous Austronesian blood mix of Taiwanese people provides a differentiation from the Chinese race that is significant to young Taiwanese activists. United Nations agencies' concern with indigenous peoples also provides an international link for Taiwan.

and president (albeit with massive and habitual vote-buying, as well as government dominance in media), a veneer of Chinese nationalism is the continuing legacy of the long dictatorship of the Chiangs. Even for the New Party, which explicitly espouses Chinese nationalism, however, this does not mean submitting to governance from Beijing. Internal democracy could probably gradually resolve the question of national identity within Taiwan, but the issue is increasingly the threat from the People's Republic of China.

Chinese Claims and Taiwanese Disagreements

China chose the occasion of the first presidential elections in Taiwan's history to make an explicit threat against Taiwan, shooting "test" missiles over the island in March 1996, while accusing incumbent President Lee Teng-Hui of promoting Taiwan independence. China's animosity to Lee perhaps partly explains his unexpectedly good showing in the election, snaring a large portion of the usual 30–35% DPP vote: Lee Teng-Hui (KMT) 54%, Peng Min-Ming (DPP) 21%, Lin Yang-Kang/ Hau Po-Tsun ticket (supported by New Party) 15%.

China's argument for its rights over Taiwan has been that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China that has been temporarily occupied by stooges of American imperialism, and that except for American imperialism its territory would be recovered. It is true that without U.S. protection Taiwan might have been subdued. China's historical argument for its claim is parallel to that for Tibet: Taiwan was part of the Manchu empire (Qing Dynasty, 1643–1911) prior to the Nationalist revolution of Sun Yat-Sen. The claim could be stronger for Taiwan than for Tibet in that Taiwan's language and culture are variations of Chinese; but the same could be said for Singapore. There is documentary evidence that the Chinese Communist Party did not consider Taiwan within China's territory until Chiang established his refugee Republic of China there. Mao's Yanan-period statement to Edgar Snow (quoted in *Red Star Over China*, p. 97) that both Korea and Taiwan should be independent from Japanese imperialism, with no mention of Chinese claims, is an embarrassment that has since been renounced by Beijing.

Japanese colonial period leaders of farmers' and workers' movements and underground parties, notably Hsieh Hsueh-Hong, heroine of the Taiwan Communist Party, had fled to the CCP before 1945 or after 2-2-8; but they were purged in the 1950s. China's leaders continued to see Taiwan and its population only in terms of an uncompleted Chinese civil war, and to seek negotiation only with the Kuomintang, where they call upon old ties of blood, native place, or common schooling. Some left-leaning Taiwanese who went to Beijing at considerable risk in the 1970s tried to persuade China to stand on the side of the Taiwanese working class and democratic movement, to no avail. In 1983 People's Congress chairman Li Xian-Nian stated during a trip to Burma that the Kuomintang regime could retain its economic system, military, and political police systems if only it recognized Beijing as the central authority.⁶

The previously pro-PRC Taiwanese dissidents, in particular, felt betrayed. Those overseas protested by boycotting a later Taiwan-compatriots symposium in Beijing.⁷

By the late 1980s members of the Taiwan Compatriots Friendship Association, China's semi-official organization for welcoming and cultivating Taiwanese visitors, privately recognized that Taiwanese did not want to "return to the embrace of the motherland"; but this did not affect official Chinese policy. Even the few Taiwanese tokens in the PRC's People's Congress — Huang Hsun-Hsing and Chang Chun-Nan, genuine participants in the 1979 Taiwan democratic movement — have sought to return to Taiwan since the Beijing events of 1989.

That Taiwan is part of China and should be recovered even by force is generally accepted by the populace of China, a matter of national pride. But as in its 1978–79 border war with Vietnam, China is making nationalistic claims about "sacred territory," devoid of socialist ideals or internationalism.

From the point of view of the Taiwan Independence Movement, China's claim to Taiwan is a figment of the past civil war between the Chinese Communists and the Chinese Nationalists, a war in which Taiwanese never participated. While recognizing a broad Chinese cultural heritage, both from the south Chinese ancestors and from assimilation to elite Mandarin culture foisted upon them by KMT educa-

tion, young Taiwanese nationalists assert their right to political self-determination and cultural self-creation, a natural tendency after nearly a century of separate development.

Through the 1980s, Taiwanese, like South Koreans, have enjoyed rapidly accumulating wealth and consumer luxuries, particularly since the 1982 devaluation of the U.S. dollar relative to the New Taiwan dollar. They have little reason now to resent American hegemony, and in fact feel a new confidence and even superiority over the economically weakening Americans. The status quo seems to promise continued economic and political advance; there is no apparent reason to rock the boat. The ruling party, no longer claiming that it will "retake the mainland" and defeat the Communist usurpers, only weakly argues that declaring Taiwan independence would be a dangerous provocation of the People's Republic of China. Independence is asserted *de facto*, as can be seen in the moniker now used in government-printed tourist posters and advertisements: "Republic of China on" (above in small print) "TAIWAN" (below in very large print).

Although Taiwanese have developed a brisk trade with China and are major investors, moving their labor-intensive processes, especially shoe production, from Taiwan to China in the last few years, several developments and incidents have congealed popular resentment against China. Since the mid-1980s, when travel to China was no longer proscribed in Taiwan, even "mainlanders" from Taiwan have found themselves condescendingly labeled in China as "Taiwan compatriots," and subjected to avaricious demands from dubious relatives. Most have returned to Taiwan with a new practical acceptance of Taiwanese identity, though passive rather than active.⁸ A particularly ghastly incident in Taiwan-to-China travel occurred in spring 1994 when twenty-four Taiwanese tourists were murdered, possibly burned alive, while on a cruise boat in a large lake in central China known as Thousand-Island Lake; renegade PLA military may have been the brigands. Grieving relatives charged that Chinese authorities destroyed the evidence with immediate cremation.

Finally, in the last few years more than ever before, China has continually sought to isolate Taiwan from international forums, insisting that

6. This position was first articulated in the fall of 1981 by a high official of the People's Congress, Ye Jian-Ying, who listed nine conditions for settlement with the Taiwan authorities.

7. In the 1970s some native Taiwanese intellectuals and activists had been inspired by the ideals of China's Cultural Revolution, which they learned of mostly by way of the U.S. anti-Vietnam War ferment. Among those explicitly pro-PRC were the noted writer Chen Ying-Chen, who served ten years in jail for reading communistic literature; Chen Yu-Hsi, who was kidnapped from Japan by KMT agents and jailed for four years after he participated in anti-war demonstrations as a grad student at the University of Hawaii; and Lin Hsiao-Hsin, founder of the Organization for Support of the Democratic Movement in Taiwan in Chicago in 1978. The pro-China Taiwanese were those that were most bitterly disappointed by China's stance on Taiwan.

But few of the progressive intellectuals began with diehard positions on nationalism. Ironically, an underground network founded in December 1971 among progressive Taiwanese students in the U.S., Taiwan People's Socialist Alliance, originally did not argue over nationalism. But in 1974 it split on the issue. Its offshoots were later known as Taiwan Era (*Taiwan Shih-Dai*), a serious revolutionary organization that advocated radical Taiwanese nationalism while excoriating right-wing TI émigré groups; and Taiwan Thought Currents (*Taiwan Sze-Chao*), a more academic group, implicitly upholding Chinese nationalism while deriding the Taiwan democratic movement as a tool of Taiwanese capitalists. Members of both groups have since returned to Taiwan and become active in promoting labor rights, environmental protection, and other progressive social causes.

8. There has been, however, one political organization formed among second-generation mainlanders explicitly to support Taiwan Independence. The organization is headed by an elderly mainlander professor of maritime navigation, Professor Liao Chung-Shan. But actively pro-Taiwanese independence mainlanders are the minority. According to recent polls, more mainlanders support the New Party than the DPP and the KMT together.

Beijing has complete jurisdiction and Taipei has no say, whereas China could conceivably accept Taiwan authorities as provincial representatives and seek conciliatory relations. China has even thought to pressure international organizations to refuse the credentials of reporters from Taiwan covering the events. This has led to a sense of beleaguering that is shared by both mainland and native Taiwanese. Re-entering the United Nations is a hope common to all.

The Condition of the Taiwanese Working Class

The above has delineated the national and international political environment in which progressive activists seek to advance the rights of the working people of Taiwan. Let us further describe the economic condition of the working class. Over the last two decades industrial labor has achieved fairly full employment and a gradually rising standard of living as a result of the expanding export economy. However, working and living conditions are far below those of the developed countries, and below apparent cash income, despite per capita GNP exceeding \$10,000. Since the late 1980s, when labor unions independent of government control finally emerged, there have been numerous struggles over labor laws and their enforcement. Employers violate promises of severance and retirement pay with impunity. The preponderance of small Taiwanese manufacturers means that most go unregulated and that their workers have little recourse against shifting company fronts. Especially in these small front-room factories the work hours may be drawn out to 60 hours per week. Health and safety conditions are often appalling, e.g. protective railings removed from plastic injection machines to speed work, and electroplating carried out in open vats.⁹

In response to rising wages, Taiwanese capitalists have progressively shifted labor-intensive manufacturing to China, Southeast Asia, and even South Africa. In the last decade many factories have simply closed down with little or no compensation to the workers; meanwhile the owners reap windfall profits on land originally purchased from the government on concessionary terms for industrial development. Taiwan's occupational structure has shifted perceptibly from industrial to service sector, which still however calls for cheap labor for restaurants, hotels, janitor service, etc. In the last eight years increasing numbers of "guest workers" from the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have filled the more servile jobs, like maid or sex industry entertainer, and the heavier

and dirtier industrial and construction jobs — at wages 40–60% of locals' wages. The number of documented guest workers from these countries is 230,000; including illegals, the number must exceed 300,000.¹⁰ It is even harder to estimate the numbers that have been smuggled into Taiwan from south coastal China. The Chinese "wetbacks" have an easier time linguistically blending into Taiwan's dense population, but their gaunt forms and Chinese-made clothing still distinguish them when seen on road crews.

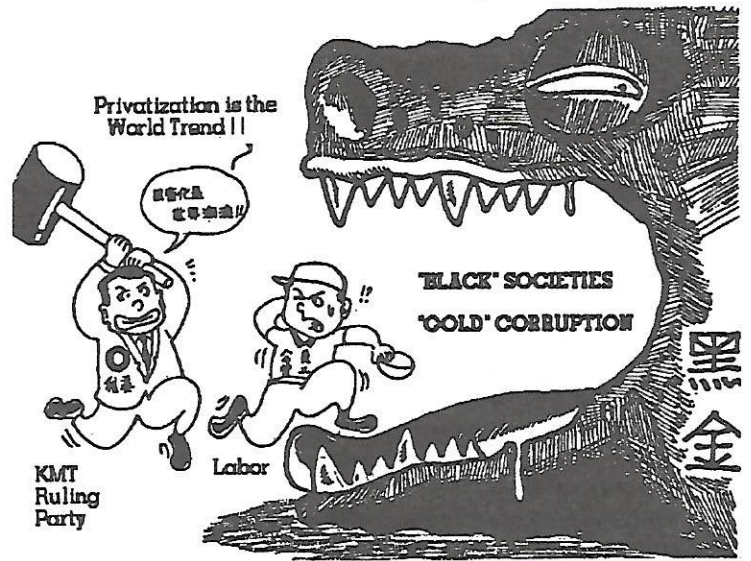
The conditions of the working class cannot be analyzed separately from overall political and social conditions. On the larger scale of social impact, working-class neighborhoods bear the brunt of severe environmental degradation, and are the first to be dispossessed under eminent domain for grandiose government development plans.¹¹ The accelerating privatization of the huge government corporations serves to move large assets into private hands just as democratization would allow improved public stewardship; it also serves to break the biggest unions that have been just about ready to buck KMT control. Part of the argument of those who are not satisfied with the status quo is that it is necessary to uproot the whole KMT by means of a class struggle under Taiwanese nationalism in order to really transform the power relationships of the society.

The Debate on Nationalism among Labor Activists

Among labor activists in Taiwan there have been basically two positions on the issue of nationalism. One position is that nationalism is inherently a right-wing, reactionary sentiment, and that labor activists need not take a stand on the issue; labor activists should stick to the issues of direct benefit to labor, which includes, however, participation in labor-related policy making in the legislature. This position was articulated in 1995 by Cheng Tsun-Chi and He Fang of the Federation of Independent Unions (FIU).

This position has in the past been consistent both with avoidance of political/ideological conflict with the ruling Kuomintang — as seen in the compromising mentality of the Labor Party (Gung Dang, founded 1988 and split in 1989, soon defunct) — and with pro-PRC nationalism, as seen in the Workers Party (Lao Dung Dang, founded 1989 with a declaration advocating cooperation with the national bourgeoisie) and its related organizations of pro-PRC intellectuals. Why these two parties actively advocating labor rights never got a candidate elected or took more than 2% of the popular vote is debatable — it may be due to their pro-labor position or their pro-China position.¹² But the combination of the two is probably most lethal, in our interpretation: the working class supports Taiwan nationalism, whether explicit in the DPP or latent in the new Taiwanese KMT.

The other position on nationalism, which is the position of the Taiwan Labour Front (TLF), is that the working class has a definite and unavoidable interest in the resolution of the national question, and that the establishment of an independent Republic of Taiwan is to the benefit of the working class, even if that establishment initially merely insures continuation of the civil liberties that have been achieved so far through the struggles of the democratic movement. Moreover, the class question in Taiwan cannot move to the forefront until the resolution of the national question; therefore the Taiwan Labour Front remains under the umbrella of Taiwan Independence organizations, including the Democratic Progressive Party, which allots



9. A case investigated by Jason Liu in April 1996 involved an alarming number of nasal cancer cases among employees of the government-owned telegraph company who were working near large backup battery repositories. Thirteen have been diagnosed, of whom five have died. Their requests for compensation for occupational disease were denied, until Liu publicized the cases.

10. The best source in English on guest workers in Taiwan is the *Newsletter of the Grassroots Women Workers Centre*, 4th Floor, No. 208, Chien Kang Road, 10577 Taipei, Taiwan. Tel/Fax: (886-2) 762-1006. The director, Yvonne Mei-Jung Lin, is very good at briefing foreign visitors.

11. See Linda Gail Arrigo, "The Environmental Nightmare of the Economic Miracle: Land Abuse and Land Struggles in Taiwan," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 1994, Vol. 26, No. 1–2, pp. 21–44.

12. The Workers Party almost got one seat in the National Assembly in December 1991 when Luo Mei-Wen, a long-term labor activist, got 18,000 votes in his native Hakka area. This was the last credible electoral bid by the party.

The best account in English of labor politics and nationalism in Taiwan is to be found in a booklet by Ho Shuet Ying, *Taiwan — After a Long Silence: The Emerging New Unions of Taiwan*, Hong Kong: Asia Monitor Research Center, 1990.

some legislative seats for social movement representatives. The alternative, submission to the People's Republic of China, would bring a huge backward step in personal and civil liberties as well as in economic conditions, and would not advance ideals of social justice or socialism, notably because the PRC itself is being rapidly transformed into a state capitalist formation run by cadres-turned-entrepreneurs.

The clash between these two positions has been articulated in a debate carried on in two publications, the "Taiwan Labor Journal" (Chinese initials, FIU) and "The Laborer" (initials, TLF). To quote from *TLF News*, an English-language newsletter that prints selected translations from "The Laborer":

By the same token, FIU's refraining from taking a position on the Taiwan Question should not be recognized as a third option, but rather as FIU's voluntary surrender of their right to voice an opinion for workers' future. This passive approach could only allow the ruling elites to monopolize their decision-making power over waged laborers' future. With the obvious disparity between the sociopolitical and economic climate of democratic Taiwan versus that of the communist China, it is absurd for the FIU to pretend that the consequence of integration or independence [from China] would not make a difference in Taiwanese workers' political freedom and socioeconomic welfare. Since workers' participation in the debate is so crucial to the entire working-class's future, it is simply irresponsible for FIU to attribute the disunity in the labor movement to certain workers' strong sentiment in supporting the independence of Taiwan from China. [*TLF News*, No. 4, January 1995, p. 1, author Chou Wei-Yu]

And despite its participation in the broad front of organizations that support Taiwan independence, the TLF has not acquiesced in the elitist and capitulating tendencies of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP):

...By appealing to workers' discontent under the KMT's dictatorship, the DPP has gained the majority of working-class votes without promoting the rights and benefits of waged laborers. ...Whereas middle-aged and retired workers remember the atrocities committed by the KMT, the younger generations of workers who have not experienced the suppression are incapable of identifying with the persecution which the DPP members have experienced to create the political party for the Taiwanese people. To win the votes of a new generation of workers, the DPP should have responded to the needs and demands of the working class. [*TLF News*, No. 4, January 1995, p. 3, author S.J. Jan.]

At present political democracy in Taiwan is only beginning to function. National identity is still in the process of formation; it is being tempered and tested by the threat from China. The TLF thinks that class issues will be the next emerg-

ing issues, and that these will lead to new alignments of political parties.¹³ The TLF will push for the emergence of a party that represents the Taiwan working class and its national identity in resistance to Chinese attempts at domination.

The Limits of Feasible Political Action

It is inescapable that each national struggle proceeds under the limited consciousness of its own experience. In past decades Taiwan was an insular society, further isolated by the fortress mentality of its rulers. Local opposition leaders saw political issues in simplistic terms of native Taiwanese oppressed by Chinese dictators. The large numbers of students that began to go abroad in the 1970s mostly studied engineering and medicine and merely imbibed U.S. liberalism. But a younger generation of Taiwanese intellectuals, those educated in the U.S. and Europe since Taiwan's liberalization in the 1980s, has had the advantage of better language training and a broader international experience, along with conditions allowing open research into their own society. The 1990 student movement, which forced real elections and reform, has had a large role in this advance of consciousness. Some numbers of students went directly to farms and factories to learn from "the people." They read Lukács and Althusser, available in nearly inscrutable Chinese translations; and also the *magnum opus* of Shih Ming, the earliest articulator of Taiwanese national liberation, now in his eighties. But at the same time the "white terror" of the martial law period is past and rapidly fading in memory; and the old democratic movement which stood up against prison and torture has been largely coopted under parliamentary procedures.

Taiwan is in many ways a maturing middle-class society; there is no longer such a gap between white and blue collar work. For the time being it seems prosperous, but rapid and short-sighted industrial and commercial development has left a severe blight on the land; Taiwan has been called "the dirtiest nation in Asia" by the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. The extent of environmental and occupational disease is only beginning to be realized. Social welfare measures such as universal health coverage and old-age income supports have been recently achieved in legislation, but it is more likely that in government practice they will be subverted and the programs starved. The growing polarization of wealth and the mobility of Taiwanese capital do not bode well for hopes to invest in Taiwan's future and in the costly rectification of past poor planning and corruption.

These are issues that call for mobilization of both the industrial working class and the middle class, and issues which the progressive left in

Taiwan must face. The struggle must come from within Taiwan and from its own consciousness and identity. In the present conjuncture it is the working class that wants to protect the future of the people of Taiwan, through far-sighted policies concerning foreign investment, for example. In contrast, Taiwanese capitalists are willing to mouth statements placating China in order to secure Chinese markets and the use of cheap Chinese labor.

Progressives around the world should realize that it is not valid to approve or disapprove of a national struggle merely in terms of big power politics. China is not right in its claim to Taiwan just because in the past China has faced off against U.S. imperialism. On the contrary, as seen in its claims to Tibet, Taiwan, and islands near Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea, the People's Republic of China has itself inherited the imperial pretensions and expansionism of past Chinese dynasties. Its nationalist rhetoric becomes shriller as its internationalist and socialist ideals wear thinner. Those living on Taiwan have the right to direct their own future and to seek allies in their stand against Chinese territorial claims. □

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About the Authors

Linda Gail Arrigo researched women workers in Taiwan during 1975-79 and wrote, among others, "Economic and Political Control of Women Workers in Multinational Electronics Factories in Taiwan," *Contemporary Marxism*, No. 11, Fall 1985, pp. 77-95. She was a participant in the Taiwan democratic movement of 1978-79 and reported on human rights violations then and later. She has been associated in the past with the Democratic Progressive Party, particularly its international relations work. She finished her Ph.D. in Sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1996.

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13. As of mid-1996 it appears that the DPP is splitting and a more militant party may be emerging alongside it. This is the "Nation-Building Party," advocating both resolute Taiwan nationalism and greater representation of social movements.

Huge Demonstration in Belgium

Why "New York Times" Downplayed Its Size

by Don Fowler

The *New York Times* is notorious for understating the size of political mobilizations by groups it doesn't approve of. During the struggle against the Vietnam war, the newspaper apparently took the lowest estimate of an antiwar demonstration available and simply divided by two to provide its version of the size of the event.

Since the *Times* is one of the most influential daily newspapers in the United States, and since New York City is the site of many protest demonstrations, the *Times* reports help shape national perception of these events. The *Times* also applies these techniques to events which occur beyond national borders, even though it has even less factual basis for arbitrarily downgrading the size of political mobilizations in other countries.

The *Times*'s reporting of the immense mobilization of the Belgian working class in Brussels on October 20 is a classic example of how it distorts the perception of events for its readers.

The Belgian Events

The dismissal of a judge in a child pornography trial earlier in the month triggered an explosion of accumulated class resentment against government lies and corruption, led by the Belgian workers and their unions. Workers suspect that "the rich and powerful" are being protected, according to the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*.

A week of protest — which included spontaneous marches from factories, rail workers stopping transportation, airline employees stopping work, firefighters hosing down government buildings as a symbolic act of cleansing, and more — culminated in the huge Brussels demonstration, which was conceded to be the largest public demonstration since the end of World War II. It was undoubtedly the largest working class mobilization since the Belgian general strike of 1961.

Although there is no reason to believe that the *New York Times* opposes prosecution of child pornographers (and in this case their crimes included murder), the spectacle of independent working class mobilization, even in another country, is dramatically at variance with how the *Times* and its capitalist owners think society should be administered. The result was that the *Times* stubbornly resisted acknowledging the actual size of the demonstration in a way that verged on comical, as well as providing an almost startling example of the brazen mendacity of bourgeois journalism when it detects an infringement of its class interests.

The demonstration was in excess of 300,000 people. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported from wire services on its front page, along with a color picture, that "over three hundred thousand Belgians" had marched. The *Minneapolis Star-*

Tribune reported "hundreds of thousands," with an estimate of 325,000 from the march organizers. Interestingly, in all accounts of the Sunday demonstration, the working class origins of the mobilizations dropped out of the stories.

How the "Times" Reported the Story
The *Times*'s coverage led off with a note in its page 3 "News Summary" — "Thousands March in Belgium." How many? The *Times* story, on page 6, was headed, "Sex Scandal in Belgium Rouses Anger in Thousands." How many? The lead sentence says, "Tens of thousands of Belgians gathered in the heart of Brussels today..." How many? In the second paragraph the *Times* finally says that "the march was one of the largest in the country's recent history" (since World War II is recent?) and quotes a police estimate of 275,000 without acknowledging the organizers' estimate of 325,000, or giving any reason why it selected the lower number.

An accompanying Associated Press photo of the demonstration, selected by the *Times* editors, is taken just above eye level and shows an area of perhaps one block filled with marchers. The photo caption says, again, that "tens of thousands demonstrated in Brussels."

It should not be necessary to prove to a 10-year-old child, or even a tenured professor of journalism, that announcing "thousands" when the truth is "hundreds of thousands" is a willful attempt to misinform.

The dramatic front page Associated Press photo in the *St. Paul* newspaper, evidently taken from a helicopter about 100 feet above the march, shows a street filled from curb to curb for about a mile. The demonstration continues beyond the range of the camera in both directions. This, of course, presents a very different perception than the picture selected by the *Times* for publication.

Why the Blatant Falsification?

When a story reports hundreds of thousands, but the headlines announce only "thousands" and the lead paragraph and caption report "tens of thousands" the falsification is so blatant that it is natural to wonder, "Whom do they hope to fool here?"

The capitalist media does not just episodically distort reporting on events it does not like. It intervenes continuously and uninterruptedly into national consciousness to create a single framework for understanding reality. Fundamental to this is that all meaningful change comes through bourgeois institutions and not through mobilizations in the streets.

That is why they reported "38,000" for the Nation of Islam-sponsored "Day of Atonement"

march in New York City October 16, when the organizers reported over 200,000, prompting march organizer Louis Farrakhan to quip, "White men can't jump, and white men can't count." In the same way, when the Canadian unions brought out some 250,000 in Toronto Days of Action on October 25, the media of the capitalists (not just "white men" but capitalists — and they can count; they just don't want the word to spread) again said, "Thousands march in Toronto."

The capitalist class, through its information media, seeks to set a tone and shape evaluations of events from the perspective that change should come only through the institutions it controls. The *Times*, specifically, seeks to communicate this perspective much more widely than its immediate readership. The Belgian events involve a deepgoing, and not yet ended, phenomenon of working class alienation and disaffection. These things do not take place in a vacuum.

They Fear "European" Example

The last year has seen big, bold, combative national strike struggles in France, with echoes in Belgium, Germany, and elsewhere. Social entitlements won long ago are under attack in Europe as well as North America, provoking deep unease in the unions and the working class generally. All these events act and react on each other, and, although not as immediately or dramatically as in Europe or Canada, find their way to this country. Every struggle where the working class asserts itself independently — both economically and politically — eventually provides an alternative example to workers in this country, in their deep crisis of organization and perspective. The national elections will be over soon enough. What then?

The *Times*, as the leading bourgeois daily newspaper in this country, operates at a higher level of consciousness, which means, as in the reporting on the Brussels march, that regional papers sometimes end up inadvertently providing more honest coverage of certain events, although not for long, as the party line sinks in through attitudes projected from more authoritative sources. It is good to be aware of this and to try to communicate it to others.

The beginnings of a labor party movement in the unions inevitably engenders a broader basis for interest in the international labor movement. Supporters of the movement should be alert to this and try to find avenues for disseminating accurate information more widely. An expanded role for the labor press is a necessary component of this. □

October 31, 1996

Mass Protests Seize Toronto

Next Step: Unlimited, Province-wide General Strike to Kick Out the Tories!

by Barry Weisleder

Barry Weisleder is the editor of the Canadian newspaper Socialist Action.

It was a two-day festival of the oppressed. Toronto on October 25 and 26 was positive, peaceful, upbeat and disciplined — at times boisterous, at others eerily tranquil. It was the biggest labor shutdown of a Canadian metropolis, followed by the largest march and rally in this country's history.

Exhibiting tremendous poise and self-confidence, hundreds of thousands of unionists and their social movement allies said NO to multi-billion dollar Ontario provincial government cuts to health care, education, and social services, to environmental deregulation and wholesale privatization of public institutions, and to widespread attacks on labor and consumer rights.

Support for the protests was so broad that reactionary Conservative Ontario Premier Mike Harris felt compelled to apologize for initially underestimating the huge turnout and for the disparaging remarks he made about "communists, special interest groups, government employees, and" — with a racist twist — "Iraqi groups and Iranian groups" which participated in the gigantic Saturday march.

Harris's shoot-from-the-lip frustration was not surprising. Hundreds of thousands of workers had defied employer intimidation tactics and joined in cross-picketing and protest rallies on Friday, or simply stayed home, in all cases sacrificing a day's pay to register their opposition to the prevailing big business agenda.

On that day there was no public transit, one hundred construction sites were stilled, most government offices (federal, provincial, and municipal) were closed or offered little service, cultural and recreational institutions were shut, colleges and universities did not function, elementary and secondary schools had few teachers and fewer students, hospitals operated on holiday staffing levels, and many factories were down, including the big CAW-organized De Havilland Aircraft plant in Downsview. All of this accounts for the sparse traffic on the roads and the summer-Sunday-like atmosphere across Metropolitan Toronto.

Thousands of workers, accompanied by family and friends, attended noisy, angry, music-filled rallies around Metro — at the Toronto Stock Exchange, at the Education Ministry near Queen's Park, and at city halls in North York, Etobicoke, and East York. Police stood by quietly on the sidelines as thousands of picketers and hundreds of trained union/community-

designated marshalls took charge, shutting down business-as-usual. For once Toronto looked and felt like a "union town."

On Saturday morning an immense crowd gathered at the lakeshore, near the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, and began a 4.2 kilometer march to the provincial legislature. It

took nearly three hours for the parade, which included over 200 social justice and community organizations along with dozens of unions, to pass en route the Metro Convention Centre where the Conservative Party held its annual policy conference.

Socialist Action (Canada) Holds First Conference

Fresh from the picket lines, rallies, and marches of Toronto's historic Days of Action, members of Socialist Action from across the Canadian state met to assess the political situation and set a course for building our revolutionary organization.

Labor and social movement activists from Montréal, North Bay, Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, and Edmonton came together for the first time since Socialist Action was formed in February 1994 following a split in Socialist Challenge/Gauche socialiste.

The split in SC/Gs, the section of the Fourth International in the Canadian state, was precipitated by the expulsion of two leaders of a minority "Democratic Centralist" current prior to the opening of pre-convention discussion. The section's bi-national convention was already 30 months overdue, and its adherence to Leninist norms existed only on paper.

Since the formation of Socialist Action, the group has published five editions of its newspaper and has tripled in size. At this first, two-day conference we were joined by members of our American sister organization (also called Socialist Action) from Boston, Vermont, Chicago and San Francisco. Together, the Canadian and American socialists sold over 1,000 socialist newspapers and buttons ("Kick Out the Tories") during the massive Toronto labor shutdown and rally days.

The SA conference discussed and adopted a Political Resolution which characterized the situation as one of "rising class struggle," but of a "purely defensive" nature, devoid of radical demands. It defined the tasks of the group as chiefly educational, combined with practical opportunities for members to promote and influence mass industrial and extraparliamentary actions.

The resolution set as a priority work in the trade union arena, but also identified the importance of the newly formed Unemployed Workers Council, along with efforts to "develop a force inside the NDP committed to a socialist programme." The newspaper *Socialist Action* (of Canada) will devote more attention to the struggles of youth, women, and people of color — key sectors of the growing movement against the cuts.

The next agenda point was an Organizational Resolution. It confirms SA's commitment to construct a disciplined and democratic revolutionary workers' party, as part of the Fourth International. The adopted document projects an educational conference for next spring, and a future full convention to deal with constitutional and programmatic issues. In the meantime, an Internal Discussion Bulletin is being created for members to exchange information, analysis, and opinion. A five-person Editorial Board was elected as an interim leadership responsible for SA newspaper content, and for increasing the frequency of the press.

A report titled "Newspaper and Publications," setting the stage for a new winter edition of the newspaper, along with plans for topical pamphlets and literature, was also adopted.

Outside the SA Hall and Bookroom, the Days of Action provided graphic evidence of the new rise of the workers' movement. Inside, another sign of the times: seven people asked to join SA before the conference adjourned, strengthening our political presence in southwestern Ontario, northern Ontario, and Alberta. Emerging prospects for new branches of SA in these areas, as well as in Vancouver, was a fitting denouement as delegates rose to sing "The Internationale."

The gigantic rally at the Legislature filled the large grassy front park, the surrounding roadway, and the wide expanse of University Avenue boulevard, southwards for ten blocks or more at its height. The crowd, already in a decidedly festive mood, was treated to performances by folk-rock stars Bruce Cockburn, Billy Bragg, and Moxy Fruvous.

Speeches by labor and community leaders extolled the event as a triumph of coalition building. But they had almost nothing to say about plans for the future of the struggle against the Tory cutbacks.

In all, the Metro Days of Action activities, which spanned six days and included an anti-poverty tent city dubbed "Harrisville" set up just behind the Legislature, had a theme: "Organize, Educate, Resist." But these words offer not a clue as to what must be done next — if the goal is to reverse the cuts and remove the Tory government — a crucial goal, especially since the Tory conference restated its pledge to "stay the course" of vicious attacks on the working class of Ontario.

War of Numbers

Attempts by the commercial media, big business politicians, and the police to undermine the impact of the Days of Action did not cease at the conclusion of the main rally. With wildly varying estimates of the Saturday turnout, testimony by so-called experts, supported by pseudo-scientific techniques, have furnished the basis for ongoing controversy. But there can be little doubt that the protest actions exceeded all past protests in the Canadian state.

"When you take into account that more than 50,000 arrived on 1,000 buses, we estimate that at least 250,000 people were with us at Queen's Park and along the way," said Metro Days of Action co-chairs Linda Torney and Margaret Hancock. "The figure of 75,000 eventually released by the Metro Toronto Police as being the number of people who participated on Saturday is laughable."

The hitherto largest demonstration in Canada saw 150,000 people rally at Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest high interest rates in 1983. The biggest single strike was a one-day cross-country work stoppage by 1.2 million workers on October 14, 1976, to protest Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's imposition of wage controls.

The Metro Days of Action, in the context of the highest level of strike activity since the 1970s (including the big OPSEU strike last winter and the very recent CAW victory at General Motors), set a new high-water mark for the labor movement.

Damned Lies

The employer class, and their hired minions, tried every trick in the book to dampen support for the days of action — with threats of reprisal against workers absent without leave, legal injunctions against picketing, and attempts to stir up fears about public safety, and guilt feelings over potential inconvenience to vulnerable citizens. Yes, these are the very same bosses who

say we can no longer afford public transit for the disabled, hostels for battered wives, and subsidized child care spaces. They think nothing of closing hospitals and schools, or of imposing user fees on drugs for seniors, garbage pick-up, and access to library and recreational facilities.

And they exposed themselves as big-time liars. Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) head David Gunn said that if pickets closed down the subway system on Friday, he would be unable to provide service on Saturday, citing obscure electrical start-up requirements. Fortunately, few workers bought this cock and bull story; and needless to say, all the other fearful forecasts of disaster proved to be just that.

Life went on, with the bosses forced to take a back seat.

Bourgeoisie Sings the Blues

Protest actions were orderly, united, and effective. No one suffered death, trauma, or injury. Only a handful of arrests occurred. In fact nothing was harmed, except the pride and productivity quotas of the men of property.

But they can be a very vengeful lot, anxious to get even for their moment of temporary political impotence.

As a result, over \$3 million in damage claims may be filed against labor groups and individuals. The Ontario Food Terminal and the TTC appear to be first in line, followed by the usual sleazy cabal of ambulance-chasing lawyers with dreams of generous class-action settlements. The problem they face is at least twofold: Metro Days of Action, as a legal entity, no longer exists; and the unions and individuals named in real or potential law suits were exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly.

Labor Tops Still Divided

Toronto was the fifth Ontario city shut down by anti-government protests. Toronto ostensibly was the litmus test for mass support and participation. So, how do you top hundreds of thousands in the streets? Shutting down a smaller city next, or targeting some major corporations or the Stock Exchange (as suggested by Ontario Federation of Labour President Gord Wilson, in the aftermath of October 26), would clearly be a recipe for squandering the growing momentum of the movement.

Yet that is precisely what some labor leaders are willing to risk. It is no surprise to hear the heads of the "pink paper" unions (Steelworkers, CEP, UFCW, Machinists) advocate demobilization or outright abandonment of the extraparliamentary movement.

They remain wedded to a tunnel-vision electoralist strategy, joined at the head to the right-wing leadership of the labor-based New Democratic Party. But what will remain of public services and workers' rights by the time of the next provincial election in 1999 or 2000, and who's to say Harris's Tories won't win again if they survive a few months of scaled-down protests?

More progressive, action-oriented unions, like the CAW, CUPE, CUPW, SEIU, and OPSEU want to see the movement continue, but there is a disturbing lack of clarity concerning both methods and aims. CUPE Ontario leader Sid Ryan, of late, has made the best public statements, calling for a province-wide strike, and even musing that if the NDP doesn't offer workers an alternative to debt mania and cutbacks, that perhaps "a new workers' party may emerge from this protest movement."

And that's the nub of the issue. If we don't delude ourselves into thinking that we might change Mike Harris's mind (i.e., win over the kind hearts of the business class his government was hired to represent), then the movement must be resolved to drive the Tories from office.

And while we struggle to force the Tories to call an early election, a working class political alternative must be created. Or else what will be the result — a Liberal regime, like the federal Liberals, whose cuts exceed Harris's? Or a neo-liberal NDP government, like Bob Rae's traitorous regime (trounced at the polls in June 1995), which politically disarmed the working class in the face of the capitalist offensive.

For an Unlimited, Province-wide General Strike to Kick Out the Tories!

Opinion polls reveal a sharply polarized electorate. The labor movement can win over vacillating elements only by demonstrating strong and decisive leadership. Labor's next step, in close alliance with the broadest array of social movements and community groups, should boldly build on the momentum already developed.

Decisive action, linked to clear demands — that's the order of the day. The next action must be province-wide, and unlimited — not just for one day, but for as long as it takes to force the Tories to call an election.

And the labor and social movements must seriously consider the kind of government we need to replace the governments of big business, to replace their global agenda of profits at the expense of working people and our fragile environment.

NDP governments in Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan have discredited the NDP. But they have not eradicated the idea that there is an alternative to the existing system, which is fueled by greed, waste, racism, sexism, and war.

Real economic democracy, socialist democracy, based on public ownership of society's wealth and resources, represents the only route of escape from the inhumanity and irrationality of capitalism. But how can that perspective be advanced without a political instrument, without a party committed to a working class agenda?

In fact, the central political problem of the working class in the Canadian state is that we have no mass workers' party worthy of the name. The struggle to create such a party, as Sid Ryan implies, is inextricably part and parcel of

Continued on next page

U.S. Spokesperson for Zapatistas

Cecilia Rogriguez Calls for Suspension of U.S. Military Aid to Mexico

Cecilia Rodriguez is the designated representative of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) in the United States. She is also director of the El Paso-based National Commission for Democracy in Mexico, whose address is 601 N. Cotton, Suite A-103, El Paso, Texas 79902; phone/fax: 915-532-8382; e-mail: moonlight@jgc.apc.org.

The following press release was posted November 6 from El Paso on a conference of the Institute for Global Communications computer network.

As part of an East Coast speaking tour, Cecilia Rodriguez, the U.S. spokesperson for the Zapatistas, is calling for the immediate suspension of all U.S. military aid to Mexico. Ms. Rodriguez, citing the Mexican government's consistent pattern of human rights violations, documented by Amnesty International and other organizations, calls on the U.S. government to stop supporting the Mexican government's massive campaign against unarmed civilians. Ms. Rodriguez made eight appearances in New York City November 12-15 on the eve of the transfer of 20 Huey helicopters from the U.S. to Mexico. [The transfer is scheduled for the end of November.] The helicopters have been offered to Mexico as part of "counternarcotics operations."

Ms. Rodriguez commented, "U.S.-provided helicopters have been used in the past by the Mexican military to attack unarmed populations. The Mexican armed forces have been accused by human rights monitors of murders, 'disappearances,' kidnappings, and rapes. Nonetheless their requests for military equipment and expertise have been granted time and time again. Under the guise of fighting drug traffickers, the U.S. government has bolstered an anti-democratic and corrupt Mexican government with a laundry list of high-tech military equipment that has been used to violate the basic human rights of the people of Mexico."

On September 20, fifteen Members of the Congress, in a strongly worded letter to the U.S. State Department, questioned whether these helicopters would actually be used for the purpose of narcotics interdiction. They cited a fall

1996 Amnesty International report that found helicopters were being used in attacks on unarmed civilian populations. This comes on the heels of a June 1996 Government Accounting Office report concluding that U.S.-provided helicopters had been used by the Mexican army during the brief Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in 1994 when approximately 150 indigenous peasants were killed.

The 20 Huey helicopters scheduled to be transferred by Thanksgiving are the first batch of 73 satellite-navigation guided aircraft that are slated for transfer to Mexico within the year. The U.S. is the foremost supplier of weaponry to Mexico.

The Zapatistas signed an agreement on indigenous rights and culture with the Mexican government this year and have been involved in on-again, off-again peace talks for the last 18 months.

Ms. Rodriguez is a U.S. citizen and was appointed the U.S. spokesperson for the Zapatistas in 1994. She has worked on social and economic justice issues for over 25 years and was formerly executive director of the Funding Exchange, a U.S. philanthropic institution that distributes money to progressive causes.

[The following section is from an NCDM posting dated October 24.]

"Giving Voice to Silence" Tour

The extremely dangerous situation which exists in Mexico continues to be inaccessible to the majority of the American public because of the disinterest of the news media. When there is no information, there is little hope of public re-

sponse to the growing U.S. presence and intervention.

Cecilia Rodriguez, the U.S. representative of the Zapatistas, is touring in the Northeast, to bring attention to the low-intensity war in Mexico, and its implications for the people of the U.S. The Zapatistas are among the first indigenous people to take a stand against the [neo-liberal] globalization policies which continue to devastate the environment, the economy, and poor people around the world.

The corrupt party-state government of Mexico in place for the past 70 years continues to expand a low-intensity war against indigenous people all over Mexico and uses government money to pay for sophisticated public relations campaigns in the United States. It is a war based on the interests of multinationals, drug traffickers, and right-wing paramilitary squads, and it has been waged with military equipment, advisers, and training from the United States.

Unless significant public awareness is achieved about the plight and proposal of the Zapatistas for change in Mexico, a creeping genocide of indigenous people similar to that which took place in Central America is inevitable.

The aim of the "Giving Voice To Silence" tour is to present the American people the viable political solution which the Zapatistas offer to resolve Mexico's present crisis. It will inform the American public, and arm them with the knowledge they need in order to hold political leaders accountable for this low-intensity war. □

Next Step: Unlimited, Province-wide General Strike to Kick Out the Tories!

Continued from previous page
the effort to build and politically deepen the current anti-cutbacks fight.

For an NDP Government Committed to Socialist Policies

The NDP continues to occupy the space of a workers' party linked to the unions. No other force to the left of the NDP can fill that space at

the moment. Therefore the fight for an NDP government represents the only available, practical, class perspective for taking the broad workers' movement forward, independent of the bosses' parties.

But the perspective would be tragically incomplete unless it calls for an NDP government committed to socialist policies. The fight for a working class program, inside and outside the

weak and bureaucratically ossified NDP, is just as important as the battle in the streets and workplaces to replace the Tories. To neglect that would be to plunge into another demoralizing political dead end, blind to all the lessons of recent bitter experience. □

Cleveland Teachers Win Round in Fight Against Union Busters

by Jean Tussey

The most significant aspect of the 1996 contract negotiations between the Cleveland School District and the Teachers Union was the remarkable effectiveness of the union's building of labor-community solidarity. The corporate business rulers of the city and state brushed aside elected bodies, ignored Black community leaders they could not control, and openly took charge of school district negotiations to try to destroy hard-won union contract gains.

The teachers took the lead in informing and organizing Cleveland's Black working-class majority in a labor-community united front able and willing to close down the schools in the event of a strike.

In May, by a vote of 4,465 to 228, the teachers voted to authorize their executive committee to call a strike if negotiations with the school district reached a stalemate when the union's three-year contract expired on August 31. The district was proposing a 10 percent pay cut, heavier work loads, less job security, and increased contributions by teachers for health insurance. Layoff notices had already been sent to 451 teachers.

Wage Cuts Demanded by Management

By mid-August negotiators had reached an impasse. The Cleveland school district, under state control for 17 months, still demanded the 10 percent pay cut for teachers in the 1996-97 school year and a wage freeze the second year. Management claimed the cut, which would apply to all school employees, was necessary to reduce the district's \$152 million debt. The Teachers Union was asking for a 3 percent pay increase, but offered to settle for extending the current contract pending improvement in the district financial picture.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 47, representing 1,800 clerical, dietary, and cleaning employees, had already voted strike authorization on August 10. The district's demand for wage and benefit reductions — and subcontracting union work — were unacceptable.

Seeing no progress in negotiations, the Teachers Union prepared to give official notice by Monday, August 19, that its members would strike September 3, the day after Labor Day and the first school day after expiration of the contract. (Under Ohio law, teachers unions are required to give at least 10 days' notice before striking.)

On Saturday, August 17, school district officials ended all pretense of "good faith bargaining" and revealed plans already under way to

recruit 1,800 "replacement teachers" should the union strike.

School Officials Declare War on Union

The Sunday, August 18 *Plain Dealer* reported: "Beginning today, the district is running advertisements in 15 of Ohio's largest newspapers, as well as newspapers in western Pennsylvania and western New York, offering \$175 a day to substitute teachers."

"They've given up trying to negotiate a solution, and now they're just trying to break the union... Essentially, they declared war on us," teachers union president Richard A. DeColibus told the *Plain Dealer*.

Front men for Cleveland schools management were Richard A. Boyd, district superintendent, and Gilman R. King, chief administrative officer.

In a four-day strike in 1988 and an 11-week strike during the 1979-80 school year, no attempt was made to hire scabs. But this year was different. The unions were dealing not with the elected local school board but with a superintendent appointed by the state to cut the cost of operating the underfunded 70,000-pupil public school system, and with a chief negotiator hired by Cleveland's major corporations.

Negotiator Paid by Big Business

Superintendent Boyd told the *Plain Dealer*: "We have a moral and legal responsibility to keep the schools open. The plans we are putting together tell us we can."

The "we" he referred to included King, hired at an "undisclosed salary" paid by "Cleveland Tomorrow, a group of the 50 largest local companies" which had also "hired the executive search firm that found" King (*Plain Dealer*, Sept. 13).

"I think any strike is a battle for the hearts and minds of the public," Boyd told the *Plain Dealer* August 17, as management openly launched its attack on the union.

Privately, Cleveland Tomorrow (which includes in its officers' group *Plain Dealer* publisher and president Alex Machaskes) also had joined with the Greater Cleveland Roundtable, "a group of ministers, politicians, and executives from business, civic, and non-profit organizations who seek to improve race relations," and hired "an advertising and public relations firm, to promote the school reform plan" (*Plain Dealer*, Sept. 13).

By the critical Labor Day weekend both sides had assumed their battle stations. Corporate

Cleveland had lined up the best anti-labor politicians, public relations experts, and strike-breakers money could buy, including (at a cost of \$65,000 a day) the nationally notorious Vance International "security guards" (particularly infamous for their role in the Detroit newspaper strike since July 1995).

Teachers Did Their Homework

But the teachers had done their homework. They had waged a consistent, principled educational campaign to keep their members, the labor movement, the parents, and the community informed on the issues at stake in defense of the public school teachers and students.

They consulted closely with the six other unions involved with the school district and had their pledge of support. They secured the assistance of state and national teachers union officers. They kept delegates to the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor informed of the progress of negotiations and how other unions could help in the event of a strike.

On April 2 the teachers had joined with parents, students, and other concerned citizens in a demonstration at the State Office Building in downtown Cleveland, asking the governor to use about 5 percent of Ohio's Rainy Day Fund (currently in excess of \$1 billion) to support school needs.

In June the *Critique*, official publication of the Cleveland Teachers Union, compared the proposals of the CTU and the state and explained, with facts and figures, how the existing tax system favors major corporations through tax abatements and other forms of tax subsidies, resulting in a school funding crisis throughout rural and urban Ohio.

Supported Detroit Newspaper Strike

The *Critique* also reported that the CTU Delegate Assembly had voted to support the Detroit newspaper strike and to contribute \$5,000. Explaining the issues in Detroit, the article concluded, "Show your support and solidarity with our fellow union brothers and sisters who are facing the same threats to their financial and job security that we face in our current negotiations: refuse to buy *USA Today*... In unity there is strength."

In June the teachers distributed a "Thank You" leaflet to the Labor Party Founding Convention delegates, who had joined in a mass protest demonstration against anti-union Democratic Mayor Mike White. (Speaking at

the City Club August 22, the mayor lost more of his dwindling support when he attacked teachers union contract work rules, with the comment: "The inmates will be running the asylum.")

Meryl T. Johnson, a popular Black teacher and union leader well known in the labor, women's, and civil rights movements, headed the Cleveland Teachers Union's Community Relations Committee (and is a member of the Cleveland chapter of the Labor Party). The Committee missed few opportunities to speak out and to distribute the union paper, as well as timely leaflets and pamphlets, at neighborhood and other political meetings.

Teachers Appeal to Parents

On August 30 the teachers issued a letter addressed, "Dear Cleveland Schools Parent." It explained:

There are three things you need to know about the current labor negotiations standoff:

We have offered repeatedly to continue working beyond the August 31 expiration of our current contract. The Administration/Board has said NO...insisting on extracting an average of about \$5,000 per teacher in wage concessions from us.

Except for the principal, *no one who is familiar with your child's school will be in the school building* on Wednesday, September 4. ...Dozens of strangers — many of whom have been recruited from out-of-town and even out-of-the-state — will be giving orders to your children....

Please keep your children home, beginning on September 4 and continuing through to the end of the current situation. It will be much safer for the children, and it is also the best and fastest way to resolve the labor problems.

The letter concluded by asking the parents to call Superintendent Dick Boyd (giving his phone number) "and tell him you want your child's regular teachers in school."

Many parents and others reportedly did call to express their concern, especially when Cleveland's daily newspaper reported on Saturday, August 31, how irresponsibly and unsafely the district planned to operate if the teachers and other union workers went on strike Wednesday: there would be no school that day, except for principals (non-union), who would "receive a crash course in how to run the boiler, air compressor, and vacuum pump in the basement of your school." On Thursday schools would begin to open on a staggered schedule.

Labor Day Events Build Support

Teachers, parents, union members, and others also took the message to the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation's Saturday Labor Day parade, held in Lakewood this year, and to Congressman Louis Stokes's 26th annual 11th Congressional District Caucus Picnic, in the heart of the Black community, on Labor Day.

The next day Congressman Stokes issued a statement sharply criticizing the way the state education officials, in control of the city schools since March 1995, had handled negotiations with teachers and had failed to improve the Cleveland school system academically or financially.

"I don't think there is any question that if this school system were 70 percent white rather than 70 percent Black, this type of denial of students' education would not be taking place," Stokes said. He warned that a \$13.5 million levy which the state placed on the November ballot despite the elected school board's opposition, had no chance of being approved by the voters unless state education officials work with the teachers, parents, and leaders from all parts of the community.

"I don't think the students would be willing to subject themselves to learning under a strike situation," he added, "nor do I think the substitute teachers would be concerned about teaching them."

Contract Negotiations Extended

Late Tuesday, after intensive bargaining sessions and the two major demonstrations of support for school employees over the long Labor Day weekend, agreement was reached to extend the contract and negotiations for ten days, to Friday, September 13. Once again, the following Monday would be the first day of the strike if no agreement was reached. The threatening armed guards were withdrawn and the schools opened on schedule September 4, but the public debate intensified.

A *Plain Dealer* editorial arrogantly criticized Stokes for intervening in the local school dispute and accused him of introducing the "race card" into contract negotiations. Stokes replied that his statement had been in response to a *Plain Dealer* reporter's question: "Do you think that the actions by the state have anything to do with the fact that the school [district] is 70 percent Black?"

George Forbes, president of the Cleveland branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), repeated Stokes's criticism of the state-appointed school officials' handling of contract negotiations as "heavy-handed." He also warned that as long as the district continued to make decisions without input from the Black community they could not expect support for the levy.

Two white Republican legislators introduced a bill to put Mayor White in charge of the Cleveland school system.

The Black Elected Democrats of Cleveland Ohio (BEDCO) issued a three-page statement in support of Stokes and the unions and accusing the "so-called state educators" of being "front men for downstate Republican interests," repeating "the rhetoric of Bob Dole and the ad copy of state officials." Their refrain is, "It's not the teachers, it's the unions."

Dozens of letters to the editor and some feature articles and columns appeared in the daily *Plain Dealer* and the weekly *Free Times*, the overwhelming majority supporting the teachers.

NAACP Meeting Turns the Tide

The decisive event in the "battle for the hearts and minds of the public" was the September 8 meeting of the Cleveland NAACP to discuss "What Now for the Cleveland Schools?" Forbes set the tone of support for the unions in his opening remarks. He said that tax abatements

are wrong today, and were also wrong in the past — although he didn't think so when, as president of the City Council, he supported abatements.

Union speakers whom Forbes introduced at the meeting included CTU President Richard DeColibus, SEIU President Michael Murphy, and Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation President Frank Valenta.

The white union officers were applauded politely, but the speakers that "brought the house down" were the Black elected political leaders who had publicly criticized the state-appointed school officials for their hard line in negotiations and for bypassing and ignoring local Black community leaders. As one speaker concluded: "You have to stand for something..."; a whole chorus responded: "or you'll fall for anything!"

"The Whole Plantation's in Revolt!"

In introducing Stokes, Forbes chuckled: "The *Plain Dealer* told him to sit down and shut up...Now the whole plantation's in revolt!" Black teachers, city councilmen, parents, students, ministers, city employees, journalists, and others took the floor to speak out.

A motion was introduced by a member of the executive board that the NAACP contribute a loan of \$50,000 to the Teachers Union strike fund. And the plans were reported for neighborhood centers, churches, and union halls to open their doors to students during the strike.

The spirited meeting demonstrated overwhelmingly that the unions had won "the battle." Failure to negotiate an acceptable contract would result in a strike that had the solid support of the community.

By Sunday night, September 16, management's team had been reshuffled; chief negotiator Gil King had been removed. An agreement was reached, subject to a vote by the 5,000 members of the Cleveland Teachers Union. Like all union contracts, it expressed the current relationship of forces:

- No wage cut.
- A three-year agreement with wage freezes the first two years and a 3 percent increase the third year.
- Step increases (raises based on experience) continue.
- Small increases in health care premiums by teachers.
- Work rules substantially the same except for the loss of two paid "professional in-service days" the first year and one the second year.
- Individual schools can modify the contract if 70 percent or more of the teachers agree.
- Safer schools.

The contract was approved on September 24: 4,029 for, 363 against.

Aftermath: The Teachers Union Community Relations Committee continues to lead the local struggle to save the public schools against privatization. The NAACP is discussing reorientation from middle-class to working-class problems to rebuild its membership. □

Teamsters President Ron Carey Talks Tough

by Charles Walker

This election is for all the marbles.

— Ron Carey

In a fiery speech before more than 500 Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) delegates, General President Ron Carey of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) attacked his old-guard opponents as “dictators, thieves, and thugs.” Carey told his audience, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the rank-and-file caucus, that he had put 67 corrupt and Mobbed-up local unions in trusteeship. Carey bitterly assailed those officials who scabbed on the February 7, 1994, national United Parcel Service strike, shamefully pleading that the strike was “illegal.” Carey singled out James Hoffa, Jr., accusing the son of the missing one-time Teamsters president of being “a front-man for the Mob.” While acknowledging the father’s mixed, contradictory legacy, Carey said that “Junior’s not even a pimple on his father’s ass.” Mocking Hoffa Junior’s charge that Carey has brought “outsiders,” including Mine Workers, to work at Teamster headquarters, Carey informed his audience that Hoffa Junior’s grandfather had been a coal miner.

Meeting in the shadow of the towering St. Louis Gateway Arch, TDU’s October annual convention drew up plans to mobilize the Teamster membership and get out a heavy vote for the Ron Carey slate. Some labor analysts say that the union’s election will have a great influence on the survival of organized labor. Indeed, Carey told the convention that previous AFL-CIO leaders were sleeping on the job, but now “our votes at the federation are changing the face of the labor movement.” In 1995, Carey cast the decisive vote that led to the defeat of Tom Donahue, Lane Kirkland’s choice to head the federation.

Carey spoke warmly and at length about TDU, recalling: “Twenty years ago when TDU got the ball rolling, I was a local union leader trying to fight the employer, other local officers, and the international union officialdom. What TDU wanted to prove was that we can do anything, if we stick together.” The mostly rank-and-file delegation repeatedly interrupted Carey’s speech with spirited cheering and applause. The audience followed Carey’s call to whip their common old-guard opponents in November with a collection that raised \$76,000.

Teamsters VP Gilmartin Supports Labor Party

In an earlier session, IBT Vice President Tom Gilmartin said that the Teamsters General Executive Board (GEB) was no longer a “rubber

stamp for the joint councils.” The joint councils are regional bodies of local unions, many of which are controlled by Hoffa Junior’s old-guard backers. In the old days, rank-and-file appeals from joint council rulings were routinely denied by the GEB, the union’s highest body between conventions.

Gilmartin related other accomplishments of the Carey administration, elected in the first-ever popular election for the union’s international officers. Gilmartin concluded by saying that he looked forward to the time when workers would “elect a Labor Party majority in Congress.” More than half of Carey’s slate attended the three-day convention.

Apart from the main sessions, delegates could attend their choice of fifteen workshops, six jurisdictional meetings, a women’s network meeting, a women and people of color committee meeting, four regional campaign activists meetings, and attend a solidarity reception with Central California Diamond Walnut strikers and Detroit newspaper strikers. Many of the workshops were led by officers and staff on leave from the union, or otherwise on their own time.

The key convention discussions concerned the upcoming IBT election and the mechanics of insuring a large voter turnout for Carey. In 1991, only 28% of the membership returned their mail ballots. Carey won with 48.5% of the eligible votes, or 189,000, defeating an opposition divided in two. Carey campaign staffers say that Carey’s membership participation policies, and the energetic campaigning by both Carey’s slate and the unified old-guard opposition mean that this time the vote turnout will be larger. They say that Carey is likely to get 265,000 votes, or 54% of the total. These figures are based on polls of likely voters. Interestingly enough, those members thought to be likely voters also expressed a strong anti-boss attitude no matter which slate they presently say they favor.

Carey is opposed by more than half of the union’s officers, an improvement over 1991. Then, maybe 90% supported other candidates or sat the election out. Carey has more officers supporting him now because of his rank-and-file supporters’ winning local union elections, and because he has broadened his slate to include some long-term officers who once opposed him.

Clearly, though, Carey’s rank-and-file base can’t compete with Hoffa Junior’s ability to raise money from wealthy officers and — as some hint — from outside sources. At any rate, the federal election officer overseeing the elec-

tion has reported that Hoffa Junior has raised \$2.25 million, leaving Carey far behind with only \$700,000. In 1991, Carey’s worksite activists, including many TDU members, tipped the scales in Carey’s favor, despite a bare-bones campaign fund. TDU expects those activists once again to make the difference for Carey when the votes are counted in December.

TDU Perspectives

Before adjourning, the TDU delegates unanimously adopted a resolution outlining the reform movement’s perspectives and tasks for the Teamsters election and the coming year. “The victory of the Ron Carey Slate in December is our immediate priority, but it is not our ultimate goal. The defeat of the old guard will take an obstacle out of the way, but it will not assure that innovative new programs are put in place or that membership involvement will take a leap forward. We still have to overcome years of inertia. And no doubt there will be those who feel that reform had gone far enough, and it’s now time to slow down. It will be all the more important for TDU to grow in strength and to develop positive initiatives for our union.”

TDU’s aims in the coming year included the following resolves: “Forge an alliance of TDU and reform officers, along with active members... and...develop model union programs that point a new direction for Teamsters. Continue to educate members and involve Teamsters in programs such as contract campaigns in national and local contracts, organizing programs, and in coalition building within the labor movement and with community groups.”

Carey was introduced at the convention banquet by Bill Slater, a veteran TDU activist who first joined TDU “at a freight meeting in Cleveland about twenty years ago.” Slater recalled when a goon squad headed by Jackie Presser “invaded our [TDU] convention in Romulus, Michigan. Well, they never stopped us in Romulus; they never stopped Brother Carey in Philadelphia [at the 1996 IBT convention], and they will not stop us next month when we elect the Ron Carey Slate for five more years.

“Brothers and Sisters, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the man who looked the mob straight in the eye and refused to be intimidated, the President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Ron Carey.” □

October 17, 1996

The Teamsters for a Democratic Union: Its Origins, Strategies, and Battles

by Charles Walker

For 14 years TDU was the underdog. The struggle was like that of David and Goliath. Today things are different: TDU is the most important organized force within the Teamsters union standing for democracy, reform, and economic justice for workers.

Dan LaBotz, Rank and File Rebellion: Teamsters for a Democratic Union (1990)

Long before the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) helped Ron Carey to his stunning 1991 electoral victory over today's entrenched Teamster old-guard opposition, TDU's importance was summed up by a rank-and-filer who said, "pound for pound, TDU is the strongest muscle for improving our union." That assessment was confirmed years later by a 1991 poll paid for by one of Carey's old-guard rivals for the Teamsters presidency. The pollsters reported that the rank-and-file reform caucus was more favorably regarded by rank-and-filers than the three contenders for the Teamsters top job, including Ron Carey, who was in the midst of gaining a union-wide reputation.

Behind TDU's widespread popularity with the rank and file are twenty years of dogged day-after-day organizing around intertwined issues as diverse as getting a single fired worker back on the job, to opposing concessionary contracts, including contracts covering the larger, more influential sectors of the union: freight, small package and parcel, and carhauling.

Inseparable from TDU's fight for economic justice is its commitment to an individual worker's right to dignity and all workers' right to democratic unions and union leaders' accountability. At its 1976 founding convention, TDU took positions in opposition to discrimination against minorities and women. TDU recognized:

Racial discrimination and the division which results from it have long been used by employers and unscrupulous officials to divide and weaken the rank and file. To be successful, the rank and file must be united. To win the participation and loyalty of the hundreds of thousands of minority Teamsters who are second class citizens in the Teamsters union and in Teamster organized jurisdictions, TDU must pursue and support vigorous policies to overcome the discrimination these brothers and sisters have suffered in the past.

Most contracts covering women Teamsters are sweetheart agreements where the company comes out on top and our union sisters are on the bottom with sub-standard working conditions and wages. The Teamsters for a Democratic Union will work to bring these contracts up to the highest standard in an attempt to end discrimination against women within our union and on the job.

At the same convention, TDU adopted a "Rank and File Bill of Rights," which called for di-

rectly elected international union officers, and elected (not appointed) local officers, stewards, and local union committees. Further, "No officer should make more than the highest paid working members in his jurisdiction." And: "Salary increases [should be] limited to the average increase for membership, and subject to membership approval."

First TDU Convention

Nearly 200 rank-and-file Teamsters from 44 local unions in 15 states attended TDU's founding convention of 1976. Many of the unionists were veterans of the wildcat strike wave that began in the late 1960s and eventually spread to the Teamsters. Between 1970 and 1976 tens of thousands of freight, parcel, and carhaul workers defied employers and union officials alike and went on strike, sometimes reviving the roving picket tactics of the 1930s. Many of the convention attendees had formed loose local networks during or after the wildcat strikes. They learned that it was often necessary to fight their officials in order to defend themselves from their bosses. Now they were launching a union-wide organization that could and would fight for members *both* on the job and in the union, an organization not stymied by the bureaucrats' monopoly on Teamsters communications.

In only a few years, TDU joined in dozens of local and regional contract fights. Its power to challenge sell-out contracts grew. Then in 1979 it organized a majority vote against a national carhaul contract negotiated by the then-General President Frank Fitzsimmons (handpicked by Jimmy Hoffa to run things while Hoffa was in a federal prison). Still the carhaulers had to eat the contract, because it was not until 1988 that the Teamsters dumped their constitutional provision that a company's offer had to be accepted unless two-thirds of the workers voted it down.

In 1983, TDU successfully helped organize a 94,086 to 13,082 freight vote to reject a bid by General President Jackie Presser to introduce two-tier wages. In 1987, UPS Teamsters turned down a Presser contract by 54 percent; nevertheless, Presser signed the agreement. In 1988, the Teamsters leadership ordered the imposition of a national freight contract on members, after a rejection by 64,101 to 36,782. TDU campaigned for the rejection. After Presser's death, the two-thirds provision was dropped from the constitution (without the benefit of a constitutional convention).

TDU Takes On the Bureaucracy

Less than two weeks after the first TDU convention, TDU went to Las Vegas to take on the bureaucracy at the Teamsters convention. TDU offered resolutions on reforming the union, and attracted press and television coverage with its

demonstrations outside the auditorium. TDU's only delegate urged the 2,300 other delegates to change the constitution to provide for direct election of all international officers, election of all business agents, a limit on officers' salaries, and separate votes on contract supplements. Fitzsimmons called TDU "infiltrators" and fumed that TDU "could go to hell." Angry words were replaced with fists and shoes when TDU's delegate was assaulted in front of a nearby hotel.

At subsequent Teamsters conventions, TDU introduced and reintroduced proposals for democratizing the union. By 1986, it had garnered only 24 votes in its challenge to Presser's presidential nomination, but had the backing of 100 delegates on some of its reform proposals. In 1991, TDU was part of the Carey delegation that made up 15 percent of the delegates. In 1996, Carey's coalition, including TDU, had a near-majority of delegates.

In 1989, the federal government seemed intent on placing the entire international union under its direct supervision. TDU opposed the plan, arguing that what the members wanted and needed was democracy, namely the right to directly elect the union's highest officers and convention delegates, who typically are union officers. Surprisingly, TDU got its way.

With the right to vote won, TDU went to Ron Carey, a progressive New York local union president, and asked him to run for the Teamsters' highest office and to lead a reform coalition, including TDU. Carey agreed, and for two years Carey campaigned in the United States or Canada every weekend, running his local union on weekdays. In the field, TDU did much of the campaign grunt work, raising money and supplying the Carey campaign with a network of activists and contacts. Defying conventional wisdom, Carey won with 48 percent of the vote against a divided old guard.

TDU and Ron Carey

TDU's overall relationship with Carey is good and has never been threatened, but it is a complex relationship. Carey named several TDU rank-and-file Teamsters to his 1991 slate. With their election, history was made with the presence of a woman, a Latino, and only the second African-American on the General Executive Board, the highest body between conventions. Carey may consult informally with TDU leaders or may listen to others who are lobbied by ranking TDU members. But Carey decides his own policies; the allies do not take votes. From time to time, TDU is in the position of agreeing to disagree.

TDU's differences with Carey are mostly over timing. TDU would move the reform process faster than Carey has been moving. More

Dirty Tricks, Hoffa Junior, and Right-Wing Meddlers

Just two days after the TDU convention, Hoffa Junior released a statement claiming that "a source inside the Carey campaign" reported that a September Carey poll showed that Hoffa was leading Carey, 45% to 41%.

The next day, the Carey campaign said, "Junior Hoffa has trouble with two things: numbers and the truth. With even his own pollster — the respected Washington, D.C.-based, Schroth & Associates — telling him that Ron Carey holds a double-digit lead, Hoffa launched the latest dirty trick of his campaign, designed to distract Teamsters and reporters from the truth.

"But Junior refuses even to admit that he conducted his own poll, despite Election Office records showing that he paid \$44,207 to

the pollster!" Carey supporters reported that a Hoffa campaign poll conducted October 3-6, 1996, showed that Carey led Hoffa, 47% to 29%.

"Hoffa's latest dirty trick," said the Carey campaign, "is the work of Junior's PR team of Richard Leebove and George Geller — both former followers of extremist guru and convicted felon Lyndon LaRouche." In 1994, the one-time LaRouche operatives claimed that Carey had associations with organized crime. At that time, the *Charleston Gazette* reported: "Since the 1970s, Geller and Leebove have specialized in smearing reform candidates in Teamsters and Mine Workers elections."

— C. W.

importantly, TDU would have shortened the period Carey has spent trying to win over a sector of the bureaucracy with his so-called olive branch policy. However, TDU recognizes the problems of governance in a 1.4-million-member organization, and has never advocated a wholesale turnover of the international union's staff, the trade divisions, or the grievance panels.

Despite his disappointments, Carey continues his attempts to win over the Teamster officialdom. After many union officials scabbed on a national UPS strike, and some of them seemed to be in bed with freight bosses during a 24-day strike, Carey wiped out \$15 million in yearly multiple salaries, pensions, and perks of high-echelon bureaucrats. Most of the bureaucrats

stayed on, entrenched in local and regional baronies, and are now backing Hoffa's effort to return the international union to their control, together with the treasury they lost in 1991.

Still Carey maintains that the bulk of the officialdom are hard-working leaders, sincerely trying to do their best for the membership. To some of his supporters it seems that Carey is mistakenly projecting his own admirable qualities upon much of the bureaucracy. Carey views his problems with the bureaucracy as having to deal with a few bad apples in the Teamster barrel; and not a caste with material and social interests in conflict with the union's membership.

Carey has won over part of the officialdom. He named more full-time officials to his 1996 slate, but did not include any additional rank-

and-filers. And Carey had the support of hundreds of full-time officers at this summer's convention. However, the depth of their support for reforms that would put the rank and file in the driver's seat remain to be tested. Especially since some officers who signed support cards for him prior to the convention went over to Hoffa by the first open vote that would reveal where they stood.

Whatever the Vote, TDU Will Continue

TDU and Carey have benefited enormously from their alliance. Each is better known and stronger than when the alliance was formed in 1989. TDU is a seasoned organization and seems too well established to be marginalized, whatever the outcome of Hoffa's challenge to Carey. TDU has never undergone a faction fight or suffered from a split. Its leadership understands how to build and maintain a consensus. TDU is still red-baited, but not as vociferously as 5-10 years ago. More importantly, during its 20 years, TDU has created a tradition and expectation of democratic opposition. Consequently, the Teamster bureaucracy is challenged on all levels more and more often and more and more successfully.

Carey's election gave hope to reform-minded labor activists outside the Teamsters. In part, that is why union reform movements, generally called caucuses, are more common now than a few years ago. Many of the caucuses pattern themselves after TDU, which has shown reformers how to leverage their numbers and magnify their influence in today's unions. □

September 19, 1996

The War Against Children: Democrats and the Unions

by Charles Walker

The following article was written on Labor Day, September 2, 1996. The author is active in Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

For a hundred years organized labor has been the only social force against organized bosses and organized capital... And I can't be bothered, quite frankly, with my colleagues who want to be joined at the hip to the Democratic Party.

— Bob Wages, president, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union

Company unionism in politics is still the norm for U.S. organized labor. Labor and big corporations alike contribute huge sums to the Democratic Party and jointly promote that party's fortunes on election day. While we don't know what it will take to persuade most of labor to sever its political ties to Corporate America via the Democratic Party, we do know there seems to be no embarrassment, indignity, or betrayal that labor hasn't endured to keep from repudiating business unionism in politics.

Here are a few choice examples. Labor screamed bloody murder when President Clinton strong-armed NAFTA legislation through a Democratic Party-controlled Congress. A year or two ago Clinton turned a deaf ear to the AFL-CIO's appeal for a fig-leaf minimum wage bill. (The time wasn't right. Clinton saved the overwhelmingly popular hike in the minimum wage for the eve of the 1996 elections.) Also, Congressional Democrats rejected AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland's plea for legislation to outlaw company use of "permanent replacements" (scabs) during strikes, even though Kirkland seemed agreeable to an abject trade-off: the submitting of workers' proposed contract settlements to forced arbitration in return for a ban on "permanent replacements."

Kirkland has now been replaced by the "New Voice for American Workers" slate of Sweeney, Trumka, and Chavez-Thompson. But the "New Voice" leadership has been tragically silent in defense of over a million children slated to be pushed into poverty as a result of the bipartisan abolition of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC). As the *New York Times* put it, AFDC was a pillar of the "New Deal social welfare program."

(The newly founded Labor Party, in contrast, was not silent. Its hard-hitting critique of Clinton's signing of the welfare bill is reprinted elsewhere in this issue.)

Yes, most of labor was silent, but disappointed. "It's fair to say there's widespread disappointment in the labor movement because

of the president's decision to sign the welfare bill," President Dennis Rivera of the nationally known hospital workers union "1199" told reporters at the Democratic Party convention. "But we have to put aside our differences in the fall campaign and make sure he [Clinton] wins by the largest margin possible so that we can take back the House [of Representatives]."

Clinton the "Last Hope"?

And what if Clinton's reelection doesn't give labor at least more clout than it had when labor couldn't prevent Congress (and Clinton) from adopting NAFTA? Apparently that's the end of labor's hopes, if President Gerald McEntee of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is to be believed. For McEntee said, "After 1994, his [Clinton's] standing in terms of American workers became clearer, because he literally became their last hope."

"My Turn" Dole v. "Right Turn" Clinton: Others Need Not Apply

Continued from page 1

the GOP standard-bearer to pull some of his best punches. While the occasional reference to "Bozo" still slipped out he couldn't forthrightly condemn Clinton's moral character.

Of course many of Dole's supporters in the field were pillorying the First Family as moral degenerates. The Christian Coalition and the NRA thought they'd captured the Republican Party — but soon woke up to the fact they had only captured themselves. Dole did a dainty dance around the loony-right's mud slinging, crusades against abortion rights and gun control, and strident calls for Christian Fundamentalism as the state religion. Divisive moral issues are not high on the Big Business agenda.

Nor are the Big Boys completely happy with the way Speaker Gingrich and his Freshmen handled the Republican Revolution. A *Wall Street Journal* columnist once characterized Newt as representing America's strip-mall merchants — whose priorities are not always completely shared by the Sixty Families. In the view of the super-rich, who are the real power in both the Democratic and Republican parties, and in this society, Gingrich's in-your-face style has too often stirred up more trouble than the results have been worth. While Clinton TV ads almost always showed Dole and Gingrich side-by-side, Dole tried to distance himself from his party's congressional leaders.

In addition to being stiffed by the CEOs, another unkind cut came from the Fraternal Order of Police. FOP's endorsement of the incumbent took a lot of wind out of the tattered Law and Order sail that had carried many a GOP boat into safe harbor. Dole found himself left mainly supporting most of what Clinton had done — only Dole would have done more of it and sooner, according to Bob Dole.

The irreverent *Comedy Central* network christened their campaign coverage *Indecision '96*. It was an apt characterization of the center-right consensus that mainstream business inter-

ests sought to put together — the economy's good and looks to get better. From Big Business's point of view, more than incremental progress has been made on long-term fiscal and social policies. Their thinking is: Let's don't poke sleeping dogs with a too-sharp stick. We need moderation, civil discourse, and a stable two-party system that focuses on differences of nuance and tempo.

Unions in the U.S. have long-standing, complex, and dependent ties with the Democratic Party. These ties encompass the awarding of small-town street-paving contracts, big city school and hospital labor negotiations, federal subsidies to favored industries, and much more. At the Democrats' national convention, 28 percent of the delegates and alternates, reportedly, were unionists. The AFL-CIO has budgeted \$35 million for "organizing and voter education." It's no coincidence that the money will mostly be spent during the federal election campaign period.

Yet there's a significant and growing minority opinion in the labor movement. That opinion says that the bosses have two parties, and unions and workers should have one of their own. In Cleveland, in June this year, that minority founded this country's first nationwide labor party — of, by, and for trade unions and for workers in general. One of the Labor Party's chief organizers is Bob Wages, president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. As quoted

above, he stated: "I can't be bothered... with my colleagues [on the AFL-CIO Executive Council and in the leadership of most unions] who want to be joined at the hip to the Democratic Party."

Given the many attachments that bind the unions to the Democrats, it's clear that the Labor Party will not speak for a majority of unions overnight. A process will be required to win over the majority. Labor Party supporters will need to keep on *patiently explaining* why the unions need their own party independent of the bosses.

For now, however, the Labor Party is the best thing America's neediest children have going for them. □

ests sought to put together — the economy's good and looks to get better. From Big Business's point of view, more than incremental progress has been made on long-term fiscal and social policies. Their thinking is: Let's don't poke sleeping dogs with a too-sharp stick. We need moderation, civil discourse, and a stable two-party system that focuses on differences of nuance and tempo.

The two-party flimflam has been the core of stable capitalist rule for more than a century. The last time a new party came on the scene to win power was in the context of civil war. The bosses recognize there is widespread dissatisfaction with the political process and have been given some scares in recent years. They long for a return to normalcy.

In 1992 a ruling class maverick with a giant ego and deep pockets broke the Rule of Two and tapped into mass sentiment for political change. Creating an apparatus from scratch almost overnight, H. Ross Perot captured nearly 20 percent of the vote in the last presidential contest. His support spanned the ideological spectrum, uniting a broad array of discontent. Some blame him for Bush's defeat, though the evidence suggests he probably took roughly equal numbers of votes from both major candidates.

But Perot's major complaint with the political process was that it didn't sufficiently appreciate Perot. He has presented no unique program. In the 1994 elections he called on the voters to "fill the Congress with Republicans." His lack of a clearly differentiated program, his sometimes bizarre personal behavior, and his autocratic leadership style in the Reform Party, has led to a massive erosion of his 1992 base of support. This encouraged the Two Parties to dismiss him as having no realistic chance to win — although he will be on the ballot in every state — and excluding him from the big debates.

Another relatively well-financed party that appeared on virtually all the ballots is the Libertarian Party. Unlike the amorphous Reform Party, the devoutly ideological Libertarians

have a clear program. But a platform that calls for abolishing public schools, Social Security, and Medicare was not likely to pull even many protest votes, much less popular support.

Ralph Nader's campaign on the Green Party ticket attracted some media attention and generated some discussion and activity on the left. An effective independent crusader around a number of issues, Nader doesn't neatly fit into any traditional political pigeon-holes. He is an outspoken supporter of the fledgling Labor Party. The issues he has built organizations around — trade policies, health care, consumer protection, the environment — are important ones for the working class. But his positions on most other issues remained unknown. And while he allowed his name to be put on the ballot, he did little else in the way of campaigning. Only in California — one of the few major states where the Green Party was able to win him ballot status — was it possible that Nader might have an impact on the vote results. And it appeared there would be little organizational legacy left over at the end of this low-key effort.

For those determined to cast a vote for a socialist alternative the usual options were again available. The Socialist Party, Workers World Party, and — our sentimental favorite — the Socialist Workers Party, were running lackluster token campaigns, appearing on the ballot in a dozen or so states.

The Communist Party and Democratic Socialists of America, were busy trying to defeat "Dole-Gingrich" — that is, they supported Clinton.

The most promising working class political alternative — the Labor Party — did not run or endorse candidates — though most of its affiliated unions, like the rest of organized labor, backed Clinton. The LP is concentrating on raising the issues in its program and building for the future. That's probably the best any of us can do this time around. □

Between Walking and Running — Expect a Long March

by Bill Onasch

The author is president of the Kansas City Area Chapter of the Labor Party. This article will also appear in the second issue of the Labor Party News and Discussion Bulletin (LPNDB), an unofficial publication for Labor Party chapters whose address is P.O. Box 721, Madison, Wisconsin, 53701 (\$15 for 10 issues). The first issue of the LPNDB contained material by Eric Lerner that was sharply critical of present Labor Party policies. Bill Onasch replies to some of Lerner's arguments.

Our Founding Convention was a giant step forward from the low-key preparations of LPA. It was the most significant expression of sentiment for a working class party in the post-World War II era. The support of several of the most progressive and dynamic international unions provides both some modest resources and an image of "respectability," which will make it easier to get a hearing from the rest of the labor movement.

Still in Organizing Stage

But despite this impressive achievement, we have to recognize that we are a long way from having a genuine mass workers party. We are still more of an *organizing committee* to build such a party. Endorsement by unions representing over a million workers is not chopped liver, but we are still talking about less than 10 percent of union members — and, of course, the great majority of the working class is not in unions.

The national "infrastructure" is quite small — smaller than some self-described "vanguard" parties — and is dependent on the contributions of resources by a few not-so-wealthy unions. None of the chapters have full-time staffs or offices of their own.

Realistic Campaigns Needed

Our tasks should be dictated by this reality. We need to develop realistic campaigns to popularize our program, putting our views on the agenda in the ongoing political debates. We should have an active and visible presence in the labor movement and community struggles. We have to recruit new members and win additional union affiliations. And we must take seriously the job of raising money to support our party. It is my hope that discussions in the chapters, and in this newsletter/discussion bulletin, will focus primarily on these objectives.

But some seem engrossed with repeating

their speeches from the debates at the Founding Convention. Eric Lerner writes, "For...ANY campaign around our program to succeed we must have a clear prospect for running LP candidates." ["What Next For the Labor Party?" in the first issue of this newsletter.] What is the basis for this absolute assertion? "Because," Lerner writes, "our program is ideologically opposed to the politics of the Democrats and Republicans we cannot expect these capitalist parties to carry out our demands."

The "capitalist parties" didn't share the ideological program of the CIO, the unemployed movement, or armed farmer protests during the Great Depression. These parties showed little interest in discrimination against African Americans before the civil rights movement of the 1950s–1960s. There was bipartisan support for the Vietnam War until the massive antiwar movement of the 1960s–1970s. In all these cases, and we could cite many similar ones, substantial concessions were made to these movements by their ideological opponents — without these movements pursuing any significant independent electoral activity.

Do Politics = Elections?

If you carry Brother Lerner's assertion to its logical conclusion we would have to wait not only for the Labor Party to *run* candidates to advance our program — but for these candidates to be *elected*. This seemingly "radical" approach actually reinforces the "capitalist party" mind-set that politics = elections, that hustling votes, and lobbying elected officials, are the only worthwhile political activities.

Elections are just one aspect of politics — and are seldom really decisive. When we have gone beyond the organizing committee stage, and have built a real party, then election campaigns should become part of our rounded activities. I will write more about my views on our electoral strategy — which lie somewhere be-

tween the run-candidates-now and run-candidates-never extremes — at another time. For now, there is no question in my mind that the Convention decision to stay out of electoral campaigns was correct.

Brother Lerner's preoccupation with electoral politics dictates most of the rest of what he proposes for our party. We must have a convention next year — because it's necessary to meet ballot filing deadlines. Increased chapter participation in the Interim National Committee is necessary — because it's "the only way we can push the Party to run candidates in '98."

The Real Role for Chapters

The electoral focus is wrong at this time — and so is polarizing the party into hostile camps of unions versus chapters. In my view, the role of chapters should be to take the party to working people who are not members of affiliated unions and to help coordinate activities with affiliated unions in our local communities. Chapters are not, or at least should not be, a faction within the party.

We will of course have continuing discussion about electoral strategy. The Convention established an electoral strategy committee that will make recommendations to our next convention. What comes out of that committee and the convention will depend not so much on abstract arguments as on developments in the real world — above all the degree of growth and maturity of our party organization.

I didn't sign up to be part of another Peace and Freedom Party using labor rhetoric. We are looking to build a new type of party in this country that can attract and serve the working class in a wide range of political activities. There are no shortcuts, no viable get-rich-quick schemes. We have set out on a long march to build a mass working class party from the bottom up. □

Evaluating the Present Stage of the Labor Party Movement

by David Jones

The Labor Party convention, as we all know, met in Cleveland, Ohio, June 6–9, with nearly 1,400 accredited delegates present, as well as several hundred observers. By the time the convention met, several hundred local, city, and district union bodies had officially endorsed the convention call, including nine national or international union organizations. (“International” union, in this context, means a U.S.-based union with Canadian affiliates.)

Extensive information on the convention, as well as the opinions and reactions of many who attended it or heard about it, favorable and unfavorable, was presented in this magazine’s last issue (*BIDOM*, July-August 1996). That issue provided a useful, if incomplete, beginning in evaluating the significance of the convention, the actions it took and the forces which organized it, came to it, and left committed to carrying out the work projected by the convention.

One thing was clear: the convention participants had many different ideas of what a labor party is, or could be, and what it should do. This could hardly be otherwise. The last time there was any significant organized expression of labor party sentiment in the unions was in the immediate post-World War II period, 1945–46. Although there have been labor party initiatives in this country since the 1820s, most people, including most active unionists and even most political radicals, don’t know very much about them.

However, the opinion of some observers that there was confusion, disagreement, and uncertainty about the character of the projected labor party expressed by delegates at the convention, although true to some extent, must be qualified by reference to: (1) an analysis of the actual composition of the convention, including who did the talking and who did the voting; (2) an identification and evaluation of distinct, coherent, and sometimes opposed sets of ideas which underlay the discussion and debate; and (3) a determination of the relationship of one to the other.

Composition of the Convention

One succinct summary which I heard as soon as I arrived at the convention was that “All the noise is coming from the back of the hall and all the votes are in the front.” This had considerable merit as an introduction to the geography of the convention. The front of the hall was where the delegates officially representing unions were sitting. They were granted weighted votes based on the number of members in their organizations (one vote for every 500 union members or major fraction thereof). In the back were the local chapters of Labor Party Advocates (LPA). Each chapter was allowed two votes for its first 50 members, and an additional vote for every 50 more or major fraction thereof. Each chapter vote could be divided among five delegates (with 1/5 of a vote each), so that if a chapter had three votes it could send up to fifteen delegates. (This encouraged greater attendance at the convention.)

What was the composition of the chapters? Anybody who said they supported LPA’s goals could be a member of a chapter. Union membership was not required. Many chapters, with little or no financial resources for convention expenses, simply filled their quota of delegates with volunteers. Chapters did not necessarily have unified positions on disputed questions, and chapter delegates who spoke on the floor could simply express their personal positions, although ultimately the question of how to cast the chapter’s votes had to be settled by majority rule in the chapter delegation.

The union delegations spoke and voted much more uniformly, although these delegates were not bound to bloc voting on a number of important questions. They held credentials for a majority of the votes which could be cast at the convention. The largest union-based delegations were from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union (UE), the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE; representing railroad track workers), and a large group of building trades unions and federations, mainly from the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area. All four of these groups had been in LPA almost from the beginning.

A Reflection of How LPA Developed

This division of the convention was an expression of how LPA actually developed — really a development along parallel lines. This process followed one track in the unions which responded positively to LPA and another among political radicals in this country who orient to one degree or another toward the unions. The two processes overlapped somewhat, but not a great deal. Tony Mazzocchi, a long time national officer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, who has extensive connections in both camps, began to actively raise the labor party idea informally with a number of people throughout the country some ten years ago. He also found numerous opportunities to speak before union locals and executive bodies. Mazzocchi is a talented public speaker well known as a principled and effective union leader and his presentations were well received.

The Ideas Behind the Labor Party Movement

In January 1989, prior to his speaking at a public issues forum for unionists, Mazzocchi told an interviewer from a local newspaper, “I’m talking to a lot of rank and file people and surveying their interest, and I’m finding a lot of interest. I’m also the head of my union’s Committee on Political Education and I’ll use that to explore interest in a labor party.” What could a labor party do? “The first thing would be absolute repeal of the Taft Hartley Act” [which places various restrictions on union boycotts, picketing, and organizing]. “Secondly, we should take work site inspection and citation duties away from the feds and give them to workers.

What Is a Labor Party?

It might seem that the answer should be obvious. Throughout the English-speaking world, for example, a "labor party" is a basic part of the political landscape of almost every country except the United States and South Africa (if South Africa can be considered an English-speaking country). A "labor party" is a political party which is supported and financed primarily by the trade union movement and which expresses, in general, the aspirations of organized labor. It runs candidates for public office, and seeks support based on its claim to represent the interests of working people. The oldest labor party, in Great Britain was founded in the early part of the 20th century. Later, there were labor parties, with a capital "L," in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere. Canada has the New Democratic Party, supported by most Canadian labor unions, which contends against the two major capitalist parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. There are similar parties in most other countries. They are called "Labor," "Socialist," or Social Democratic and have an organic relationship to the organized labor movement in their respective countries.

All these parties contend for elective office against various capitalist and petty bourgeois parties, are supported by a substantial majority of the unions, and generally call for legislative and constitutional reforms in the interests of the working people. Many of them have been, for varying periods of time, the official governing parties in their respective countries. This is not a secret. You can read about it in *Time* or *Newsweek* or your local paper. You can see the British Labour Party backbenchers grilling the Tory ministers on C-SPAN.

So when the call went out from a sector of the U.S. trade union movement in 1991 for the formation of a "labor party" in the United States, why was anybody confused about what that was? There have been numerous

attempts in the U.S. this century to organize third party movements with progressive programs of social reform that were explicitly *not* labor parties, including quite a few within the last quarter of a century, like the Peace and Freedom Party, Common Cause, the Green Party, etc., which set out to create socially "all-inclusive" movements based on some minimum program of progressive or radical reforms.

A "labor party," on the other hand, by definition has its primary orientation toward the working class. This, by its very nature, suggests an underlying philosophical set of analyses and principles which compel a conclusion that such an orientation is necessary. Such an orientation suggests, at least, an opposite direction from "all-inclusive" politics, and, at least by strong implication, says society is divided into classes — classes with different interests. The call for the formation of such a party, it follows, is inescapably based on the conclusion that the interests of the laboring class are being abridged by another class (or classes) to the extent that a new course of action is required, and that the laboring class's interests are different enough from, or even opposed to, the interests of other classes to require the formation of its own independent class-based political movement.

To proceed from this premise to the creation of an organization like Labor Party Advocates in 1991, which sought financial and political support for its projected aims almost exclusively from organized labor, makes it even more clear what kind of party is intended.

Most politically informed people know that the existing labor parties in the industrial world are under intense pressure from the capitalist free-market offensive, watering down and retreating from some of the basic elements of their social-democratic reform programs, even formally repealing calls for such historic positions as

nationalization of basic industries. When in government they have often implemented austerity programs, such as, recently, in Ontario, and their professional politicians have tried to get away from basic working class and trade union constituencies in the interests of appealing for middle class electoral support.

The Tony Blair leadership of the Labour Party in Britain is an outstanding example of this turn toward the middle class. At the party's October 1996 convention Blair told the delegates: "Forget the past; no more bosses versus workers. We're on the same side; on the same team."

This sentiment is a fairly accurate description of the actual policy followed for most of this century by the British Labour Party's leadership, but Blair was only free to say it so openly now because the convention delegates no longer come overwhelmingly from British unions. As the *New York Times* reported (October 4, 1996): "Judging by the [convention delegates] on their way to corporate receptions in nearby hotels, the party that was once symbolized by the cloth cap is now a party of dark suits accessorized with cellular telephones." The *Times* failed to report whether the "dark suits" put down their cell phones and rose to sing the "Red Flag" (the party's official anthem) at the close of the convention.

It seems to me that in this international context, which the central organizers of the Labor Party in the U.S. are certainly aware of, to step forward with a call for an unambiguously named Labor Party, not some all-things-to-all-people Party for the General Good, is to move rather demonstratively and boldly against the current, not only of capitalist politics in general, but of social-democratic politics in particular, and a pretty clear statement of the character of the party they seek to build.

— D.J.

The right to act is a powerful right, and workers are capable of doing more."

At the January 1989 meeting, Mazzocchi reminded his listeners that former President Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat, had been floor leader in the Senate for the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. Johnson, of course was supported by labor for president in 1964, which,

Mazzocchi said, "indicates how far we have come from the time when repeal of Taft-Hartley was part of 'labor's program.'" He argued that the failure of "labor law reform" in 1978 (a much-sought objective of the union leadership at that time, an attempt to "level the playing field" and overturn some of the many legal obstacles to union activity which was sabotaged by Congressional

Democrats — for more on the 1978 dispute, see Frank Lovell's article in this issue) showed that the Democrats' record of betrayal of labor is not recent. At that time Mazzocchi was assigned as a leading OCAW lobbyist in Washington and witnessed the betrayal (as union leaders saw it) close-up. Mazzocchi has often said, in a pointed challenge to those who uphold the post-World War II era as a golden age of cooperation between capital and labor, that the only piece of pro-worker legislation passed by Congress since the New Deal era of the 1930s was OSHA (the Occupational Health and Safety Act), enacted in 1970 under the Republican Nixon administration.

Mazzocchi said that when he started work at Ford Motor Co. in 1946 after being discharged from the army, "There was no grievance procedure. We settled our grievances at the end of the day...or we didn't work." He explained that the unions had thought in national terms while production was being internationalized. "The world is an integrated economic entity," Mazzocchi said, and the unions' "Buy American" slogan is a fantasy. The unions "failed to challenge the prerogative of management to manage; we just bargained over the spoils." He said he has always been for a labor party and that he was "encouraged by the fact that 50% of the electorate didn't vote, because they feel that the two parties don't represent them. They are our constituency."¹

"The labor movement has to be a crusade," he said, "not just another institution." A labor party, Mazzocchi said, "is the framework for a new vision — a catalyst for organizing the unorganized."

Taken as a whole, Mazzocchi's motivation for a labor party, as summarized above, includes (1) exposing the two-party system as a long-standing fraud perpetrated on the working class; and (2) advocating independent political action by the unions while appealing to the working class as a whole, as well as raising ideas of (3) trade union direct action based on the initiative of the rank and file, (4) workers' control of industry, and (5) labor internationalism. It should not be necessary to say that none of these ideas are advocated by the majority leadership of U.S. unions.

In the 1980s, the climate for exploring labor party prospects became more favorable within the OCAW as a result of Mazzocchi's tireless advocacy and the election of Robert Wages as international president. Wages, a generation younger than Mazzocchi, has been an outspoken and effective advocate of the labor party campaign. In 1989, OCAW commissioned a scientific poll of its members' political attitudes. The results showed, among other things, that a substantial majority thought unions were doing a poor or very poor job in political action and thought the two major political parties were dominated by big business. Nearly half believed that neither party represented the interests of working people. Three out of four thought unions should stay politically involved and 70 percent of those 25-34 years old supported the formation of a labor party. Only in the 55-64 year age group did less than a majority favor a labor party. (Interestingly, only one out of four of the full-time union representatives agreed it was time to build a labor party.)

OCAW Takes the Lead

LPA was launched in 1991. Delegates representing some 90,000 oil and chemical refinery workers and others voted at OCAW's 1991 convention to support the initiative politically and financially. The delegates adopted a resolution for a "Crusade for a New Social Political and Economic Agenda for Working America." The resolution instructed the union leadership to provide support to Labor Party Advocates. It said that "more and more Americans

view the political arena as the property of the wealthy because Americans for the first time in the post World War II era feel that life will be more difficult for their children than it was for them." The resolution pointed to the joint responsibility of Democratic and Republican administrations in initiating and carrying forward a concerted anti-labor agenda ("two decades of relentless union busting by the federal government and its corporate allies") as the postwar economic boom ended after two decades of expansion. It explained that labor must assert itself to fill a "political vacuum" and it said that the OCAW "should not wait for others to begin the broad discussion necessary with the rank and file of our movement."

OCAW moved vigorously and systematically to implement the resolution. Serious efforts were made to educate and organize around LPA in OCAW locals. OCAW locals were encouraged to endorse LPA and to encourage members to pay \$20 and join LPA as individuals. The OCAW's Educational Department published and distributed an LPA organizing manual and a speakers training workbook to be used in local unions.

The Organizing Manual explained that "we have wasted enough of our time, money and energy working for the Democratic party...As workers we must face the fact that all scabs aren't out crossing picket lines. Some of the scabs are posing as friends of labor, taking union money and votes, and scabbing in Congress."

Why Labor Needs Its Own Party; What a Labor Party Would Be

The manual said that "business unionism" had strengthened "the ideology of the isolated individual and diminished ideas of solidarity among working people in general."

Workers in the U.S., the manual said, "did not develop a notion of themselves as members of a class with different interests from employers in the community and political arena, as well as the workplace..." This could be changed by the formation of a labor party, it said.

What will a labor party be like? The manual said, "Rank and file workers are essential to the formation of any truly representative labor party. LPA must be a mass organization of rank and file workers intent on building a labor party themselves." The party will engage in elections, the manual advised, but "the question of successfully engaging in elections is NOT whether we win, but whether we increase our numbers and our platform by participating." (Emphasis in the original.)

The manual explained that what is needed is a *labor* party, not some other kind of third party seeking reforms: "Only a movement clearly identified with the trade unions — which have proven their value to millions of working families for generations — will successfully mobilize this potentially large constituency."

It is evident that there had been a serious and sustained effort to systematically educate and organize at least the largest single component of the 1996 Labor Party convention, the OCAW delegates, around a definite conception of a labor party consistent with Mazzocchi's earlier motivation for the party: that is, developing the idea of the existing two-party system as a fraud, advocating a working class party based on the organized union movement, explaining the necessity for a broad mobilization of the union rank and file, and, while incorporating electoral activity into the party perspective, taking a realistic view of what is needed to present a credible challenge to the two major parties. The educational material prepared by the OCAW had also been made available to other LPA endorsing unions.

1. That "constituency" keeps growing. The turnout in the 1996 elections is reported to have been the lowest since 1924. — *Eds.*

The UE Comes on Board

The United Electrical Workers Union has advocated a labor party as part of its official program for many years. UE has not been a part of a national labor federation since it was expelled from the CIO in 1949 as "Communist dominated," along with 10 other unions, including the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), which represented, as it does today, dock workers at ports on the West Coast. The ILWU endorsed LPA and sent a good-sized delegation to the convention.

After the 1949 expulsions a competing organization, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), formed by CIO anti-Communists, made deep inroads into the UE's jurisdiction. UE, however, retained a solid base in heavy electrical manufacturing, with large locals at General Electric and Westinghouse, weathered the McCarthy period, and emerged still a viable union. When the AFL and CIO merged in 1955 the Communist Party demanded that its UE cadre participate in the merger by seeking affiliation with the conservative AFL Machinists Union. A majority of the UE's leadership refused to pursue this course and relinquish their organizational independence. Many of the UE leaders left the CP at that time. The UE, however, along with the ILWU and an influential minority of the leadership in the United Packinghouse Workers Union, and a few others remained outposts of the "old left" in the conservative American trade union movement.

The UE national leadership retained a strong sympathy for the Soviet Union, as did the ILWU. In 1980 the UE was undoubtedly the only U.S. union that debated a proposal to support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Since the time of the AFL-CIO merger the UE has been a democratic and militant organization compared to most U.S. unions — the UE national president's salary can be no higher than that of the highest paid worker represented by the union. The UE and the ILWU opposed the Vietnam war from the beginning and their official contingents marched in antiwar demonstrations. UE had the second largest delegation at the Labor Party convention. Since the convention UE has assigned a full-time national Labor Party organizer to build support within the union and has held special regional conferences for the same purpose.

BMWE

The third largest contingent at the convention was the BMWE. An old-line railroad craft union, BMWE was convinced to support LPA by an influential militant wing of its national leadership. The BMWE, the second largest of the eleven rail unions, has aggressively sought to find a way out of the trap of government-imposed labor contracts which has characterized the rail industry, with especially negative impact in recent years. The imposition of a concessionary national contract by a near-unanimous vote of Congressional Democrats and Republicans in 1991 provided fertile ground for labor party advocates within BMWE.

Jed Dodd, leader of the union's division in the northeastern United States, told an LPA conference in 1994 that "both [major political] parties represent wealth in this country. The only time we have increased our portion of the value that we produce is when we fight them in the streets."

"At our last [BMWE] convention," Dodd said, "we passed a resolution directing our president to defy the law if Congress orders us back to work [in the event of a strike]. I know that the Democratic Party will...move to have us thrown in jail for defying Congress...Brothers and sisters, in addition to massive street action, we need a political organization that clearly supports the majority of people in the United States...Without a response such

Labor Party Message Keeps Spreading

At the October convention of the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) rank-and-file delegates supported a motion to "recognize" the Labor Party, overriding the opposition of their international president. (We hope to have more about that in a future issue.)

And in early November, the actress Brett Butler, a Labor Party member, appeared on the David Letterman show (a program seen by millions on one of the major TV networks). Butler, who plays an oil refinery worker — an independent-minded single woman — in the show "Grace under Fire" was asked about the election just past. She said she supported the Labor Party and told viewers about it, including why the newly founded party did not run candidates in this election.

The second issue of the Labor Party's newspaper *Labor Party Press*, edited by National Writers Union member Laura McClure, has come out. It includes an effective article by Adolph Reed demonstrating the many ways in which the Labor Party convention was better and more democratic than the conventions of the Democrats and Republicans. (To join the LP and receive the paper, send \$20 for one year to PO Box 53177, Washington DC 20009.)

as Labor Party Advocates, we cannot reverse management's one-sided class war." (Full text of speech in *BIDOM*, February 1995.)

Building and Construction Trades Unions

The fourth major union contingent at the convention was from building and construction trades unions, often seen as the most politically conservative in the U.S. labor movement. Although San Francisco has long been identified with protest politics, the delegates from the six Bay Area building trades councils were not ex-student radicals, but typical of construction workers everywhere. Their support of the labor party movement has developed over a number of years, based on their own experiences and persistent education by labor party supporters in their own organizations. Other building trades organizations represented at the convention included the California and Kentucky State Councils of Carpenters, the Painters District Council from Cleveland, Ohio, and others.

There were, of course, many other unions which sent delegates and which represented significant and diverse constituencies, such as the California Nurses Association and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. However, the four groups mentioned above were, in effect, the dominant forces which came together at the convention, as is generally acknowledged. I have focused at length on these groups, their histories, their composition, and the general attitudes toward independent political action by labor that have been expressed within their organizations because without assessing these factors it is impossible to really grasp the underlying dynamic of this development or reach any reliable conclusions about its present and future.

Negative Comments

Sweeping generalizations about the meaning of the convention, the intentions of the organizers, the value and substance of its decisions and so on, mostly negative, such as those of *Nation* magazine columnist Alexander Cockburn, reported in the last issue of this magazine, are impressionistic, selective, and not of much value. Cockburn, an upper-class British leftist who now resides in the Marijuana Belt of rural Northern California surrounded by exurbanized hippies and pot farmers, is not quite the oracular authority on the labor movement that he thinks he is.

Cockburn, relies on second-hand information to dismiss the convention with a series of quotes attributed to unidentified disheartened individuals who attended the convention.

The following are typical: "conventioners asked each other: how can it be a third party if it's not going to run candidates?... don't the organizers understand that to Americans, parties mean personalities and programs and elections?... many rank-and-filers left Cleveland still supporting the 'party' but grumbling, in the words of one black unionist and community worker from Oakland, 'I'm never going to be able to sell this to my people back home'... no less than three highly experienced labor organizers [not delegates] separately confided to [Cockburn's informant] that questions of the party's base and its aims were unresolved."

"Maybe the Labor Party," Cockburn opines, "is nothing more than a bid by Wages and the OCAW to build some backup muscle for the union and its allies as a 'progressive' pressure group inside the AFL-CIO."

The Charge That Convention Was "Undemocratic"

Cockburn lamented that "it would be nice to say that the Cleveland convention debated these issues in a democratic manner, but, alas Bob Wages... seemed petrified at the prospect of serious debate on any but the most peripheral matters." As anyone who attended the convention knows, this is simply false. If the democracy at the convention was distorted by anything, it was not by the skilled and respectful convention chairpersons (Wages was only one of several) but by the relentless microphone-hogging of various radicals, essentially representing no one but themselves and/or their grouplets.

Mike Munoz, a leading labor party organizer and a Carpenters union official in the Bay Area, told the *Labor Party Press*, "I thought the convention was amazingly democratic. There was intense debate on many issues, pro and con. The debates were intelligent and passionate — exactly what happens at political conventions or at many union conventions."

The Electoral Issue

It is true, as Cockburn says, that one of the central debates of the convention was over whether the Labor Party should make plans to run candidates in forthcoming elections. Most of the union delegates who spoke opposed this, almost entirely on practical grounds, and most of the radicals supported it. The only notable exception to this division was a sizable segment of the ILWU delegation, which apparently hoped to add Labor Party endorsement to the credentials of some local "progressive" candidates in California.

One of the most succinct answers to the argument for immediate electoral activity by the party was given by Kevin Hussey, a BMW delegate, printed in the post-convention issue of the *Labor Party Press*. Hussey says, "What I think was most important was that we stuck to the idea of organizing rather than running candidates who don't have a chance in hell of winning. In my union, we'd love to run candidates — we're affected more by these rotten politicians than anyone else, because they constantly interfere in our business as rail employees. But even so, we're realistic — we know that we can't run candidates right now. First we have to build a bigger base — get two or three million people signed up and then maybe you can swing some elections."

It's plain that this delegate's fundamental criteria for judging the merits of this question are how it affects the longer-term prospects of building the party and expanding its base in the unions.

Mixed Motives for Running or Endorsing Candidates

It is true that proposals for running Labor Party candidates were supported by a number of delegates with union credentials, although from perspectives as divergent as seeking a break from the Democratic Party or looking for labor credentials for a Democrat running as an "independent" progressive. The *de facto* coalition of these two tendencies on the convention floor necessarily could not be based on any clear principle and it was deservedly defeated by the votes of delegates like Kevin Hussey.

If your initial principle for *this* labor party is that it must be an organic expression of the unions, the question of running candidates is practical, not principled. Perhaps, at another time, under different conditions, this might not be true. But the essence of politics is understanding where you are and what you're dealing with. The underlying issue, the one Cockburn claimed was unresolved by the convention, is whether effective party building can result from running so-called Labor Party candidates with no broad base of support.

Running Labor Party candidates who, by definition, seek to speak, not only in the name of the working class, but of *the organized labor movement*, would be a self-evident absurdity at this stage in the party's development. The reality is that even if such a resolution had obtained a majority at the convention, the endorsing unions would not have gone along with it. The radicals would have only captured themselves, thus guaranteeing, not a break from the Democratic Party, but a stillborn labor party. All that would have been left for them would have been some negotiations over which so-called "progressives" the LP would endorse.

It is clear that the unions supporting the LP will not, at this point, initiate independent labor electoral activity on their own, and that, at a minimum, they see a broader base within the labor movement as a prerequisite for such action. It is not a given that even Wages and Mazzocchi could persuade the OCAW to enter into such a project at this point, especially in isolation from the AFL-CIO. (See the following article by Don Fowler about Wages's endorsement of Clinton.)

What the Convention Accomplished

What did the convention do? It adopted a *program* and a *constitution*, it widened its base within the labor movement, and it began to crystallize a broader union-based political leadership.

The *program* calls for (1) taxing the rich, (2) guaranteed adequate annual income, (3) free health care, (4) expanded public provisions of health care, education, mass transportation, (5) a 32-hour work week with no loss in pay, (6) the repeal of anti-labor legislation, to list only some. The *constitution* defines the party as an organization of the working class, employed and unemployed, native and immigrant. It structures the party so that it is anchored in the labor movement and controlled and financed by the affiliated unions. It sets out electoral activity as something that comes "only after recruiting and mobilizing workers with sufficient collective resources to take on an electoral system dominated by corporations and the wealthy."

The adoption of the constitution and program by a large majority were decisive steps towards resolving "questions of the party's base and its aims."

It is clear that there is a continuity of ideas expressed in the program and constitution of the party that is consistent with the perspective initially put forward by Mazzocchi and further developed within LPA, especially with the political and financial support of OCAW. It is clear that these ideas form a unified and coherent whole and that a leadership has been assembled from the

unions based, to a significant degree, on *political agreement* with this perspective and its underlying premises.

Structure of Convention

Some Labor Party supporters with roots in the radical left, and, perhaps, considering themselves the historic custodians of the labor party idea, were disconcerted by the structure of the convention. Mike McCallister, writing in the last issue of this magazine (“A View from the Hinterlands,” *BIDOM*, July-August 1996), provides a good representation of this. McCallister, a local officer of a public employees union and chairperson of the Madison, Wisconsin-based chapter of LPA, reports that he rode to the convention on a chartered bus with many of the 45 members of his chapter who attended. “Politically, our delegation was diverse, though mostly to the ‘left’ of the LPA leadership,” he says.

McCallister says, “You could tell the minute you walked into the convention hall that the primary endorsing unions...were determined to keep control of the weekend’s events. [Those] delegates...were seated at the front of the hall. The second-class endorsing locals were in the middle and the untouchable chapter delegates were at the back.” There was “tight control” exerted over the convention by the dominant organizations, he says. The chairperson of the first session was “heavy-handed.”

The tendentious description of the chapter delegates as “untouchable” is introduced at the beginning of the article for no apparent reason, and with no supporting facts, other than that they were seated at the rear of the hall. Combined with the characterization of “tight control” and “heavy-handed” chairing, the initial impression presented by the author is that the convention was undemocratic.

What is this all about? McCallister says that about half the Madison delegation were not delegates from union locals. It would follow that some 20–25 people were chapter delegates or alternate delegates. Perhaps McCallister’s negative remarks reflected a feeling among these people that this was unfair and that they should have had more votes. If so, was this position to the “left” of the LPA leadership’s position?

Whether the chapter delegates were “untouchable” or not, they certainly weren’t inaudible. Even on a strictly per capita basis they had the greatest proportion of the convention speaking time during plenary sessions. Some of their motions were ruled out of order. But all the major positions represented at the convention were moved, seconded, extensively debated, and voted on. And no one has demonstrated that those radicals who spoke most often on the floor represented a consensus even of the delegates from the LPA chapters.

Any informed person who attended the convention should have known that the “primary endorsing unions” were going to dominate the convention. They organized it and they paid for it. The rules of the convention, promulgated many months in advance, explicitly provided that there would be weighted voting. Everything Mazzocchi, LPA, and its parent union, OCAW, said and did over the years made it clear that the axis of the projected labor party would be the affiliated unions.

Labor Party Must Be “Dependent on Unions”

The conception that a labor party based on the unions can serve as an indispensable vehicle for developing and mobilizing support for advanced ideas for social change in the interests of the working class as a whole, that it can do so in a form that can be readily understood and supported by workers with union consciousness, and that the very fact of its formation qualitatively enlarges class consciousness is an idea that has found continuous expression in a politically mature and militant wing of the labor movement in

this country for decades. James P. Cannon, a militant socialist working class leader, articulated this idea over many decades. “The labor party movement is much stronger than its formal expression. The invincible strength of the movement for a labor party in America derives in the first place from the objective necessity for such a development.”

“The minimum condition,” Cannon said in 1948, “is that the [labor] party must be really based on the unions and *dependent upon them*, and at least ultimately subject to their control as to program and candidates.” (Emphasis added.)

“The danger,” he continued, “is that we may get impatient... and [impatience may] impel us to seek shortcuts to a labor party, or some wretched substitute for it, over the head of the official trade union movement.”

Criticism About Democracy

The present criticisms about “democracy” are subsumed in the question of what kind of party. A labor party organized and financed by the unions will be run by the unions. Affiliated unions will be allotted voting strength proportionately. If this is the kind of party you support you should withdraw the criticisms about the “primary endorsing unions” controlling the Labor Party convention. That’s the whole point. Who else is supposed to control the convention?

“The delegates,” someone says. “One person, one vote.” Leaving aside the obvious consideration that this would completely undermine the basis of the party as one that is a direct expression of the affiliated unions, is it more democratic for Greg from the Gripsters Mill chapter with 50 members to get one vote, for Karen from Local 123 with 500 members to get one vote — and for Bob from OCAW with 90,000 members to get one vote?

McCallister says that “most of the grunt work of organizing the party” is carried out in chapters. This is radical myopia. Most of the work of organizing was carried out in the affiliated unions with their tens of thousands of members. They carried out extensive education in hundreds of locals and brought the most delegates to the convention.

Discussion on the “Left”

The real problem with most of the published discussion of the convention by the “left” is that it is not really about the convention, or the Labor Party — it is about themselves. They were disappointed, they didn’t get called on, they got ruled out of order, etc. The logic of their objections is that labor should have called a convention of the left to tell the unions what to do. The hundreds of delegates who sat with the international, district, and local union delegations and were part of an *organized intervention* into the convention by their unions are simply missing from these discussions and reports. They are just figures in the background, like the workers painted on the banners that hung in the convention hall — just a bunch of hand-raisers for the cynical union bureaucrats who orchestrated the convention.

Nevertheless, these faceless delegates spoke on the floor of the convention and were able to articulately motivate the proposals supported by their organizations. What I have tried to show in this article is that the dominant unions had arrived at their support of the labor party effort as the result of successful internal struggles which ultimately, as Frank Lovell says in another article in this issue (“Class Education and the New Labor-Intellectual Alliance”), derive from “serious changes in the social and political consciousness of millions of union members and unorganized workers,” stimulated, as he says, by hard-fought union battles in the 1980s and early 1990s “which, even when defeated, contrib-

Letter from Rank-and-File Rail Worker

Reader of "The Militant" Objects to Its Labor Party Coverage

The following letter appeared in the August 19 *Militant*. It confirms what we too observed: a strong rank-and-file presence in the union delegations at the Labor Party convention.

The article by Susan Zárate on the Labor Party convention (July 22, 1996) seemed to me to be written to make the facts fit her already preconceived negative notion of the convention. Her two comments regarding rank and file participation ("relatively few") and solidarity with ongoing labor disputes ("little talk") seemed based on poor investigation.

As a rank and file delegate from the rail industry with 20 years on the job and real knowledge of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way delegation at the convention, I

can strongly say that the majority of that delegation was made up of working railroaders. Many, like myself, are elected to some minor union office but work full time on the job. Are we then part of some "bureaucratic officialdom"? Other delegations seemed to me to have many working members. I did not carry out a scientific count, but I bet Susan Zárate didn't either.

Also I wonder if sister Zárate was in the convention when the stirring rally for the Detroit News strikers was being held, includ-

ing the loudly proclaimed resolution to call for and help organize a "National Labor March" in Detroit, which was adopted with a huge shout of "yes" from the convention floor?

I agree that the Labor Party is weak and misguided in many areas, but I think it deserves a much more careful analysis than sister Zárate gave it. Please do more homework and write again.

—Phil Amador
Cincinnati, Ohio

uted to a growing restiveness in union ranks, a desire to fight back, to stop allowing the class war to remain one-sided." (See Jed Dodd's remarks quoted above.) The strongest of them had carried out extensive education and organization of their members around the labor party perspective, and a fairly impressive collective understanding of what this was all about had been achieved among a significant layer of active members of their organizations.

I think what is hardest for many of the "left" to assimilate is that the "primary endorsing unions" not only "controlled" the convention, but that they *were* the convention, they *were* LPA, and they *are* the Labor Party organization founded by the action of the convention. The "left" didn't organize them — they organized the "left." That's what the chapters were for.

Whatever the limitations of this Labor Party, it is without a doubt, a creation of the *organized labor movement*.

A Political Tendency in the Unions

It seems to me that in order to understand what is going on here it is necessary to recognize that Wages, Mazzocchi, and the emerging leadership of the LP represent a developing *political tendency* within the unions. This tendency is defined, not by adding up OCAW plus UE plus BMW, as though these were monolithic bureaucratic blocs, but by the synthesis of program, activity, and leadership that has been developed since this effort emerged as a distinct, organized movement within the unions in 1991. The ideas which it advocates, and the methods employed in organizing others around them, are, at the least, consistent with and not opposed to, a class-struggle perspective.

It is not necessary to exaggerate this or to idealize the leaders of the Labor Party to see a crucial difference between them and the leadership of the AFL-CIO. The difference is there, and most significantly, it has crystallized into organizational form and is seeking the support of rank-and-file union members.

Different from Sweeney

John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, addressed the Democratic Party convention in August. Just because 28 percent of the delegates to the week-long Chicago convention were reportedly union members and the 12-million member AFL-CIO had raised about \$35 million to help elect Democratic candidates, Sweeney didn't get to hog the microphone. He only got five minutes to speak. (Maybe this is the model of democracy some of the critics of the Labor Party convention had in mind.)

"What do working families want?" Sweeney asked. "They don't want to run the Congress or the White House or the political parties," he said (emphasis added). "They want the kind of America Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and a new Congress will deliver." The Labor Party was not at the forefront of his or the Democratic Party's concerns, but it remains a small dark cloud on the horizon. Not only have several AFL-CIO affiliates endorsed the Labor Party; the idea is out there in the grass roots.

Prior to the LP founding convention, Sweeney was asked by the editor of one small labor paper what he thought about the labor party. The editor wrote: "...the Labor Party...has a motto. The bosses have two parties, we should have at least one of our own. Amen. I asked AFL-CIO President John Sweeney what he thought of the labor party effort and he replied that it had been tried before, never worked, and that we needed to work within the system before we change it from the outside. Oh, puke!... We're taken for granted in the two party system because those in power look at each other and say, 'We don't have to cotton to labor's interests because where else do they have to go?' I say go to Cleveland." (*Duluth Labor World*, May 22, 1966.)

Although Sweeney campaigned for federation president as a "New Voice for American Workers," his position on labor's subordinate place in politics and society is nothing new. George Meany, first president of the newly merged AFL-CIO, told the federation's founding convention in 1955 that he disavowed any AFL-CIO intention to "control" the workers' votes, to build a labor party, or even to take over any of the existing parties. (See Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step: Twenty Years of the CIO*, p. 517.)

A High Degree of Consciousness

It is quite interesting that the labor party movement has emerged initially from old-line blue collar, industrial unions, although that is rapidly evolving with the participation of groups like the California Nurses Association and others. Aside from the UE, and to a much lesser extent, the ILWU, the leadership of the movement is not based on the "old left," but comes from unions like OCAW, the BMW, and the building trades unions, which have no tradition at all of that kind of leadership.

Still, it came from somewhere. It is hard to avoid seeing a high degree of consciousness behind this whole effort. It is a highly favorable beginning for the first organized expression of labor party sentiment in the American unions in 50 years, and for the development of a class struggle tendency. □

Robert Wages's Endorsement of Clinton

Its Meaning for the Prospects of Building a Labor Party

by Don Fowler

Robert Wages, president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW) and a central leader of the Labor Party, addressed "An Election Year Message" to his union's 90,000 members in the September-October issue of the union's journal, the *OCAW Reporter*.

Wages reviewed the union's continuing efforts to build a labor party and then went on to discuss the November presidential election. He said that the Congress elected in 1994 is "the Congress of Bob Dole" and that this Congress had "declared class war on working people." He listed some of the anti-labor actions Congress took in the last two years, including cutting back on labor standards, Medicare, environmental and consumer protection laws, while giving tax cuts and access to workers' pension funds to the big corporations and the rich. What to do? Wages said: "While I'm committed to building a real world alternative to the political system that gives us too little to choose from...I intend...in November to vote for President Clinton. And it won't be that difficult to do, given the choices I have."

Wages, however, doesn't just say that Dole and the Republicans are anti-labor, itemize their crimes against working people, and let it go at that. And he doesn't say that Clinton and the Democrats are our "friends." He says they are — evil. "It is certainly a political truism of the era we live in," Wages wrote, "that, as we are confronted, time after time, with making a choice between the lesser of two evils, then we are inevitably going to end up with — what else? Evil. An evil this time, a worse evil next time...and so on."

At LP Convention: A Different Message

Wages's keynote speech to the Labor Party convention in June had a somewhat different thrust. He told the delegates that the convention's task was "to organize a political party that represents the working class. And I can't be bothered, quite frankly," he said, "with my colleagues who want to be joined at the hip to the Democratic Party."

Wages said that, unlike Samuel Gompers, "we're not going to sell out to the bosses and call ourselves non-partisan in order to do it. Because, I make no bones about it, brothers and sisters, I'm partisan. I'm against them what are trying to kill me."

Wages warned against those who say, "Oh, gosh, maybe this isn't the time." "If we're going to take on the entrenched political powers

in this country," he said, "we're going to have to out-organize them."

There is no reason to doubt that Wages sincerely believes what he said both at the convention and in his election message. There is also no reason to believe that there was any doubt in Wages's mind when he spoke at the convention that he and the OCAW would endorse Clinton's reelection.

Wages's election message implies that he fears that at least some of the union's members may be swayed by appeals to reactionary prejudices and vote for Republicans. "Don't be misled by hysterical cries around the infamous 'Four G's': gays, guns, God, and government," he urged. On the other hand, his speech to the Labor Party convention made no mention of future endorsements of Democratic Party politicians and only warned against one "G": Gompers-ism.

Gompers and the "Non-Partisan" Policy

Wages's understanding of Gompers's policy is one-sided and apparently based on a superficial reading of labor history. Nevertheless, it is an illustration of one of the dynamics of an authentic labor party movement: it inevitably engenders a wider discussion of the history of the labor movement, including its internal development and struggles over policy. Supporters of varying positions within the movement will naturally seek to anchor their views in historic precedent. These debates begin to open the door to a wider education of the rank and file in the true history of the working class, and, it follows, of society as a whole. This is profoundly progressive.

Wages is correct that the policies he espouses are not the same as the "non-partisan" political stand of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) under its founding president, Samuel Gompers. While AFL officials sometimes gave personal endorsements to candidates, the federation itself formally supported only one presidential candidate from the time of its founding, in 1885, until Franklin Roosevelt's reelection bid in 1936. In 1924, the AFL endorsed Progressive-Republican Wisconsin Governor Robert M. LaFollette for president. The AFL had no formal coalition with the Democratic administration until 1936, the fourth year of Roosevelt's first term.

In contrast, for the past 60 years most of organized labor has been emphatically "partisan" — that is, officially for the Democratic Party. Also in 1936 the then-influential Com-

munist Party U.S.A., on orders from Stalin's Kremlin and Comintern, supported Roosevelt.

It had been, up to that time, a principle of the anticapitalist working-class parties (socialist, communist, anarchist, etc.) that the Democratic and Republican parties were bosses' parties and, as such, it was inconceivable for a class-conscious worker to cast a vote for their candidates. Even in this country, tens of thousands of workers were imbued with this conviction. The class consciousness of these tens of thousands was a living, material reality, and all potential for organizing for progressive social change ultimately rested on it. This was the vanguard of the working class.

For these workers, and for the organizations they influenced, class consciousness was the framework for evaluating all questions related to the interests of the working class, and the expansion of class consciousness was the ultimate guarantee that the workers could combine, organize, and fight for a better world. It is a measure of the complexity and contradictory nature of the actual development of social struggle that the unprecedented proletarian upsurge of the mid-1930s was also a qualitative turning point in expunging class consciousness *in politics* from the American working class for generations — as the union bureaucracy, with the complicity of the leaders of the largest radical workers' organizations, the Communist and Socialist parties, turned from Gompers's "non-partisan" policy, not to independent labor political action, but to concerted, organized support for the bosses' Democratic Party.

1936: "Lesser Evilism" in Politics

The "lesser evil" concept, as it applies here, arose specifically in American politics during the 1936 presidential elections, and was part of the transition from "non-partisan" to "partisan" politics on the part of organized labor. It wasn't too hard for the old-guard union bureaucrats to simply say, "Vote for Roosevelt. He is our friend." They didn't go in much for theorizing. As Jim Cannon said, the union bureaucrat "works neither with hand nor brain, but only with the larynx."

But for the Communist Party, which was not an insignificant part of the U.S. labor movement in 1936, it had always been a matter of principle, or at least policy, that the Democrats and Republicans were the bosses' parties, and it was impermissible to vote for their candidates. The CP, from the time of its founding in 1919, had always called for independent working-class political action, and campaigned vigorously in the 1920s for a labor party. More importantly, the workers who supported the CP were imbued with this idea. So the CP, while running its own token candidate for president, came up with the slogan, "Defeat Landon at all costs" (Landon being the 1936 Republican candidate). "At all costs" meant, without saying so, "Vote for Roosevelt." Why? He was the "lesser of two evils."

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The Cycle of Poverty?

by Peter Kellman

The following article is a slightly revised version of testimony given by the author, a resident of North Berwick, Maine, to "The Commission to Study Poverty Among Working Parents" in Portland, Maine, on October 1, 1996.

The idea that poor people are the only people involved in the cycle of poverty is an absurd notion. When a storm over Africa creates a hurricane that devastates the east coast of North America we understand that the devastation created by the storm emerged from worldwide weather patterns. We do not blame the victims of the storm for the tragedy. We understand that the storm didn't just appear over the east coast to punish people.

Like the worldwide weather patterns that created a storm in Africa, that led to a hurricane, that disrupted life patterns on the east coast of North America, cycles of poverty do not come out of a vacuum to descend on one segment of the population. Levels of poverty are directly related to levels of wealth. To understand how great wealth is accumulated is to understand how poverty is created.

What Happened to Poverty in World War II?

During the great depression of the 1930s, when official unemployment was 30 percent, the state of California posted border patrol agents to keep jobless U.S. citizens from other states from entering California. When the country started gearing up for World War II, California not only opened its border but recruited people from other states to come work in its war industries. What happened to the cycle of poverty during World War II? Gone. Evaporated. All of a sudden that "shiftless, no-good" class of poor farmers from Appalachia and Oklahoma, who couldn't grow crops to put food on the table and make payments on the land, became national heroes serving in the army or working at defense plants.

Poverty and obscene wealth are directly related. The very rich need the poor as an anchor on the middle class. The anchor is used in two ways. When workers organize to get more of the wealth they create, one of the ways they exercise power is through the collective bargaining process. The bottom line of this process for workers is the strike, and for corporations it's the lockout. In either case, the corporation needs people desperate for work to break a strike or to work during a lockout. If there is full employment and people are earning a living wage, it is hard to find people willing to scab on another person's job.

Another way poverty is linked to wealth is best seen through the workings of the Federal Reserve Board. It raises and lowers interest rates as a way of keeping the unemployment rate above 5 percent. An unemployment rate of 5 percent means that at least 7 million people will

not find jobs. Unemployment at this level ensures that there will not be competition among employers for workers, which would cause some employers to raise wages to attract workers away from other employers. When unemployment doesn't work to create enough competition among workers for jobs in a particular field, the employers get government to train more workers so there will be more people trained and available for work than there are jobs.

It is interesting to note that the U.S. government forces corporations to compete with each other when it comes to market share (the Sherman antitrust act), but it will do nothing to force them to compete for workers. In fact, the corporations constantly get not only workers to compete for jobs; they get towns, states, and counties to compete for those same jobs. At this level, governments compete to help corporations externalize cost (by offering them tax breaks, etc.). This is also a big part of the poverty cycle.

Subsidies to Corporations and the Rich

When governments — that is, taxpayers — subsidize corporations with tax breaks and special training programs it means that money will not go into affordable housing, health care, or education. Then to make matters worse, those that can afford to pay the most in taxes are let off the hook because it is said that the less the rich have to pay in taxes, the more they will invest — thus, supposedly, helping create jobs. (This brings us, incidentally, to the major financial institutions, another key part of the wealth cycle.)

So we rely on the rich to invest. Great. But the rich demand a very high rate of return on their investments, which forces the corporations to cut wages and "downsize," so they can pay an exorbitant rate of return to those who already have more than they need. Meanwhile those who have less, get less, and some get nothing at all.

It is not by accident that one in five Americans who work 40 hours a week or more don't make enough to bring their families out of poverty, that since 1979 the American standard of living has dropped from first to thirtieth in the world, while the richest 20 percent of our population controls 85 percent of the wealth. This means that 80 percent of us are fighting for a piece of the leftover 15 percent of the wealth. When that 15 percent drops to 14 percent it means that the same number of people are competing for a smaller piece of the pie. This means

that those least able to compete are forced out of the game. That is the cycle of poverty.

One of the standard responses to poverty is that we need more training. But if we train more people for jobs that are not there, isn't the net result that people with higher skill levels are now competing for fewer jobs? And may that explain why one-fourth of college graduates presently must take jobs that do not require a college degree and a young male worker today earns 25 percent less than his dad earned at the same age?

What Is the Solution to Poverty in America?

Poverty is a tool created by a *permanent overclass* that uses its wealth and power to take more wealth from those who create it. Along those lines, I offer two proposals which, taken together, will not solve our problems, but will help some people in the short run and in the long run will force us to rethink our views on the causes of poverty.

- 1 Introduce legislation which revokes the privilege of any corporation to do business in the state of Maine if it uses "permanent replacements" during a strike.
- 2 Introduce legislation that would require a corporation to accept a *good faith offer of sale* to workers or a community affected by a potential plant closure. This good faith offer would have to be accepted any time a corporation puts a facility up for sale or when a corporation uses a facility as a "cash cow," that is, starts to milk profits from a facility without putting resources back into it. The recent Hathaway case is a good example.

How would introducing this legislation create a debate to help us rethink the cause of poverty and the solutions to end poverty?

Property vs. Pursuit of Happiness

The preamble of the Maine Constitution states in part: "We the people of Maine, in order to establish justice, insure tranquility, provide for our mutual defense, *promote our common welfare*...do establish the following Constitution for the government of the same." Then under section 1, Natural Rights, it states in part: "All people are born equally free...and have certain rights, among which are those of...*possessing and protecting property and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness*." Because the wealthy have historically controlled our government and have been an overwhelming influence on the judiciary, most judicial interpretations have put the property rights of the few above the *common welfare and pursuing and obtaining happiness* of the many.

At the heart of "striker replacement" and "good faith offer of sale" legislation is the concept that the common welfare is more important than the right of a few to accumulate property if the use or misuse of that right interferes with the *common good* and with the pur-

suit of the many in *obtaining safety and happiness*.

Finally, Section 2 of Article 1 states: "Power inherent in people. All power is inherent in the people; all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit; they have therefore an unalienable and indefea-

sible right to institute government, and to alter, reform, or totally change the same, where their *safety and happiness* require it."

We need to recognize that our society, our government, our schools, our training programs, our financial institutions, and even our families are being run in the interest of the

wealthy few who control the major transnational corporations. Our safety and happiness require that we now rethink and reform our government to deal with the cycle of the accumulation of wealth and power by the few to the detriment of the many. □

What Focus for Labor Party?

Two Key Issues: Jobs and Health Care for All

by Brian King

The author chairs the outreach committee of the Labor Party, Seattle chapter.

Let's pose a question: Why build a labor party? To some sisters and brothers, it may seem frivolous to ask something like this. I mean, isn't the answer obvious to all of us who are working hard to build the LP? I'm not so sure. At least I'm not at all confident that there is general agreement within the LP on how to change the course of political history here in the U.S.

A slightly different question may help point the way toward an answer to the first one: What's a labor party for and what can it do that other organizations that are already leading progressive movements in this country cannot do?

I believe that the LP is important to support because it has the potential to:

- 1 Build a mass, class-based movement of working people (roughly 85 percent of the U.S. population). A movement that will fight for a just and fair society from the point of view of the people who build, fix, and service America every day.
- 2 Reverse the current trend toward stagnation and decline in the labor movement by mobilizing the unorganized, who will find new ways to form and join unions as they are brought together by the Labor Party for the battles to come.

It seems to me that we can move toward accomplishing these two goals by standing for issues and ideas that the large majority of our base — all working people — consider vital to their lives. Issues such as a constitutional right to a job at a living wage, and a universal, single-payer health care system sweep across the appeals to divisions and particular interests among workers that so often leave average people thinking; "That sounds fine, but it's not going to help me."

The Labor Party needs to establish itself as a powerful voice for the whole working class of our country. The idea of demanding a constitutional right to a decent job is such a new and exciting concept! It will enable us to engage in a tremendous amount of grass roots organizing,

and it will show people that the LP is fighting for all workers, together.

There are many, many worthy issues in our country that apply mostly to people in particular groups. Often, these issues don't ignite the kind of passion outside these groups that is needed to unite enough people for a long and difficult struggle. Movements for the rights of veterans, disabled people, women, lesbians and gays, immigrants, and people of color, to name just a few, command our full respect and support. But should they be our central, front burner issues?

Our positions in favor of these various movements are stated clearly in the LP program, as they should be. In the "Call for Economic Justice," points 4 and 5, we call for, among other things, an end to the specific types of bigotry that still plague our national life, and for full reproductive services in a universal health care system. Without these planks, we would risk losing much of the enthusiasm and energy we now receive from members of the LP who feel very deeply about these important matters. We would also jeopardize our outreach to the essential communities these movements represent.

The Right to a Living-Wage Job

Here's another point to consider about a campaign for a right to a living-wage job. The lack of decent jobs often lies at the very core of the concerns of particular group movements. If everybody felt the security of a constitutional right to a job, it would become infinitely more difficult to whip up anti-minority group hysteria. The divisiveness that leads to things like the despicable, anti-immigrant, and anti-poor welfare bill recently signed by Clinton, would begin to heal.

If we are to wage this kind of campaign successfully, we'll have to give it our full attention, especially during the coming period while we're still a relatively small organization. If we bounce from one deserving issue to another, in coalition after coalition, we'll never have the energy or numbers we need to establish our-



selves as the party of all the working people here in the U.S.

It's important to remember that if we don't endorse or participate in a coalition that is sponsoring a good activity, it doesn't mean that we're against what the sponsoring group is trying to do. We should continue to announce these important events at our meetings and encourage LP members to attend. I believe, however, that we should use most of our valuable organizational time to work on building the Labor Party.

Movements and groups centered around particular issues have long been the dominant mode of progressive politics in the U.S. We don't need a Labor Party to keep doing these things. We do need a Labor Party to unite the working class to challenge the people who run this country for control over the issues that affect us all; issues of work and the lack of it, and health care for everybody, would make a great start. □

November 4, 1996

Class Education and the New Labor-Intellectual Alliance

by Frank Lovell

Under the capitalist mode of production perceptible shifts in the relationship of social classes, signaling political upheaval, do not appear suddenly and often go unnoticed long after their effects are felt by the oppressed majority. This pattern of class conflict is more common in recent U.S. history than in many other advanced capitalist nations. Here in the U.S., where the class division of society (between the working class and the employing class) is rarely mentioned, we have been experiencing a major shift in relative economic and social weight from the working class to the employing class over the past half century, since the early post-World War II resurgence of the organized sector of the working class in 1946.

During these years various cultural and political movements have emerged and receded, and landmark developments along the way have recorded the political consequences and left long-lasting behavioral grooves in the common social consciousness.

50 Years Ago:

Taft-Hartley, Cold War, and Witch Hunt

In 1947, the U.S. Congress enacted a new law that sought to regulate class relations by imposing further restrictions on unions, supervising their internal affairs and limiting their right to strike. At the same time, Congress and the executive branch (then under the Truman administration) also launched an attack on civil liberties under the guise of seeking out subversive elements and "foreign agents" said to be lurking in working-class organizations, in the broad radical movement of that day (including the Communist Party), and in the still vigorous unions.

These two initiatives on the part of the ruling class, enactment of what became popularly known as "the Taft-Hartley law" and the launching of the government-sponsored witchhunt (later called "McCarthyism" after the zealous Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy), succeeded in helping to stifle the voices of potential opposition and weaken the inherent power of organized labor. None of this could have succeeded so well but for the postwar economic stability and relative prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s.

Those were the days of the "American Century," when the U.S. rulers were riding high, deluding themselves that they were masters of the world, free to send their armies wheresoever they chose. In 1950 in Korea they found out that this was not necessarily so, but it has taken them a long time to figure out why. The bitter Vietnam war in the 1960s and early 1970s was certainly a profound educational experience for all concerned, but the lessons remain challenged. The ruling class in this country refuses to accept any outright rejection of its right to rule, and constantly seeks ways to satisfy its thirst for economic gain, for ever greater profit margins, and to impose its will at home and abroad.

40 Years Ago:

Rise of the Civil Rights Movement

On the home front broad sectors of the working class have been more recalcitrant than many today with short memories or lacking knowledge of recent history can fully appreciate. In 1955 the Black community in Montgomery, Alabama, rose up against the Jim Crow system of racial segregation and refused to ride the segregated buses in that city. This was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which eventually destroyed the Jim Crow system in the South and helped to mobilize Black actions against discrimination in the North. The Civil Rights Movement changed forever the subservient Black stereotype (portrayed often as indolent maid or janitor) and forced white-dominated society to respect Black people as equals. The impact on popular consciousness was enormous, nowhere greater than in the union movement. The struggle against Jim Crow unions, waged unsuccessfully for years in the old AFL by A. Philip Randolph as president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, finally found sympathetic responses in the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO after segregation laws began to fall under the onslaught of anti-racist sentiment.

Inspired by the determination, persistence, and success of the Civil Rights Movement, the 1960s student rebellion drowned out the repressive legacy of the 1950s' "silent generation." And this fueled the student anti-Vietnam War movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Other national minorities and dissident cultural currents were beginning at that time to organize themselves and to voice their needs, including Latinos. Also, the women's liberation movement and the gay/lesbian rights movement announced their presence and defined their goals.

The Radicalization of the 1960s

The combined effect was the emergence of what appeared to be "a new period of radicalization," described at the time by the socialist organizer, theorist, and journalist George Breitman, as follows:

one in which large numbers of people, responding to material conditions and alterations in those conditions, change their attitudes about important questions, beliefs, values, customs, relations, arrangements, and institutions — social, personal, philosophical, political, economic, cultural. Things that were previously accepted or taken for granted begin to be questioned or rejected. To the ideologists of the ruling class, it seems as though all of a sudden all the verities have collapsed and nothing is sacred — from the shibboleths of capitalist democracy to breakfast cereals.

At the time it seemed as if the only sectors of the working class affected by this general radicalization were Blacks and other

minorities, and some working-class women. But the women's liberation movement was organized and led by upper-middle class women, not low-paid working women. Certainly the organized workers, in their majority white males, seemed to be almost untouched by the radicalization. In retrospect, however, it is clear that important organizational changes were occurring in the unions, and the social consciousness of millions of union members was undergoing profound transformation.

Two of the most influential and powerful unions, the United Mine Workers and International Brotherhood of Teamsters, were in the grip of corrupt intransigent bureaucracies. The entrenched officials came under attack from broad-based rank-and-file movements that eventually succeeded in ousting them and shattering the old bureaucratic structures. The struggle to reform these unions was long and arduous, but it gained allies and inspiration from the radicalization of the 1960s. The entire union movement was affected by the radicalization in ways not realized at the time.

The bureaucratic crust of the union movement, under the reactionary leadership of George Meany and his Cold War advisers in the top echelons of government, did not crack sufficiently to let the new enlightenment of the membership break through. To many radical student leaders and others in the academic world, the union movement appeared to be a solid reactionary bloc, serving the interests of U.S. imperialism. But even then many local union officials and some local unions endorsed and contributed to the massive antiwar demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and in several other major cities.

Beginning of "One-Sided Class War"

While most attention was focused on the radicalization of the late 1960s and early '70s and the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, a subtler, deeper process was going on in the economy: the post-World War II capitalist economic expansion, with rising profit rates and rising wages, came to an end; a new phase, a "long wave" of capitalist downturn, of falling profit rates, set in. And the ruling capitalist investors, bankers, and employers adopted a policy of freezing and/or driving down wages and demanding concessions from labor organizations.

By the mid-1970s the new, more aggressive policy of the employers toward labor became evident. In mid-1978 an incident occurred that marked the end of the cozy class collaboration between labor and management that had been nurtured for three decades. This relationship was formalized at the top level as a working labor-management committee which met regularly to discuss and, in the words of one union representative on the committee, "attempt to arrive at cooperative approaches to substantive issues, such as energy problems, inflation, unemployment, rising health care costs, and others." The name of this committee was the Labor-Management Group, a non-governmental group of eight major corporation executives and eight ranking labor officials. Professor John T. Dunlop, a former secretary of labor, presided over the group's deliberations. Decisions taken there had more far-reaching social consequences than debates in Congress, and often determined the outcome of Congressional debates.

The incident that dissolved this committee was the resignation of Douglas Fraser, representing the United Auto Workers. He said,

I believe leaders of the business community, with few exceptions, have chosen to wage a one-sided class war today in this country — a war against working people, the unemployed, the poor, the minorities, the very young and the very old, and even many in the middle class of our society. The leaders of industry, commerce and finance in the United States have broken and discarded the fragile,

unwritten compact previously existing during a past period of growth and progress.

What brought this on was a broadside attack on the pending union-sponsored Labor Law Reform bill, which would have ended some restrictions placed on unions under the Taft-Hartley law. In a sustained, nationwide publicity campaign financed by big business, the proposed reform measures were denounced as a "power grab by Big Labor."

George Meany, a member of the Labor-Management Group and AFL-CIO president, chimed in with the comment that, "If they want class war, we'll give 'em class war." The choice of class war, of course, had already been made by the employing class — without consultation or advice from the union bureaucracy.

Fraser had a better appreciation of the new relationship of class forces than Meany. Meany had accepted class collaboration as a stable relationship, but Fraser sensed the change. "The new flexing of business muscle can be seen in many other areas," he said.

The rise of multinational corporations that know neither patriotism nor morality but only self-interest, has made accountability almost non-existent. At virtually every level, I discern a demand by business for docile government and unrestrained corporate individualism. Where industry once yearned for subservient unions, it now wants no unions at all.

The Past Two Decades: "One-Sided Class War" Deepens

That was 18 years ago. Since then unions have continued to negotiate with employers in major industries, call strikes, sign contracts, and attempt to find ways to accommodate the needs of workers in each particular industry to the profit goals of management in a rapidly shifting global economy. The result is that unions have steadily declined in size and influence. When Fraser was president of the UAW, for example, he boasted that he represented 1.5 million workers. Today the auto industry produces more vehicles, but with half as many workers. An even more drastic reduction of the work force has hit the steel industry. The same is true in coal mining, copper mining, railroading, and elsewhere in the industrial sector of the economy. Computer technology has eliminated the printing trades as they existed 20 years ago. The AFL-CIO is down to 13.5 million members from a postwar high of around 17 million in 1975. Total union membership in 1974, including unions not affiliated with the AFL-CIO, was 21,643,000. Today that figure is about 15 million.

Opposition Grows in Unions

The employers' 20-year offensive, and other social and economic pressures on the union movement, forced unexpected responses within the ranks. Opposition movements developed, blaming incumbent officials for failure to negotiate contracts for better wages and working conditions. General restiveness spread through the ranks of labor, expressing a sense that something was wrong. For example, Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), the most viable and effective of these opposition movements, was organized in 1975 and by 1991 had progressed so that it was able to help win the election of Ron Carey, resulting in a more combative Teamsters union and steps toward the transformation of its bureaucratic structure. By 1996 many unions had rank-and-file caucuses of varying strength, patterned after TDU (and its predecessor, Miners for Democracy).

Early 1980s:

AFL-CIO Asks What Went Wrong

In 1982 the AFL-CIO Executive Council established a 26-member "Committee on the Evolution of Work," chaired by then-AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Thomas R. Donahue. This committee hired a host of "experts" from universities and research groups and met regularly for nearly three years, mandated "to review and evaluate changes that are taking place in America in the labor force, occupations, industries, and technology." In February 1985 it issued a report entitled, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions." Considering the time spent on trying to discover what went wrong this was a very brief report, only about 30 pages. One section was on "changes in the workforce"; another was on "the desires and perceptions of workers." There was an additional section on "the seeds of resurgence."

Under recommendations, the report included one on "new methods of advancing the interests of workers." But the trouble with the report was the limitation imposed by the old-style bureaucratic concept of what the union movement ought to be, as stated:

Organized labor believes that each worker is entitled to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. That pay should include a share in the profits the worker helps to create and, thus, unions seek a larger share of those profits than "market forces" might dictate. And we recognize that those profits can only be created in a well-managed enterprise, where both capital and labor contribute to the result.

This concept clearly acknowledges the primacy of capital and relegates labor to a cooperative, that is, subservient, role.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a number of hard-fought labor struggles — PATCO, P-9, Pittston, the Staley lockout and other battles in the Illinois "war zone" — which, even when defeated, contributed to a growing restiveness in union ranks, a desire to fight back, to stop allowing the class war to remain one-sided. This growing radicalization in the unions was expressed in other ways as well, for example, the formation and growth of Labor Party Advocates from 1991 on, the steady numerical growth of biannual Labor Notes conferences, and the activities of Jobs with Justice groups in many cities. The struggle against NAFTA also marked a big step forward in union fight-back activities.

Ten years after the "report on the changing situation," the increased restiveness in the labor movement found expression within the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Serious changes had occurred in the social and political consciousness of millions of union members and unorganized workers. This resulted in a division within the ranks of the Council and a contest for the AFL-CIO presidency and control of the Council at the 1995 convention. The dividing issue was whether the resources of organized labor should be used to organize struggles to satisfy the needs of working people or to continue seeking labor-management cooperation to this end. The more independent and progressive slate carried the day. A new, expanded Executive Council was elected. The new administration is headed of course by John Sweeney of the Service Employees International Union, president; Richard Trumka of the United Mine Workers, secretary-treasurer; and Linda Chavez-Thompson of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, executive vice president.

New AFL-CIO Leadership Seeks Allies

The new AFL-CIO administration is pledged to seek the natural allies of the union movement and organize joint actions to confront the employing class with the need to redress the injustices of this society. This, then, is the background to what appears to be the

beginning of an alliance of organized labor and a segment of the academic community.

On September 18, 1996, Sweeney introduced the new alliance at a Washington news conference. He was joined by Betty Friedan, a founder of the modern feminist movement; Roger Wilkins, civil rights activist and history professor; James D. Perley, president of the American Association of University Professors; and other academics. They announced the organization of a nationwide educational project, "A Teach-In with the Labor Movement." The first of these teach-ins was held at Columbia University, Thursday and Friday, October 4–5, 1996. The *AFL-CIO News* of September 23, 1996, reported that other teach-ins were scheduled "throughout the month of October" at Wayne State University in Detroit; the University of Cincinnati; Clinch Valley College, Wise, Virginia; the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; Eastern Illinois University, Charleston; University of Texas at El Paso; Florida State University, Tallahassee; University of Wisconsin, Madison; and the State University of New York, Genesee. According to the *AFL-CIO News*:

The teach-ins are designed to promote a new spirit of engagement and activism by serving as a way to stimulate a national dialogue between academics and trade unionists. Subjects for discussion include immigration, the globalized economy, organizing among African-Americans, welfare and work, families and feminism, labor political action and culture, identity and class politics.

The Teach-In at Columbia University

All the above topics were included, in one way or another, at the Columbia University teach-in.

During the two days at Columbia three plenary sessions were held: the first Thursday evening at 7:30, the second Friday morning at 9:00, and the third Friday afternoon at 4:00. At each of these sessions one of the top AFL-CIO officials spoke: Sweeney at the first, Chavez-Thompson at the second, and Trumka at the third. They were joined by nationally prominent professors, journalists, and other intellectuals. Between plenary sessions on Friday a series of morning and afternoon workshops were conducted, sixteen in all. These ranged in subject matter over all those promised in the AFL-CIO's early announcement and additionally included ones specifically on "Politics and the Future of the Labor Movement," "The Wages of 'Race': Unions and Racial Justice," "Culture, Identity, and Class Politics," and others. Among the others were "Work, Welfare, and the Labor Movement" and "Union Summer and a New Generation of Organizers."

All workshops were conducted by panels of widely recognized activists and authorities in their fields. An outstanding example was the one on "culture, identity, and class politics," convened by labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein. Comprising the panel were prominent historians Todd Gitlin and Robin Kelley, both of New York University, and union staff members Jo-Ann Mort and Jerry Hudson.

Huge Overflow Attendance

One aspect of the Columbia teach-in that contributed as much to its success as any other was the surprisingly large, overflow attendance. The event had been well publicized among New York academics and other intellectuals, less so in union ranks. But the turnout at the first plenary session surprised the organizers, who had prepared for an overflow crowd of a few hundred. Long before 7:00 on opening night large crowds of students and others were gathered outside Low Library, largest available space on Columbia campus. Before the scheduled time for the teach-in to begin

the gates to the Low rotunda were closed because the fire safety capacity had been reached. It was later reported that between 1,100 and 1,200 had been allowed into the area that should accommodate no more than 1,000.

Organizers had arranged closed-circuit TV transmission so that those who couldn't get in would be able to see and hear the speakers in other rooms. Others who couldn't find space there or preferred to remain outside listened to loudspeakers on the steps of the library. An estimated 2,000 participated. The Friday sessions, plenaries, and workshops were likewise packed. At both plenary sessions on Friday scores were turned away when it became impossible to crowd more into the auditoriums.

Friedan's "Geiger Counter": Beginnings of a New Movement

The tone of these union-university-sponsored teach-ins was set at the first plenary session at Columbia, where the university president welcomed the participants and endorsed their goal to re-establish a labor-academic alliance. The popular Columbia lecturer, labor history professor Eric Foner, chaired this opening session, and the first speaker he introduced was the feminist writer Betty Friedan. "I have a pretty good historical Geiger counter," she said. "Thirty years ago, my Geiger counter was clicking about the beginning of the women's movement. My historic Geiger counter is clicking again." She went on to say that a new movement is indicated, the resurgence of labor. And in her remarks she expressed the notion that through alliance with a resurgent labor movement the unfulfilled goals of the women's movement, and those of other cultural protest movements and national minorities, can finally be won. How this will come about is controversial and was discussed further at teach-in workshops.

Another controversial question, more discordant, arose in the remarks of Richard Rorty, philosophy professor at the University of Virginia. He hailed the renewal of the academic-labor alliance but asserted that it was the unruly antiwar students who denounced the U.S. government, burned the American flag, and spat upon returning troops during the Vietnam war who were partly — perhaps largely — responsible for the breakup in the first place of previously warm relations between academia and organized labor. The mainly student audience did not take kindly to this suggestion of how recent history had unfolded. Some in the audience were Columbia students in the 1960s (now tenured professors), and their understanding of that period is different from Professor Rorty's. His unfortunate reference to Vietnam enlisted a kind of low hissing sound that seemed to roll through the audience, the same unique sound first heard thirty years ago. But other parts of Rorty's talk were applauded, and Eric Foner smoothed over the incident by promising "more talks." Everyone agreed that because of the Vietnam issue the official union establishment had been alienated and isolated.

Patricia Williams, professor of law at Columbia, talked about the "lessons of hard work" as seen from a class perspective, using as an example the hard life and generous gift of Oseola McCarty. For 75 years Oseola McCarty worked in the South as a washer woman, never earning more than a few dollars a week, and managed to save \$150,000, which she donated to the University of Southern Mississippi for a scholarship fund for Black students. From this example of a poor hard-working woman who was never able to get anything for herself and wanted to help children get a better chance than she ever had, Professor Williams castigated contemporary pundits, politicians, opponents of welfare, and other apologists of the capitalist work ethic. She submitted the basic questions, "Do we really want to romanticize a system of inden-

tured servitude that left the vast majority of Black women in Miss McCarty's generation actually envying those who did laundry because it was a better job than most? And before making generalizations about what Miss McCarty may have 'not earned' in benefits from the Government, isn't it worth asking what she ought to have earned in the private sector, given the great likelihood that she was grossly underpaid?"

Sweeney: "It Takes a Union to Get a Raise"

These are the kinds of questions that resonate well with the message AFL-CIO president John Sweeney brings to these teach-ins. In his book *America Needs a Raise*, Sweeney has written: "Corporate America's relentless drive to cut labor costs — and Wall Street's cheering on the effort — explained some of the sad stories that made headlines in 1995 and some crises I inherited when I became president of the AFL-CIO." At the teach-in he appealed for a united effort "to end corporate welfare as we know it," and asked the academic community to help prepare for coming struggles. "We need your help in making basic economic education available and accessible to every American," he said, "so that everyone can understand what is happening to their family budget and who is doing it to them." In a passing reference to the presidential campaign and attendant rhetoric, he said, "We need your help in telling millions of unrepresented workers that while it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a union to get a raise." Careful not to identify with his favorite presidential candidate and mindful of both professor and student worries, Sweeney said the contest in present-day society is between the privileged few on top and the great majority on the bottom, not Republicans and Democrats nor conservatives and liberals. He reminded the audience that, "if you're a professor with tenure, you're on the bottom."

This plenary session ended with a rousing old-time religion speech against corruption in high places and for unity in spirit and deed of all the oppressed and exploited, delivered by Dr. Cornel West, professor of ethics and religion at Harvard University.

Second Plenary Session: Latino Rights Included

The second plenary session, scheduled for 9:00 Friday morning, was in Altschul Auditorium. Again the crowd exceeded seating capacity and squeezed into all possible standing space. The speakers were Katha Pollitt, a writer and editor at *The Nation* magazine; AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson; Professor Orlando Patterson, Harvard University; and Joel Rogers, history professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The session was chaired by Columbia Professor Ira Katznelson, an organizer of the teach-in. He began by explaining some of the organizational problems of such an event, apologizing for the inconvenience of space limitation and thanking everyone associated, especially the large enthusiastic attendance that he said testified to the significance of this "historic event."

Linda Chavez-Thompson greeted the assembly with a "*buenas dias*," congratulated all present on having learned Spanish, and went on to talk about organizing workers in Texas, where she represented the public employees union (AFSCME) and where a large percentage of the work force is fluent only in Spanish. In this way she demonstrated the vast chasm separating the new top AFL-CIO leaders from their predecessors in their understanding of the special needs and divisions within the present multinational work force. She was not there to promote the Latino "March To Washington," planned for October 12 (Columbus Day) to protest new anti-immigrant legislation and police brutality against un-

documented workers, but leaflets for the march were widely distributed at this session, and most present were made aware that the AFL-CIO gave official endorsement. (Chavez-Thompson herself spoke at the October 12 demonstration in Washington.) AFL-CIO support for the Latino demonstration was recognized as a far cry from the days of the anti-Vietnam War movement, when the AFL-CIO attacked the demonstrators and hailed the jingos.

Professor Patterson, a sociologist, seemed to represent a throwback to old prejudices when he suggested that unions and others, including people of color (Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asians), should support tougher immigration laws because immigrants undercut the prevailing wage scales. Some in the audience booed this notion, but there were no other signs of angry protest. Undoubtedly Patterson would have received a very different response in many union meetings. This question of immigration restriction and migrant labor is high on the union agenda, and what must be done remains unresolved.

Katha Pollitt, a consistent critic of Clinton's anti-labor record and his reactionary stand on many issues (including immigration), directed her remarks to the failure of the AFL-CIO to fight more vigorously against the new welfare legislation, asserting that such indifference to the needs of poor people isolates the unions as "special interest groups," concerned only with the needs of organized workers, which often are partially satisfied at the expense of others less well off. Her complaint could not be responded to in the format of the plenary symposium, but the audience seemed to welcome this display of divergent opinion as a promising sign of free expression in the emerging working-class movement.

The final speaker was University of Wisconsin Professor Joel Rogers, founder of the New Party, a populist-type electoral structure which is backing local candidates in the 1996 general elections and which often "cross-endorses" Democrats. Rogers confined his talk to a critique of the evils of capitalism, the irony of the inherent contradictions within the system. His remarks were well received by the audience, a fitting conclusion to the session.

Closing Session Includes Labor Party Speaker

The closing plenary session, which began at 4:00 in the afternoon and was supposed to end no later than 6:00, was chaired by the popular lecturer Manning Marable, who heads Columbia's Black Studies department. The speakers were Frances Fox Piven, City University of New York; Karen Nussbaum, who heads the recently created AFL-CIO women's department; José La Luz, International Area Director of AFSCME; David Montgomery, professor of labor history at Yale University; and Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer.

This session started well with remarks by Marable, followed by Frances Piven, who denounced recent welfare legislation and called for basic changes in the economic and political structure of this country. Karen Nussbaum seemed to fall in step with this general idea, but spoke mostly about the importance of the AFL-CIO women's department and its projected role in the coming political transformation. José La Luz was extended a warm personal welcome by Marable, old friends reunited. La Luz explained that in recent years he has lived mostly in his native Puerto Rico and then delivered a denunciation of U.S. imperialism and its consequences at home and in the so-called Third World, the semicolonial countries. David Montgomery, who was introduced as chairman of the union-sponsored Labor Party in Connecticut, delivered a peroration on the greed that capitalism breeds, especially among the manipulators and masters of finance and industry, as shamelessly displayed by the chief executive officers of most

giant corporations, always demanding higher monetary rewards for themselves and lower pay for labor. The audience demonstrated its appreciation of this part of the session with sustained applause.

When Montgomery finished speaking, time for adjournment was near. It had been reported that Richard Trumka was delayed in traffic and would be late or possibly not arrive. He appeared just as Montgomery was concluding, and of course the meeting was extended long after the closing hour. But a funny thing happened.

Trumka Pitch for Clinton Booed

Unfortunately, Trumka had not heard the talks that had been given and did not know the mood of the audience. He began by telling how happy he was that the Clinton campaign was receiving favorable response among the electorate and went on to describe some of his experiences on the campaign trail, following the outline of a standard Clinton stump speech. The audience listened quietly, unmoved at the indicated applause points. This seemed to puzzle Trumka, but he plowed on to his high point that a Democratic Party victory seemed assured. Silence — followed by some boos and that unusual low hiss of the disgruntled student audience. Trumka was in strange territory (not entirely alien to him because he has been to the university before for his law degree). His response seemed almost instinctive, "You people must be Dole supporters." This brought forth a few nos, mostly snickers. In this audience there were Labor Party advocates, Ralph Nader supporters, and many others disillusioned with the two-party system. Trumka had presence of mind enough to jump to another subject: confronting corporate power and the union struggle for shorter hours of work and higher pay. This warmed the audience so that when he finished Trumka got a good round of applause.

Identity and Class, Union Summer

Between the second and third plenary sessions a series of workshops were scheduled — eight in the morning (11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.) and eight in the afternoon (2:00–3:30). All workshops were participated in or led by prominent scholars, introduced by conveners of academic stature. Not all workshops were of equal value as learning experiences, determined partly by those who happened to attend. They were all well attended; some were crowded, and a few turned away disappointed participants. As always it was hard to tell which workshop to attend by the title or by the names of the conveners and panelists. One on politics and the future of the labor movement listed Elaine Bernard, head of the Harvard Trade Union Program, as a panelist. A former chair of the British Columbia New Democratic Party (Canada's labor party), she has been an effective voice for independent labor politics in the U.S. and was a guest speaker at the Labor Party founding convention in Cleveland.

Two other workshops drew attention: "Culture, Identity, and Class Politics" in the morning and "Union Summer and a New Generation of Organizers" in the afternoon. The one in the morning was especially interesting because of the announced participants, including Todd Gitlin and Robin Kelley, both professors at New York University, whose books on labor history and Black struggles are familiar to students interested in these subjects. Each approached the question first raised in this teach-in by Betty Friedan, the first speaker in the opening plenary session: will the cultural protest movements (women's liberation/feminism, Black nationalism, Latino self-identity, gay and lesbian rights) be subsumed within the resurgent labor movement? Or will nationalist struggles and cultural protest fructify working-class struggles to transform society? Both Gitlin and Kelley treated this apparent

paradox tangentially, from potentially conflicting vantage points. This long-deferred discussion is not new, having previously arisen with the emergence of militant Black nationalism as preached by Malcolm X during the radicalization of the 1960s and '70s. It now reappears and will surely remain with the further revitalization of the labor movement.

Union Summer, the subject of the other workshop of special interest, was (and is) a unique AFL-CIO project, suited to the present needs of the union movement. In his book *America Needs a Raise* John Sweeney offered a glance at the changing face of AFL-CIO unions and issued an open invitation to all who may be interested:

At the AFL-CIO, we're committed to helping...working people meet their own needs: we don't want to impose a one-size-fits-all pattern of unionism on every working person in every occupation in every sector of the economy. That is one reason I've created the Committee 2000, to take a thorough top-to-bottom look at unionism in America. We're taking nothing for granted — from the structure dating from the 1930s, where unions are based in companies and industries, to the view that our most important function is to bargain and enforce contracts. Sure, I expect that most unions will continue to fit this pattern, but I also hope we will find new ways to help the new workforce meet new needs.

The invitation is, "If you have ideas about how unions can transform themselves to meet your needs and the needs of your co-workers, then write to me at the AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. No kidding: we need all the ideas we can get."

The idea of Union Summer was implicit in this new openness expressed by Sweeney. During the summer of 1996 several hundred student volunteers were enrolled and subsidized in a crash course to learn about and practice unionism as organizers in the field. Andy Levin, director of the Union Summer project, participated in the afternoon workshop on this subject. Other participants were Sarah Potter, Columbia student; Johanna Marquina, City University of New York (CUNY), Staten Island; and Valerie McCrory, Yale Student Labor Action Coalition.

Whatever these students may have learned from Union Summer, it was clear that they were enthusiastic about the experience. Many Union Summer participants were present at the Columbia teach-in, attending most of the sessions in scampering groups, seeking space to crouch inconspicuously in crowded aisles and other cramped areas.

In all aspects the Columbia teach-in was a promising beginning for the new alliance of the intellectual community and the labor movement, and for "the fight for America's future." □

October 23, 1996

Robert Wages's Endorsement of Clinton

Continued from page 37

And that is how the concept of the "lesser evil" was introduced into the American working class as a guide to electoral politics.

Wages Takes up the Lesser Evil

Wages's "lesser evil" argument, while not original, is expressed within the framework of a perspective of building a labor party, looking forward to a time when "we have built our Labor Party powerful enough to put our own agenda in place — when we will no longer have to choose between evils." Half of his article is on the need to build a labor party and what OCAW has done and is doing to advance that prospect. Seven pages of the OCAW magazine are devoted to a report on the Labor Party convention and a guide for members on building the party.

There is no reason not to take Wages's argument as the expression of an honest conviction. It is not equivalent to the duplicity of the CP in 1936 and afterwards.

Just a Maneuver?

The current leadership of OCAW, from all appearances, remains committed to the labor party effort they inaugurated five years ago. They have made it quite clear, and Wages says so again here, that their perspective is a mass-based labor party supported by a decisive segment of the unions which will be able to contend in elections on a more or less equal basis with the two bosses' parties. Are they sincere? Or is this just a complicated maneuver to build a "progressive" pressure group.

In the absence of a mass labor party in this election, the OCAW leaders apparently be-

lieved that one of the bosses' parties was better than the other. Is this a contradiction? Yes. Does it logically weaken the argument for a labor party? Yes. Is it an error? Yes, and not a new one. It is a misconception shared by the overwhelming majority of the Labor Party's supporters at the present time.

It would have been better if Wages had said, "The bosses have two parties and we have only the nucleus of our own. Since we can't run a credible labor candidate for president this year, let's sit this one out. Nobody running represents us. Don't waste your vote by casting it for someone who has a chance of winning. They are all our enemies, and all that voting for them does is encourage them." But Wages either didn't believe this or thought it politically impossible to advocate this position as president of his union.

It would have been better if OCAW had picked a few places where it was influential enough in the local union movement to run viable independent labor candidates in selected working class districts on the Labor Party program. But that presupposes a level of consciousness and confidence of which there is no evidence.

The real problem with what Wages said is that it poses the wrong question. He should have asked, "Does an endorsement of Clinton and the Democrats advance or retard the construction of the labor party to which our union is committed?" It does not take a lot of insight to see that support to the Democrats logically weakens the argument for a labor party. The "lesser evil" argument certainly can be, and is, utilized as an argument against the general conception of a labor party. It is also apparent that

characterizing those for whom you urge support as "evil" is not much of a motivation to vote for them. It probably convinced a few more OCAW members to "sit this one out." Wages's position undermines *both* of his objectives: persuading his members to vote for Democrats this time and convincing them of the necessity of a labor party. This is an inherent difficulty of a half-way position.

A Contradictory Process, Still in Its Initial Stages

The development of an authentic labor party in the U.S. is, and will remain, a *contradictory* process, precisely because it is emerging from the highly contradictory American labor movement as it actually exists. It cannot be determined, without further experience, which tendency is the more fundamental here: the OCAW's endorsement of the Democrats or its commitment to building a labor party. In this context, Wages's endorsement of Clinton and the Democrats is a strong reminder of the incompleteness of the process, a reminder that we really are only at the very beginning, however significant that beginning is.

What is notable is *not* that the most influential part of the labor party leadership has not yet broken decisively from bourgeois politics, or at least feels that it cannot do so within the framework of its own union. What is notable is that the movement which has emerged is based unambiguously on a segment of the unions. That is what should be supported, defended, and strengthened. Only that ultimately promises to provide the material basis for overcoming the illusions in capitalist politics expressed in Wages's message. □

Striking Newspaper Worker Runs as Independent in Michigan Elections

by Cheryl Peck

Cheryl Peck is a leader of the Trotskyist League (TL), which has endorsed Doug Young and provided assistance to his campaign.

More than 2,000 newspaper workers from six unions at the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* have been on strike against Gannett and Knight-Ridder, corporate owners of the papers, since July 1995. Many strikers and strike supporters have wanted to turn up the heat on the companies by stopping production at the Sterling Heights printing plant. But the leaderships of the striking unions (Teamsters, CWA, GCIU, and Newspaper Guild) have limited the strike action to advertisement and circulation boycotts and occasional symbolic civil disobedience.

The national leaderships of the Teamsters, CWA, and AFL-CIO have provided financial assistance, made a few cameo appearances in Detroit, and called a national boycott of Gannett's *USA Today*. But they have refused to organize a national march on Detroit or any other really effective action. As a result, the strike is losing.

Doug Young, a striker with 12 years seniority in Teamsters Local 2040 (mailers), is running for Michigan State Representative in Shelby Township near Detroit, as a militant, prolabor independent. His campaign has focused on some key issues in the strike, including the need to fight against the antilabor injunction in place at the Sterling Heights plant and to repeal antilabor laws. Young calls for political independence from the Democrats and Republicans to win gains for workers.

In a September fundraising letter, Doug Young described his perspective on what is needed to win the strike.

We have been on strike since July 13, 1995. On Labor Day weekend, 1995, we showed how the labor movement can use its power to stop the production and distribution of scab newspapers. We organized mass picketing at the gates of the scab plant, and stopped almost all vehicles from coming and going for many hours.

We did this more than once. Unfortunately, the owners of Gannett and Knight-Ridder were

able to get a judge to issue an injunction limiting the number of pickets at the gate to 10. Since then, whenever we have succeeded in organizing any kind of mass labor action that has blocked the production or distribution of the scab paper, we have been set upon by private security guards, laws, and police that have prevented us from doing what needs to be done.

There are many different ideas about what labor should do in this situation. One of the things that we need to do is fight to outlaw scabs and repeal all the laws that restrict labor's rights, like Taft-Hartley.

This is why I decided to run for office...I don't think that I, by myself, can change the laws. But I think that I could use my position in the Michigan State Legislature to build support for this struggle and other labor struggles. I could speak out for labor in the Michigan State Legislature. The labor movement needs more representatives in public office who are part of the labor movement and loyal to it. It's not possible to rely on the Republicans or Democrats to speak for labor. □

Australian "Green Left Weekly" on Doug Young's Campaign

by Barry Sheppard

Reprinted below is part of an article written for Australia's Green Left Weekly. We have omitted quotations from Young's campaign material reprinted elsewhere in this issue of BIDOM.

An important local development in the current election campaign is the decision by a striking Detroit newspaper worker to run as an independent labor candidate for Michigan State Representative from the 32nd District, north of Detroit.

Douglas Young, 31 years old, has worked as a newspaper mailer since he was 18. He is a member of the mailers' union, Teamsters Local 2040. The Detroit newspaper strike is over a year old, and is the most important labor battle currently in progress in the United States.

Young joined Labor Party Advocates earlier this year, and was a delegate to the Founding Convention of the Labor Party this past June.

His opponents are incumbent Republican David Jaye, Democrat David Kennedy, and Lib-

ertarian Bob Van Oast. Jaye is one of the most conservative members of the Michigan State House and is often aligned with the incipient fascist pro-militia groups in the district.

The Libertarian Party espouses an extreme version of *laissez-faire* free market capitalism and would do away with all social programs won by the working class, Blacks, women, and other oppressed people.

Through his campaign, Young hopes to call attention to the newspaper strike, and is trying to convince other active unionists to run for office and promote a forthright, unambiguous pro-labor agenda.

Shelby is a small town where many workers including auto workers in the Detroit area, live. By choosing a town like Shelby, a first-time

campaign against the two major capitalist parties can more efficiently utilize its resources than in it could in a big city like Detroit.

While Young is a member of the Labor Party, the Labor Party is not endorsing him or any other candidates in the current election. This is because at its founding convention the party decided on a two-year moratorium on running candidates while it attempts to build itself into a more substantial force.

However, most members of the Detroit area chapter of the Labor Party are supporting Young's campaign as individuals.

As the discussion within the Labor Party continues on this question, Young's campaign is sure to be a part of it. □

Douglas Young: Newspaper Striker for Michigan State Representative

Text of Election Flyer

Why I Am Running for State Representative

I want to get the word out about the workers' plight, about how the rich corporations control the whole country, about how they control our day-to-day lives.

I want people to know that workers do have the numbers. We can make a change.

After 14 Months on Strike, Why I Decided to Run

Most people don't realize that the newspaper strike is still going on, that we are still out there.

Also, most people believe that it's through legal means that we're going to win strikes. If this is true, then we have to take over the legal offices or we are not going to win. All the laws are against us.

If we count on all the laws and the rich people and politicians and representatives who have been bought and paid for by the rich people, if we expect them to do right by us, we are terribly mistaken. Look at the situation we're in.

So individually we have to all do something. Instead of asking somebody else to do something we've got to get up and do it ourselves. Either by running in a campaign or supporting an independent candidate or someone who has issues that mean something to you instead of all the rhetoric.

We need new thinkers. We need people, like myself, who have been through things like the strike here. These are the kind of people who are going to help us. If not, then we will get rid of them, too. But workers stand a better chance with someone like me than they do with billionaires like Steve Forbes or Ross Perot or lackeys for the rich like David Jaye [the incumbent].

Why We Need a \$10/hour Minimum Wage and a 32-hour Work Week with No Cut in Pay

The \$10 minimum wage is really the bare minimum that people need to have a decent home, a car, and a life. I think that, to be realistic, people need to make closer to \$20 an hour to have a livable wage. But I support the struggle for the \$10 minimum wage as a step in the right direction. No one can support themselves on \$5.15 an hour in this country. Nobody.

I believe workers need more free time to study issues to make more informed choices.

The Democrats and Republicans push family values and yet they really don't have any family values. The more free time that you have, the more time you can spend with your children; you can build a better bond with your spouse; you can have a better family life.

We've got to make some kind of move to put more people to work. We're in the business of starving our own citizens out in this country. And it's only going to get worse.

Politicians' rhetoric is not going to get us a job. A shorter work week with no cut in pay by law will.

The rich complain about the rampant drug use in this country and yet the mother and father are both out working to support a family. They are not allowed to raise the children.

So I think that the best thing to do is to put more people to work, have fewer hours for all of them. Rotate people on the jobs that we have. I'm sure, with all the intelligent and creative people we have, that we could come up with a workable plan. We need the will to do it.

Why We Need to Outlaw Scabs and Repeal Antilabor Laws

I think it's necessary because legal scabbing pits workers against worker. It's like playing a game of chess where you attack your own pawns, checkmate your own king. Certainly, as a worker whose job has been taken by a scab, I am not partial to scabs, but they are workers, too. They are being exploited just as we are.

That is why we need to outlaw so-called replacement workers, that is, scabs, and repeal antilabor laws. I want to move workers to build our own party and run our own candidates, to get past all the rhetoric and the racism and the phony political differences that the rich use to divide us. We do have more in common than we have apart, separate from each other.

The Role of My Campaign in Building the Labor Party

I was a delegate to the founding convention of the Labor Party in Cleveland, along with several fellow strikers. Unions representing over 1.2 million workers founded the Labor Party.

It will give people who are interested in the Labor Party a chance to run a candidate. It gives us a chance to get some of the issues out there, the platform. We are gaining experience so that when we do have more members, we can launch an effective assault on the House of Representatives or the Senate. We will have some people who have an education and background in it. We won't be starting from scratch. We have to get experience right from the start.

Why Working People in Shelby Township Should Vote for Me

I think the issues I'm raising are relevant and important for all union-minded people, all working people, in Shelby Township. People are interested in a better life for their family, in

some kind of job security. My platform speaks directly to those needs. I am telling the truth because, in this strike, I have lived the truth. The truth of what it means to be a worker in the U.S.

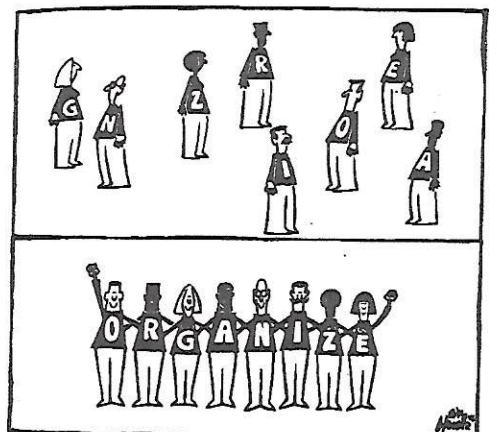
Why Young People Should Vote and Campaign for Me

My campaign is all about the future. If young people want to have a future, they have to look ahead. They can't look at their parents' lives, they can't look to the environment they have been raised in. It's being eroded by the Democrats and Republicans and by the corporations. It's not going to exist any longer.

They are going to be in a terrible plight if they don't become interested now. This is going to be a long battle; they might as well become involved now.

Sooner or later, young people are going to realize that the workers and the labor party are on their side. We are the only refuge they have to come to. If they get involved when they're older, of course, we'll still welcome them with open arms, but it would help to have them in the battle now. All those jobs are going to be gone. They aren't going to have the nice job, the big, huge house, the nice, fancy vacations that their parents can afford. Just imagine how far we could go if they became involved now.

To support the Doug Young campaign, send contributions to Committee for Doug Young, 46658 Franks Lane, Shelby Township MI 48344 (313-730-4530). E-mail: dougforrep@aol.com. Internet: <http://members.aol.com/bdreamer/dougyoung/doug1.htm> □



Labor Party Calls for Real Welfare Reform: An End to Corporate Welfare and a Constitutional Right to a Job at a Living Wage

Text of Labor Party Statement on Welfare Bill

On August 23, the newly formed Labor Party's Interim National Council issued the following statement on welfare reform legislation passed by the Congress and signed by President Clinton.

Election-year pandering to what he assumes is a widespread lack of public support for anti-poverty programs that fight hunger and homelessness has led President Clinton to sign the misnamed "Welfare Reform" bill. The problem, though, is not welfare. It is the lack of jobs with decent pay and benefits.

While we hoped for better from the president and other elected officials, the Labor Party is not surprised after looking at the recent record of political actions that have intensified the economic insecurity facing America's working people: NAFTA and GATT, corporate welfare in the form of tax breaks and direct subsidies, deregulation and subsequent bailout of the Savings & Loan industry, dismantling public sector services and jobs, and tax cuts benefitting the very wealthy.

The corporate quest for profits has resulted in years of "downsizing" working people out of hundreds of thousands of jobs with no social policy reaction by politicians. Social Security and Medicare have been targeted for actual or potential cuts disguised as "reforms" or measures to "protect the solvency" of these funds. The dismantling of anti-poverty programs disguised as "welfare reform" is the beginning of wholesale rollbacks of the social insurance programs all working people pay into and benefit from in times of need, corporate downsizing, illness, injuries, and old age.

An Attack on All Working People

This "welfare reform" attacks all working people — not just those whose benefits are cut. Despite its proponents' claims to the contrary, this bill's so-called workfare provisions will allow for replacing regular jobs that pay wages and provide benefits with slots filled by recipients of public assistance who will work in exchange for their meager grants instead of wages. Not only are these grants much below the minimum wage — in some states less than \$200 a month for a family of three; states also may avoid cash payments entirely in favor of an in-kind arrangement in which aid recipients will work in exchange for food stamps, commodity foodstuffs, or other noncash benefits. This amounts to creating pools of labor inside the American economy that are in effect coerced and forced to work for subsistence or less. This will effectively depress other workers' wages as well. The lowest 30% of wage earners can expect a 13% reduction in income as a result of

this legislation, according to a recent analysis by the Economic Policy Institute. This will push more working people to, and over, the brink of poverty.

Programs stigmatized as "welfare" have been an important, though inadequate, safety net of last resort for many working people. The main public assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC], has been the equivalent of unemployment insurance and paid family leave for many women workers whose employers don't offer these benefits. As the pro-corporate, bipartisan consensus pursues policies that increase unemployment and underemployment, more and more American workers will find themselves in need of this safety net.

We know that people want to work when at all possible and when working yields a return; no one wants to, or should be forced to, work for less than subsistence and under horrible conditions. The sixty-year old anti-poverty program apparatus is part of the hard-won system of safeguards — like Social Security, Medicare, OSHA, the Wagner Act, and Davis-Bacon — that American working people have won against corporate power and prerogative. An attack on any piece of that system is an attack on all of it. Thus the *Wall Street Journal* reports that the Democratic Leadership Council is prepared next to join Republicans in pushing to privatize Social Security.

The Federal Reserve Board shapes monetary policy to ensure that unemployment never dips below a minimum of 8 million people — in a perverse formula that economic health equals what's good for a small group of investment bankers and wealthy bondholders. Similarly, almost every day brings news of more corporate mergers and "downsizing."

In the first five months of 1996 layoffs totaled more than 230,000 — up 34% from 1995 (*Economic Notes*, July/August 1996). Corporate-led trade policy intensifies this sacrifice of America's working people; using the same formula that the U.S. Commerce Dept. relied on for its projections, Public Citizen estimates that in its first two years NAFTA has cost the U.S. 1,000,000 jobs.

A Many-Pronged Attack on Wages and Conditions

The trend is clear, we are living through a many-pronged attack on American wages and living standards. Still, the politicians and pun-

ditions claim that people who receive low-income public assistance simply do not want to work or are poor because they are in some way defective or inferior to the rest of us. And they persist with this ugly stereotype even as they support policies that render more and more of us jobless. In fact:

- In 1993, 2 million full-time, year-round workers were living in families with incomes below the poverty level and another 448,000 families, each headed by a full-time worker, would have fallen into poverty without aid from low-income public assistance (*Welfare Myths: Fact or Fiction*, Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law, 1996).

The Labor Party understands that this "welfare reform" legislation arises from and reinforces a punitive mind-set that is based on myths about who is poor and why. We recognize that women do not have babies to get the paltry benefits available through AFDC. In fact:

- 43% of families receiving AFDC have only one child, and 73% have no more than two, and the birthrate among women on AFDC is lower than that for the society at large (*Welfare Myths: Fact or Fiction*).

We recognize that there is no "welfare trap."

- Most families receive benefits for no more than two years at a time.

A recent study in the respected *Journal of Marriage and the Family* found this:

- There is no significant relation between having grown up in a household that received low-income public assistance and using it oneself. (Mark Rank, "Welfare Use Across Generations: How Important Are the Ties That Bind?" 1995.)

Against Race and Gender Scapegoating

We also denounce the vile racial and gender scapegoating and victim-blaming that this legislation dishonestly manipulates, the stereotypes of African-American and Latino irresponsibility.

- The preponderance of families receiving AFDC are, and always have been, white, and there has been no explosion in adolescent childbearing among black or brown women. *Continued on page 50*

A Reassertion of Revolutionary Values

Notebooks for the Grandchildren: Recollections of a Trotskyist Who Survived the Stalin Terror by Mikhail Baitalsky. Edited and translated by Marilyn Vogt-Downey; Foreword by Roy Medvedev. Humanities Press, 1995. Appendices. Index. ISBN 0-391-03829-x. \$75.00.

Reviewed by Mark Weber

Mark Weber is a member of the Greater Cleveland Labor History Society and the Labor Party.

All these great revolutionaries were extremely vulnerable. They were, as Jews, rootless, in a sense; but they were so only in some respects, for they had the deepest roots in intellectual tradition and in the noblest aspirations of their times. Yet whenever religious intolerance or nationalist emotion was on the ascendant, whenever dogmatic narrow-mindedness and fanaticism triumphed, they were the first victims.

— Isaac Deutscher
in *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*

I. This remarkable book presents the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky (1904–1978), a revolutionary socialist who was a defender of the October Revolution and a supporter of the Left Opposition after 1923.

The book is composed of nine notebooks, all of which appeared serially in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. The memoirs were translated into English from Russian by Marilyn Vogt-Downey. Important editorial work was done by Naomi Allen and the late Sarah Lovell. Marilyn Vogt-Downey has also contributed a very useful “translator’s introduction” in which she comments on the life of Baitalsky, the significance of his memoirs, and distinctive features of his analytical approach. This introduction enhances the value of the book as an educational tool; without it, some readers would have difficulty placing Baitalsky in the proper historical context (within the events of the Revolution).

Baitalsky was thirteen years old in 1917, when, first, the February Revolution overthrew the tsar and, later, the October Revolution brought Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power. As a young Jewish boy in a small Ukrainian town, Baitalsky was inspired by the liberating environment created by the Revolution. He joined the Young Communist League in early 1920.

Later, he joined the Communist Party and was active in his native Ukraine in the struggle against the abuses of the New Economic Policy (1921 and after). His memoirs depict in perceptive detail his first arrest in May of 1929. They also describe the forced collectivization of Soviet peasants in the 1930s, the

deification of Stalin through Soviet literature and the press at all levels of society, and the creation and institutionalization of a privileged stratum in the bureaucracy of the new Soviet state. Through Baitalsky’s eyes, we see the horrors of camp life brought about by the purges, and the harassment — both petty and brutal — of political dissenters and oppositionists, inside and outside the camp system.

II. Baitalsky’s careful attention to detail is complemented by his astute analysis of the events he witnessed, in terms of cause and effect on Soviet society. For example, the largely successful Stalinist effort to destroy history (and therefore memory) led to the intellectual bankruptcy of Soviet society. The destruction of history was also a primary motivation for Baitalsky to write his memoirs. He wanted to write for the next generations — the grandchildren — so that they would know not only what the truth is but also that there is an objective truth, based upon historical reality and evidence, which exists, independent of changes in party line.

Baitalsky served two terms in the infamous Vorkuta labor camp system. Upon his release after completing the second term, he began to write these memoirs. In a special introductory session entitled, “Preliminary Remarks: The 1920s and the 1970s,” Baitalsky outlines a number of themes that are carefully woven into his detailed narrative. These themes include the role of the intellectual, democracy, and anti-Semitism.

In his discussion of Jews in the revolutionary movement and in discussions of anti-Semitism, Baitalsky makes a genuine contribution. Certainly, other writers, such as Nora Levin, have provided a scholarly overview of Jewish participation in the Russian revolutionary movement.¹ However, Baitalsky’s view is based on personal experience. In addition, his analysis extends beyond the dawn of the outbreak of revolution — where Levin’s analysis ends.

Baitalsky writes that, in the early 1920s, Jewish membership in the Komsomol in his native Ukraine was extensive. Baitalsky writes:

The fact is that there were many Jews in the Odessa Komsomol, particularly in the Moldavian district. It was almost 100 percent Jewish. Peresyp was about half Jewish.

Baitalsky goes on to write about his desire as a Jew who had joined the struggle to become part of the broader Russian movement:

We did not avoid the word “Jew,” nor were we silent about it. We simply had little need

for it. And we used the word “Russian” most often...

For Baitalsky and many other young men and women who sought to escape the shtetl for the revolutionary struggle, the ultimate solution to the Jewish Question was, in the words of Arthur Liebman, an international socialist society that paid no heed to distinctions between Jews and non-Jews.²

One of the strengths of Baitalsky’s memoirs is that they transcend the traditional boundaries of autobiography and function almost as essays on the morality and values of the revolutionary struggle. Baitalsky comments that the revolution produced an upsurge of democracy, of workers’ participation in government and in building a new society. What Stalinism accomplished was the preservation of the institutional forms of this new democracy, while methodically debasing and eliminating the democratic and participatory content and vitality from the new revolutionary institutions and governing bodies. Ultimately, as the revolutionary system became ossified into rule by a new caste of bureaucrats and functionaries, the very democratic spirit and values of the revolution became themselves a threat to the new elite. Those who sacrificed to build the revolution — like Baitalsky — were consigned to prisons and labor camps, while new apparatchiks (symbolized by the character Gletkin in Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon*) became the men of power. Baitalsky writes:

Stalinism has no effective means for educating youth in the spirit of proletarian morality because proletarian morality is alien to Stalinism. Like the Saturn (Cronus) of Greek mythology, Stalinism devours its children — it can produce no young. Zealous servants — because they are devoted to the system as the source of personal advantages and privileges they have grown used to and because of inertia and ignorance — can train people... But there will be no fresh ideological reinforcements.

The Stalinist system was built on lies and deception. As such, it must accomplish two seemingly contradictory objectives. First, it must idealize the events of October 1917. Second, it must slander and destroy all those who played a role in bringing them about. Commenting on the use of slander, Trotsky wrote:

One must understand what is happening. The deep molecular processes of reaction are emerging to the surface. They have as their object the eradicating, or at least the weakening of the dependence of the public consciousness on the ideas, figures, and slogans of October.³

1. Nora Levin, *While Messiah Tarried: Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871–1917*.

2. Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left*, New York: Wiley, 1979.

3. *My Life*, New York: Pathfinder, 1970, p. 517.

Baitalsky understood the critical role of slander and the big lie in the maintenance of Stalinism. However, his memoirs do not merely analyze it from a scientific socialist point of view. He also speaks of faith — his faith and the faith of his fellow prisoners in the hope that truth would eventually prevail and triumph over the accusations and oppression. This optimism is the core of moral courage and of classical Marxism. The powerless prisoners hoped and believed that the lies and falsifications of Stalin would eventually be exposed and the values of October restored. This optimism of Baitalsky and his incarcerated comrades is a key element of Marxism and is that which separates it from Stalinism. Without the values of optimism and faith in working people to change their lives, the revolutionary must turn to force and coercion as central instruments of policy. Isaac Deutscher remarked that, for Marxism, violence is a possible midwife of the struggle for a new society, while, for Stalinism, it is its mother.

III. Mikhail Baitalsky died on August 18, 1978. In a concluding section of his memoirs, appropriately titled "I Hope for an Echo," Baitalsky wrote:

What is important here is not the eleven years I spent directly under the authority of the sergeants who punished you for "babbling." What matters is whether or not I was really able during the remaining years to raise my voice to tell people about those eleven years.

Baitalsky has succeeded in telling us about those eleven years, and much more. He has provided us with a moving statement not only on Stalinist oppression and deception, but also about faith, hope, and content in revolutionary struggle. In times such as these, we often turn to the wellsprings of faith and hope — faith in the working class and hope for a different future. However, content is something more complex. Baitalsky wrote that "when the form ossifies, the content has nowhere to grow." Although he was writing about the state, his words are also appropriate for reflecting on the importance of democratic values in the struggle. Those values are part of the precious inner core of a revolutionary ideology. If nourished, it will help the

ideology to reach out to workers, and it will be the basis of a new society. This was Baitalsky's hope, and it should be ours as well.

NOTE:

Separate from a review of Baitalsky's memoirs, its value as an educational tool should be discussed. Certainly, the Humanities Press edition, at \$75.00, is not priced to meet the financial circumstances of many workers and students. Therefore, one must obtain back issues of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* in order to read the notebooks as they appeared serially over several years. An alternative might be to issue, in pamphlet form, excerpts from the notebooks, with a version of Marilyn Vogt-Downey's introduction and Baitalsky's introductory section entitled "Preliminary Remarks: The 1920s and the 1970s." Such an effort would require much work by a few dedicated, but already overworked, individuals. However, Baitalsky's memoirs are a significant contribution to an understanding of the nature of Stalinism as a system and to the documentation of its abuses and terror. □

Labor Party Calls for Real Welfare Reform

Continued from page 48

The scapegoating of the poor diverts attention from the real welfare giveaway — corporate welfare.

- In 1950, for every dollar individuals paid in income tax, corporations paid 76 cents; by 1992 corporations paid only 21 cents for every dollar paid by individuals (Labor Institute), and one-third of giant U.S. corporations — with assets of \$250 million or more — paid no federal taxes at all (U.S. Government Accounting Office, *International Taxation: Taxes of Foreign and U.S. Controlled Corporations*, June 1993).

The Cost of Corporate Welfare

The cost of corporate welfare contrasts strikingly with that of low-income public assistance. To give an idea:

- Corporate welfare in 1994 totalled \$104.3 billion (federal tax breaks of \$53.3 billion plus federal direct subsidies of \$50.9 billion); for the same year AFDC and food stamps cost \$38.22 billion (James P. Donahue, *Aid for Dependent Corporations: Federal Estimates of Corporate Welfare for 1994*, Essential Information, Inc, 1994).

This "welfare reform" in fact increases corporate welfare at the same time that it attacks the working class. The legislation allows private employers to make use of "workfare" recipients to fill their employment needs. So not only does this "reform" enable private employers to recruit involuntary, non-wage labor, it has the government subsidize them in doing so. This is

clearly an attempt to restore a version of the forced labor of the workhouse or the convict-lease system that the labor movement fought so hard against in the 19th century.

The Labor Party resolutely opposes this sort of "welfare reform" and its agenda of dividing the American working class by demonizing those people who have been pushed to the margins of the corporate-dominated economy. We expose this abominable legislation for what it is: a veiled attack on all American workers.

Labor Party's "Call for Economic Justice"

In June, nearly 1,400 delegates representing more than 1.2 million organized workers at our Founding Convention adopted a Program, "A Call For Economic Justice," that places the needs and interests of the American working class — the vast majority of U.S. residents — at the center of public policy. The critical linchpin of that Program is a demand for a Constitutional Amendment Guaranteeing Everyone a Job at a Living Wage (\$10 per hour, adjusted for inflation). Every U.S. resident must have access to a job that pays above-poverty level wages as a basic human right.

We also call for:

- A severely prohibitive Job Destruction Penalty Law that would require firms to pay severance to laid-off workers and to compensate communities for the social costs attendant to layoffs;
- Restoration of workers' rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike;

- A thirty-two hour, four-day work week;
- An end to all forms of discrimination, scapegoating, or other form of injustice — including hate crimes — on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, age, creed, or language;
- A comprehensive, universal, publicly funded national health care system, organized on a single payer model;
- Four years of free post-secondary public education for all U.S. residents;
- A trade policy based on enforcement of strong international labor standards;
- Elimination of corporate welfare;
- Redirection of tax policy to shift the burden to the wealthy and corporations;
- Paid family leave, and subsidized, high-quality child and elder care for all;
- A revitalized public sector and a public commitment to insure that labor plays a central role in shaping technological development and implementation.

This Program represents the Labor Party's understanding that the appropriate response to poverty is economic justice and restriction of corporate power, not a toxic cloud of punitive social policy that is only a tactic in the class war predatory corporations and their politician allies have declared on America's working people.

For more information, contact the Labor Party at (202) 234-5190. Fax number, (202) 234-5266. Or write the Labor Party at P.O. Box 53177, Washington, D.C., 20009. □

The Heritage They Reconsider

George Breitman, Paul LeBlanc, Alan Wald, editors, *Trotskyism in the United States*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1996, 318 pp., \$60.

reviewed by Joe Auciello

This book, a collection of previously published essays usefully bundled in one volume, explores the problems inherent in the effort to build a revolutionary Marxist political organization in the United States. It is a valuable addition to what George Breitman called "the political and theoretical arsenal" that socialists have assembled with painful, strenuous effort, and, thus far, with mixed results.

The varied essays gathered in *Trotskyism in the United States* reflect some of the divergent thinking that has characterized North American Trotskyism in the years before and since the Socialist Workers Party began to revise its program and policies. The SWP eventually split from the world Trotskyist movement in 1990, though long before then it had pushed out or expelled those of its members who openly continued to defend the program of the Fourth International. Differing assessments of the SWP's new theories and organizational practices led finally to the different groupings and organizations that exist today: the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity, Socialist Action, and *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, formerly published by the Fourth International Tendency (FIT).

Though editors and authors Paul Le Blanc and Alan Wald (George Breitman died in 1986) are both members of Solidarity, they are not in complete agreement on the issues central to this book, especially on the question of a vanguard party. Nor does this collection of essays promote the official position of any one grouping or organization. George Breitman's contribution was written while he was a leading and honored member of the Socialist Workers Party; Le Blanc's essays were first published by the Fourth International Tendency, and Wald's essays on Trotskyism were written as a member of Solidarity.

So, there is no lack of different emphasis and opinion. In other words, there is something here to displease everyone. Documents are not included, except for six pages of excerpts from the *Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, the 1938 founding document of the Fourth International, drafted by Leon Trotsky.

No one should take up this book expecting to be comforted by the restatement of familiar ideas and received opinions. The value of the essays is that they will challenge, provoke, and, at best, stimulate their readers to develop their own ideas and opinions. So, while *Trotskyism in the United States* is a summing up of experience, it is hardly intended to be the last word in the analysis of political organization, demo-

cratic centralism, the transitional method, the role of program, and the history of the Trotskyist movement.

The Liberating Influence of the Transitional Program

Revolution is a wordy, even verbose enterprise. Considering, for a moment, only the SWP, of the thousands of articles, documents, and pamphlets written during the 1970s, relatively little bears rereading. When the time comes to build barricades in the streets, there will be no need for brick or concrete. Socialists will stack up reams of newspapers, journals, and forgotten discussion bulletins, erecting barriers impenetrable and thick, forming a mountain of words from the pages now tucked away in attics, and subject, as Marx said, to the gnawing criticism of the mice.

If any single document from the 1970s deserves to be spared this fate, it is the one Le Blanc and Wald selected for inclusion in this book: George Breitman's illuminating essay, "The Liberating Influence of the Transitional Program: Three Talks."

First given as lectures at an SWP educational conference in 1974, Breitman's essay was printed as an SWP internal discussion bulletin in 1975, then reprinted in this magazine in 1986-1987 and in pamphlet form a year later by the FIT.

Breitman's essay is important because it shows, through detailed and clear example, how to think politically. He explained how the SWP leaders of the 1930s acquired the transitional method from the Bolsheviks and other Marxists via Trotsky, and showed the prior conceptions they had to overcome in order to assimilate this method. Breitman's point was not merely for his audience to learn the right slogans or the right position, but to understand how these were arrived at. If this method were learned, then socialists would be better able to adjust to new, unforeseen political developments that would invariably arise as capitalism decayed and new forms of struggle arose and different sectors of the oppressed came out in struggle.

This thesis is presented early in the essay: "The method of the transitional program as it was written in 1938 is absolutely applicable today. In fact, the transitional method, in my opinion, is an even greater contribution than the transitional program itself" (p. 91).

The transitional method enables a political party or group to involve itself with the greatest effectiveness in social protest or struggle. As most people most of the time are not revolutionaries or socialists, when they are spurred to action, their political demands are not likely to be drawn from the Marxist arsenal. Some socialists would then insist that ideas and slogans from their own program be adopted by the movement as a whole. As this acceptance would require a beginning movement to have already

reached revolutionary conclusions, such socialists are usually ignored and isolated.

More experienced and thoughtful socialists realize that a movement in struggle will deepen its understanding based on its own experience, responding not only to the symptoms but the causes of its oppression. Transitional demands contribute to that deepened awareness. Transitional demands form a bridge between most activists' initial level of understanding and a richer one that moves toward placing authority and political power in the hands of the masses themselves.

An example from the 1980s Central American anti-intervention movement helps to clarify this point. Rather than refusing to support an electoral referendum against the war in El Salvador because the referendum did not blame the Democrats and Republicans (who, in fact, were responsible for reactionary U.S. policies in that country), revolutionary socialists who applied the transitional method supported the referendum since it helped to organize and enlarge the anti-intervention movement. Also, and equally important, the logic of the referendum asserted the right of the American people themselves, not the government, to decide on questions of war. These demands helped the movement, deepened the consciousness of the activists, and aided the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador.

Failure to comprehend and develop the transitional method has led some individuals and organizations on the left to a wrong-headed, foolish approach to new political developments, like the burgeoning of the Nation of Islam. Not understanding the reasons for its significant growth, its dual-sided nature, they dismiss it verbally instead of creating a political strategy toward its members and supporters. Adolph Reed, Jr., for instance, denounces NOI leader Louis Farrakhan as an "ebony fascist." The SWP, which writes glowingly about Cuba and has attacked Farrakhan as a reactionary who echoes the ideology of right-wing bourgeois politicians, will now have to confront the fact that Castro recently welcomed Farrakhan to Cuba, as the NOI's newspaper, *The Final Call*, reports with a front-page photograph and a caption entitled "Freedom Fighters Meet" (September 17, 1996).

Even the SWP will realize that most bourgeois and religious figures who meet Castro do not embrace him as a fellow freedom fighter — quite the contrary. *The Final Call* also reports, "After the meeting, Min. Farrakhan called for an end to the U.S. embargo of Cuba and urged the U.S. government to pursue a just foreign policy."

An article about this meeting also ran in the September 24 issue of the Nation of Islam's newspaper.

Finally, one weakness that Breitman noted more than twenty years ago has, unfortunately,

not been overcome. Socialists, generally, still maintain a "bias or blindness to everything except the most obviously political or economic aspects of life in the United States." Breitman's criticisms are still pertinent: "An area in which I regret to report no progress is our almost total lack of interest in cultural problems and questions...Despite our urban location, we have always had more to say about agriculture than about culture" (p. 128). It is enough to recall that an informative analysis of rap music was published by Socialist Action, but that its author was from Poland.

The First Fifty Years

The first essay in the book is Paul Le Blanc's "Trotskyism in the United States: The First Fifty Years." It provides an overview from the founding of the U.S. Trotskyist movement in 1928 to the early 1980s. This essay is a substantially rewritten and improved version of an earlier one published as a pamphlet ten years before. The first version was too much of an outline, rather dry, though redeemed by plentiful reference to the commentary and reminiscences of political figures and personalities whose lives, for a greater or lesser time, had intersected with Trotskyism.

The present version develops the strengths of the original and provides considerably more in the way of detail. Also, the political conclusions and criticisms are drawn out, which increases the usefulness of the essay. In part, Le Blanc examines the first fifty years of the Trotskyist movement in order to understand how it soured, a topic he pursues more thoroughly in a later essay in the collection.

Le Blanc maintains that American Trotskyism from 1928 to 1978 "divides into two phases: the period from the beginning of the Great Depression to the post-World War II capitalist recovery ... and the period from the 'new radicalization' of civil rights, antiwar, student, and feminist struggles... In the first period... we see a predominantly working-class current..." (pp. 67-69). In his second essay Le Blanc will refer to "the petit-bourgeois consciousness" that defined the membership of Trotskyism's second period despite their class location in or near the proletariat (p. 195). Despite appearances, the continuity between the two phases of Trotskyism was disrupted, as the younger generation was shaped by entirely different conditions.

New members came to the SWP in large numbers during the early 1970s; an organization of 500 in 1969 swelled to 1,125 just four years later. As Le Blanc says, they "rejuvenated the movement," enabling the party to grow in every area of its work, as well as laying the base for an important regional expansion that would get under way by the mid-1970s. These newer members were generally young with little to no experience in socialist politics and traditions. Like anyone new to an organization, they tried to fit in and adopt the method, style, and values that characterized it. "Some took to copying the mannerisms of the prestigious elders — talking

sagely about 'the way we do things' even if they had been members for only twelve months..." (p. 63). Most new members did not become such caricatures, but most did try to assimilate into their new environment and absorb as much as they could of its traditions. In retrospect, the negative side of this process stands out more clearly.

Le Blanc rightly criticizes the excessive trust that the majority of the SWP membership held toward party leaders, "which contributed to a tendency toward conformism...a blunting of our inclination to think critically" (pp. 63-64). This trust was abused. Political disagreements were always treated as divisive, and the means of resolving them were more damaging than the disagreements themselves, with the following result: "The way the leadership handled disputes in the 1970s was to undermine quite seriously the internal democracy to which the SWP was formally committed. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the bulk of the membership seemed to approve of such treatment of dissident minorities. In large part, this flowed from the intense desire of the party members to reject anything that might divert them from realizing the magnificent opportunities and potential that had opened up for the Trotskyist movement" (p. 56).

Le Blanc also points out how poorly the SWP leadership reacted to unexpected political developments:

"The devastating crisis of American Trotskyism took a bizarre form. By 1980, the central leaders of the SWP, gathered around Jack Barnes, had concluded that the classic 'Trotskyist' outlook could no longer be considered adequate. Instead, the political tendency represented by the Cuban Communist Party under Fidel Castro was seen as representing the revolutionary wave of the future. In part, this was precipitated by the 1979 revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua.

"The Nicaraguan revolution... took the SWP by surprise — the Sandinistas' defeat had been confidently predicted in the SWP's *Intercontinental Press* just weeks before their victory. This victory...seemed to fly in the face of the 'orthodoxy' of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction that the SWP leaders had headed in the recently concluded dispute in the Fourth International...Without discussion, the Barnes leadership rapidly phased out [the] traditional political and theoretical perspectives of the Trotskyist movement... The Fourth International was denigrated, and a hopeful projection was made about a 'new international' that would be led by the Cuban Communist Party...

"The party's democratic-centralist norms were also redefined, with a dramatically heightened centralism and a dramatically restricted democracy..." (pp. 65-66).

The erroneous political perspectives which Le Blanc refers to can be found in a 1973 speech by Jack Barnes, SWP general secretary, called, "The Unfolding New World Situation." In this talk, given to an SWP National Committee meeting and published a year later, Barnes, in a section

titled "How Trotskyists Can Go Wrong," made this assertion:

"There is no vanguard that is adequate other than the Leninist vanguard...The Stalinists of whatever variety, the guerrillaists, and the petty-bourgeois nationalists constitute obstacles on the path to the world revolution; they are obstacles to advancing the new working-class upsurges in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America. They offer only a dead end." (*Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974, pp. 108-109).

When reality proved more complex, when these dogmatically asserted perspectives were not realized, when they were in fact refuted, the younger-generation SWP "leadership team" around Barnes was unable to modify its *sectarian* conception of the revolutionary program. Instead, they continued to equate that program with their own rigid formulations, and so in rejecting their own previous sectarian dogma they began to throw out fundamental aspects of the revolutionary program itself.

The Barnes leadership did not correct one error so much as create others, trading one oversimplification for another. Once the most determined opponents of adaptation to Castroism in the name of Trotskyism, they soon became the most determined adaptationists to Castroism in opposition to Trotskyism.

Of course, to create this political make-over it was necessary to limit, stifle, and finally expel the oppositions that developed in response to the Barnes team's programmatic and organizational reversals. To further shackle any future opposition, party members were limited in the number of preconvention discussion contributions they could submit; thus, the restrictions on democratic functioning continued even after almost every dissident was removed, all in the name of — democracy.

How this "devastating crisis" occurred in the SWP and the proper generalizations to be drawn from it are the underlying topics of Le Blanc's and Wald's essays. Their differing assessments have already provoked some controversy among those who situated themselves within the Trotskyist tradition.

The Decline of American Trotskyism

In his second essay, "Leninism in the United States and the Decline of American Trotskyism," Le Blanc outlines the main tenets of Leninism and surveys the Bolshevik tradition in the U.S., which persisted essentially in the Socialist Workers Party, noting the factors that sustained, nourished, and later diminished the force of this movement. He sketches the economic and technological conditions of American capitalism that developed and retarded the growth of working-class consciousness, granting these the importance they deserve in shaping the circumstances that affected the building of a proletarian political organization.

Yet, following a 1974 essay by Alan Wald, "Fatalism and Critical Consciousness," Le Blanc deepens his analysis of the SWP's degen-

eration by considering the factors that were more readily subject to control and remedy by the leadership and the party as a whole. He argues that "certain serious organizational mistakes in which some of us who later became oppositionists had acquiesced, or that we had failed to challenge, also contributed to our later defeat" (p. 196). These mistakes, which were codified into SWP policy, were several, including: overly rigid interpretation of the party's 1965 organizational resolution that was "misused to intimidate and eliminate dissenters in a manner that greatly damaged party democracy" (p. 208), factional maneuvering against minority tendencies, and the expulsion of a minority tendency without allowing the right to an appeal.

Throughout the 1970s, members of the SWP majority came to see disagreement with the leadership or with party positions as incipient disloyalty that would necessarily result in "illegal conduct" by the minority and would lead to splits or expulsions. Le Blanc further notes that members were not allowed to communicate with each other in drafting documents until the pre-convention discussion period started — a new restriction. The leadership layer itself was subjected to "leadership body discipline" so that a decision made on one level of the party hierarchy had to be supported at another level, even by those who had opposed the decision. Le Blanc might also have added that members of the SWP who were also members of the Young Socialist Alliance were saddled with new restrictions. They were either forced to defend the majority position of the SWP or they were prevented from raising in the YSA issues that had been "settled" in the SWP.

Le Blanc views these policies which choked party democracy as the antithesis of the SWP's history. He compares Barnes to the party's founder, James P. Cannon, and concludes, "The erosion of the Cannon tradition was not reversed but completed as Barnes took control. Moving into a position of central leadership in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Barnes helped shape new norms that further undermined the party democracy that is essential to Leninism" (p. 206).

This conclusion is valid and significant. No revolutionary socialist party can be built and endure with the excessive limitations on party democracy that occurred in the SWP. Political disagreements must always arise, and a healthy organization would consider them normal, potentially productive, and thereby minimize the friction that accompanies differences of opinion among strong-minded people. Trotsky's words, which Lenin repeated, should be absorbed by every revolutionary, especially the leadership, in a political organization: "Ideological struggle within the Party does not mean mutual ostracism but mutual influence" (V.I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions," *Selected Works*, volume 3, New York: International Publishers, 1967).

If, on the contrary, disagreements are always a prelude to resignations, expulsions, or splits,

then the organization will hemorrhage whenever it is cut by sharp political questions.

Democratic Centralism

Party democracy — democratic centralism — requires a full and fair discussion of issues and positions among an informed membership and a national convention to determine party policy. Those who agree with certain positions will combine to support them in a tendency or faction. Typically, a majority will emerge, and this grouping must be allowed to carry out its positions in the working class and in political movements, with the cooperation even of those who disagree. This procedure gives a fair test of policy in practice and also maximizes the effectiveness of the organization. These are the basic terms of democratic centralism, well-known to everyone. In the *Transitional Program* this idea is summarized in the phrase, "full freedom of discussion, complete unity in action."

Periodically, the ranks must be able to challenge and even change party policies. But an organized pre-convention discussion period with the rights of tendency and faction and with decisions made at a convention are only the minimum requirements of democratic centralism.

Equally vital, though far less subject to regulation, is the atmosphere within a political organization. Those with a different opinion must not only be allowed to state it (and collaborate with others in forming it), but they must also know that their point of view will receive a fair hearing among the membership, even if that membership is skeptical or ultimately unconvinced. Despite the outcome, whether or not a minority succeeds in convincing enough of the membership to become a majority, there must nevertheless be a reasoned exchange of opinion within the organization. If party members, figuratively, block their ears to different viewpoints, then, obviously, no discussion has occurred. The organization will not have achieved the "mutual influence" that Trotsky and Lenin called for.

Lacking the assurance that they will be heard, rather than tolerated until such time as they can be removed on the basis of some real or invented infraction, it is more difficult for a minority to remain in an organization. When that organization itself is tiny (at least relative to the class it wants to represent), there is less gravity to hold together the tendencies and factions that orbit around the majority. Add to this a hostile and bitter atmosphere, then the severing of ties, regardless of the organizational form this might take, is accelerated. What Les Evans, then a minority spokesperson within Socialist Action, told an SA National Committee plenum twelve years ago remains valid today and will for a long time to come: "We have to learn how to discuss with each other again. We have lost the habit. We have gained the habit of how you smash someone" (*Socialist Action Internal Discussion Bulletin*, No. 28, 1984, page 9).

The majority of an organization, when constituted fairly, must be allowed the freedom to

apply its positions in real life with the loyal, if skeptical, support of a minority. But it is not enough to tell a minority to behave loyally; they must be treated loyally. That's the responsibility of the leadership and the majority of the group or party.

Without such an understanding, no organization can weather the storms it will inevitably encounter.

If, instead, political disputes within an organization are settled by proverbial clubs and hammers, as is not uncommon, then a majority, with its greater numbers, will doubtless succeed in defeating a minority. The disputed policy, program, or ethos will have been "saved" from whatever "harm" the minority might inflict. The success, however, will be temporary. A price must be paid, all the more terrible if the questions in dispute did not warrant the severest methods.

Because a majority of the membership will have learned only the language of war, the consequence of fighting with clubs and hammers will return to plague the organization. When new conflicts emerge, as inevitably they will, and the majority itself becomes divided, the membership will only be able to speak with each other in the words they have learned already and used with apparent success — the language of factional warfare. Then new minorities will be marked off from the former majority, dividing lines will be drawn once more, tighter and narrower, and a diminishing group will consume itself in battle. A smaller, weaker majority, with ever greater conviction and ever fewer members, will remain until the cycle repeats itself again. This is the dynamic that fuels a sect. Examples abound.

Whither Trotskyism?

Alan Wald, in his two essays reexamining the traditions of American Trotskyism (a third essay of Wald's is a balanced appreciation of the life and work of George Novack, a prominent scholar and theoretician of the SWP), would extend the arguments developed above. Wald argues that the legacy of American Trotskyism is, by itself, an inadequate basis for building the kind of revolutionary organization that is needed today. The best of that legacy would become a part of a new kind of organization, a diverse and flexible revolutionary socialist group that is necessary. Wald's essays are written to help determine just what "the best of that legacy" really means.

Behind "The End of 'American Trotskyism'? Problems in History and Theory," lies a frustration with Trotskyism's limitations, with how little has been accomplished. Wald sees a paucity in terms of organization, theoretical work, and scholarship, as well as historical achievement. He is moved, therefore, to evaluate Trotskyism in terms of its program and traditions in order to discover possible weaknesses which contributed to those limitations, while still recognizing the objective conditions that set limits on what could be done.

So, Wald would not agree with George Breitman, who says: "We have the advantage over our predecessors of not having to plow up the same ideological and methodological ground that they covered. If we really absorb the lessons they learned and the methods they pioneered, then we should be able to go beyond them and plow up new ground" (p. 107). Wald would also like to go beyond the pioneers, but he would insist on a reexamination of those "lessons," not simply an absorption of them.

Before considering the ideas Wald presents, it would be useful to note a potential difficulty readers may experience with Wald's writing, especially in his essay, "The End of American Trotskyism?" For many readers it is likely that the essay's style and method of development could be unfamiliar. Rather than an assertion-plus-proof-plus-conclusion structure of argument, Wald creates a dialogue with the self, writing like a man of two opinions who is thinking aloud, trying to make a decision. In reading the essay we overhear a person advancing an idea to mull it over, and then modify, refute, or reassert it. The structure of the essay mirrors the flow of the thoughts themselves, and, ideally, should promote reflection in writer and reader. The process of the thought, then, meanders rather than marches to a conclusion. Some readers, no doubt, will be put off by an unfamiliar method or will misread questions as conclusions.

In addition, Wald's writing style, notable generally for its clarity, erudition, and sardonic wit, occasionally clouds over into prose like this: "Trotskyism must be rejected as an autarkic revolutionary movement projecting its own hegemonic leadership" (p. 272), a lapse into the prose fads currently besetting the academic left.

Further, a range of topics are raised as recommended areas of future consideration and research. These include a definition of Trotskyism itself, its role in the future, an assessment of the role of program, reasons for political schisms, reevaluation of the Communist Party, and so on. Wald expresses an opinion on these matters, but their context suggests a certain tentativeness.

Trotskyists who are convinced of the rightness of their cause and traditions will be startled and perhaps angered by the provocative questions Wald asks at the beginning of his essays. What, he demands, would a young revolutionary activist today make of this tradition? Why should young radicals care about it? Wald wants a discussion and reconsideration of issues that most Trotskyists would consider settled. Where others are certain of answers, Wald tends to ask questions.

The Vanguard Party

On certain issues — defining issues for the revolutionary left — Wald is emphatic. He is, at least, certain that the idea of the Leninist vanguard party as Trotskyists have understood and practiced it is a self-defeating concept.

Wald wants to avoid any repetition of "the discredited legacy of Trotskyist sectarianism,"

which "flows from the belief held by James P. Cannon in the 1940s that the Socialist Workers Party was the already constructed vanguard, with its main objective being to win leadership of the masses" (p. 279). To illustrate his point, Wald then quotes SWP leader Morris Stein, from a 1944 internal document: "We are monopolists in the field of politics. We can't stand any competition. We can tolerate no rivals. The working class, to make the revolution, can do it only through one party and one program... That is why we are out to destroy every single party in the field that makes any pretense of being a working-class revolutionary party. Ours is the only correct program that can lead to revolution..." (p. 280).

Anticipating rebuttal to his contention, Wald then warns against "those who can sugarcoat and speciously 'interpret in the appropriate context' such statements, or even try to minimize them in light of the fact that both writers (Cannon and Stein) modified their views as time went on."

It should first be acknowledged that Wald possesses the integrity and consistency to develop the current thinking of many Fourth Internationalists on the question of the revolutionary party. If what they argue is accurate, then the ideas of the most influential Trotskyists of the past, that is, the tradition articulated by Trotsky himself and by James P. Cannon, must be wrong, or, at least, wrong for the present era.

But Wald's own argument at this point, his anticipation of disagreement, should also be questioned. Understanding the appropriate context of an idea, for instance, is not by definition "specious," and if the opinions quoted were modified, then the proper step is to consider how that modification affects the Trotskyist tradition which Wald criticizes.

Still, at the very least, it must be admitted that Stein's comments in particular are an example of proud, boastful talk. This tone, in part, may reflect the years in which the words were uttered. The SWP had recently endured a debilitating split on the verge of a world war, its leaders had been thrown in jail, another factional fight was brewing, and still the party was enjoying a stability and increase in membership and influence. SWP leaders had good reason for their proud words. It would be misleading to discount this context.

Yet it would also be misleading to deny that Cannon and Stein meant what they said. An overweening self-confidence is evident in Stein's words and in the "American Theses" (a resolution adopted by the SWP's 1946 convention), a tone and content which might be regarded more skeptically today. Within the SWP, the idea that everyone else on the left should be regarded as an "opponent" was evident throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and beyond. This notion infected the internal life of the party as well. It came to be understood that anyone in the party who held different opinions was an opponent in embryo, or worse, an opponent already born and growing. Of course, this atti-

tude made it easier to enforce conformism, to intimidate and silence the uncertain and undecided, and finally, to expel oppositionists.

The Vanguard Party in Action

Nonetheless, the quotes from Cannon and Stein that Wald highlights and the undeniable sectarian tendencies that did exist in the SWP do not tell the whole story. That party did respond in a healthy, positive way to important developments in the class struggle from the 1950s through the mid-1970s, specifically, in the civil rights movement, the rise of Black nationalism, the movement in opposition to the war in Vietnam, the women's liberation movement, and the struggle for gay and lesbian rights. This response was codified in political resolutions and carried out in practice.

The SWP's work in the antiwar movement, to cite a major area of party activity, required it to cooperate successfully with numerous other individuals and organizations in local areas and on the national level. In his recent autobiography, *The Prophet's Children* (a remarkably honest and reflective book), Tim Wohlforth says of the SWP: "on the whole, its strategy was principled and successful... The SWP and its members can be justly proud of having affected world history positively in the 1960s" (p. 156).

This political work could have been more successful but for the practices of other organizations. For instance, the Workers League, with Wohlforth at its head, suffered from its own form of sectarianism. They were, as Wohlforth notes in his autobiography, "drawn toward the positions of the SWP-YSA. Yet we could not entirely accept these either because of our predisposition to view that group's policies as 'revisionist'" (p. 157).

Of greater significance than the Workers League was the Communist Party, which tried to channel the antiwar movement into support for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, an unacceptable strategy of class collaboration. SDS, which could have been a vital force in anti-war demonstrations, generally did not involve itself in them after 1965. The SWP could not have changed the different, and wrong, perspectives which characterized those organizations.

So, the criticisms of Trotskyist sectarianism need to be tempered by a consideration of the receptivity and openness other organizations extended to possibilities of common efforts. In general, these were terribly inadequate. Revolutionary Marxists who were politically active during those years may remember a Maoist chant heard at antiwar conferences: "Ice-pick the Trots! Ice-pick the Trots!" The dogmas and practices of such organizations, which tended to confirm SWP's suspicions that other leftists were "opponents," were much more of an obstacle to common work than the SWP's self-conception as a vanguard party.

Also, Wald's criticisms of Trotskyist sectarianism and vanguardist errors are not fundamentally new; nor do they necessitate all the reevaluation which he believes should attend this rethinking. Wald's arguments are actually

criticisms that have already been made from within the Trotskyist tradition by some of its most articulate spokespersons and most resolute defenders. Ernest Mandel has described the Trotskyists of the 1930s as "always the most fearless, but ... not always the best. Those who, because of their intimate ties with the proletariat, reflected the illusions and discouragements of the class did not enter our ranks. Those who never succeeded in integrating themselves in the mass movement came with less hesitation to the small handful of outcasts...The vanguard, due to its isolation, developed a number of defects characteristic of a whole period of recession: excessive factionalism, sectarianism, and presumptuousness of the intellectual..." (*Revolutionary Marxism and Social Reality in the 20th Century*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1994, pp. 14 -15). These comments, no less critical than Wald's, were published in the SWP's theoretical journal in — 1947.

Further, the legitimate criticisms which Wald does make, as exemplified in the quotes from Cannon and Stein, do not, theoretically or practically, refute the idea of a Leninist vanguard party. There was another side to the SWP's thinking and activity which ran counter to the notion that they had already become the vanguard, a current of thinking which Wald minimizes.

The Nucleus of a Party

In more thoughtful and sober-minded moments, Trotskyists have argued that those organizations which consider themselves the core of a future vanguard party, one in the process of being created, must earn its status in the class struggle. An organization becomes a party, a vanguard, when a significant number of the most class-conscious workers view this organization as the best means of achieving their political goals and therefore join it. With this kind of numerical growth and political influence, a Marxist group can become a vanguard party. Without such growth it can become, at best, a nucleus of a future party, a corporal's guard. At worst, it will devolve into a sect.

The point is not to abandon the concept of the Leninist vanguard or cease striving to become one. Without this clarity of direction, a socialist organization would lose purpose and coherence.

The idea of building the nucleus, or seeds, of a party is noteworthy in that it leaves open the path of future growth and development. This includes, as Wald urges, "friendly interaction with rival perspectives," among other possibilities. Even in the 1940s it was clear to followers of the Trotskyist tradition that the vanguard party was not yet created, but was still in the process of being built. This recognition was more likely to come to the fore when practical work was required, as opposed to theoretical pronouncements. Here is Cannon in 1942, speaking on the campaign for a labor party:

"Normally and logically, when you organize a party and adopt a program and invite people

to join it, that is the way you build up a party — by recruiting people directly. We came up against the fact in 1934, however, that there was another group developing on the left-wing road. They didn't come over to us, so we had to go over to meet them. This fusion with the A.W.P. [American Workers Party] was a departure from the line of direct recruitment. Similar was the entry into the S.P. [Socialist Party]. It was a maneuver, a turning away from the path of building the party by direct recruitment, because a certain set of circumstances confronted us where the most eligible and logical candidates for Bolshevism refused to come into this party. We had to turn about and join them." ("Remarks on the Labor Party Campaign," in *Aspects of Socialist Election Policy*, published by the National Education Department of the SWP, p. 15.)

Cannon does not say here that the SWP is "the already constructed vanguard, with its main objective being to win leadership of the masses," nor would it be accurate to construe such a meaning from his words. Though he uses the term "party" in referring to the SWP, Cannon is really describing a nucleus, pointing out that other potential vanguards had emerged or were emerging. The SWP had to shift its perspectives and adjust to unexpected realities, had to find a way to merge with these left-wing forces, precisely because it had not yet become the vanguard party. Wald argues that "no program or group of cadres or organization exists as 'the heir and continuator' of the revolutionary tradition." Decades before Wald wrote these words, Cannon was applying them in practice.

But Cannon would not have accepted Wald's critique. Cannon would have argued that because the cadres he helped assemble were the heir to the revolutionary tradition, they had to act wisely, with strategical and tactical flexibility, just as their predecessors, most notably the Bolshevik party of Lenin, had done. Cannon's SWP could not pompously declare itself The Party and assume that it need only apply its program and the masses would heed the call. The Trotskyists of the 1940s had already undergone just that sort of debate in 1935 when Trotsky, Cannon, and Shachtman insisted that revolutionary principle needed to be applied realistically, intelligently, and should not serve as a barrier to growth.

Wald acknowledges that Cannon did not always triumphantly present the SWP as the already constructed vanguard party. However, Wald does not give the flexibility of Cannon's thinking sufficient consideration. In his essay he does not quote what Cannon was later to write.

In an essay entitled, "The Vanguard Party and World Revolution," first published in 1967 in *Fifty Years of World Revolution* and later reprinted separately as a pamphlet, Cannon wrote, "The vanguard party cannot be proclaimed by sectarian fiat or be created overnight. Its leadership and membership are selected and sifted out by tests and trials in the mass movement, and in the internal controver-

sies and sharp conflicts over the critical policy questions raised at every turn in the class struggle. It is not possible to step over, and even less possible to leap over, the preliminary stage in which basic cadres of the party organize and reorganize themselves in preparation for, and in connection with, the larger job of organizing and winning over broad sections of the masses" (p. 359).

Elsewhere in this essay, Cannon referred to the SWP as a *propaganda group aspiring to become a party* — that is, socialists who are organized around a program, who call themselves a party, but who have not yet recruited the numbers necessary to be a party in fact, in real life. That group may enter the Labor, Social Democratic, or Communist organizations in order to "transform a propaganda group into a force capable of influencing, organizing, and directing broad masses in action. The ultimate goal is to create a new mass party of the working class along this road" (p. 357). These strategic reorientations may become necessary because the propaganda group is not the party, not in the real sense, the Leninist sense, of the word.

Ernest Mandel, the best-known leader of the Fourth International after Leon Trotsky, has written at length about the concept of the nucleus of a party, or a "vanguard organization." Mandel has more precisely identified and named the distinctions that can be found in the thinking of Trotskyists like James Cannon. Two of Mandel's essays on vanguard parties and the Leninist theory of organization can be found in the 1994 collection, *Revolutionary Marxism and Social Reality in the 20th Century*.

A popular pamphlet of Mandel's, *The Revolutionary Student Movement: Theory and Practice*, published by the Young Socialist Alliance in 1969, outlines the distinction between a revolutionary nucleus and a revolutionary party. In response to a question about Leninism, Mandel said:

If you advance a theoretically pure definition of a party, which is not only a body of people holding a certain number of ideas with a program, structure, statutes and so on, but which also has a certain concrete impact on its own class and on the whole of society, I would have to answer that in no place today have revolutionary Marxists already achieved such an influence. That is to say, they cannot yet mobilize under their own banner a significant section of their own class.

What we do have today are the nuclei of such parties in various countries on all the continents. There are groups which, on the basis of a correct political program and the organizational structure which corresponds to these principles...are seeking with more or less success to build such parties. I personally think that such organizations adhere to the Fourth International on a world scale. The Socialist Workers Party in the United States is an organization of this type.

The Example of the Bolshevik Party

When Wald writes in positive terms of the kind of organization he desires, emphasizing especially the qualities of openness, flexibility, and innovation, he is not really surpassing the

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edited by Paul Le Blanc, 412 pages

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This book documents the waves of expulsions carried out in the SWP by the Jack Barnes "leadership team" from 1981 through 1984. It presents an inspiring record — and reaffirmation — of the revolutionary ideas and commitments of those forced out of the organization. Also included are letters and a speech by pioneer American Communist James P. Cannon on the theme "Don't Strangle the Party," as well as documents by Jack Barnes and Co. The introductory essay by Paul Le Blanc relates the 1981-84 experience to broader questions: the history of American Trotskyism, the development of the U.S. working class, and world politics.

Volume Three:

Rebuilding the Revolutionary Party

edited by Paul Le Blanc, 148 pages

(1990) — \$9.00

This book consists of eight documents. The longest, "In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity" (1983) by Paul Le Blanc and Dianne Feeley, responds to Jack Barnes's attack on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Also included are: a 1988 analysis of the SWP by Frank Lovell and Paul Le Blanc; and documents on the need for unity among revolutionary socialists in the United States.

Trotskyist tradition or going beyond what Cannon and Mandel argued for.

Wald's criticisms, then, do not refute the idea of the vanguard party. What is useful in his observations underlines what has already been acknowledged from within the Trotskyist legacy, and his projection of what a revolutionary organization ought to be actually characterizes a Leninist vanguard party.

The Bolshevik party of Lenin's time created an "organizational culture" in which the membership was "fully informed" and had the "freedom and motivation to shape, through democratic structures," the policy of the party, "a policy linked to emergent social movements." Soviets, or workers councils, for instance, were not the invention of the Bolsheviks, and expropriations of landed estates were occurring in the countryside throughout 1917, well before the October revolution. Elements of the Bolshevik program were revamped in "friendly interaction with rival perspectives": the agrarian program announced at the triumph of the revolutionary insurrection

was in fact the program of another party, the Socialist Revolutionary Party. The Bolsheviks developed a program reflecting the aspirations of the oppressed national minorities within the Russian empire, and the national struggle will also be a prominent element of the future American revolution. Finally, although the specific issues differed, the Bolsheviks were responsive to the newly "emergent social movements" of their day.

Wald's advice that "one should proceed as a person of the future who accepts the possibility that previous theorizations of social change... might prove to be profoundly inaccurate" is another example of an assertion that does not refute but confirms the role of a vanguard party. Wald's imperative aptly describes the Lenin who reoriented his party's strategy with the April Theses (together with the party members who supported those theses), thereby setting the Bolsheviks on the path to the socialist revolution. The political leaders, Wald argues, should "be learning from...the participants more than 'leading' them," an idea which captures the

relationship which did in fact exist between the Bolshevik party rank and file and its leaders. In his *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky observes that the party members were to the left of the Central Committee and pushed it forward (just as the revolutionary masses were to the left of the Bolsheviks as a whole). Trotsky, Lenin's antagonist prior to 1917, was placed on the leading committees of the party and even represented it publicly prior to actually becoming a formal member of the Bolsheviks, certainly a fine example of "a repudiation of the strong elements of sectarianism" which will be necessary for a healthy revolutionary party.

In sum, the Bolshevik party, prior to its degeneration under the bureaucracy headed by Stalin, embodied the positive characteristics which Wald advocates for socialist organizations in the 1990s. So, by the end of the day, when the hurly burly's done, Wald's conclusions on this topic are far less startling than the provocative questions and statements which preceded them.

One notable difference, though, between the present and the Bolshevik party of the past would be the greater presence and prominence of women. George Breitman remarked on this distinction in his already quoted essay, "The Liberating Influence of the Transitional Program." Breitman documented the rise in the number of female delegates to SWP conventions in the 1970s, and concluded, "I don't think that there has been any change in our party in these three and a half decades bigger or more important than this one... wherever you look, you find the women of the party well-represented, making serious contributions to its work." This is a permanent transformation. The leading role of women members will be a defining characteristic of any revolutionary vanguard organization that develops in America.

Revolutionary Continuity and the Labor Party

In his conclusion to the essay, "The End of 'American Trotskyism'?" Wald argues that "one shouldn't drop Trotskyism because politically active people need continuity if they are going to avoid repeating errors of the past," and because "there are recoupable elements in its theory and tradition far superior to others available" (pp. 276–277). Wald is certainly right to insist that one such element is a rejection of sectarian practice and self-deception.

The dividing line of sectarianism today is revealed in large part by socialists' response to the recently formed Labor Party. Marxists who ignore developments such as the Labor Party, or who would try to impose their own program on it, are guilty of short-sighted sectarianism. The practice of the present-day SWP and organizations like Labor Militant are examples of what not to do. The Trotskyist tradition is realized today in the critical, nuanced, but supportive response from groupings like Socialist Action, Solidarity, and *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. These Marxists did not have to begin their thinking from scratch as Labor Party Advocates

gathered in Cleveland last June for its founding convention. The imperative that revolutionaries must, in a principled way, link up with the real movement of the workers vanguard guided the practices of all those forces influenced by the Trotskyist tradition.

These organizations, linked to the Fourth International (in the case of Solidarity, by a caucus of FI supporters), did not attend the Labor Party convention to “participate only as ‘seasoned experts’” or, to use Wald’s exclamations, “to lecture on Trotskyism!!!”

The Trotskyists who attended this convention behaved as Wald counsels; they went to “genuinely listen to people from other traditions.” Clearly, both Solidarity and Socialist Action reassessed their point of view, if not on the labor party as a theoretical question, then on this Labor Party at this time. Despite the real and unbridgeable differences which separate Soli-

darity and Socialist Action, both organizations functioned as vanguard elements must: they thoughtfully modified their stance in response to real events and opportunities in the class struggle. They demonstrated in practice the flexibility and openness that Wald argues will be necessary to revitalize the left in this decade. To cite one of Wald’s judgements (though in an altogether different context),

“This kind of thinking was not an aberration of the movement but flowed directly from the tradition of ‘American Trotskyism.’”

Conclusion

Greater understanding of, and more dialogue about, the Trotskyist tradition can only help the American left. The essays contained in this book, whether one agrees with them or not, are a real contribution to that necessary dialogue among socialists. One complaint, therefore, is

that the cost of this book in hardcover — \$60 — will prove too expensive for most of its intended audience. Libraries are likely to account for the bulk of sales, and there may not be too many libraries willing to make such a purchase. The ready appearance of a paperback edition should give the book the wider circulation it merits and help stir the political debate and reassessment which the authors hope to encourage.

Because it will help stimulate such a debate, *Trotskyism in the United States* should prove to be of enduring value to revolutionaries and socialists who may be defending, developing, or discovering the history and tradition of Marxism in America. That tradition will continue to live and thrive because it offers invaluable assistance to the millions who will one day accurately interpret the world and who will therefore want to change it. □

Robert D. Dullea, 1901–1996

by Frank Lovell

Bob Dullea died August 22 this year at age 95. He was a socialist most of his life and a sympathizer and active supporter of this magazine, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (BIDOM)*, from its first issue in December 1983 until his death. He was a delegate from Cleveland, Ohio, to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1938, and it was in the pre-World War II SWP that he received his basic Marxist education.

His loyalty to the working class in struggles for social justice throughout the world never flagged. His faith in the socialist cause remained firm during the postwar periods of reaction, from the era of Cold War and McCarthyism to the present crisis of world capitalism.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the wave of radicalization that swept this country at the time brought Dullea and millions of others like him to the realization that capitalism as an economic and social system was bankrupt. In 1931 or 1932 he and his lifelong companion, Margaret, joined the Socialist Party (SP). She now says that the gathering war clouds in those early days, when few outside the socialist movement were aware of the impending danger, prompted them to join the SP and to identify with the pacifist message of that party’s leader, Norman Thomas.

In the Socialist Party the Dulleas found new friends, some of whom were associated with or active in sections of the resurgent union movement. With the rise of the CIO and the advent of the sitdown strikes as a new weapon in the union arsenal, class conscious organizers were in great demand. Membership in the Socialist

Party, in some situations, qualified the holder to assume the responsibilities of a field organizer in the formative years of the CIO unions, 1935–1938. Bob Dullea then became active in the CIO textile organizing committee in Ohio and Michigan, and was also an organizer for the Cleveland local of the Butchers Union.

By 1936 Bob Dullea had achieved some prominence in the Cleveland branch of the SP and had been the party’s candidate for mayor of that city. He and Margaret were also ardent participants in the internal discussions within the SP that culminated in 1937 in the expulsion of all adherents of the Trotskyist tendency, with which the Dulleas were identified. So it was not surprising that Bob turned up as a delegate from Cleveland to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), held in Chicago over the New Year’s weekend at the beginning of 1938. The convention minutes show that he served on the five-member Conflicts and Grievances Committee. On all disputed questions within the SWP, especially the “Russian question” — having to do with the class nature of the Soviet Union at that stage of its bureaucratic degeneration — Dullea voted with the majority.

In 1940 the Dulleas moved to New York. In consultation with the SWP leadership they hoped to establish a party bookstore near party headquarters at 116 University Place for the sale and distribution of party literature. When this failed to develop as planned they converted the project into a small business and managed to turn it into a profitable enterprise. During the war years (1941–45) this bookstore, near New

York University in downtown Manhattan, was one of the few places in the city where antiwar literature and radical publications were available.

Bob and Margaret Dullea were personal friends of Bert Cochran, a leading Trotskyist and union organizer, almost from the time of their first meeting back in Cleveland in the days of the jubilant CIO movement and the early sitdown strikes. And when a split developed in the SWP leadership in the depths of the McCarthy era, in 1953, they were sympathetic to the defensive strategy advocated by Cochran. By the time the SWP split occurred the Dulleas were no longer active SWP members, but they remained sympathizers. After the split they were more sympathetic to the Cochran group than to the SWP, but they retained personal relations with many of their close friends in the SWP over the years. They never lost interest in politics and continued to contribute to SWP projects, increasingly so during the anti-Vietnam War protests, until radicals of the 1960s generation surreptitiously captured control of the SWP and repudiated its Trotskyist heritage.

The ties of personal friendship were dear to Bob Dullea. It was characteristic of him that he managed throughout his long lifetime to retain his faith in the American working class to transform society, root out the evils of capitalism, and usher in the socialist future; and at the same time he cherished his friendships with many who disagreed with his politics. Supporters of *BIDOM* have lost a staunch friend and sustainer of our cause. □

October 5, 1996

Farewell to a Solid Citizen

by David Jones

Bill Bader, president of the Twin Cities Labor Party chapter and a member of the Executive Board of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, died suddenly on August 13, of an apparent heart attack. He was 56 years old.

The St. Paul *Union Advocate* (August 19, 1996) reported that Bill “was passionate about the rights of working people, whatever their background, color, or social status... After Labor Party Advocates held its first convention to form a national Labor Party, Bader was elected president of the Twin Cities chapter. His goal, he said, was to create a political movement by and for working people.”

Bill was a long-time member and activist in the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) Local 1M in St. Paul. He was a skilled worker, employed as a journeyman platemaker, but free of all prejudices of craft, race, or nationality. He served his apprenticeship in the old Amalgamated Lithographers Union, which later merged with other printing trade unions to form the GCIU.

Most of his working life was spent at Brown and Bigelow, a century-old printing plant employing hundreds of workers. He served as shop steward in his department for many years. According to his wife Patricia, “Bill was the steward whether he had the title or not... if it was trouble, they came to him.” Bill never shrank from taking on the bosses, and the experiences formed the basis for some of his extensive store of working-class anecdotes, usually tinged with a sharp edge of humor.

Bill identified with all the traditions of workers’ struggles, from his memory of workers at Brown and Bigelow enforcing their labor agreements by shutting down the presses to what he learned about the revolutionary labor organization known as the Industrial Workers of the World (the “Wobblies”). He related how during one negotiating session his boss told him about his first contact with the labor movement. As a small child, he told Bill and the others, he helped his grandfather and others drive Wobbly harvest workers off their North Dakota farm with clubs and shotguns. He apparently hadn’t heard about mutual interest bargaining at that point. Bill liked to wear a red button with the black cat (an old IWW symbol) into his meetings with the owner.

Grew Up in “Tough Part of Town”

Bill grew up on St. Paul’s West Side, at that time a largely German Catholic working-class community, “a tough part of town,” one local union leader who went to high school with Bill said. As a young boy Bill often accompanied his father, a meat salesman, as he made his rounds visiting his customers at small butcher shops, taverns, and restaurants. He had vivid memories

of going to one such spot, a working-class lunchroom run by two German brothers in greasy aprons who served up huge platters of sausages, fried potatoes, eggs, and ham. His vision then of becoming an adult male, Bill said, was that you became big enough to eat those massive meals, like his father and uncles did.

One of the things that stuck in Bill’s memory was that every place then seemed to be a union shop. Unionism was everywhere. He recalled going to the neighborhood movie theater and seeing John L. Lewis on the newsreels, telling off a Congressional committee or defending a strike by the coal miners. Everybody knew about Lewis, he remembered.

As Bill recalled it, his family’s basic outlook on the larger world was, “Don’t get involved.” Keep a low profile and hope that no disaster strikes. Stay out of the military and don’t vote. Bill’s father took him up one day to Summit Avenue, a long boulevard lined by the mansions of the merchants, bankers, and capitalists of St. Paul, the home of the Hills, the Weyerhaeusers, and others. “This is where the swells live,” Bill’s father told him. Bill used to contrast this with his memory of an uncle who worked for the city’s public works department and lived on the West Side in a tiny house with a small garden. His uncle would sit outside, look at his tomato plants, and tell Bill: “It doesn’t get any better than this.” Bill would laugh sardonically as he told the story. “Get a job with the city,” his uncle advised. “They can’t blast you out of there with dynamite.”

Shaken Up by Employers’ Attacks on Unions

But it turned out they could blast you out of there, out of the city and out of other places. The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike at the beginning of the 1980s, when the Reagan administration broke the air controllers’ strike, signaled that it was open season on unions. Bill’s world, like that of millions of other workers who had jobs with living wages and some semblance of security, was shaken up and threatened. Bill said that was what began to shake him out of his routine and really impelled him to become an active trade unionist outside the boundaries of his own shop.

The strike by UFCW Local P-9 against the George A. Hormel Company in Austin, Minnesota, beginning in August 1985, brought hundreds of Twin Cities unionists into active support and collaboration with each other, often in ad hoc committees outside the regular trade union channels. Many of the unionists Bill met at that time were the people with whom he worked closely for the remainder of his life, through new institutions like the St. Paul Labor

Speakers Club and Labor Party Advocates, and old ones like the Trades and Labor Assembly.

On the recommendation of organized labor, Bill was appointed by the mayor to the city’s Civil Service Commission, a three-person panel charged with adjudicating grievances of workers who came under the purview of civil service law. The commission had routinely been run by the staff attorney assigned to it by the city, with the commissioners rubber-stamping the attorney’s recommendations. That changed during Bill’s tenure. Bill saw himself as an advocate of workers’ justice, not an “impartial” citizen member. He fought tenaciously to compensate and reinstate workers who had been canned by the city bureaucrats. After a couple of terms Bill was dropped off the Commission by a new mayor, a Democrat who became so unpopular with the unions that last year the state labor federation announced that the mayor was not welcome in any union hall.

Bill’s Navy Years: The Bay of Pigs Shock

Bill joined the U.S. Navy while still in high school, but experiences there permanently altered his outlook on life and ended any ambitions for a lifetime career. When his squadron was assigned to a secret mission in April 1961 that turned out to be the abortive U.S.-sponsored invasion of revolutionary Cuba by anti-Castro forces at Playa Girón, a beach on the Bay of Pigs, it stimulated the beginning of a radical change in his outlook. He talked about it in an interview in 1994.

“A year later they were giving out medals for service in the [1962] Cuban missile crisis on the ship one day. So a couple of days later I went up to the executive officer, and I asked him for my medal. ‘Were you there in the missile crisis?’ he asks. I say, ‘No, I was there at the Bay of Pigs.’ ‘There was no Bay of Pigs,’ he says. ‘You were never there.’” Another sardonic laugh from Bill.

“I started wondering, what sense did it all make? It’s just working people on both sides. What’s going to come out of it? What’s the purpose? You know, when I was in Cuba I didn’t think the Cubans wanted to fight us, and I didn’t think our boys there wanted to fight the Cubans. I sure couldn’t see any reason for doing it. Because they were just like me.”

Stationed for a time at the huge Guantánamo (Cuba) naval base, he wondered, “If there was some sort of problem with the Cuban people, what were they letting them in there for [to work on the base]? They’d come in by the hundreds, a flood of them, about 8 o’clock in the morning. They were there primarily to clean the officers’ quarters, and they did grounds work — lawns and shrubs — and street work. They went

through a Marine Corps checkpoint; they were primarily Black people. I don't think the Marines even took them seriously, considered them a real danger — they'd only a frisk a few of them.

"They were just trying to make a buck. The Yankee dollar. I wasn't any different than they were. That's when I first started thinking about these things."

Labor Party Convention a High Point

The Labor Party convention in Cleveland this June was a high point for Bill. He had helped to organize the labor party movement since it started. He was gratified when the Trades and Labor Assembly, which did not endorse LPA, nevertheless voted to pay part of his convention expenses. Bill continued at the same time to participate reluctantly in the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party (the Minnesota section of the Democrats), because the labor movement did. In this he was pretty typical of most Labor Party supporters.

Bill was elected a delegate to the GCIU international convention in 1992: "Well, it was in Honolulu. The union wanted to endorse Clinton for the office of president, and they wanted to take a vote.... One of the delegates stood up and said, 'Why don't we make it a standing count, so we all know it's unanimous.' I'm sitting there thinking. This guy doesn't deserve a unanimous labor endorsement. He's never done anything for labor. He has to earn it. Why should we give him a unanimous vote? And I thought to myself, there'll be fifty to a hundred people here who won't vote for him. So I talked to my brother that's sitting next to me, and I said, 'Let's abstain from this, so it won't be unanimous, and we won't have to be a part of this.' We were sitting there and everybody stood up, I guess. And the union president says, 'Well, it looks like it's — oh, I see some brothers sitting down.' Then he called for the no vote. And I thought, 'Aw, f— it, I'm going to vote no.' And I nudged my brother gently, and I stood up and said no. And there was this big TV screen there, and I looked up, and I saw myself standing alone. I thought to myself, I'm not so much of a Crusader Rabbit now. I'm kind of Chunky Chicken soup. I hope I get out of this hall alive. I was scared to death.... But I didn't get any flak from the delegates there. A couple of them asked me why I voted no, and I told them. I was surprised there was no flak, because I thought I'd really get ridiculed."

The *Union Advocate* said that Bill "embodied much of what is great about the labor movement. He was a hard worker who participated in numerous activities, from serving as a trustee for the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly to helping plan the Labor Day picnic." He also

convinced the Assembly to organize, for the first time in many years, a Labor Day parade. Bill made sure that the parade had, besides unions, fire trucks, and color guards, a contingent from the Welfare Rights Organization. Bill, the *Advocate* said, "put his hands and his heart into efforts on behalf of all working people."

An Interest in Working-Class History

Bill developed a serious intellectual interest in working-class history and shared the experience of books, plays, and documentaries on this subject with his friends, usually with some element of his sardonic sense of humor interjected.

Given his long-standing interest in maritime matters, I lent him a book on the great mutinies in the British navy in 1797 at Spithead and the Nore, comparable in scale in British history only to the 1926 General Strike. At the Nore, 50,000 seamen seized the fleet at anchor, 113 ships, and held it for a month, electing a fleet parliament composed of two delegates from each ship, which met daily on the Admirals' flagship. The rebellion was eventually crushed, and the president of the fleet, Richard Parker, surrendered to the British naval authorities by his chastened shipmates, was hanged along with other leaders. In a letter Parker wrote to a friend just before going to the gallows, he said ruefully, "Remember never to make yourself the busybody of the lower classes, for they are cowardly, selfish, and ungrateful; the least trifle will intimidate them, and him whom they have exalted one moment as their Demagogue, the next they will not scruple to exalt upon the gallows."

As might be deduced from the story of his experience at the convention, here was somebody Bill could identify with. After this I would occasionally get phone calls beginning, "This is Parker." These usually came after Bill had heard some workmate make an especially backward remark. But there were also times of elation when the workers in his department had united against the demands of the employer or voiced some progressive sentiment of human solidarity.

"Don't Go to the Mine"

When the recent French film *Germinal*, based on Emile Zola's 19th century novel about striking coal miners came to town, we went to see it. Zola's novel in part reflects the ideological struggle in the International Workingmen's Association (the "First International") between the adherents of Marx and Bakunin. In the film, a miner who expresses the Bakuninist point of view is seen reading an anarchist newspaper at the boarding house where some of the miners live. He disparages the struggle over immediate objectives, telling the miners' leader that all it takes is a few francs to buy off the workers.

After the defeat of the strike and the murder of its leader, the anarchist decides to blow up the mine and makes secret preparations. On the morning of the appointed day he tells a worker with whom he has had some of these discussions, "Don't go to the mine today."

After that, in the course of some discussion or debate that wasn't going in the direction Bill wanted it to, he would interject, "Don't go to the mine, Dave."

Bill was one of those exceptional individuals who emphatically refute the pessimism expressed by the Bakuninist miner in *Germinal*, a worker who emerges from the trade union environment and develops an ever enlarging intellectual hunger for ideas and history. Although his life was cut off too quickly, it is yet another example of the inexhaustible potential of the working class to produce new political leaders from its own ranks, and the myriad complicated and unexpected ways they find their way to new ideas under the impact of social and economic changes. These are the indispensable people who can and will transform the American working class movement into an irresistible movement for social and human liberation.

"A Union Person from the Get-Go"

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

The Wobblies had a term, coined in their own ironic way, for a worker, for a trade unionist, who perhaps kept his or her roots in one place, but was a reliable and indispensable ally of the revolutionary labor movement, one who had principles, integrity, and courage, who could be counted on when the chips were down. Such a person was a "solid citizen." Bill Bader was a solid citizen. His life, and those of others like them, should be remembered and recorded. Those lives are more important than they, in their modesty, ever imagine. They constitute the living proof that this movement is not an artifact, that it can renew itself, learn to think and to educate itself, recapture the lessons of the past, and organize and struggle for a better world. □

Letters

Disagrees on Labor Party Supporting Candidates Now

I generally support the arguments of Jerry Gordon in *BIDOM* No. 133. I want to comment on one aspect of the Labor Party electoral policy debate.

The class struggle generates candidates independent of the Democrats and Republicans, from Decatur and Detroit to Virginia and North Carolina. Supporting some independent candidates could build the reputation of the LP among workers and oppressed people. The decision on electoral support at the Founding Convention prevents the LP itself from doing this for now.

Since the convention, Detroit newspaper striker and Teamster member Doug Young has based his candidacy for Michigan State Legislature on the newspaper strike. Yet the Detroit LP cannot endorse its own member.

An independent AIDS activist in Tennessee may also deserve support. Below is a statement I was in line to read during the debate on the Labor Party Convention floor. I ask you to print it as part of this letter.

I have been a member of UAW Local 600 at the Ford Rouge Plant near Detroit since 1978. I will give some examples showing that doing electoral work immediately and building the Labor Party immediately are not counterposed, but necessary to each other.

1. A striking Pittston miner, Jackie Stump, ran as an independent labor candidate, defeating a 24-year Democratic Party Virginia state legislator. Mineworkers' Local 2490 President James Gibbs, said, "We had a Democratic Governor... The judge that fined us [Pittston strikers] \$54 million was a Democrat. But see, payback is hell! It was that judge's father that we beat in the election!" We should be prepared for such a candidacy tomorrow, not wait for two years.

2. In a situation like the Hormel strike, we should be capable of moving fast if a strike leader like Jim Guyette wants to run against a politician like Rudy Perpich, the Minnesota governor who sent the National Guard against the Hormel strikers.

3. In Whittakers, North Carolina a few years ago, independent Black candidates took on the white political establishment and won local offices.

The Labor Party should invite candidates like these to run as Labor Party candidates. Even if they do not want to run as Labor Party candidates, the Labor Party should support them as candidates independent of the Democrats and Republicans. The Labor Party needs to reach out to initiatives by oppressed people. This could help increase minority and women's membership and

leadership in the Labor Party, and help make the Labor Party the champion and representative of all workers. This cannot wait.

4. If Ron Daniels, a Black leader, were to run for an office soon on the basis on which he ran for U.S. president in 1992, the Labor Party should be free to support him.

5. Dave Watts ran for City Council as the candidate of the striking and locked-out workers in Decatur. The Labor Party should be free to invite such a candidate to run as a Labor Party candidate. We needed to be the War Zone party two years ago, not wait two more years.

6. In Detroit I recently spent a couple days in jail after allegedly damaging scab newspaper vehicles during a demonstration. In such incidents, the strikers themselves get fired before they go to trial. I think we need independent candidates running for office on the basis of defending the newspaper strike. The Labor Party should support them immediately and invite them to run as Labor Party candidates. They have been on strike for a year.

They haven't got two more years.

Ron Lare
October 18, 1996

On Black and Women's Caucuses at Labor Party Convention

I would like to share some thoughts about the Black Caucus and the Women's Caucus at the 1996 founding convention of the Labor Party.

The Black Caucus was able to take form at the convention because Black workers caucuses had already been organized in a

number of unions to deal with the pervasive racism in American economic, social, and political life. Many of those who participated in the formation of the Black Caucus had already worked together in struggles for common goals.

The Women's Caucus participants had not. The first session of that caucus was called by a few of us from the Workers Unity Network to see who these women were who were interested in building an independent working class political party based on the unions, and what their concerns were.

More than 125 women attended the first lunchtime session, which Carol McAllister chaired. The necessarily brief comments of the 35 or more who spoke during that first meeting reflected a wide range of ages, experience, and concerns.

It seems clear that the Women's Caucus cannot be all things to all women. We cannot repeat or duplicate the experience of the suffragists, of NOW, of NARAL, of CLUW, or even of the various populist, socialist, or communist parties.

The unique thing about the Labor Party convention was that hundreds of working class women participated in the organization and founding of this party. They were delegates, and some served on key committees. This never happened before at a founding convention of a political party.

We are in a position at last to assert the fact that *all issues are women's issues* — and men's issues, in a working class party at the end of the 20th century. That should be our starting point.

Jean Y. Tussey
Cleveland



An Appeal to All Readers and Supporters of Bulletin IDOM

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Third Conference on Leon Trotsky's Legacy to Be Held in Moscow, November 1996

The Committee for the Study of Leon Trotsky's Legacy is sponsoring an international conference under the title "*The Revolution Betrayed — 60 Years Later.*"

The conference will be held in Moscow on November 22–24, 1996, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of Leon Trotsky's book *The Revolution Betrayed*, which was completed in August 1936.

The following themes are proposed for discussion:

1. The fate of the book *The Revolution Betrayed*, its publication, and its significance for the development of Marxist thought.
2. The problems of the nature of the USSR, its development and collapse, raised in the book.
3. Contemporary questions concerning the development of socialist theory and practice, the revolutionary and reformist workers movements, and the fate of the societies in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.
4. Issues involved in conducting a scientific study of Leon Trotsky's life and overcoming the dogmas of "the Stalin school of falsification."

Other themes connected with this book will also be examined.

Committee Founded in 1994

The Committee for the Study of Leon Trotsky's Legacy was first organized at an international conference on "The Ideological Legacy of Trotsky: Its Historical and Contemporary Significance," held in Moscow, November 10-12, 1994. It was founded for the purpose of furthering a deeper and broader study and understanding of Trotsky's ideological legacy and how his ideas relate to problems of social development. The Committee resolved to undertake the following measures:

1. To publish in Russian and English the materials of the 1994 conference at which the Committee was formed.
2. To create in Moscow an International Scientific Center for the organized collection and study of materials linked with Trotsky's political and theoretical activity.
3. To facilitate the scientific publication of Trotsky's works, above all in the Russian language. It was proposed that included among these would be the expeditious publication in Russian of

the hearings of the Dewey Commission published in book form in English as *The Case of Leon Trotsky and the Commission's verdict*, also a book in English, *Not Guilty*.

4. To continue to hold conferences and seminars on problems of understanding and applying Trotsky's theoretical legacy.

President: Pierre Broué, Cahiers Leon Trotsky

International Coordinators: Alexei Gusev (Moscow), Marilyn Vogt-Downey (New York)

Initial Advisory Council*: (Russia and Belarus)

Alexander Buzgalin, Professor, Moscow State University

Nadezhda A. Joffe, Daughter of Bolshevik leader Adolf Joffe, Survivor of Stalin's camps, author of *Back in Time*

A. Kuryonyshev, Historian, State Historical Museum, Moscow

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Jim Miles, Railworker, USA

Carlos Olivera, Student, Moscow State University, League for International Trotskyism, Brazil

Bertell Ollman, Professor, New York University

Bennett Satinoff, Railworker, Assistant District Chairman, Local 1043 Transportation Communications International Union

George Saunders, Translator of many of Trotsky's writings

Paul Siegel, Socialist Action; Professor Emeritus, Long Island University

Morris Slavin, Professor Emeritus, Youngstown State University, Ohio

Hillel Ticktin, Critique magazine, University of Glasgow

Esteban Volkov, Leon Trotsky's Grandson, Curator of Trotsky Museum in Mexico

Alan Wald, Professor, University of Michigan

Barry Weisleder, Ontario Public Service Employees Union

David Loeb Weiss, Documentary film maker, New York

Suzi Weissman, Professor, St. Mary's College

Nobuo Yukawa, Trotsky Institute of Japan

*Organizations listed for identification

purposes only.

To contribute to this effort, make checks payable to Committee for the Study of Leon Trotsky's Legacy; send to the Committee at P.O. Box 1890, New York, NY 10009 Tel. (718) 636-5446; e-mail: mvogt@igc.apc.org

- I wish to be a sponsor of the Committee
- Please send me the materials from the 1995 conference (\$5 is enclosed for postage and handling).
- I am enclosing \$_____ to help with the Committee's work.

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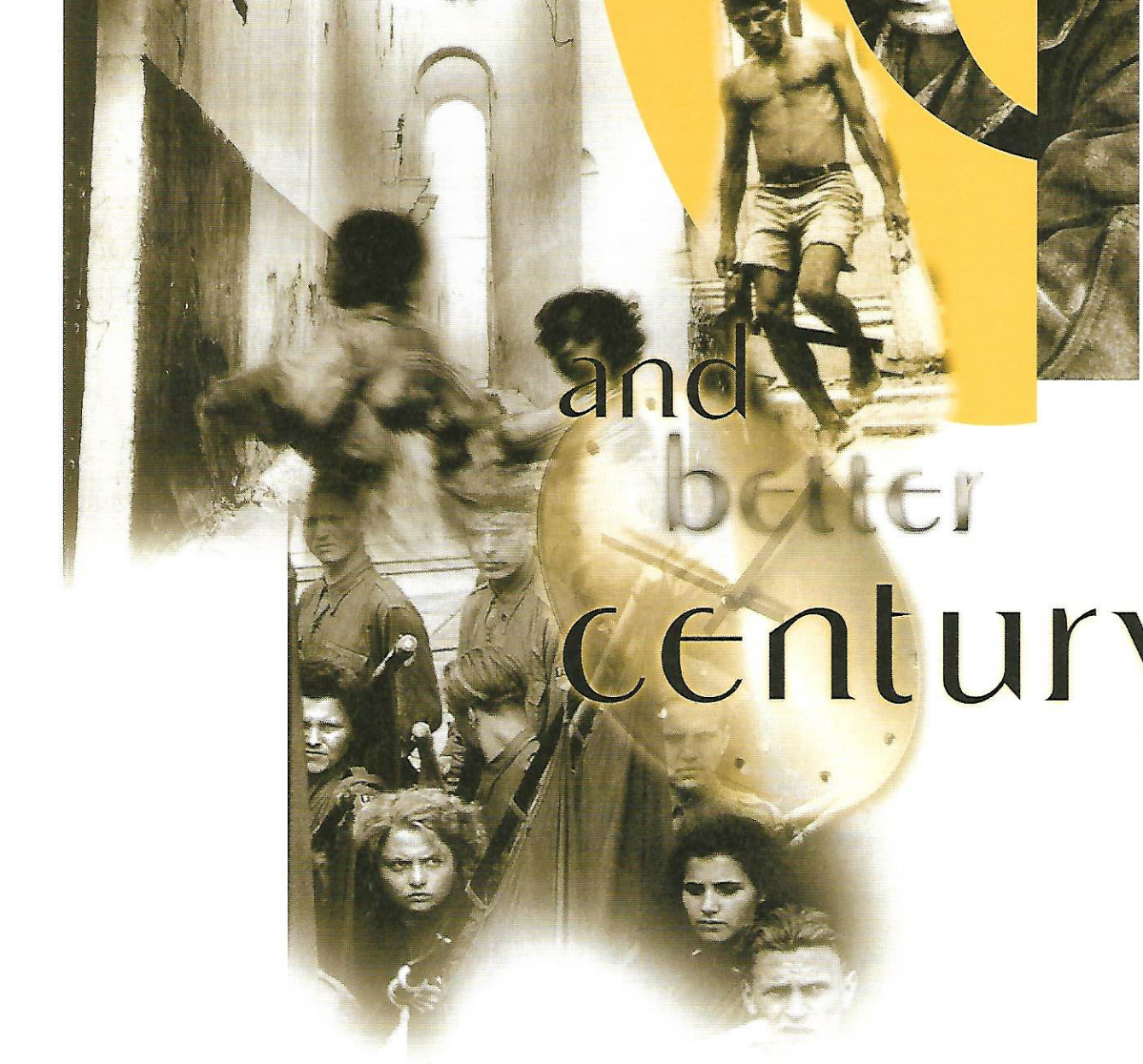
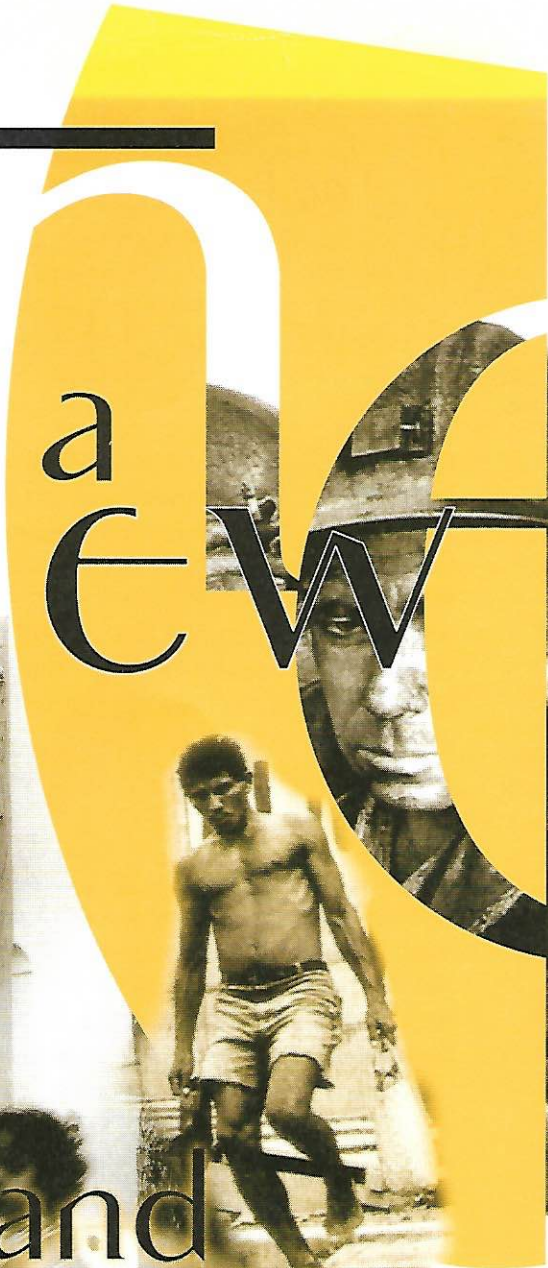
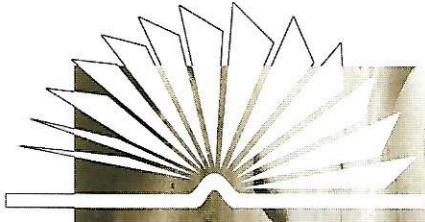
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Organization (for identification purposes only)

INSERT

the IIRE:

into a
new
and
better
century





The International Institute for Research and Education

Did history end when the Berlin Wall fell? Does triumphant neo-liberalism offer the only realistic model? Or are the only alternatives worse: nationalism, racism, fundamentalism, communalism?

Not just intellectuals, but thousands, even millions of social activists, in trade unions, NGOs, ecological movements, students' and women's organizations, are wrestling with these questions. They are trying to protect their constituencies from the painful consequences of economic globalization and shrinking programmes. But to sustain themselves and function effectively they need a sense of history, a grasp of social theory, and a vision of a better future.

The International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam shares these grassroots activists' values: their conviction that societies can and must be changed, democratically, from below, by those who suffer from injustice, on the basis of wide-ranging international solidarity. We exist to help progressive organizations and their leaders pose the questions and find the answers they need. Since 1982 we have welcomed hundreds of participants from over 40 countries to our courses and seminars, which are shaped to meet the needs of several different target groups: European youth organizers, Third-World development workers, economists, core progressive leaderships, women and others. Participants in our sessions have a unique opportunity to escape from the pressure of daily activism so that they can study, exchange ideas with people from other countries and reflect upon their involvement in a changing world.

Heading toward our third decade, the IIRE is responding to the demands of a changing time. We are renewing our curriculum. Moreover:

- Our **Ernest Mandel Study Centre**, opened in 1995, hosts seminars and lectures on economic and social issues of the post-Cold War world.
- Our **Notebooks for Study and Research/Cahiers d'étude et de recherche**, redesigned in 1994, have received increasing international recognition.
- Our **library**, which now contains over 25,000 books and periodicals, is being made more useful as a resource for researchers in critical social theory and history.
- Our well-equipped Amsterdam **headquarters** is being made available for more gatherings of other socially-minded, non-profit organizations.

This brochure is meant to give our friends and supporters around the world a better understanding of our efforts. It is also meant to let you know how you can participate and help. Your help is more necessary and fruitful today, as we move into a new century, than ever before.

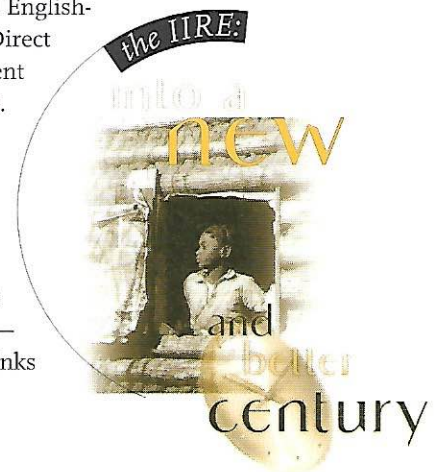
Curriculum

The IIRE's main activity remains the organization of educational courses. Participants and lecturers come from all over the world to work together on these courses, acquire knowledge, exchange ideas, and develop a framework for solidarity. Topics vary considerably, but each session includes efforts to understand: the shaping influence of global capitalism; the impact of past history; interaction between humans and their natural environment; the special situation of women and oppressed peoples; the functioning of existing states and structures; and prospects and strategies for change.

Our courses clearly respond to a felt need. Organizations in many countries send several students to sessions over a period of several years, building up an ongoing working relationship with the IIRE that goes beyond what individual students learn. Each year more organizations apply to send participants than we are able to accommodate. Those who come leave extraordinarily enthusiastic comments behind. Just to cite a few: One South African participant said that our course was "invaluable". A Congolese participant said, "I loved the militant, internationalist warmth both among the students and between the students and staff." In a Mexican participant's words, "Why not say it: it is encouraging. It is important to reconfirm that you are working with serious and human people around the world."

We do not pretend to offer ready-made answers to the questions that participants are confronted with. What we do is give them new means for analysing their situation and acting effectively, through informed, creative, critical thinking. Enhancing (self-)critical capacities and openness to new ideas is one of our main goals. Encouraging dialogue across boundaries of geography, nationality, gender and political tradition — and language (courses are usually bilingual English-French or English-Spanish, with simultaneous translation) — is another. Direct interaction among activists from different countries and continents, with different backgrounds, experiences and skills, is essential to the learning that takes place here. Great emphasis is put upon formal and informal exchanges, sharing of experiences and viewpoints.

Students at the IIRE not only study and discuss together, they cook, eat, clean and relax together, throughout their courses. To live for weeks or months in a culturally diverse group gives flesh and blood to the ideas of internationalism and solidarity. It helps to "feel the world", especially for those who have rarely — in some cases never — been outside their own countries. It often leads to friendships and organizational links that last long after the courses have ended.



The IIRE's offerings: an overview

From the beginning, every course that the IIRE has held has ended with collective, written and oral evaluations by staff, lecturers and participants. The courses have changed continually to meet participants' needs and demands. We have never given the same course twice in exactly the same way. From 1982 to 1988 we held two three-month sessions each year which surveyed a whole range of theoretical, historical and practical issues. While intensely rewarding, these sessions were also intensely demanding for both participants and staff. In the 1990s we have made major changes in our curriculum, shifting towards somewhat shorter sessions with more varied programmes tailored to different groups. This has involved transforming both the courses' content and our educational methods.

Our new course formats provide more time for reading and collective discussion. Participants take reading materials and audio cassettes with them when they return home and often circulate these materials widely (particularly in countries where such material is rarely available and copying is beyond most people's financial means). This ensures that the learning experience continues well after specific courses end. Printed materials complement lectures and discussions in more than one way: they provide historical and theoretical background; include documents from major

thinkers and figures of the past; present contending analyses; and introduce further readings to participants who wish to go deeper.

The subjects studied at the IIRE have also evolved. Present from the beginning, feminist concerns have gained in importance. In 1988, for the first time, a full week of a session was devoted to ecology; activists in this field gathered later at the IIRE for an international ecology seminar. More recently issues such as economic globalization, lean production, international financial institutions, and new forms of North-South solidarity have become important focuses.

Specific sessions held at the IIRE in recent years include:

Latin American Schools. In 1990 we held our first one-month session conducted in Spanish and attended almost exclusively by Latin Americans. These sessions address e.g. problems posed by NAFTA and Mercosur, the changing role of liberation theology and the decline of Latin American populism.

Schools on the Arab Region. The first of these one-month sessions for North Africans and Middle Easterners was also held in 1990. Their main language is Arabic, with simultaneous translation of lectures from English and French. They address e.g. Islamic fundamentalism, the legacy of the Gulf wars and dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Eastern European School. This one-month school in 1990 was attended by participants from Poland, East Germany, Hungary and other countries. Discussions of Eastern Europe in transition at later IIRE sessions benefitted considerably from this course.

Women's Schools. These one-month sessions have considerably enriched other IIRE courses. For example, other courses have borrowed feminist analyses initially presented here of the interaction of gender, race and class, social and family dynamics of economic restructuring, and democracy and leadership development in popular organizations. The next Women's School is planned to take place in the summer of 1997 in English and Spanish.

Third-World Schools. In 1993 we brought together leaders of social movements from Asia, Africa and Latin America for a one-month session. This and later Third-World Schools have studied in particular changing patterns of world trade, the debt crisis, the role of national minorities and trans-border disputes, and the US role in the Third World since 1989.

European Youth Schools. These two-week, generally trilingual summer schools for leaders of progressive youth organizations have become a regular annual event. They offer a short but intensive introduction to social theory, applied to discussions of issues in e.g. European anti-racist organizing.

"New Questions" Schools. These one-month sessions, of which the first was held in 1995, have built on and synthesized innovations in the IIRE curriculum going back to our first years. In many ways more seminars than lecture courses, they are meant for established progressive leaders who are re-examining past assumptions. Wrestling with a range of different themes, participants focus on the implications of a changing world economy and on challenges to old ways of organizing.

Who are our students?

Since our first session in 1982, hundreds of participants have come and gone from over 40 countries in every continent except Antarctica, in groups of between 15 and 50. Slightly more than half the participants have come from the Third World; most of the rest from Western Europe, North America and Japan. Smaller numbers have come from Eastern European countries.

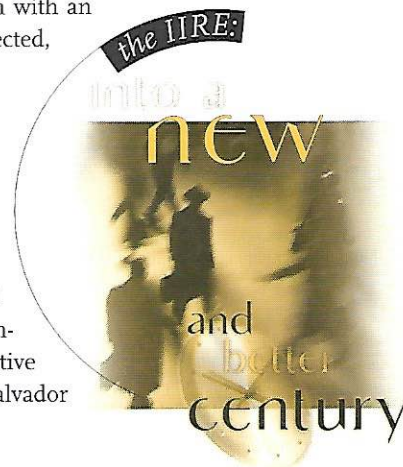
Participants' social origins are as varied as their geographical ones. The great majority of them come from popular milieus, i.e. families of primary school teachers, workers, employees, small traders, etc.; the others, mostly from intellectual and professional milieus. Most have finished secondary school. Even those who have no university degrees often have an impressive range of knowledge gained from formal or informal educational programmes in their organizations.

Except for the women's seminars, the rate of female participation in our courses and seminars has usually varied between 20 and 30 percent. We continue actively promoting the participation of women, with some success. The age range of the participants is from the late teens to the late forties, with the median age around 30. A large minority of participants are (paid or unpaid) full-time organizers for trade unions, associations or political parties, while the others combine substantial organizing efforts with other full-time or part-time employment.

Ernest Mandel Study Centre

Ernest Mandel, professor at the Free University of Brussels, author of major works in economics such as *Late Capitalism*, and first chairperson of the IIRE, died in July 1995. In 1996 the Ernest Mandel Study Centre was established in his honour, in order to promote research in economic and social theory in his humanist and militant spirit. The Centre was launched on the first anniversary of his death with an international seminar on his contributions to economic and social thought, in which IIRE Fellows and other distinguished scholars discussed a range of topics such as economic long waves, non-market economies, the theory of bureaucracy, the history of political thought and civilization and barbarism. The Centre plans to continue this tradition with an annual *Ernest Mandel Memorial Lecture*. Ernest Mandel's writings have been collected, catalogued and indexed in the IIRE library to assist with further research.

Beginning in 1996, the Economists' Seminar held annually at the IIRE has taken place under the auspices of the Ernest Mandel Study Centre. The seminar generally brings together about twenty professional economists from various European countries, North America, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Themes discussed have included globalization, social clauses, and the transition to the market in Eastern Europe. Each year the seminars have resulted in a substantial body of published work in various forums. Thanks to the participation of Nicaraguan and Brazilian economists in our 1992 and 1993 Economists' Seminars, the discussions there on alternative models of economic development for small countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador were drawn on in several different countries.



The IIRE library

We have a steadily growing library with over 25,000 books (16,000 titles) and several thousand periodicals housed on three floors. Most of the books are in one of the IIRE's three working languages, English, French and Spanish; but there are also significant collections in German, Portuguese and Italian, with smaller collections in several other languages. A substantial part of this library is now computer-indexed, facilitating easy cross-searching by topic, author and language. The work of completing the computer cataloguing is now under way.

We welcome large- and small-scale donations to our library. Please contact us if you have books that you are willing to part with that might be useful.

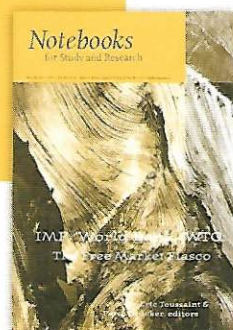
Notebooks for Study and Research

Since 1986, the IIRE has published 25 issues in English of its scholarly Notebooks for Study and Research (NSR) and 23 issues of the parallel French-language Cahiers d'étude et de recherche (CER).

The Notebooks are comprehensive studies, often based on lectures given in sessions in our Institute. Each time the first edition, regardless of the subject, sells between 1000 and 2000 copies. The publications are distributed through both subscriptions as well as through a number of bookshops and supportive organizations — we appreciate help with finding bookshops and organizations that will carry them! Different issues of the NSRs/CERs have also appeared in languages besides English and French, including German, Dutch, Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Turkish, Swedish and Russian.

Notebooks

for Study and Research



Titles published during the first ten years of the Notebooks for Study and Research series:

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- No. 21** *Factory Committees and Workers' Control in Petrograd in 1917*, David Mandel (48 pp. £4, \$5, f10, 30 FF)
- No. 22** *Women's Lives in the New Global Economy*, Penny Duggan & Heather Dashner (editors) (68 pp. £4, \$5, f10, 30 FF)
- No. 23** *Lean Production*, Tony Smith (68 pp. £4, \$5, f10, 30 FF)
- No. 24/25** *IMF/World Bank/WTO*, Eric Toussaint & Peter Drucker (editors) (116 pp. £6, \$8.75, f15, 45 FF)

Publication of the Notebooks for Study and Research is supported by our subscribers. A European subscription costs £10 or 100FF for four issues; outside Europe, subscriptions cost £12, \$20 or 120FF. Please note that there is also a 20 percent shipping surcharge for individual Notebooks mailed outside Europe. Payments can be made by means of a bank or giro transfer to "CER/NSR", Amsterdam, Postbank no. 1757144 (in Dutch guilders), or to "P. Rousset", CCP Paris 11 541 97 T (in French francs); or with a cheque made payable to "P. Rousset" on a bank in the UK (for pounds), the US (for dollars) or France (in francs). Donations above the minimum subscription amount are used exclusively to subsidize Notebook distribution in the Third World.

The IIRE has also published 32 Working Papers (WP)/ Documents de Travail/Documents de Trabajo (DdT) since 1988: works in progress, geared towards an interdisciplinary and international discussion, that are published and distributed for critical review in a limited circle. They are often an important stage in preparing later publication, whether as a Notebook for Study and Research, one or several articles, or a book.

From Korea, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa and other countries, requests come in continually for information (and free copies) of IIRE publications. We have already had to reprint several issues of the NSRs/CERs.

Gathering place

Aside from the schools, seminars, and conferences organized by the IIRE itself, the building is in principle also available for use by others in the periods between activities organized by the Institute. For example, it has been used in the past for youth conferences, solidarity events, conferences of the Transnational Institute and International Institute for Social History, and gatherings of German and Dutch NGOs.

All these events take place in the centre we opened in 1982 in Amsterdam. With the help of major donors as well as many volunteers we were able to rebuild and furnish a suitable building in a quiet part of town, aggregating four 19th-century Amsterdam houses, in which up to 50 people can be housed. The renovated complex includes three conference/meeting rooms, holding between 15 and 70 people, equipped with six-channel translation equipment for simultaneous translation; two dormitory floors comprising 24 simple bed- and workrooms, with adjoining showers and toilets; a collective kitchen and dining room; stock, laundry and tool rooms; three library floors; and three recreation rooms with facilities such as television, video recorders and videotape library, stereo systems, table tennis and so forth. All four original buildings adjoin the Institute garden, a special source of delight for participants in the spring and summer.

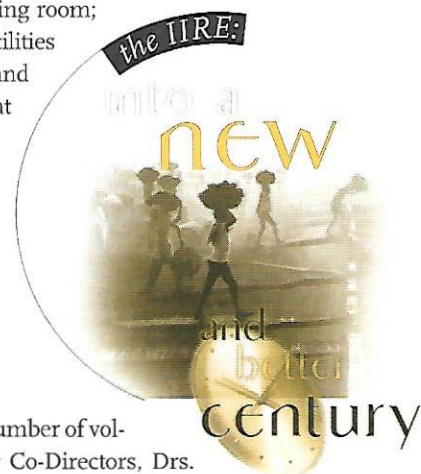
Sites combining all these different facilities, in the heart of Western Europe and convenient to a major international airport, are rare indeed. All this is available at reasonable rates to interested progressive organizations, along with access to the Institute's equipment (fax, Macintosh and IBM computers, photocopier). Inquiries are welcome.

Staff and collaborators

The IIRE carries on its work with a small permanent staff and a large number of volunteers from both the Netherlands and abroad. The permanent staff is led by our Co-Directors, Drs. Robert Went and Dr. Peter Drucker. Robert Went, a Dutch economist, also works at the University of Amsterdam, co-edits the Dutch yearbook for socialist analysis and discussion *Kritiek*, and writes on economics for various Dutch publications. His book "Grenzen aan de globalisering?" received wide acclaim in the Dutch-language press after its 1996 publication; an English translation is now being prepared. Besides lecturing on economics at the IIRE, he coordinates our budget and financial development. Peter Drucker, a US citizen and political scientist, previously served as programme co-ordinator for National Mobilization for Survival. He is the author of *Max Shachtman and His Left* (1994) and is currently at work on an anthology on sexuality and popular struggles in the Third World. Besides lecturing on history and sexuality, he directs the IIRE publications.

Our board of directors, working on a volunteer basis, oversees the Institute's finances and general development. Dr. Joost Kircz, Chairperson of the IIRE Board, directs a project at the University of Amsterdam on the changing pattern of scientific communications in the electronic era, and works in scientific publishing. His main interest is in the relationship between science and social thought and action.

Our permanent staff is unable to maintain the Institute alone. Each course needs a broader, ad-hoc team. Through the years an international network of Fellows has been built, most of them teaching at university level, combining scholarly and activist expertise. Besides coming to Amsterdam to lecture at the



Institute and take part in discussions, Fellows contribute to and edit our publications, maintain links with organizations that wish to participate in our activities, and help shape the Institute's overall direction. Among our Fellows are:

- Daniel Bensaïd (France), Université de Paris VIII, author of numerous studies in philosophy, sociology and politics including *Les discordances du temps*.
- Stephanie Coontz (USA), Evergreen State College, historian, author of feminist studies including *The Social Origins of Private Life* and *The Way We Never Were*.
- Janette Habel (France), Université de Paris VIII, author of *Ruptures à Cuba*.
- Michael Löwy (Brazil/France), Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique—Paris, sociologist of religion and author of many books including *Redemption and Utopia*.
- David Mandel (Canada), Université du Québec à Montréal, political scientist and editor of the bilingual Russian-North American journal *Alternatives*.
- Pierre Rousset (France), former IIRE director and author of works on both East Asian politics and ecology.
- Catherine Samary (France), Université de Paris IX, economist and specialist on Eastern Europe, author of works including *Yugoslavia Dismembered*.
- Anthony Arthur Smith (USA), Iowa State University, philosopher and author of books including *Dialectical Social Theory and Its Critics*.
- Eric Toussaint (Belgium), director, Comité pour l'Annulation de la Dette du Tiers-Monde, author of works on Latin American history and international political economy.
- Josette Trat (France), Université de Paris VIII, author of works of feminist theory and editor of *Cahiers du féminisme*.
- Marcel van der Linden (Netherlands), International Institute for Social History, labour historian and co-editor of *The Formation of Labour Movements, 1870-1914*.
- Charles-André Udry (Switzerland), economist, editor *Page* 2*.
- Francois Vercammen (Belgium), Ernest Mandel Foundation, director of Brussels research centre.

How you can help

The IIRE is an active institute, which is proud of its achievements. We want to expand our activities, which we feel are badly needed in the present world situation. We invite everybody who agrees with our aims to help us with the further development of our project, financially or through other forms. Founded in Belgium, we were officially recognized as an international scientific foundation by a Royal Decree of 11 June 1981. Contributions to our work are tax-deductible in several countries, for example in the US through the Funding Exchange International Fund.

Compared to other similar insitutions, we carry out our work with an absurdly low budget. We receive no government subsidies. No money is spent on high staff salaries, public relations or luxurious meals or accomodations for participants. Everything is done with a minimal staff, with unpaid international Fellows and volunteers who often pay all or part of their fares to and from Amsterdam, and with the labour contributed by the participants themselves. We could not have launched and maintained the IIRE without the help of many people: not just donors, but the many volunteers who have come from several countries to help with painting, repairs, and electrical work; the friends who have left their libraries to us in their wills; and particularly our lecturers, translators and interpreters, many of whom wholly or partly donate their services. This multi-faceted help will be as essential in the next century as it has been in our first two decades.

Despite these contributions, the Institute costs money. We need money for plane fares: plane fares from the Third World must more and more often be completely covered by the Institute. We need money for our building, which though beautiful is old. We need money for food (although participants cook for themselves during their stays). We need money for gas, water, light, heat, property taxes, photocopying, phone calls....

We confront simultaneously a rise in costs and a struggle to find new donations. We are doing our part to breathe new life into hope and faith in the future. But we can only do it with new sources of financial support: we must acquire new donors if the Institute is to maintain and expand its work. We rely on your help.

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