

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published monthly by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. We have dedicated this journal to the process of clarifying the program and theory of revolutionary Marxism — of discussing its application to the class struggle both internationally and here in the United States. This vital task must be undertaken if we want to forge a political party in this country capable of bringing an end to the domination of the U.S. imperialist ruling class and of establishing a socialist society based on human need instead of private greed.

The F.I.T. was created in the winter of 1984 by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because we opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than half a century. Since our formation we have fought to win the party back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective and for our readmission to the SWP. In addition our members are active in the U.S. class struggle.

At the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International, the appeals of the F.I.T. and other expelled members were upheld, and the congress delegates demanded, by an overwhelming majority, that the SWP readmit those who had been purged. So far the SWP has refused to take any steps to comply with this decision.

"All members of the party must begin to study, completely dispassionately and with utmost honesty, first the essence of the differences and second the course of the dispute in the party. . . . It is necessary to study both the one and the other, unfailingly demanding the most exact, printed documents, open to verification by all sides. Whoever believes things simply on someone else's say-so is a hopeless idiot, to be dismissed with a wave of the hand."

—V.I. Lenin, "The Party Crisis," Jan. 19, 1921.

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism, No. 25, December 1985

Closing date November 10, 1985

Send correspondence and subscriptions to Bulletin IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009

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THE SWP (USA) REJECTS THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS OF THE TWELFTH WORLD CONGRESS

Statement Adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Oct. 5, 1985

-- At the end of 1983 the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States expelled from the party the majority of the members who, within the National Committee and the party branches, opposed its political orientation and its challenges to the programmatic foundation of the Fourth International, particularly concerning the theory of permanent revolution for the countries dominated by imperialism and the necessity of anti-bureaucratic political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states.

This political purge, carried out in a brutal and anti-democratic fashion, lost the SWP more than 150 members, including a number of former leaders of the fraternal section of the Fourth International in the United States. These comrades, organized in Socialist Action (SA) and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT), appealed against their expulsions to the SWP convention in August 1984. The convention rejected their appeal, and on the same occasion refused to allow a delegation of the United Secretariat to participate in its deliberations.

In January 1985, the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International, receiving a collective appeal from the expelled comrades, adopted by a majority of almost 90 percent the following motions:

"a) The World Congress upholds the collective appeal of the expelled SWP members now regrouped in SA and FIT.

"Whereas these expulsions were carried out in barefaced violation of the statutes of the Fourth International--of which the SWP is the fraternal organization in the USA--and whereas this political purge made mockery of the rights of minorities inside the SWP,

"the World Congress demands the collective reintegration of all the present members of SA and FIT who were expelled from the SWP into membership."

Vote:

	for	against	abst	not voting
Delegates	97.5	5	1	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

"b) Whereas the new members of SA and FIT who are not expelled former members of the SWP or who resigned from it in relation to the expulsions or who resigned on the basis of the program of the Fourth International and whereas they would have been members of the SWP if the latter had not carried out these unjust and undemocratic expulsions,

"the World Congress supports the SA and FIT request that all their members be collectively integrated into the SWP with all the rights and duties stemming from the organizational norms of democratic centralism."

Vote:

	for	against	abst	not voting
Delegates	97	5	1.5	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

"c) Given the situation that has been created in the United States by the undemocratic expulsion from the SWP of those who opposed the orientation of its majority leadership,

"and noting that as a result Fourth International adherents are now divided into three separate organizations when they should all be members of the fraternal section of the Fourth International in the United States, the SWP,

"the World Congress rules that, as long as SA and FIT are not collectively reintegrated into the SWP, the entire organized membership of SA and FIT will be considered as full members of the Fourth International with all the rights and duties prescribed by its statutes, and within the limitations imposed by reactionary U.S. legislation."

Vote:

	for	against	abst	not voting
Delegates	98	5.5	0	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

In August 1985 the delegates of the twenty-third convention of the SWP, on the recommendation of the Political Committee, rejected all the demands formulated by the World Congress and reiterated at the convention by the

United Secretariat representative present.

-- These decisions openly violate the overwhelmingly majority demands of the World Congress. If carried out by an affiliated section they would make nonsense of the elementary norms of functioning for an international organization. While the SWP is prevented by reactionary U.S. legislation from being affiliated to the Fourth International, it has the political and moral obligation to give the greatest weight to World Congress decisions, if it takes seriously the fact of being the fraternal section in the United States.

The statutes of the International leave a broad area of sovereignty to the national sections in determination of their national political line and the choice of their leadership bodies, but they fix a minimum of obligations and norms of functioning that make it possible to have the broadest possible exchange of ideas and positions within a common programmatic and organizational framework. The decisions of the SWP convention, if adopted by a section, would be a complete negation of even the simply moral and political authority of the sovereign body of the International: its World Congress. In so doing a section would be refusing to abide by the spirit of our statutes, and thus put itself outside the common framework of our norms.

The International has the duty to state clearly and publicly that the SWP, fraternal section of the Fourth International in the United States, is not, because of its own decisions, the only organization identifying politically with the Fourth International in the United States.

In conformity with the resolutions adopted by the Twelfth World Congress (and because of the division of Socialist Action into two distinct groups), there are now in the United States four totally separate organizations of fraternal members with the same rights and duties: the Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, So-

cialist Action, and Socialist Unity. Each of these organizations is sovereign over decisions concerning its political line and composition of its leading bodies. While deploring their division, which is the outcome of the crisis in the SWP and the anti-democratic purge of those in opposition, the United Secretariat defends the right of each of these organizations to attempt to build the revolutionary party in the United States but does not support the orientation of any one group against the others.

--All the steps taken by the SWP leadership, if taken by a section of the Fourth International, would show the section's desire to deny in practice the minimal functioning of the International, at the same time as it is turning its own party into a monolithic faction, accommodating itself to the formal framework of the International only on condition that it does not respect a single obligation and gradually emptying this framework of all programmatic content.

No revolutionary party, particularly in the bastion of imperialism, will be built by trampling on the democratic traditions of Bolshevism and the Communist International, which the Fourth International was formed to defend, with the valuable collaboration of the SWP, against Stalinism. Through its own weakening in the United States, the SWP is already paying the price of this orientation, in stark contradiction with its past and with the internal regime of the Fourth International and its sections.

In fighting for the World Congress demands to be respected, the United Secretariat is convinced that it is fighting for the defense of one of the basic principles of the revolutionary Marxist program? freedom of discussion within the revolutionary organization in the framework of the discipline and centralization necessary for effective action in the class struggle. The Fourth International stands adamant on this principle and this program. □

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AFL-CIO DEBATES FOREIGN POLICY

by Steve Bloom

With the beginning of the cold war and the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the 1950s, which purged most radicals from the unions in this country (or at least from leadership positions in them), the U.S. trade union movement was lined up solidly in support of government foreign policy objectives. Those who became politically active in the anti-Vietnam war movement of the 1960s and early 70s will remember the staunch backing given by AFL-CIO and other unions to the policies of Johnson and Nixon. A paunchy, middle-aged, white male with hardhat and American flag was the popular image of U.S. labor at the time.

A similar pro-government, anti-communist policy was followed by union leaders at the time of the Korean war. And every foreign policy objective during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s--from right-wing propoganda against national liberation movements or those countries which have overthrown capitalism, to providing arms and logistical support for counter-revolutionary forces, to outright invasions of countries like Guatemala and the Dominican Republic--has found the State Department line echoed by the top leaders of the labor bureaucracy.

To be sure, these right-wing views did not always reflect the sentiments of the rank and file--especially during the time of the Vietnam war. But the ranks were unable to find an independent voice, and the union tops stood as a monolith, despite a small reflection of the antiwar mood coming through near the end of the Vietnam period.

DIVERGENCES ON CENTRAL AMERICA

Today things have begun to change. The counterrevolutionary U.S. policy in Central America and the refusal of the Reagan administration to impose genuine sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa have become the subjects of broad opposition within the U.S. union movement. The discussion taking place over the Central America issue, in particular, has threatened to open some serious rifts. The changing attitudes toward Washington's foreign policy are fueled, in large part, by a growing opposition to President Reagan's bla-

tantly anti-worker, pro-capitalist social and economic policies at home.

The new approach to the Central America issue is reflected in, and stimulated by, the growth of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. This committee, which was formed several years ago, is co-chaired by Douglas Fraser, president-emeritus of the United Auto Workers; Jack Sheinkman, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers; and William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists. It is supported by an impressive list of other prominent union leaders, and has been instrumental in organizing several tours of U.S. trade unionists to Central America. The committee has done a great deal of educational work within the union movement--including sponsoring tours of representatives of Salvadoran labor organizations.

Another reflection of the growing sentiment against U.S. Central America policy among organized labor has been the success of the two Emergency National Conferences Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean--the first of which took place in Cleveland in the fall of 1984, and the second in Minneapolis late last spring. Both of these conferences--organized to defend the basic right of the Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and Grenadian people to self-determination--attracted a significant layer of rank-and-file trade union activists as well as a number of local officials.

A growing list of local unions, district councils, and national unions have adopted resolutions that, in one way or another, oppose U.S. policy in Central America. The support--both formal and material--from the union movement to the national demonstration which took place last April 20 in Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other cities, was greater than at any time during the entire course of the Vietnam war.

Of course, the more reactionary "cold warriors" in the top echelons of the AFL-CIO have not just stood passively by while all of this is going on.

Last August 29, for example, Lane Kirkland sent out a letter addressed to "Principal Officers of State and Local Central Bodies." It discussed a "tour of Central American trade unionists scheduled for this fall," and explained, "The Central American speakers who are featured in this and similar tours usually represent organizations that are associated with the Communist-led World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) based in Prague, Czechoslovakia, or that openly support Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movements in Central America."

LANE KIRKLAND LETTER

The letter goes on to denounce the "Sandinista Workers Central" [sic] of Nicaragua, the CNUS of Guatemala, the FUTH in Honduras, and FENASTRAS and ANDES in El Salvador--all legitimate representatives of the union movements in their countries. "If your organization is interested in discussing the struggle for trade union freedom in Central America," the letter concludes, "speakers for appropriate occasions can be provided from the AFL-CIO or the American Institute for Free Labor Development. Visitors from AFL-CIO-supported unions in Central America are also available from time to time for meetings."

Another front on which the AFL-CIO leaders are fighting for their reactionary views is through resolutions at state AFL-CIO conventions. One such convention--which had a rather different outcome than the bureaucrats intended--is described by Bill Onasch in his article in this issue of the Bulletin IDOM: "Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention: Setback for Bureaucracy."

And it isn't surprising that the top union officialdom in this country is capable of a few dirty tricks along the way. A recent issue of Update, a newsletter published by the Philadelphia Labor Committee on Central America and the Caribbean (an affiliate of the National Labor Committee) contained the following report: "Also of interest to some: Tom Cronin and Carol Stein stumbled upon a private meeting introducing several 'contra' supporters to the Philadelphia area. The meeting was advertised in the name of the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee but the first clue that this use was fraudulent was that the meeting was held on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. The Jewish Labor Committee's officials knew nothing of the event, which was organized by their staffperson after she was contacted by AFL-CIO officials from New York City.

Activists should be on the lookout for misuse of their group's name."

AFL-CIO CONVENTION

One stage in this battle to determine the policy of the U.S. trade union movement with regard to Central America was reached with the adoption of a resolution at the AFL-CIO convention in Anaheim, California, late in October. The wording of the resolution was a compromise. It declared that "a negotiated settlement rather than a military victory holds the best hope" for solving the crisis in the region. This was seen by most as a criticism of current U.S. policy, though it fell far short of the goals set by those who wanted the convention to openly oppose aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

The New York Times of October 30 quoted Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers and part of the conservative wing of the union bureaucracy, as interpreting this compromise in the following way: "If a union wants to go to Washington and support aid to the contras they can do that. If a union wants to go to Washington and oppose aid, it can do that."

This, of course, means that the discussion that is taking place within the AFL-CIO is not concluded. We can expect an increasing growth of opposition to Reagan's Central American policy in the unions, which will have an important, and perhaps even decisive, impact on the broader development of an anti-intervention movement among the American population as a whole. That, in turn, could well make the difference in the future of the Central American peoples' struggle for self-determination.

NEED TO BREAK WITH CLASS-COLLABORATIONISM

So the debate that is taking place is an extremely important one. But it is also necessary to understand its limitations. Those forces within the unions which are waging the fight against U.S. Central American policy remain tied to the broader, class-collaborationist perspectives of the bureaucracy as a whole. They continue to identify the interests of working people in this country with the interests of the U.S. capitalist class, not with those of working people in other countries. They simply disagree with the government, and with their fellow union leaders, about what policies will best serve those interests. This outlook severely limits the scope of what they will be able to accomplish.

One illustration of this reality is an article by John Russo, director of the Labor Studies Program at Youngstown State University. It was published in the Oct. 30-Nov. 5, 1985, issue of the Social Democratic paper, In These Times, and was headlined: "AFL-CIO foreign policy faces revolt." Russo discusses some of the factors which have stimulated the Central America debate in the unions. He points out that there is growing opposition to the idea of defending "economic freedom." Translated this means the freedom of corporations to invest, sell and repatriate profits." This is a traditional goal of U.S. foreign policy supported by the union movement, Russo explains. "Many of the labor community now reject this formulation because it has resulted in corporate disinvestment and deindustrialization," as U.S. corporations seek a workforce in other countries which it can exploit more profitably.

"Defense expenditures also concern unionists," Russo goes on. "Conventional union wisdom saw increased military spending leading to increased employment in high-wage unionized defense industries.... This perspective is rapidly being replaced by one that suggests that military spending is wasteful, creates fewer jobs than other forms of public spending, and that capital might better be spent in rebuilding the nation's infrastructure."

Of course, it is true that military spending is wasteful--even from the narrow economic point of view of creating jobs. And there is nothing wrong with using that fact as a weapon in the fight against U.S. government policy. But if the perspectives of the struggle rely primarily on this sort of reasoning, or on the attempt to keep "our" jobs here in "our" country, the labor movement is fighting with one hand tied behind its back.

In fact, the virtually universal support--even among those union leaders who are part of the fight for a change in policy on Central America--for the reactionary "buy America" campaign is the best illustration of the limitations inherent in their outlook. The problems caused by capitalism (chronic crises, unemployment, etc.) cannot be solved for U.S. workers at the expense of workers in other countries. By claiming that jobs somehow belong by right to "us," the logic is that they should be taken away from someone else.

Such an approach divides workers in this country from those in other coun-

tries, instead of uniting us. The capitalists use a similar trick in the U.S. itself--having workers in one town, or one industry, or one factory fight to keep "their" jobs at the expense of workers in another town, or another industry, or another factory. And the price? Being "more competitive," that is, working longer hours under worse conditions for less money. This divides and weakens the union movement whether applied to the U.S. or internationally.

The failure of any wing of the union leadership to break from, or even question, their class-collaborationist outlook was also brought out at the AFL-CIO convention. No protests were reported when Secretary of Labor Bill Brock spoke to the delegates and called upon the AFL-CIO to join with the bosses to improve the "competitive position" of the United States in the world.

To be sure, Russo in his article and those union leaders who oppose U.S. Central America policy speak in terms of the need to fight for human rights. But this goal is subordinate to their primary effort -- the reform of U.S. capitalism, making it more rational and beneficial for the goals and objectives of union leaders here in the United States. The current discussion in the unions on Central America is an important step in a process. In its own right it will promote opposition to U.S. government policies and should be encouraged. But it also must go further.

A movement must be begun in the unions which will create a class-struggle left wing -- to break out of the class-collaborationist perspective of the bureaucracy. Such a left wing will understand that the interests of U.S. workers are not tied to the interests of U.S. business but are directly counterposed to them. It will support the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Central America because breaking this part of the world from the domination of imperialism will make it possible for the workers of those countries to gain economic freedom and full employment without "taking jobs away" from workers in the U.S. or other countries. Such a class-struggle left wing will make its uncompromising commitment to human rights and self-determination the centerpiece of its strategy, and will breathe real life into the traditional union slogan of "an injury to one is an injury to all," applying it to the struggles of all working people--here in the U.S. and throughout the world. □

MINNESOTA AFL-CIO CONVENTION: SETBACK FOR BUREAUCRACY

by Bill Onasch

State conventions of the Minnesota AFL-CIO are usually pretty tame events. While dissidents have been able to express themselves in the past without being beaten up, the bureaucracy has seldom had much trouble in securing comfortable majorities for their class-collaborationist policies. This year's St. Paul convention, which took place on September 22-24, handed the "labor statesmen" shocking defeats on two major class-struggle issues: Central America and support to embattled packinghouse strikers in Austin, Minnesota.

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy is even to the right of House Democrats on the Central America issue. Enjoying intimate ties to the State Department and the CIA, the labor lieutenants of U.S. capital are staunch supporters of the Salvadoran dictatorship and mortal enemies of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Shortly before the St. Paul convention, phony Central American "labor leaders" were paraded through Minnesota union meetings, urging support for Reagan's imperialist intervention in the region. The national AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer was on hand to steer Lane Kirkland's pro-intervention line through the convention.

The resolution submitted by the state federation executive officers praised "the efforts of the Duarte government to promote trade union rights and land reform." It expressed optimism that the genocidal butchers in Guatemala are granting a "democratic opening" in the sham elections scheduled in that country November 3. As to Nicaragua, the labor skates declared: ". . . The democratic unions continue to oppose the Sandinista government's efforts to subjugate free trade unions and impose a totalitarian social system." These human rights experts implored the Sandinistas to "... emulate President Duarte in neighboring El Salvador by opening a dialogue with both the civic and armed opposition to bring an end to the war and restore the promise of democratic pluralism."

For the first time in recent memory, a resolution submitted by executive officers was soundly defeated by the

convention delegates. Led by AFSCME delegates, the convention rejected the State Department line and instead passed a resolution stating: "RESOLVED: That the 28th Constitutional Convention of the Minnesota AFL-CIO go on record opposing the Reagan Administration's attempts to provide support for the 'contras' attempting to overthrow the legal government of Nicaragua; and be it further RESOLVED: That the Convention opposes the use of U.S. troops to intervene in the internal affairs of Nicaragua; and be it further RESOLVED: That the Convention supports self-determination for the people of Nicaragua." A companion resolution put the convention on record against further military aid to El Salvador.

This stunning defeat of the pro-imperialist line has already paid some dividends. An AFSCME District Council, and several other AFL-CIO local unions, as well as a number of union officers, endorsed the October 26 mass march and rally in St. Paul against U.S. intervention in Central America. The secretary of the AFSCME District Council agreed to be a featured speaker at the rally on the steps of the State Capitol. This is a new level of official labor involvement in Minnesota in a mass protest action against intervention.

THE HORMEL STRIKE

Another sticky wicket for the bureaucrats was the question of solidarity with United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9, engaged in a bitter strike against the Hormel company in Austin, Minnesota (see article by Dave Riehle in this issue of the Bulletin IDOM). The leadership of the packing house division of the UFCW has branded P-9 as "splitters" embarked on a suicide mission. P-9, which has also conducted a "corporate campaign" against Hormel and the First Banks System, is fighting to reverse the pattern of "concessions" to the employers which has been the centerpiece of the UFCW's bargaining "strategy." If P-9 succeeds in its battle to turn back wage cuts, two-tier, and other gimmicks favored by the bureaucrats,

then other packinghouse workers may demand the same kind of fight by their union. In fact, at the time of the convention, nearly 4,000 additional packinghouse workers were already on strike in the upper Midwest, while others were working without a contract.

The UFCW enlisted the support of their fellow bureaucrats to try to isolate the Austin strikers. Convention sessions were virtually closed to non-delegates (except for invited politicians and lawyers who were abundantly present). The request of the P-9 president to address the convention was rejected. Resolutions supporting P-9 were given short shrift in the Resolutions Committee.

But P-9 was not to be denied. Hundreds of Hormel strikers fraternized with convention delegates outside the forbidden zones of the Civic Center. Answering the slanders heaped upon them by the same officials who praised human rights in El Salvador, the strikers won the respect and admiration of the big majority of the delegates. In the end, the bureaucrats were forced to sanction the struggle in Austin, giving it grudging verbal support. As with the Central America resolutions, this was immediately translated into substantial assistance to the strike. Many locals which were hesitant about publicly endorsing the strike previously, for fear

of provoking the ire of their various international leaderships, can now cite the convention action as official policy, authorizing strike support.

While maintaining a sense of proportion, these two episodes should be seen as an indication of the beginning of some important shifts in the labor movement. While there was no organized class-struggle left wing at this convention there was a significant layer of local leaders, stewards, etc., who were prepared to challenge some of the most reactionary aspects of the bureaucracy. While not socialists, not even advocates of breaking with the Democrats, these delegates reflect what are probably the sentiments of the majority of the rank and file of organized labor. Most workers are opposed to any new Vietnams and are sympathetic to those who are putting up a fight against the boss.

It is still too early to speak of a new upsurge in the labor movement. But actions such as the packinghouse strikes, teachers strikes, Chrysler, and the fights over Central America, indicate that part of the class is recovering from the demoralization of the post-PATCO period and is prepared to struggle. Some will be defeated, such as the Bath Iron Works strike. But others will prevail and will inspire a further escalation of resistance to the employer's anti-labor offensive. □

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AUSTIN PACKINGHOUSE WORKERS BATTLE HORMEL'S TAKE-BACK CAMPAIGN

by Dave Riehle

The audacious campaign by United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 in the small southern Minnesota city of Austin against a 23 percent wage cut imposed in October 1984 by their employer, the George A. Hormel meatpacking company, has drawn national attention, both from the bosses and from those political currents that seek to influence the workers' movement. The latter category, of course, includes the incumbent union bureaucracy, particularly the leadership of the UFCW international union, which has actively opposed the struggle by P-9.

The struggle by P-9 has taken on an even more serious character since August 17, when the local union voted to go on strike at the Austin plant. The other seven plants in the Hormel chain, under agreements with different expiration dates, continue to work.

Local P-9 has been given close scrutiny by major capitalist journals such as the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, as well as many others, particularly in cities such as Chicago where the meatpacking bosses are headquartered. Their evident interest and concern are not academic. The fight by Local P-9 is the most advanced trade union resistance to the bosses' decade-long take-back campaign to emerge on the American labor scene so far. The Austin struggle is not the first attempt to reverse the capitalist anti-labor offensive, nor the one that involves the most workers, the largest organizations and resources, nor even the most direct form of class conflict; the Phelps Dodge strike, the many battles of the UMWA, the Toledo A.P. Parts strike, and even the several bitter strikes against Iowa Beef Processors in Dakota City, Nebraska, have all exceeded the Hormel fight in one respect or another. But the combination of essential elements necessary to conduct an all-out battle in defense of wages and working conditions and to reverse the give-back trend in labor has been best represented in Austin.

The Hormel Co., with plants in about eight cities, was founded in Austin before the turn of the century, and Austin has remained the flagship plant

of the company, as well as its corporate headquarters. In 1978 the Hormel Co. demanded -- and got -- a seven-year concessions contract as the price for modernizing and rebuilding the Austin plant. The seven-year contract provided for wage cuts that would provide one-fifth of the \$100 million needed to build the new plant, eliminated the right to strike or slow down, provided for a 20 percent boost in work speed, eliminated incentive pay, and otherwise drastically revised the contract. When the new plant opened in 1982, hundreds of new workers were hired. Today, a majority of the Hormel workers in Austin are young and have three or less years' seniority.

When wage reductions occurred at some Oscar Mayer plants last year Hormel claimed that this, along with cuts at two other major packers -- Morrell and Swift -- formed a pattern that allowed them to institute wage cuts. The company also based the claim on an industry-wide concessions contract reached in January 1982 between the packers and the UFCW international leaders. It proceeded unilaterally to institute the wage cut.

P-9 is accused by Hormel of violating a local agreement, also negotiated in 1982, which P-9 ratified. But in March of that year Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9, filed charges against Lewie Anderson, UFCW vice president in charge of the Packinghouse Division, charging that Anderson had misled the local when he presented a summary of the contract.

Only a few years ago, unionized packinghouse workers were covered under a master agreement that provided for an industry-wide base pay of \$10.69 an hour. When the meatpacking bosses started to go after concessions in earnest -- utilizing the drastic restructuring of the industry, the closing of massive older plants, and the liquidation of the traditional big packers such as Armour and Swift -- they also demanded local exceptions to the master agreement. The UFCW leaders, after a few brief setbacks, capitulated totally. They opened the floodgates to a wave of withdrawals from the master agreement,

as the packers played one local off against another, using the threat of plant closings and layoffs as economic blackmail. In headlong retreat, the UFCW leaders attempted to wheedle a truce out of the hard-charging meatpacking bosses by agreeing to deep-going give-backs on wages and working conditions. They privately accepted a ceiling on industry wages of around \$8.50 an hour and then stood passively by as Swift and Armour were ostensibly sold to new owners, union agreements were abrogated, and wages of around \$6.50 an hour were established in what had once been the stronghold of the packinghouse workers union.

The UFCW failed to act until Local P-9 launched its anti-concessions fight, hiring Ray Rogers of Corporate Campaign, Inc., to assist them in conducting a struggle for public support of their fight against the wage cut. Rogers had worked with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union on the J.P. Stevens boycott, and proposed a similar campaign focusing on the ties between Hormel and First Bank of Minneapolis, the company's major creditor. The local voted to assess themselves \$3 per paycheck to finance the campaign.

Shortly before Christmas 1984, the national packinghouse committee of the UFCW was hastily called to Chicago. After hearing from Rogers and Guyette they formally refused to endorse the P-9 Corporate Campaign and instead announced a boycott and organizing drive directed against Armour/ConAgra -- a company that represents the part of the old Armour packing chain reconstituted on a non-union basis. This campaign has never been seriously pursued by the UFCW, but they have hypocritically utilized it to attack P-9 for undermining the united front against Armour/ConAgra.

The truth of the matter is that the only instance where packinghouse workers were able to hold on to what they had -- and even make some gains -- was in the Iowa Pork Industries strike in South St. Paul in 1984. Here the militant local leadership of Local P-4 followed a different course from that of the UFCW international.

The election of a new, young leadership in Local P-9 in January 1984 grew out of the combination of the default of the UFCW international leaders in the face of deteriorating wages and working conditions and closures of unionized plants, and the reinvigoration of a key component of the traditional organized sector of the industry through the influx of hundreds of young workers into

the new Austin Hormel plant in the early eighties.

The authority of the UFCW bureaucracy was weakened by their open complicity in dismantling the master agreement in packing that had maintained uniform wages throughout the industry, and by their utter failure to present any other perspective than continued retreat. Because of this the Austin workers were able to move rapidly to install a new local leadership that reflected their willingness to fight. This leadership, closely tied to the history and continuity of the Austin local -- many are second and third generation Hormel workers -- adopted a policy that relied fundamentally on a mobilized and educated membership.

RESCIND THE 23 PERCENT WAGE CUT

In collaboration with Rogers and Corporate Campaign, Local P-9 began to mobilize early this year to exert pressure on Hormel and its corporate backers to rescind the 23 percent wage cut. Corporate Campaign's strategy included picketing Hormel and First Bank stockholders' meetings, intervening in the meetings with workers holding token shares of stock, establishing informational picket lines throughout the area at First Bank locations, and massive distribution of leaflets, door-to-door in major urban areas like the Twin Cities and Duluth. One signal result of the campaign early on was the transfer of the Hormel annual stockholders meeting to Atlanta, the first time in its 90-year history it had been held outside of Austin.

Corporate Campaign's strategy of trying to exert pressure on employers through their financial backers, and trying to shame them into adherence to corporate good-citizenship, is a mild enough plea for self-reform. In fact the concept of corporate campaigns is endorsed by the AFL-CIO itself. The corporate campaign parallels one of the pet ideas of the Democratic Socialists of America, the so-called Campaign for Corporate Responsibility, and many of the most enthusiastic supporters of Corporate Campaign, Inc., in the labor movement are supporters of DSA.

One labor editor in Minnesota got so carried away he characterized Ray Rogers as "possibly labor's greatest organizer ever." Be that as it may, Rogers's dynamism, ascetic commitment, and perspective of mobilizing the ranks of the union as the primary campaigners has undeniably made a real contribution to the Hormel workers' fight.

AUSTIN'S LABOR HISTORY

The packinghouse workers union was established at Hormel's Austin plant in 1933, after a brief strike that included an occupation of the plant by the workers. The strike was led by a veteran packinghouse worker, a "boomer butcher" who had been employed in many different meatpacking plants. Frank Ellis, born in 1888, was still, in 1933, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, one of many revolutionary workers who played an indispensable role in initiating the drive toward industrial unionism that culminated in the CIO, and who had received their grounding in class-struggle unionism in the IWW. As Ellis later explained, although he remained committed to the concept of "One Big Union," he felt that the notoriety of the IWW would have been an obstacle to the success of the organization of the Hormel plant. He therefore proposed that the new union adopt the name "Independent Union of All Workers." The union's stationery retained the familiar IWW globe, simply replacing the letters "IWW" with "IU of AW."

Over 15 locals of the IUAW were established in southern Minnesota and Iowa, including Armour plants in Mason City and South St. Paul, Wilson's in Albert Lea, and Rath Packing in Waterloo. It is no exaggeration to say that the birthplace of the packinghouse workers union was Austin, Minnesota.

When John L. Lewis set up the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee under Van Bittner in 1937, Ellis brought the IUAW forces into the organization. A few years later the United Packinghouse Workers of America was established, and Austin provided leadership for the national organization. Ellis became an international vice president in charge of organization, and others from the Austin local were a part of the international leadership, including the editor of the union's paper, the Packinghouse Worker, and Ralph Helstein, for many years president of the international union.

Many militant and class-conscious workers joined the Socialist Party during the late thirties, and in 1936 the American Trotskyists dissolved their organization, the Workers Party of the U.S., and entered the SP in order to be part of that movement. In Minnesota this brought the leaders of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544, the most dynamic section of the state labor movement, into the SP, and into direct contact with

farmer and labor militants in the state organization, including Austin. Ellis knew and respected the Trotskyist leaders. Some of them were veterans, like Ellis, of the heroic days of the IWW, and he would travel to Minneapolis to consult with Ray Dunne, a central leader of the Minneapolis Teamsters and of the Trotskyist movement.

The Trotskyists were able to influence many of the class-struggle militants in the Minnesota SP, and when they were expelled from the SP by the Norman Thomas leadership in late 1937, the newly formed Socialist Workers Party had four Minnesota branches, including one in Austin -- composed primarily of packinghouse workers.

Austin packinghouse workers provided important leadership for the UPWA in the Midwest. This leadership, in collaboration with militants, including SWP members, in the giant Swift, Armour, and Cudahy plants in South St. Paul, was indispensable in defending the UPWA from determined assaults by the packers in the postwar national packinghouse strikes. The union-busting plans of the meatpacking bosses were decisively rebuffed by mass mobilizations of packinghouse workers in the Midwest, particularly in South St. Paul, where even the mobilization of the National Guard in the 1948 strike did not succeed in sustaining the scab-herding efforts of the packing companies. The district director of the UPWA at that time was a member of the SWP, who was able to work with party fractions in the Armour and Swift plants in South St. Paul.

Class-struggle methods were largely abandoned with the consolidation of a class-collaborationist leadership in the CIO as a result of the cold war witch-hunt. Nevertheless, they were not forgotten by the rank-and-file packinghouse workers. Other assaults on the union were answered by energetic mobilizations, notably in the 1959 strike at the Wilson packing plant in Albert Lea, Minnesota, about 20 miles west of Austin, originally organized by the IUAW. Mass picket lines of thousands of packinghouse workers and their supporters defeated an attempt to import scabs into the plant, despite the utilization of the National Guard by the Democratic-Farmer-Labor governor Orville Freeman. That was the last time the National Guard was employed in a labor dispute in Minnesota. □

It is one thing for the mandarins of the AFL-CIO Executive Council to endorse a gentlemanly corporate campaign respectfully suggesting to the bosses that their junior partners in the union bureaucracy would like a little more consideration. It is quite another to mobilize the ranks of the union to place demands on the bosses, appeal for support from working class public opinion over the heads of the bureaucrats, and, worst of all, to upset a carefully worked out agreement to accept a qualitative retreat on wages and conditions. All this has made Rogers anathema to the UFCW bureaucracy, and they seized upon him as the focus of a campaign to attempt to isolate and defeat Local P-9. William Wynn, UFCW international president, sent a letter to all UFCW locals, AFL-CIO affiliates, and central labor bodies advising them to stay clear of Local P-9 and Rogers.

P-9 DELEGATION GIVEN STANDING OVATION

Wynn has approached officers of other international unions with complaints about local leaders in Minnesota who have not hewed to his demand. More timid officials have used this as an excuse to deny official support to P-9. The situation has shifted significantly in P-9's favor since the onset of the strike on August 17, and especially since the state AFL-CIO convention in late September, where P-9 intervened with hundreds of members arriving at the convention to lobby the delegates for support. A crucial gain was registered as the convention voted explicit endorsement of the P-9 strike, the delegates giving the P-9 delegation a standing ovation as the official delegates from the local entered the hall.

These developments opened the door to approaching the local unions for support of a food caravan to Austin on October 19, organized by the Twin Cities P-9 Support Committee -- an ad hoc group of unionists and others, with some official representation from local unions. Apparently spurred by an earlier food caravan organized by the Twin Cities committee, and by the depletion of the regional strike fund, the UFCW regional office in the Twin Cities initiated a food caravan of its own for the same date, sending delegations both to Austin, and to 2,800 John Morrell workers on strike in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The Twin Cities Support Committee caravan and the UFCW Region 13 group met up on the outskirts of Austin for a joint parade through the town led by

Local P-9, a rally at a city ballpark, and then a march down to the union's headquarters to unload the donated food. Operating, whether deliberately or not, on the united front principle of "march separately, strike together," the combined solidarity made an enormous impact, taking a giant step toward breaking through the wall of isolation which the UFCW international leaders and the capitalist press have tried to erect around Austin.

The St. Paul Union Advocate reported that one hundred tons of food were delivered, and that it took scores of volunteers close to four hours to unload the trucks bearing the supplies. Some food was distributed immediately from tables set up in the union parking lot, and many workers were visibly moved by the tangible demonstration of solidarity, openly weeping as they carried away their allotment.

Although it is plain that a food caravan, no matter how successful, cannot hope to meet the needs of 1,500 strikers and their families for more than a few days, the impact on the morale of the workers is immense. One older worker, a long-time leader of the local and the regional union, told me, "I have been around the labor movement all my life, and I have never seen anything like this." Coming from a veteran not easily or superficially impressed, this is an indication of the role a well-conducted campaign of material aid and moral solidarity can play in cementing together the determination and fighting spirit of workers in struggle, giving renewed hope of victory to the most committed vanguard workers, and giving them an unassailable argument for continued persistence to take to the less involved and convinced members of the union.

Proof of this was registered that night. A packed meeting of the local membership voted unanimously to continue the struggle, and to ask the international union for sanction to send out roving pickets to begin to close down other Hormel plants working overtime to make up production in Austin. What the response of the international will be remains to be seen, but a significant feature of the meeting was the presence of local leaders from Hormel plants in Algona and Ottumwa, Iowa, and Fremont, Nebraska, who pledged their solidarity with such a course. Many packinghouse workers throughout the Midwest, particularly in the Hormel chain, have been inspired by the Austin struggle, and support groups have been established in the other Hormel locals.

A STRATEGY OF MOBILIZATION AND OUTREACH

While Corporate Campaign's focus on First Bank has provided a unified theme for the resistance of the Hormel workers to the company-imposed wage cuts, the struggle itself has inexorably moved more and more into labor-oriented channels. The onset of the strike has only accelerated this trend. The strategy of mobilization and outreach adopted by P-9 has been enthusiastically assimilated by the Hormel workers, hundreds of whom have become ardent evangelists for labor solidarity and fluent campaigners. Initially directed toward the general public, the P-9 efforts have progressively focused more sharply on winning other packinghouse workers to their cause, an orientation not necessarily contained in the original Corporate Campaign perspectives. Caravans of hundreds of P-9 members have traveled to other Hormel plants, conducted mass leafletting of the workers, and invited them out to campsites established nearby to discuss the issues.

This campaign for the hearts and minds of other packinghouse workers is of enormous significance. It is plain already that things will never be the same again within the Packinghouse Division of the UFCW. The packinghouse workers, many of whom have been the recipients of cutbacks even more drastic than those visited on the Austin Hormel workers, now see an alternative to the dead-end strategy of the UFCW leaders being tested out in action. At the same time, the utter incapacity, not to say unwillingness, of the international leadership to fight back becomes more and more evident.

The support groups organized in other Hormel locals, and the impressive stream of workers that come out to the P-9 campsites are a warning to the UFCW bureaucrats and the packing bosses of what could lie in the future. The attempts to isolate P-9 by the UFCW leaders have been pushed into the background as the Austin local registers crucial advances in breaking through the siege.

It now seems more difficult than ever for the UFCW bureaucracy to place the local in receivership, remove the executive board, and sanction a back-to-work movement led by discredited former officers -- who bitterly oppose the current struggle. This was clearly where the international leaders hoped to go, but their failure to contain the struggle in Austin has spiked their plans, at least for the present.

The Minneapolis Star and Tribune tried to promote developments along

these lines last March by running prominent interviews with some of the disgruntled former local officials, intimating that they had a substantial following. The spuriousness of this claim was soon exposed by the P-9 leadership, and the campaign was dropped by the capitalist media. Speakers at a major solidarity rally in March, particularly former Iowa Pork strike leader Bud Schulte, helped stymie this move by demanding the big business press get out of the internal affairs of the packinghouse workers union.

The imperative necessity that the P-9 struggle break through the cordon around Austin and begin to win active and visible support in the official labor movement itself has been unevenly understood among P-9's strongest supporters. The enthusiasm of various radical trade unionists and a relatively small number of dissident union officials who have been willing to buck the UFCW's anti-P-9 campaign is clearly inadequate on its own to turn the tide in favor of the Austin workers.

A TEST FOR POLITICAL CURRENTS

This has brought the question of strategy into sharper focus, and provided an instructive test of the various political currents contending within the labor movement. Social Democracy, Stalinism, and revolutionary socialism all have related to this struggle in one way or another. In every case these decisive political tendencies within the working class have been represented by more than one organization.

The main current of U.S. Stalinism, the Communist Party, has a number of adherents who hold full-time posts in various unions in the Twin Cities. Their reaction to the Austin rebels of Local P-9 has been about as warm as that of a vampire to a cross. Even though the CP's organ, the Daily World, has supported the P-9 struggle and followed it attentively, the CP bureaucrats see nothing of value to be derived from association with anything that would come between them and their main orientation -- merging themselves into the "mainstream" of the labor movement, i.e., cozying up to the big boys. They have been willing to go exactly as far, and no farther, than the "mainstream" union bureaucrats heading up the state AFL-CIO and various central labor bodies -- that is, make token financial contributions to the P-9 strike fund, and allow a P-9 speaker to appear before their organizations, if so requested through proper channels. The Stalinists

have also conducted a muted campaign against the Twin Cities P-9 Support Committee, advising others that there are "too many non-trade unionists in it."

The junior grade Stalinists of the Communist Labor Party, a small splitoff from the CP in the 1950s, which also functions in the Twin Cities labor movement, have likewise been uncomfortable with the composition of the Support Committee, and sensitive to the fact that supporting Local P-9 does not have quite the same character as hustling votes for Democratic politicians, in the eyes of the labor "mainstream." Not having a state power to base themselves on, and no significant cadre of union officials, they are compelled to go where the action is. Their perspective on the P-9 struggle is to see it as an adjunct to the projected National Rank and File Against Concessions Conference, due to convene its founding conference in Chicago this December. The rank-and-file conference, they hope, will become a vehicle for helping to get themselves elected to more posts within the bureaucracy. Beyond that they project no perspective that differs in any important way from that of the incumbent bureaucrats.

The Social Democrats, true to their traditions, have no unified policy or disciplined cadre working in a common direction around the Austin fight. Those in the DSA milieu are in the main quite active in support of P-9. They exert a not inconsiderable influence in the more active sectors of the trade union movement, in white collar unions like AFSCME, and in some labor journals published in Minnesota. Not unexpectedly, the further up the ladder of the union hierarchy you go, the less resolute this support becomes. Nonetheless, the Social Democratic milieu constitutes a significant part of the movement. As has been mentioned previously, their political orientation is embodied in the reformist idea of "corporate responsibility" which Corporate Campaign, Inc., projects. Although Rogers himself has not taken part in the attempts by some to make him out the hero of the movement (some of his tactical prescriptions could have led to disaster if they had been pursued), at bottom this effort reflects DSA's trajectory of trying to replace incumbent bureaucrats of the Kirkland variety with their own.

Revolutionary socialists in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and the Socialist Workers Party have all participated in the defense of P-9. The SWP, which expelled

its basic trade union cadre from the Twin Cities branch almost two years ago, has been largely isolated from the new openings in the union movement that have arisen here -- notably around the Iowa Pork strike and the Austin struggle. A more important handicap, however, has been the sectarian policy the Barnes leadership of the SWP has compelled its members to follow. Its dogmatic and undialectical insistence that opposition to the bosses' take-back drive could only develop "when there is a rapid leap toward politicization on the part of a whole layer of workers" (as Mac Warren reported to the 1984 SWP convention) excluded the possibility of anything significant happening in the trade union movement in the present. Only a "break from bourgeois politics and from collaborationism in the unions" would induce the SWP to participate in any organized struggle within the labor movement, according to Warren. In the meantime, "we're talking to the ones we want to." This outlook could be summarized as "after Kirkland, our turn."

Such an ultimatist conception has led the SWP to view with lofty disdain unorthodox formations like ad hoc strike support committees not composed solely of official trade union delegates. SWP members could explain at length, to those who were disposed to listen, that "workers will have to go through the experiences of setbacks and advances, victories and defeats in struggle ... before they will acquire revolutionary combat experience and their consciousness will be transformed." Until then, party members were told, "there are individual rank-and-file workers today who can be convinced of a revolutionary perspective and won to our tendency in the unions."

ABSTENTIONISM CONDEMNS SWP TO SIDELINES

In real life, in spite of the general default of the union leadership, there are openings that present the possibility of mobilizing support for workers in struggle -- the schemas of the SWP leaders notwithstanding. The Iowa Pork strike support committee, in spite of the failure of the union bureaucrats to do anything to effectively mobilize support, did have the sanction of the UFCW regional leadership. This meant that as flawed an instrument as it remained it was possible to utilize it to initiate crucial strike solidarity actions such as rallies, boycotts, and other activities that could win the support of much broader sections of the trade union movement.

The SWP's abstention condemned it to the sidelines, and as might have been expected, rank and file workers who could be "convinced of a revolutionary perspective," such as Bud Schulte, the central leader of the Iowa Pork strike, understandably looked elsewhere for a radical tendency in the unions. Schulte's decision to join the F.I.T. demonstrated the bankruptcy of the SWP's approach, even on its own terms. The sterile and futile expectation that combative, radical-minded workers are going to be won to a political tendency that passively stands by and takes notes while real blows are being delivered to the class enemy contravenes the whole history and tradition of the SWP.

This rather obvious truth may have influenced the SWP leaders to adjust their thinking. The Oct. 25, 1985, Militant contains an article by Tom Leonard which takes note of the Hormel strike and four other examples of resistance to corporate concessions demands. The article registers the fact that some new motion is to be detected in the labor movement. Perhaps concerned that they will be left behind the author instructs: "The task of progressive-minded union activists is to join in this process and help strengthen labor by actively participating in the unions." This curious formula presumably denotes members of the SWP, since there are no known "progressive-minded union activists" other than SWP members who are awaiting permission from Tom Leonard to "actively participate in the unions."

Some SWP members in the Twin Cities now work in the P-9 Support Committee, and one or two have even made some effective contributions by getting their union local to join in the food caravan to Austin. They have no independent perspective on what the committee should do, however, although they apparently think the food drive is a worthy endeavor. Other than occasionally suggesting that the Support Committee contact farm organizations, the SWP members have little to propose. The main preoccupation of the SWP in relation to the Hormel strike still seems to be peddling a few papers, and tagging along on the P-9 caravans as Militant reporters.

Naturally, it is a contribution to the P-9 struggle to get the truth out to a national audience, however modest it may be. The Militant, however, seems to have a blind spot when it comes to recording the activities of those they consider "splitters" (members of the groups formed as a result of the purge of the party between 1982 and 1984 -- F.I.T., S.A., and Socialist Unity). The

Militant has given extensive coverage to the Support Committee food caravans to Austin, but has scrupulously avoided mentioning what is well known to every worker in Austin -- that the chairman of the Food Committee, and the person most centrally identified with the drive to aid the Hormel workers, is Jake Cooper, a veteran SWP member expelled from the Twin Cities branch and a member of S.A.'s National Committee. The Militant's editors evidently believe that facts are facts only when they fit their conception of how things ought to be. The idea that those who the SWP leaders have branded as pariahs could be playing a key role in defense of the Hormel strikers is hard to explain and easier to leave out. Unfortunately, the Militant, a paper which once had a reputation even among its opponents for telling the truth, now cheats its readers.

BEST DEFENSE: A UNITED FRONT

Fourth Internationalists in the F.I.T. and S.A. have been able to collaborate constructively on work in defense of P-9. It was clear to us from the onset that the best contribution we could make would be in helping to project a united front strategy that could, to the extent possible, force the union bureaucracy to publicly solidarize and identify with the P-9 struggle.

In spite of their reluctance, it was plain they could not afford to be open opponents of the local union, except by utilizing phony excuses like the role of Corporate Campaign and Ray Rogers, the dispute between the UFCW leaders and P-9, or others. It was essential to overcome this -- and it was overcome, through the projection of the food caravans. Persistent appeals were made to the UFCW and the Minnesota trade union officialdom to support or take charge of the food drive. At the same time it was made clear that the campaign would go on regardless, and that it would not be utilized as a forum for attacks on the official leaders. Such an approach eventually led to the possibility of obtaining substantial financial support for the October 19 caravan from local unions, and to the UFCW regional office initiating their own food caravan.

The result has been a substantial victory in breaking down the attempt to isolate P-9 from the Twin Cities labor movement, one of its key potential allies, as well as delivering significant amounts of urgently needed material aid to the Austin local.

The battle is far from over. The

stakes are high, and the bosses are hardly ready to throw in the towel. They are fully prepared to starve and freeze the strikers into submission, if they can get away with it. But the last word has not yet been spoken by the labor movement, and especially by the packing-house workers. Workers in packing have a long history of struggle. Conditions of work in the packing plants have always been harsh, even at the peak of union power. Even more than in other industries, it has been evident that the packinghouse workers never wrung any concessions from the owners that they didn't fight for. The packing bosses

have never hesitated to use the most brutal methods to club the workers into submission. The struggle in Austin will not be concluded until the strength of both sides is seriously tested. Anything that can be thrown into the scales on the side of the workers is not to be discounted. Every political tendency contending for influence in the workers' movement has an opportunity today to do something. Those who default, and those who preach false counsel, will be remembered. So will those who contribute something of value. For revolutionaries, that is enough. □

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CLEVELAND LABOR UNIONS RALLY AGAINST APARTHEID

by Jean Y. Tussey

The October 11 Anti-Apartheid Committee in Cleveland succeeded in uniting the most diverse community groups and factions in a joint action around the single issue of opposition to U.S. ties to apartheid. It demonstrated the key role labor can play in leading coalitions for action on social issues. It provided a small but valuable example of the importance of democratic discussion and procedures for resolving differences and strengthening such coalitions.

The rally brought a spirited, capacity audience of five hundred-plus to the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 880 meeting hall. Banners above the speakers' platform expressed the central themes: "End All U.S. Ties to Apartheid!" "Free Nelson Mandela and All South African Political Prisoners!" and "Labor Solidarity Has No Borders!"

The phenomenal breadth of opposition to South African apartheid, recorded in the 250 endorsers' list of the rally, was also evident in the composition of the speakers and the audience.

Co-chairing the meeting were two coordinators of the October 11 Committee: Ione Biggs, vice president of Clergy and Laity Concerned of Greater Cleveland and of Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice; and Mike Murphy, representative of Service Employees International Union Local 47 and a central organizer of the rally.

National and international speakers were: Willie Baker, United Food and Commercial Workers international vice president and civil rights department director; Nomonde Ngubo, co-founder of the South African National Union of Mine Workers and an international representative of the United Mine Workers of America; and Shuping Coapoge of the African National Congress Mission to the United Nations.

Local speakers included: Mylion Waite, associate director of the Greater Cleveland Interchurch Council and director of the Free South Africa Coalition of Greater Cleveland; Warren Davis, regional director of the United Auto Workers; Pauline Tarver, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Cleveland Chapter; Diane Underwood, president of the National Organization

for Women, Cleveland Chapter; Stanley E. Tolliver, member of the Cleveland Board of Education; and Don Morris, executive assistant of the Urban League of Greater Cleveland.

Veteran Cleveland labor and social activists noted that the audience was the largest turnout from organized labor and the Black community on such an issue that they had seen in years. This fact was not lost on the speakers, either.

The ANC speaker commented: "This meeting is inspiring for the people of South Africa."

Nomonde Ngubo reportedly told one of the coordinators that a remarkable feature of the Cleveland rally was the large proportion of young Blacks and trade unionists in the audience.

Youthful Mike Murphy, whose union office had served as the area headquarters for the Anti-Apartheid Committee, talked about "the importance of this coalition" to force the politicians to turn things around.

UAW Director Davis delivered one of the most rousing speeches of the evening. He vividly described the plight of trade unionists in South Africa and reported on the decisions of the UAW and other unions to help destroy apartheid. "The American trade union movement is committed to this war for the duration," he said. It is important to build coalitions, he explained, but he is also proposing a labor union committee, a steering committee, to plan labor strategy.

The final speaker on the program, UFCW International Vice President Baker stated: "We think what is happening here says something about the American labor movement," about its solidarity with trade unionists and all victims of South African repression and about labor's capacity to organize opposition to U.S. complicity with apartheid.

One hundred and twenty persons at the rally turned in slips with their names and addresses to be added to the mailing list for future anti-apartheid activities. A meeting was scheduled for November 16 to discuss what next in the fight to end all U.S. ties with South African apartheid.

The October 11 Committee Against Apartheid was formed at a meeting on

August 11 to plan and organize a massive rally in Cleveland to coincide with demonstrations "around the country and around the world" protesting the repressive policies of the racist South African government.

In a two months' campaign the committee secured 250 endorsements from labor, Black, women's, religious, senior citizens and retirees, faculty and student, and other groups; distributed 35,000 printed leaflets and 750 posters advertising the rally; raised \$2,700 to cover all expenses; and did it all without a single paid staff person.

The breadth of the support that built the rally -- and the movement -- is documented in the endorsers' list:

Forty-six from the religious community encompassed most denominations, their social action and ecumenical committees, and organizations as diverse as the Council of Islamic Unity and New Jewish Agenda, as well as the more orthodox.

Black community endorsements in addition to traditional NAACP, Urban League, and religious, included the National Council of Negro Women, International Black Women's Congress, Black Women's Political Action Committee, the 21st Congressional District Caucus, and representatives of the East End Community House, Black Unity Community House, Domestic Workers of America and Grass-root Female Leadership Coalition, and Vibration magazine.

Endorsements from women's organizations included Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice/Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; two area chapters of NOW; YWCA Public Affairs Committee and Racial Justice Task Force; Rape Crisis Center, Women Against Violence Against Women, and Women Take Back the Night; and activists from Hard Hatted Women.

Other constituencies on the endorsers' list were the American Civil Liberties Union, Arab Social Club, Friends of the Filipino People, Peace Action Coalition of Northeast Ohio; directors or officers of the Greater Cleveland Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, the Spanish-American Committee, Cleveland Central America Solidarity Committee, U.S. Out of Southern Africa Network/All People's Congress, Cleveland Council of Unemployed Workers, Americans for Democratic Action, West Side Community Health Center; campus faculty and students, and several professional and sympathetic business people who contributed their talents and services.

Twenty-nine public officials, from U.S. senators and congressmen to state

legislators, county commissioners, and city councilmen endorsed, as did the Cleveland Board of Education; and the City Council and County Commissioners declared October 11 Anti-Apartheid Day.

The most significant achievement in building the October 11 rally was reaching into broad sections of the labor movement with an issue and a proposal for action to which working people and their organizations could relate, asking them to do things they could do about the atrocities in South Africa that they were seeing on television and in the newspapers daily.

The immediate result was that trade unionists on all levels of leadership endorsed the rally, got involved, and assumed major responsibilities for building it. A small, local action, perhaps, but an important indicator of things to come.

Of the 250 endorsements received, 106 were from labor organizations, elected union officers, staff and organizers. The Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation, the oldest craft unions, the newest clerical workers and public workers labor organizations, the largest industrial unions, and even a progressive local of the Teamsters supported the rally against U.S. ties to apartheid.

CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

An Answer to Jack Barnes

BY CLIFF CONNER

F.I.T., P. O. Box 1947
New York, N.Y. 10009

60¢

More than half of the financial support was from unions. UFCW Local 880 contributed the hall for the rally. The Painters District Council, UFCW, and SEIU Local 47 provided rent-free meeting places for the committee.

UAW Local 122, on the eve of its strike at Chrysler, contributed \$500 and distributed 3,000 flyers for the rally at plant gates. The UAW regional director who spoke at the rally was not just giving lip service. Region 2 contributed \$500, UAW CAP Council \$250, letters urging support were sent to all the locals in the area, officers of several locals participated in the October 11 committee meetings and UAW members served as marshals at the rally.

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees striking the County Human Services Department wanted to know whether County Commissioner Hagan was to speak at the rally. When they were told no politicians were scheduled to speak, that the Anti-Apartheid Committee was nonpartisan, they cheered, and bought batches of anti-apartheid buttons to wear on the picket line. They also attended the rally.

Space does not permit listing all the labor endorsers here, but a few quotes from local union papers tell more about the consciousness about apartheid within the labor movement than any statistics or commentaries.

From the UFCW Local 880 Voice (October 1985):

"Apartheid is a major issue for unions worldwide, not only because of labor's inherent revulsion against such a system, but also because of South African crackdown against union leaders.

"Racism is repugnant to us.... We oppose it in any form, but we must take an especially determined stand in our relationships with a government that builds racism into its legal and social structure."

Painters District Council Executive Secretary Wally Kaufman in the Cleveland Citizen (September 20, 1985):

"So what is the answer? Should Cleveland workers start working for 19 percent of present wages so they can 'compete' with the low cost of South African labor? No! A thousand times no!

"The answer is to join and participate in the growing world-wide movement, led by trade unionists everywhere, to end the wage slave system (called Apartheid) in South Africa."

USWA Local 2265 StripScript (September 1985):

"This rally will provide a chance

to learn more about what's happening in South Africa, how it affects us, and what we can do about it. A large turnout at this rally will also show that unlike Ronald Reagan and Jerry Falwell, working people in Cleveland don't believe the U.S. government should continue to assist the racist government of South Africa."

Steve Hatch, executive secretary of the Cleveland Newspaper Guild in Local One graphic profiles (August 1985):

"A Labor Day 1985 message --

"While this is the traditional time of the year to talk about Labor -- its hopes and its dreams, its successes or its failures -- there is an issue facing all of us right now which transcends labor or politics or national boundaries.

"That issue is South Africa and that government's continuing refusal to give up and condemn the odious and dehumanizing policy of apartheid.

"The moment is long, long overdue that we should try to do something about it.

"To that end I recently agreed to serve on an ad hoc group called the October 11 Anti-Apartheid Committee, a coalition of labor, civil rights, peace and other groups whose sole purpose is to organize a rally on October 11. The rally, we hope, will demonstrate to South Africa and to the world, that the time for justice and freedom for blacks in South Africa is now!

"The committee will be passing out leaflets at the Cleveland Labor Day parade and as I write this (Aug. 23) endorsements for the rally are pouring in from public officials, individuals and groups. This local's officers and Executive Board have joined the chorus along with the 21st District Congressional Caucus, the Cuyahoga County Commissioners (who have declared Oct. 11 as Anti-Apartheid Day), dozens of labor unions and hundreds of others.

"And while I, personally, am ashamed of having waited so long to act, I am extremely proud to see Labor leading the way."

Postscript: The involvement of the Cleveland labor movement and its assumption of leadership in building the broad coalition for the rally against U.S. ties with apartheid was not a spontaneous development. It was the result of policies, strategies, and tactics democratically discussed, debated, and voted at the open meetings of the October 11 Committee. □

SOUTH AFRICA NEEDS A WORKERS PARTY

Interview from 'Was Tun'

How did this revolt start, and what are its centers?

The revolt has economic and political reasons. I would put the political reasons in first place.

Not only the Blacks, but also the great majority of the Coloureds and Indians, rejected the new constitution. But when in the constitution the government excluded those classified as Blacks from any political representation, it drove the urban Black youth into revolt.

On top of that you have the economic misery and the intensive politicization of Black society. The Black school students' movement has played a leading role in this.

Their militant stance, of course, goes back a long way in South African history: the Soweto uprising was initially a school students' movement. They demand a better education system which offers the Blacks similar possibilities to the whites. But now they are going far beyond this demand and are aiming for a socialist-oriented education.

Another big factor is that most school students can get no work after school. In the eastern province the unemployment rate is almost 40 percent.

Is the movement restricted to the cities?

No, although there have been no uprisings on the land like in the

cities, perhaps with the exception of the eastern province.

The movement draws in the contract workers working for white farmers, and the miners, of course. And poverty and hunger are much worse in the countryside than in the cities. I think that an explosion is brewing, especially in the so-called "resettlement camps," which are a sort of concentration camps.

These camps may become the starting point for guerrilla or other action against the regime, like the Palestinian refugee camps. They are the result of a policy that has turned more and more Blacks into wageworkers, but wants to stop them becoming urbanized.

What role does the trade union movement play in this revolt?

Without a doubt the trade union movement has played an important, in many respects decisive, role.

The strikes that began in September in the "Vaal triangle," the industrial area of the Transvaal and Orange Free Station, and which flowed into a two-day regional strike in November, were the beginning of the revolt. This movement was led primarily by the two big Black union federations, FOSATU and CUSA.

Until then FOSATU and CUSA had been able to avoid acting in too openly political a way so that the regime could attack them. After the strike some FOSATU unionists were arrested -- they are now being charged with high treason.

Are the trade unions winning masses of new members?

Yes, especially among the miners.

The unions encourage their members to take part in political class-struggle actions in the townships, though indeed not as trade unionists, because the South African government would then immediately ban them, but in civic committees and in spontaneous revolts.

Like Solidarnosc they try to avoid open political action as trade unions at the current stage. But many trade unionists think that a political workers' party must emerge from the trade union movement. In this respect too we have learned much from political experience. I think it is tactically right.

This interview was originally printed in the German socialist paper Was Tun. We are reprinting an abridged translation from the British publication Socialist Organiser (September 19, 1985). In this interview -- given in early August, soon after the declaration of the state of emergency -- a leader of the National Forum argues that South Africa is "a classic situation of permanent revolution."

Activists in the U.S. get many opportunities to hear the views of the African National Congress. It is also important to recognize the existence of other perspectives within the South African movement.

However, the trade union movement is very divided. I would distinguish three different groups. On the left there are the unions that consider themselves as belonging to the Black consciousness movement.

In the middle there are the two big trade union federations that I mentioned, who now want to unite. Further to the right is the South African Congress of Trade Unions which is close to the ANC.

Great pressure is being exerted from left and from right on the federations in the center to come out more openly in a political way. They reject this -- and rightly, I think. At this time it would be organizational suicide and would only lead to the arrest of their leaderships.

What are the differences between the two big alliances in the liberation movement, the United Democratic Front and the National Forum?

Both originated about the same time in 1983.

The NF remained true to the original idea of building a common opposition of all forces that rejected the new constitution, the so-called "New Deal." The main organizations taking part in the NF were the Azania People's Organization (AZAPO), the only legal national organization of Blacks, and the Cape Action League.

Both alliances are made up mainly of Black workers. The workers are organized in the townships, and their organizations belong to one of the two alliances. The Black petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals are also represented in both alliances.

In the UDF there are also bourgeois (mainly white) elements, liberals, and business people with links to big capital. Of course the organizations of the National Forum also have white members from community organizations, student organizations, and trade unions; but not this bourgeois element.

CUSA, one of the two big Black trade union federations, belongs both to the UDF and the NF.

The NF campaigned against the constitution much more seriously than the UDF, in which a right wing time and again proposed using the constitutional institutions as a platform for legal propaganda.

The basis of the NF is the "Manifesto of the Azanian People," which is of course not a socialist program, but in any case puts socialism on the agenda. On the other hand the UDF has not even been able to unite on the Freedom

Charter, the ANC's 1955 manifesto for an anti-apartheid coalition.

We are ready for joint work with the UDF, but not for a political alliance, because we reject collaboration with the liberals.

Consequently we rejected the visit of U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy which the UDF welcomed. With that visit important capitalist circles in the U.S. and in South Africa itself wanted to push the Botha government into reform.

So is socialism on the agenda in the consciousness of the movement's activists?

Quite definitely. Obviously most people have no scientific, disciplined conception of socialism. But since about 1980 most activists have been clear that apartheid could only be removed by socialist solutions of some sort.

The trade unions on one side, the community organizations, tenants' organizations, etc., on the other, are building an organizational foundation for a socialist movement.

It is still not a workers' movement. There is still no workers' party, but the foundation for such a party has already been established.

And some member organizations of the NF, like the Black Alliance of Mining and Construction Workers' Unions, have already progressed very far on the road to a socialist strategy.

As against that, the old and new left belonging to the UDF start from the idea that the movement should not go beyond national and democratic goals -- though there are socialist-orientated organizations affiliated to the UDF too.

The bourgeois camp, internationally and in South Africa itself, is split in its attitude to the Botha government. Some bourgeois forces in the U.S. call for a boycott. How do you explain this?

The strategic situation in South Africa is differently assessed.

There are capitalist politicians who consider that the Afrikaner National party and the Botha government are the only force that can carry through reforms without endangering the system itself.

Others, further to the left, are on the contrary convinced that such a reform can be carried through only by the cooption of the moderate leadership of the African nationalist movement. And these forces, who are aiming for a new power bloc, propose an economic boycott.

Is such a reform solution possible, and is there a social basis for it?

Even so far-reaching a concession as legal equality can no longer integrate the Blacks, above all the youth.

As against the national-democratic theoreticians of the UDF it must be maintained that the revolution in South Africa has a permanent character.

The caste system indeed implies that in time many more Indians and Coloureds can be politically neutralized than Blacks. The many Black collaborators in the townships show, however, that fundamentally even classified Blacks can be neutralized.

On the other hand the youth of precisely these intermediate layers reject this government and the new constitution most sharply, and take part in the revolt. Other than repression the government has no means to solve the question of apartheid. It does not have enough time.

I believe that in the next five or ten years the capitalist powers of the West will see themselves forced to bring the moderate wing of the liberation movement to power somehow, as in Zimbabwe. But the attempt to put a limit to the movement by that means will fail.

Of course we cannot predict how the revolution will then proceed, but it is the classic situation of a permanent revolution.

Is South Africa on the eve of revolution?

In the National Forum we have tried to warn against two dangers since 1983: a premature uprising and a Latin-Americanization of the country. Both are now threatening.

It was clear that a revolt was coming. It must be in the interest of the Botha government to provoke a premature outbreak of the revolt, so as to stifle it quicker and eliminate its leadership through a wave of arrests or through the state of emergency.

The precise moment may not be favorable for the government, because it is in a very difficult situation economically. But there can be no doubt of the government's preparedness to impose the state of emergency.

This state of emergency will not last very long, but in time organizations will be destroyed or have their leaderships removed, and it will take some years to build them up again. The aim of the state of emergency is a breathing space in which the so-called "reform movement" can be extended and the Black middle class neutralized.

The moderate leadership of the UDF did not think this wave of repression

was possible. It assessed not only the international situation but also the relation of forces inside the country falsely and expected that the government would be forced into negotiations. In reality we are moving towards Latin American conditions.

That means that the regime allows a limited political debate so as then to remove the leadership that shows itself openly, either legally or illegally, through death squads -- as has already begun with the murder of the oppositional lawyer Victoria Mxenge.

The movement should have prepared itself for this. But it is clear that the UDF and also parts of the National Forum and even the unions were not quite prepared for this wave of repression.

The unions will probably come out of it best, because they hold back from open revolutionary activity and have only carried on general political education among their members.

But won't the brutal state intervention lead to a further politicization and extension of the revolt?

Politicization, yes, but not necessarily an extension of the open revolt.

We are in a situation very similar to Northern Ireland. The government can forget, once and for all, the idea of bringing over the Black youth and the Black population to their side: integration is excluded.

But the workers cannot sustain an open revolt indefinitely in South Africa anymore than they can anywhere else. There will continue to be sporadic revolts in the townships.

If we had an army, as in Iran in 1979, that was recruited from the "sons of the people," then it would perhaps be possible today to talk about a successful revolution. But it will be years before we have such a situation. You can't talk about a successful revolution when you don't know how to neutralize the army and the bureaucracy. And they are still 85 percent white.

The government will not let the proportion of Blacks in the state apparatus increase quickly, because it knows that is their own power base. Anyone who says that a successful revolution is possible in the next two or three years does not understand the situation.

It would be different if an international war neutralized the army in South Africa and gave us the opportunity to come to power. But no neighboring state is strong enough even to threaten South Africa. □

THE AUSTRALIAN SWP LEAVES THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

What the U.S. SWP Denounces -- But Does Not Explain

by Tom Barrett

Two months ago the Australian section of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party, announced its decision to withdraw from the FI. Though no one in the International is pleased, few are surprised by the decision, for the Australian SWP had in recent months made it quite clear that it was no longer Trotskyist and in fact had become openly anti-Trotskyist. SWP National Secretary Jim Percy, discussing the group's resignation from the FI, declared, "I think it was wrong to form the Fourth International in the first place."

The U.S. SWP's response has been to turn three of its biggest guns on the Australians: Doug Jenness, Steve Clark, and Larry Seigle. In the September 23 issue of Intercontinental Press they ringingly denounce the former Australian section for its adaptation to Stalinism both politically and organizationally. Well, good for Jenness, Clark, and Seigle! They can still denounce those who adapt to Stalinism. They can still take aim at a target thirty feet wide and hit it squarely. They can still make the record and "prove" their loyalty to the Fourth International. But anyone who knows the record of the U.S. SWP leadership will quickly appreciate what is happening here: one revisionist current trying to distract attention from itself by pointing a finger at someone else.

Those who look for an analysis of the Australian SWP's political trajectory in Intercontinental Press will be disappointed. There is nothing in Jenness's, Clark's, or Seigle's articles which adequately explains why the Australian party went in the direction that it did, and there is even less of a clue as to how the same degeneration can be prevented in the future in other sections of the FI. That should surprise no one, for the U.S. SWP leadership is to a great degree responsible for what has happened in Australia. The Australians began their programmatic revisions by marching in step with precisely Jenness, Clark, Seigle, and the rest of the U.S. SWP leadership. They have only gone further, and in a straighter course, than their former mentors in New York.

They have stood proudly by their political positions rather than attempt to smuggle them in under organizational wraps, and in so doing they have exposed the U.S. SWP leaders as dishonest maneuverers.

WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN SWP ACTUALLY SAYS

The Australian SWP spelled out its programmatic revisions in a political resolution entitled "The Struggle for Socialism in the Imperialist Epoch." Its National Executive adopted the resolution in July 1984. They sum up their criticisms of the Fourth International as follows:

"...These errors are:

"● an underestimation of the role of national liberation struggles within the worldwide fight for socialism, in particular a programmatic error of downgrading the anti-imperialist united front and the democratic stage of revolution in the semicolonial countries, from which flow a sectarian attitude towards national liberation movements; this error was largely responsible for the delay by the majority of the FI in recognising the creation of a workers' and peasants' government in Nicaragua in July 1979;

"● a tendency to view the united front as a weapon primarily against political opponents (to bring about their 'exposure') rather than against the class enemy;

"● an overestimation of the place, within the tasks confronting the workers states and within the world revolution, occupied by the political revolution against the ruling castes in the bureaucratized socialist states;

"● a view of program abstracted from the practice of parties, which leads to judging other currents by their words rather than their deeds and thus to the view that the Fourth International is the only Marxist revolutionary current;

"● an attitude towards other class-struggle or revolutionary currents that downplays their achievements and seeks for programmatic differences rather than practical agreements;

"● a reluctance to put our program into practice, as seen in the failure to orient to the industrial working class and establish a base there when the conditions for doing so exist." (Reprinted in International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Volume XX, No. 7, p. 28)

One does not find this quotation in Intercontinental Press, for it is fundamentally no different from ideas expressed by the central leaders of the U.S. SWP.

The question which any reader should be asking is, "how did it happen?" Especially the supporters of the Barnes leadership should be asking how it happened that this organization, which begins with the same premises as the Barnes group, should end up adapting so grossly to Stalinism. Doug Jenness offers one explanation. He says, "At the heart of this degeneration is the overall deproletarianization of the Australian SWP -- in its composition, functioning, and political outlook." This is hardly an explanation. How is it that this "deproletarianization" led to a political trajectory towards Stalinism? What is the connection? How is this "deproletarianization" reflected in functioning and political outlook? Jenness says nothing more about it.

Larry Seigle, in his 1983 report to the U.S. SWP National Committee, reprinted in the September 23, 1985, IP, is more detailed in his criticism of the composition of the Australian SWP, but he in no way demonstrates the connection between the composition of the party and the revisionism in its program. He criticizes the Australian SWP because its "largest union fraction is made up of ticket collectors in public transport" and then for concluding "that for our party the turn is behind us." Whatever the merits of that criticism (this correspondent does not give it much validity) it in no way is an explanation for the political evolution of the Australian section. Jenness and Seigle are evading the real issue behind the smoke-screen of "The Turn." This is as much explanation as we get.

THE REALITY WHICH THE SWP LEADERS CANNOT FACE

The plain fact, which takes some intellectual courage to admit, is that "The Turn" has not accomplished the goals set for it by the Barnes leadership in either Australia or the U.S. What was wrong was not getting party members into industrial jobs; the problem was the way it was done and the political projections made, and the result was disastrous -- at least in the

United States. What divided the Australian SWP and North American SWP was their different responses to the opportunities and problems created by activity in the industrial unions.

Initially, the Australian SWP leaders joined their counterparts in the U.S. in looking to Cuba for a solution to the political problems posed for the revolutionary movement at the end of the 1970s. Rather than concluding that their own policies had created the difficulties they faced, they concluded that party program was at fault -- and they began to junk it systematically. The Australians enthusiastically supported the rejection of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and the turn away from class analysis to "campist" analysis. The alliance in revisionism lasted two years -- from 1979 to 1981.

Several differences arose in 1981 and later which were used to justify the bitter split between the U.S. and Australian SWPs. Afghanistan, the Nuclear Freeze Movement, and Croatian nationalism have been cited as serious errors made by the Australian SWP. However, they were not, and are not, the fundamental cause of the bitter split. The real cause was that the Australian SWP was turning outward, and the American SWP was turning inward.

The Australian SWP saw where political activity was going on and went there. Having already gone a good distance away from Trotskyism, they found it easy to adapt to the petty-bourgeois or Stalinist leadership in the Australian peace movement. It was no problem to endorse uncritically the entire political line of Castro and the Sandinistas, weaknesses along with strengths. They took their new line seriously, and they applied it in the mass movement. They applied it in the Nuclear Freeze Movement, in the trade unions, and even in the anti-Stalinist movement.

The worldview which sees the conflict between the "imperialist" and "anti-imperialist" camps as fundamental to world politics is essentially a non-class analysis. Without a class view, when one sees the Nuclear Disarmament Party taking positions to the left of the Labor Party one has no inhibition about supporting the NDP against Labor. (The Australian SWP and their U.S. colleagues in the North Star Network have a similar view of the West German Greens.) When one sees Croats fighting for "freedom" it doesn't matter that their organization wants to dismember the Yugoslav workers' state and restore capitalism piece by piece. One applauds

the fighters; one overlooks the fact that though the Yugoslav bureaucracy is guilty of many crimes, Serb chauvinism is not one of them (Tito himself was a Croat). Activism is the important question, not program. Put another way, it's not important what you do, as long as you do something.

The U.S. SWP's policy was the reverse side of the coin from the Australian policy. It withdrew from activity with the justification that we were in a "preparatory period." It decided that no movement against U.S. intervention in Central America could be built until U.S. ground troops started dying there (that view has since been discarded). It decided that involvement in union affairs was either adapting to the bureaucracy or taking on the bureaucracy prematurely, in any case, something to be avoided. It decided that the women's liberation movement was hopelessly tied to the Democratic Party and that the "gender gap" was a lie perpetrated by the Democrats. The political resolution passed at its 1984 convention and again at its 1985 convention was a guide to inaction and contained some of the wildest distortions of theory and fact ever committed to ink and paper in the history of the party. (See previous issues of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism for more detailed analysis of this deplorable document, entitled "The Revolutionary Perspective and Leninist Continuity in the United States.")

The Australian SWP showed no inhibition about its turn away from Trotskyism. They believed -- and still do -- that it is correct. They have not been afraid to follow the logic of their new line wherever it may lead. When they published "The Vietnamese Revolution and Its Leadership" (reviewed in Bulletin IDOM No. 18), written by Allen Myers, a North American who had been a member of the SWP in the United States for many years before moving to Australia, it became very clear that the logic of their line was straight to Stalinism. That is truly unfortunate, for however wrong the Australian comrades are, they have been up to now honest, dedicated revolutionists. They have been straightforward about their politics and unafraid to put them into practice. From the Stalinists they will learn different methods of functioning, and from all reports they are working quite closely with the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia, a small group which split from the "Eurocommunist" Communist Party of Australia.

A number of members and former members of the Australian SWP have re-

fused to go along with this walkout from the Fourth International. Most of them are supporters of the undeclared international faction led by Jack Barnes. While it is good that they still want to be part of the Fourth International, it would be better if they faced reality and critically examined what happened to the Australian SWP. They are getting scant help from Jenness, Clark, and Seigle. If the Australian supporters of the Barnes faction persist in the delusion that the Australian degeneration was caused by "deproletarianization" of the SWP's composition, then they will miss an important opportunity to begin anew on a firmer political foundation. The comrades in the U.S. SWP also owe it to themselves to make an honest assessment of the Australian experience, for there is serious danger that it can be repeated in the United States.

WILL THE BARNES FACTION LEARN?

The U.S. SWP has only this year begun to return to activity in the struggles for social change. However, they have not done so with a mass-action orientation; they have not been guided by the method of the transitional program. Instead they have adapted, as the Australian SWP did, to the petty-bourgeois forces who currently dominate the antiwar-antinuclear movement in the United States. These people are comfortable with the Democratic Party, not with workers and students marching in the streets, and the SWP has become an accomplice in their misleadership.

Very few articles have appeared in the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism which do not mention the importance of program. The experience of the Australian SWP is an excellent illustration of the importance of program -- that is, the codification of what revolutionists want to accomplish and how they think they can best do it. No organization can exist without program. If it doesn't formulate one for itself it will adopt someone else's, whether consciously or not. This is what happened with the Australian SWP, and a similar process is taking place with the SWP of the United States. This can still be reversed, of course, if the U.S. SWP leaders or members take the first steps -- honestly analyzing what happened in Australia, and reversing those aspects of their own policies which lead in a similar direction. Such actions will be far more fruitful than ringing denunciations of the Australians printed in Intercontinental Press. □

GORBACHEV: THE NEW IMAGE AND BEYOND

Interview with a French militant recently returned from the U.S.S.R.

On the occasion of Gorbachev's visit to France, articles and papers on the U.S.S.R. are flourishing. The French CP's press reflects an increasingly soothing image of Soviet reality, worthy of the editorialists of Pravda (or of Izvestia, which is the same thing). They describe at length the great progress being made in the Soviet economy, advances in the fields of education and health, of urban planning, focusing on only a fraction of Soviet reality. The rest of the press in general offers a totally one-sided view of the U.S.S.R., which is presented as a society statically rooted in the image of Lenin at the foot of his mausoleum. They choose to highlight another side of things: the Gulag, dissidence, police dictatorship. Both describe aspects of the situation but neither describes the true Soviet reality. The personality of Gorbachev, for example, upsets them. For the former, why does this society need "drastic change," "radical improvement" if its balance sheet remains "globally positive"? For the latter, how could a society so atrophied produce such an attractive leader at the top of its hierarchy?

To examine Soviet life in the Gorbachev era, Rouge has interviewed Michele, a militant revolutionary Marxist. Michele, a specialist in contemporary Russia, has just completed a long stay in Moscow.

Q. Gorbachev has an exceptional image in the West. He recently granted an interview to the American magazine Time. The journalists described him as a "persuasive, spontaneous, charming, terribly dressed person." What is the feeling of the Soviet population towards the new General Secretary?

A. The opinion of intellectuals is generally very close to this sentiment. The

majority of them expect great changes. They say "for ten years, nothing has changed, certainly not under Brezhnev, but now we're entering a new period." Many intellectuals have even shown a great admiration for Gorbachev; they compare him to Kennedy and say "if he's not killed he'll really do something." And when I express another point of view they're very surprised because in their milieu this sentiment is largely unanimous. Aware of the bureaucracy's resistance to change, they explain that there will be no concrete improvements until Gorbachev can consolidate his power. However, they really do expect something new. Furthermore, they are very impressed with Gorbachev's style, by his frankness, by the quality of his speeches which for a change are not recited.

On the other hand, the sentiment among workers is very different. They are in general very skeptical. One worker told me: "Maybe in ten years there will be some change." They know that in general when reforms are spoken of, they're carried out on their backs. Furthermore, no specific changes have been seen in the factories apart from some cosmetic alterations. The workers are accustomed to being skeptical towards everything official. If they see something concretely positive maybe they'll be more enthusiastic. The sole innovation to date consists of a reinforcement of work discipline and the fight against alcoholism.

Q. In the West we've heard a lot about this campaign against alcoholism. Has it had a real impact? How is it perceived by public opinion in the U.S.S.R.?

A. Some effective measures have been taken which have been well received; everyone is for them except of course the alcoholics! But it's basically a superficial campaign because it doesn't get at the real roots of alcoholism. The campaign only restricts the hours of liquor sales, raises liquor prices, and fights drinking on the job. After the third fine the offender is dismissed.

But I don't believe that this threat will really scare drinking work-

This interview originally appeared in the October 3-9, 1985, issue of Rouge, the revolutionary socialist weekly newspaper published in France. Translation is by the Bulletin IDOM.

ers because there are always job openings in the factories. In fact it is nearly impossible for a worker to be really fired. On the other hand, for an intellectual, the menace is real. He won't easily find another post corresponding to his qualifications.

Q. Coming back to the question of change, it seems as if the government is ready to implement some economic reforms on a large scale, and that the initial moves have been carried out. We're no longer in the period of Brezhnevian immobilization; the new team appears to be taking the bull by the horns in imposing the necessary changes. How would you, therefore, explain the skepticism among workers?

A. Indeed, many reforms have begun, but they have little substance. What has been accomplished up until now is ambiguous and contradictory.

On the one hand there has been talk of giving more autonomy, more initiative to the enterprises; on the other hand there have been proposals to reinforce the central administrative apparatus. In a recent article in Izvestia I read that one must not necessarily think that a reform of the market will be carried out. Another source reports experiences in creating private service enterprises on a small scale; and several articles have been published on this theme suggesting that more will be done along these lines. If this is the case we will probably see an improvement in living standards but this will not eradicate the roots of the problems of the Soviet economy.

In a word, a new approach is always being spoken of, but when one looks for it one finds nothing. Up until now, the meaning of the reforms has been on the one hand to increase the pressure on the workers, to increase the intensity of work, and on the other hand to fight against waste, to economize. One reads in the papers of incredible wastes that have taken place, but nothing has been proposed beyond some hair-raising denunciations.

These wastes and the complete labor disorganization that accompanies them are not conducive to productivity. Why work if the product of your labor is lost? To work for no reason is demoralizing; people have a certain pride. If they can work, if they have the tools and the necessary basic materials, and if what they produce is useful to society, then they'll do their job in an appropriate manner.

Q. Is the sole manifestation and expression of working class dissatisfaction found in the "passive resistance" which threatens to severely lower the productive level of the country?

A. One should not speak of the working class in general because it is extremely stratified. If we speak of the workers in heavy industry in the large cities, it is known that there are informal structures in the factories, that some strikes have occurred, that some workers have fought to defend their rights (wages, overtime, working conditions). Some informal leaders have emerged and have acquired their popularity through their knowledge of workers' rights; they are consulted by workers from other shops and even other factories. All this takes place outside of the official unions which are and which appear in the eyes of the workers as tied to the administrative apparatus and to the party.

Recently, an activist in the official union wrote an article saying that it was necessary to carry out better propaganda to explain to the workers all that the official union gives to them, adding that the union gives them much but they don't appreciate it. This so-called unionist admits that what the union delivers to the workers is not evident; the union occupies itself with obtaining theater tickets or Sunday outings, but it does not defend the interests of the workers.

Q. You speak of the existence of informal leaders in the factories. Have they made contact with each other, and with the dissidents? Can more durable structures emerge?

A. It's a delicate question. It is extremely rare for the workers to continue their informal organization outside of the factory. They remain atomized. The difficulties of daily life mitigate against workers' activism. Furthermore, the repression over the last few years has effectively intimidated dissidence. Nevertheless, we're seeing the birth of a new form of opposition. The general tone of the old dissidence didn't take the interests of the workers or economic questions into account. It was interested above all in questions of democracy. The new opposition represented by young socialists is not only not frightened of the masses, it sees in the masses a political force. According to them, the working class is the sole force capable of changing things.

By the way, it must be kept in mind that in its great majority the working

class is very cultivated. The average level of education is higher than in France. There is a growing number of workers in the factories who have studied in the universities but have either failed to find work corresponding to their educational level or have been kicked out of the universities. Finally, there is a not insignificant number of engineers who work as workers because they can earn about twice as much as engineers (400-450 rubles as opposed to 150-200).

There exists a layer of socialist activists who orient towards the working class, and who see a response to actual problems not only in democratization, but also in economic reform based on decentralization. Unlike the large majority of intellectuals who are critical of the system, these activists have some ideas about what must be done and they elaborate their analysis.

Q. Do you think that profound changes at the political level will take place? What is the true scope of the struggle that Gorbachev is leading against bureaucratic corruption?

A. No liberalization on the political level has been seen. No signs, not even any hope. If the society as a whole is examined there is unanimous agreement that the old situation cannot continue. Many people think that if reforms have already begun the situation will improve. On the other hand no other leader has ever promised so much, talked so much in so little time as Gorbachev. He has become prisoner to his own promises. If he doesn't deliver there will be profound disappointment. Gorbachev must deal with two problems. Before these reforms, assuming they are truly on the blackboard, can have an effect on the standard of living and working conditions they will initially result in a lowering of working conditions, which the working class will not accept -- as witnessed by several strikes which we have been informed about periodically.

Within the bureaucracy, there is great resistance to all reform. That is why Brezhnev accomplished nothing. It's more likely that cracks will appear within the bureaucracy. These cracks could give a social movement room to develop, especially if they occur on the basis of economic degeneration. □

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DO WE NEED TO REDEFINE MARXISM? PART 2

by Paul Le Blanc

Marxism is a body of doctrine (carefully worked-out theory), united with a dynamic methodology, at the service of the working class, for the purpose of achieving communism. A proletarian movement which is committed to achieving communism could be called a communist movement, and to be most consistent and effective it would have to utilize Marxism. Through a process of terminological twisting and chopping, one could say that Marxism is communism, communism is a movement, and therefore Marxism is a movement (not a doctrine). This is what Jack Barnes has done, concluding that communism is a "better" name for Marxism. The result is the denigration of theory, and a mutilation of what Marxism really is.

Barnes and Waters have, perhaps inadvertently, performed "theoretical" operations which are all-too-similar to those of far less worthy figures of the past. This becomes clear when we consider one of the polemics which Trotsky wrote in 1928, stressing that a failure to make a distinction between Marxist theory and the living class struggle can only result in "theoretical tail-endism, which simply runs errands for the practical tasks of the day." [20] The man Trotsky was polemicizing against was Joseph Stalin.

Stalin, in his Foundations of Leninism, had made a point of contrasting the "theoretical dogmas" of the Second International with "the method of Leninism," which he saw as the "further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx." He went on to argue: "Theory is the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect." [21] Trotsky sharply challenged this conception, arguing that Stalin "absolutely fails to understand that theory -- genuine theory or theory on a large scale -- does not at all take shape in direct connection with the practical tasks of the day." He went on to explain:

This is the second and concluding part of the article "Do We Need to Redefine Marxism?" which appeared in the November Bulletin IDOM.

"It is only because theory is not inseparably linked with the practical tasks contemporary to it, but rises above them, that it has the gift of seeing ahead, that is, is able to prepare to link itself with future practical activity and to train people who will be equal to future practical tasks. The theory of Marx raised itself like a giant watchtower above the revolutionary practical work of the Lassalleans contemporary to Marx, just as it did above the practical activity of all the organizations of the First International." [22]

One of the most illuminating discussions of the distinction between Marxism and the revolutionary movement was Rosa Luxemburg's "Stagnation and Progress of Marxism." She noted, first of all, that "enlightenment concerning the laws of social development has become essential to the workers in the class struggle, [and] this connection has borne good fruit in social science, and the monument of the proletarian culture of our day is -- Marxist doctrine."

Although this in itself contradicts the redefinition of Marxism by Barnes and Waters, Luxemburg carried the thought much further:

"But Marx's creation, which as a scientific achievement is a titanic whole, transcends the plain demands of the proletarian class struggle for whose purposes it was created. Both in his detailed and comprehensive analysis of capitalist economy, and in his method of historical research with its immeasurable field of application, Marx has offered much more than was directly essential for the practical conduct of the class war.

"Only in proportion as our movement progresses, and demands the solution of new practical problems do we dip once more into the treasury of Marx's thought, in order to extract therefrom and to utilize new fragments of his doctrine....

"If, then, today we detect a stagnation in our movement as far as these theoretical matters are concerned, this is not because the Marxist theory upon which we are nourished is incapable of

development or has become out-of-date. On the contrary, it is because we have not yet learned how to make adequate use of the most important mental weapons...." [23]

By accepting the redefinition of Marxism, we can shrug off this challenge -- but we won't be very good revolutionaries if we do.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

It is possible to argue that Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters have redefined Marxism in order to betray it. The argument could run something like this:

Barnes and Waters have lost faith in Trotskyism and feel a need to orient to the Cuban Communist Party. In order to do this, it is necessary to adapt to Stalinism in the way that the Cubans have felt compelled to adapt to Stalinism. To paraphrase Waters, it is necessary to knock the dead hand of "old Trotskyism" off the wheel of the party in order to find our own way to the actual revolutionary course and revolutionary leadership of our own time. Part of this operation is to appeal to higher authority by counterposing the collected works of Marx-Engels-Lenin to "Trotskyist distortions." The problem, of course, is that these "Trotskyist distortions" happen to be authentic Marxism. The garbling of Marxism that we have examined here is simply a by-product of the cynical manipulation of theory that is used to cover up a political betrayal.

I think there are elements of truth in such an explanation but that the reality may be more complicated than this. If we try to look more deeply into the problem, we may find even more important lessons to learn about our recent experience.

The way that Barnes and Waters define Marxism today suggests a lack of depth behind their earlier professions of "Trotskyist orthodoxy" and present-day "Leninist orthodoxy." Yet this does not necessarily mean that they were or are insincere. It is quite possible that it is not cynicism but a fundamental conceptual confusion that lies at the heart of their so-called "Marxism," and that this confusion is genuine, deep-rooted, and of long standing.

There are people in the world, including some who have identified themselves as Marxists, who see reality not as something which can be understood and changed by the application of theory but instead as being indistinguishable from theory, as a living manifestation of

their particular (usually very "orthodox") beliefs. For such Marxists, the actual class struggle becomes indistinguishable from their theoretical conceptions. This can lead to tailoring one's perception of reality so that it conforms to one's "orthodoxy." It's also possible to tailor one's "orthodoxy" (even unconsciously) to conform to one's perception of reality. It is possible, as in the case of Barnes and Waters, to do both at the same time. Even if one decides that Barnes and Waters consciously and cynically manipulate theory, the theoretical/perceptual blurring and double-think is still a factor in the decision of many comrades who follow them. And it is built into the very un-Marxist (but seemingly very "orthodox") way that they have defined Marxism.

Marxism is not the same as reality, it is not the same thing (to use Barnes's misquote from Marx and Engels) as "the actual relations springing from an existing class struggle," it is not another word for the workers' movement or the experience of the workers' movement, and it is not another word for communism. To think otherwise is to succumb to a profound confusion which garbles both reality and Marxism.

Of course, such confusion is not confined to present-day followers of Jack Barnes. It was shared by many of his co-thinkers of yesterday who continue to hold on to traditional perspectives. Yesterday's version of "orthodoxy" seems not to have worked, however, resulting in the Barnes leadership's casting-about for one that does seem to work, at least in the Caribbean. Yet the results of the new "orthodoxy" don't appear to have been beneficial to Barnes's shrinking organization, which has proved increasingly less capable of providing leadership in today's struggles. Only by overcoming the superficial approach to theory and reality can a genuinely Marxist solution be found to the crisis of American Trotskyism which is reflected in the decline of the SWP.


The problem that we are confronting, the deification of "orthodox" theory combined with the denigration of actual theory, is not a new phenomenon in the Marxist movement. Rosa Luxemburg has shown how, in the German Social Democratic Party, the theoretical ruts of "orthodoxy" combined with pragmatically arrived-at policy decisions that were then given "orthodox" explanation. Isaac Deutscher has shown how similar tendencies existed among the Bolsheviks before 1917. It is worth reflecting upon his words:

"In [Marxism], science, philosophy, sociology, politics, and tactics were closely knit into a single system of ideas. Yet the interest of practitioners of Stalin's type in matters of philosophy and theory was strictly limited. They accepted certain basic formulas of Marxist philosophy, handed down to them by the popularizers of the doctrine, as a matter of intellectual and political convenience. These formulas seemed to offer wonderful clues to the most complex problems -- and nothing can be as reassuring to the half-educated as the possession of such clues. The semi-intelligentsia from whom socialism recruited some of its middle cadres enjoyed Marxism as a mental labor-saving device, easy to handle and fabulously effective. It was enough to press a knob here to make short work of one idea, and a knob there to dispose of another. The user of labor-saving gadgets rarely reflects upon the difficult research that preceded their invention. Nor does he reflect upon the disinterested and seemingly unpractical research that will one day make his gadget obsolete. The users of the intellectual gadgets of Marxism, perhaps not unnaturally,

treated their possession in the same narrowly utilitarian fashion."

Deutscher counterposes to this the example of Lenin: "Unlike many of his followers, Lenin was the critical student in the laboratory of thought. In the end he always turned his findings to some political use; and his findings never shook him in his Marxist convictions. But while he was engaged in research, he pursued it with an open and disinterested mind. When on occasion it seemed to him that he ought to fill an important gap in his knowledge, he did not hesitate to ... entrench himself in the British Museum or in the Bibliotheque Nationale and assimilate a wealth of new material before he spoke his mind on a debatable issue. In such moments the users of the Marxist gadgets, including Stalin, grew somewhat impatient with the scrupulous thinker." [24]

The fusion of "orthodoxy" and utilitarian denigration of theory was also characteristic of better Bolsheviks than Stalin, then and since. This is what Barnes and Waters have given such forceful expression to in their explanation of Marxism. With such an approach, Marx-



LEON TROTSKY
and the
ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES
of the
REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

By Dianne Feeley, Paul Le Blanc, and Tom Twiss

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Published by F.I.T., P.O. Box 1947, N.Y., N.Y. 10009

ist theory tail-ends decisions that are made, as Barnes puts it, on the basis of "facts" rather than "principles" or "doctrines." This presents no problems since the "facts" themselves are "Marxist." It gives the appearance of being more down-to-earth and "materialist" to subordinate theory (ideas) to practice (the proletarian movement). But appearances can be deceptive.

It seems to me that there are also common sources for Barnes's interpretation and the pragmatist interpretation of Marxism advanced by Sidney Hook and James Burnham in the 1930s. The abandonment of authentic Marxism, however, contributes to profound political disorientation. In the case of Stalin and those who followed him, it contributed to the rise of what we call Stalinism -- the authoritarian rule of a privileged bureaucracy. In the case of Hook and the Burnham-Shachtman group, it led to adaptations to imperialism. There is even an example in the history of U.S. radicalism of such a group adapting first to Stalinism and later to U.S. imperialism -- the Lovestone group.

The long-term political trajectory of the Barnes group, if it maintains its pragmatic-utilitarian approach to Marxism, can therefore not be precisely determined in advance. What can be determined, however, is that -- as was the case with all of the above-mentioned groups -- a pragmatic-utilitarian approach to Marxism can, in immediate practical terms, have damaging effects.

Trotsky once warned that "if political conclusions are made empirically,... then the Marxian system of politics is invariably replaced by impressionism -- in so many ways characteristic of petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Every new turn of events catches the empiricist-impressionist unawares, compels him to forget what he himself wrote yesterday, and produces a consuming desire for new formulas before new ideas have appeared in his head." All too often this generates extraordinary zig-zags, improvisations, adventuristic leaps -- and, ultimately, "a tendency to refrain from active participation, a tendency to self-elimination, to abstentionism, naturally under cover of ultra-radical phrases." [25]

The Socialist Workers Party is a complex organization, affected by the rapidly unfolding and often contradictory realities of our time. It could be argued that the pragmatic-utilitarian

approach to Marxist theory in the SWP has had a disorienting effect, but that this itself is not uniform, undeviating, or without contradiction. There are vacillations and also healthy counter-tendencies. Nonetheless, honest observers of the SWP must admit that the debilitating trend against which Trotsky warned has been manifest in the party during the recent period. It finds its reflection in profoundly contradictory reactions to events in Iran, Poland, Afghanistan. It finds its reflection in the SWP's responses to the social struggles in our own country.

"The party of the proletariat," Trotsky argued, "is a party unlike all the rest....Its task is the preparation of a social revolution and the regeneration of mankind on new material and moral foundations." In the swirl of class struggle and world politics, under the intense pressures of imperialism and Stalinism, "the proletarian revolutionist, a leader all the more, requires a clear, far-sighted, completely thought-out world outlook. Only upon the basis of a unified Marxist conception is it possible to correctly approach 'concrete' questions." [26]

By rejecting the idea that Marxism "is a movement not a doctrine," Lenin, Luxemburg, and Trotsky (unlike Barnes and his partners in confusion) were able to integrate revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice in a critical-minded and scientific way that was consistent with the approach of scientific socialism's founders. This provides the possibility for an organically unified conception of Marxism which can powerfully contribute to humanity's emancipation. □

NOTES

20. Leon Trotsky, Challenge of the Left Opposition, 1928-29 (Pathfinder Press, 1981), p. 406.
21. Joseph Stalin, Problems of Leninism (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), pp. 14, 19, 20.
22. Trotsky, Challenge of the Left Opposition, 1928-29, p. 405.
23. Mary-Alice Waters, ed., Rosa Luxemburg Speaks (Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 111.
24. Isaac Deutscher, Stalin, A Political Biography (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 118.
25. Trotsky, In Defense of Marxism, pp. 56, 123, 105, 91.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

UNIONS NEED CLASS-CONSCIOUS LEADERS

by Farrell Dobbs

Although efforts to solve capitalism's problems at labor's expense are gradually sharpening worker-capitalist relations, the clash has not yet developed beyond limited conflict within industry. Failure to take the necessary working-class action is due mainly to incompetence and timidity in union leadership. If ably led, the workers have the capacity to make an all-out fight on the job and to carry their struggle onto the political arena as an independent, anticapitalist force.

They lack only a leadership able to establish unity of action in labor's ranks and to mobilize the full struggle potential of the class. To fill the gap it will not be enough simply to replace the union bureaucrats with people who mean well but have not shaped a policy that meets the worker's needs. Solution of the leadership crisis requires formation of a left wing in the union ranks, democratically organized in support of a clearly-defined program of labor demands.

Left Wing Program

Backing will be gained for a program that stems from the workers' immediate needs and their developing class sentiments. It should include rank-and-file

control over union affairs; escalator clauses in all contracts, formulated to keep wages fully abreast of rising prices; reduction of the work week with no cut in pay; full compensation for jobless workers, including youth unable to find a place in the labor force; opposition to the Vietnam war; defense of the unconditional right to strike; and complete union independence from government control.

Concerted efforts are needed to combat racist schemes to pit white workers against black at the expense of the class as a whole. Toward that end the left wing should demand equal rights for all workers inside the unions and on the job. Advocates of black power in the civil-rights movement should be given fraternal support and their example emulated within the unions by putting forward the concept of labor power. Recognition along these lines of the trail black workers are blazing for the benefit of all their class brothers and sisters will help to overcome blind race prejudice. It will help to knit the black-white unity so urgently needed to advance general working-class interests.

Class Struggle Concepts

In broad terms, a union left

wing can have real meaning only to the extent that it strives consistently to help the workers shed class-collaborationist illusions and acquire class-struggle concepts. This leads toward full use of the union power in direct confrontations with the owners of industry over issues important to the workers. In the process they come up against interventions by the capitalist government on the side of the employers. Through these experiences an honest, knowing union leadership can teach rich lessons about the role of government in the class struggle and about the nature of the capitalist politicians presently running the government. The workers can be helped to grasp the need for organization of their own independent party based on their existing organizations, the unions.

When the unions are thus brought toward a complete break with capitalist politics, the road will begin to open for labor to take the general political lead against capital. Militants within all sectors of the broad mass movement can then be unified around a common struggle to promote anticapitalist political action. As the trend gathers momentum the way will be prepared for a direct challenge of the present capitalist control over the government.

With the union movement as yet only in a preliminary state of change, breakup of the labor-Democratic coalition still lies somewhere ahead. The workers remain in a highly contradictory stage of political transition, leaving uncertainties as to the immediate pace and scope of new developments. In this complex situation care must be taken neither to put forward slogans too advanced to make real connection with dissident workers, nor to

This article was written in 1967 by Farrell Dobbs (1907-83). Dobbs had been a trade union organizer in the 1930s, a prisoner for opposing World War II, a candidate for president four times after the war, and national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party for 19 years (1953-72). The present article, reprinted from the May 8, 1967, issue of the Militant, was the last in a series dealing with problems facing revolutionary workers in unions that lacked militant leaders. Pathfinder Press recently thought it remained relevant enough to publish the whole series under the title Selected Articles on the Labor Movement (1983).

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overadapt to specific conditions and thereby de-emphasize labor's necessary political goals. The class vanguard's duty is to help the workers educate themselves and prepare to act on an ever-higher plane as they become convinced of the need. Efforts to overleap that process and inspire action simply by audacious leadership proposals can only misfire.

Contradictory Development

The task of a union left wing is to develop step by step the unfolding of the historic course that is necessary and possible for the working class. As the desired results begin to take form in real life they will not appear as simple, clear cut and uncontradictory as may have been anticipated in terms of pure theory. Continued backwardness on some important questions may obscure the fact that workers are becoming more advanced in their thinking about others. Experimental attempts can be expected to graft advanced ideas onto retarded forms of struggle, something like putting a souped-up engine in an old jalopy. This will probably be the case as the workers move toward independent class political action.

In the 1930s the workers first tried to organize in basic industry through the AFL, hoping to remake its craft-union structure to serve their industrial union needs. It took the failure of that experiment to prepare them for a mass shift to the building of the CIO. Today a somewhat analogous situation exists in the sense that the workers have yet to exhaust their efforts to solve essentially political problems through union methods alone. They are not ready to move forthwith to supplementary organization of their own independent party to add a higher form of struggle.

Within the unions, however, changes in the member's attitudes are taking place as they search for more effective means of struggle in defense of their class interests. Those who voice the workers' needs and show leadership ability in the search for a solution of their problems will get support. In this connection there is a positive side to the Reuther-Meany dispute. Although Reuther's leadership credentials are no

better than Meany's, he has helped to open up a critical examination of union policy. Militants striving to forge a class-struggle left wing can take things from there, going beyond Reuther to initiate meaningful discussions in the union ranks.

Unity

While stressing the need for effective changes in union policy, emphasis should also be placed on maintaining working-class unity against the capitalists. Labor's interests require opposition both to bureaucratic attacks on dissident union members and to government frame-ups of union officials, as in the case of James Hoffa of the Teamsters. The latter type of frame-ups are really aimed at the labor movement and represent a form of government intrusion into union affairs that bodes evil for the membership. Bureaucratic misleaders must be removed from union office, but not by the capitalist government. All union affairs must be handled by the workers themselves through exercise of rank-and-file democracy.

Primary attention should always center on the class enemy, with key programmatic demands aimed straight at the capitalists. If emphasis is put on a program meeting the workers' needs, and it is made clear that the left wing will support efforts from any quarter to carry out the program, the union bureaucrats will be caught in a bind. They must either respond to the needs of the membership or stand exposed as incompetent and unreliable. Instead of their being in a favorable position to witch-hunt the left wing, impetus will be given to sentiments for a change in leadership that are already developing in the union ranks. The trend is reflected in the ousting of McDonald, Carey and Burdon from top posts in the steel, electrical and rubber unions. It signifies a search for the kind of leadership that can be given only by a left wing based on a class-struggle program.

Palace revolts within the top bureaucracy, whether led by an Abel in the steel union or a Reuther in the AFL-CIO, will not halt disintegration of its monolithic control over the unions. Actions of the kind simply illustrate

the basic contradiction in which the bureaucrats are caught. They want to collaborate with the capitalists but they have no use-value, even in that role, unless they control a union base. It is the latter need that they find increasingly hard to fulfill. Changing objective conditions are narrowing their chances of continuing to pose as labor leaders only to collaborate with the class enemy. As a result they are floundering around in an effort to stem the inevitable tide of rank-and-file revolt.

Cracks in Bureaucracy

Growing pressures from the union ranks can also produce fissures among lower-echelon bureaucrats who are in most direct contact with the workers. Instead of acting simply as policemen for the top-level dictators, some of them are beginning to feel a need for at least limited adaptation to struggle moods in the ranks. Worker militants can take tactical advantage of such developments, provided it is clearly understood that the leadership problem cannot be solved through self-reform within the class-collaborationist bureaucracy.

There can be no solution short of building a leadership based on class-struggle concepts, a leadership that emerges from a left wing dedicated to the basic perspective of rank-and-file control over all union affairs. Through such close ties between leadership and membership the full power of the working class can be mobilized. In action the workers will demonstrate their courage, resourcefulness, ingenuity — their capacity to change everything for the better.

In the coming struggles many tactical problems will arise that can be decided only on the basis of specific circumstances at the time. It does not follow, however, that tactical decisions can be made on the basis of mere improvisation. All tactics must point in the direction of labor's strategic needs. They must serve to promote a direct confrontation with the capitalists within industry and in government; and they must point toward a challenge of the lackeys of capitalism within the mass movement. Tactical decisions must in addition be linked up with

persistent efforts to impel working-class sentiment in an anticapitalist political direction.

Labor Party

The first phase of anticapitalist political action will focus on efforts to form an independent labor party based on the unions. Even though such a political formation can be expected to have illusions at the outset about solving labor's problems through reform of the capitalist system, the class character of the party will make it inherently anticapitalist. This be-

comes the starting point from which to help workers perceive the need to struggle for governmental power and abolish the whole capitalist social structure. In the process union militants can be won over to acceptance of the socialist program. In this way formation of a broad class-struggle left wing will lead to growth of a conscious socialist wing; today through projection of anticapitalist political concepts in the unions; tomorrow through direct experiences in independent labor political action.

Theorizers of the "new left" fail to grasp the importance of forging a revolutionary-socialist vanguard party and working to fuse it with the exploited masses. Making a fetish of numerical strength, they brush aside the conscious socialist movement because of its present small size. To them nothing has meaning unless it is already "big." With that criterion they turn away from serious study of the laws of class struggle and search for the lowest common political denominator that will promote "bigness." As in other important matters, a vital need that they do not even begin to understand is blithely dismissed as "irrelevant."

History has proven time and again that sheer force of numbers does not assure a mass movement the attainment of its goals. On the contrary, if a movement lacks a class program and a class-conscious leadership, it will crumble in the test of battle, no matter how big it may be. In the last analysis the program decides everything, provided there is a leadership capable of carrying it out. That is why the building of a revolutionary-socialist vanguard party is so vital to the basic interests of the working class, and it is the reason for the existence of the Socialist Workers Party.

Workers' Power

Labor's future hinges on the construction of a party capable of shaping a program that meets objective class needs, a party able to carry through the struggle for realization of that program. Through its efforts, growing numbers can be helped to embrace

the socialist alternative to outlived capitalism and they can go forward with self-confidence in the struggle for the socialist goal. Their strategic objective will be the taking over of governmental power by the working class and its allies.

Attainment of that goal will end governmental control by bankers and corporation magnates, whose philosophy was once summed up in a single candid sentence uttered by Henry Ford II. "The target of private business," he said, "is private profit." That means merciless exploitation of people in this country and abroad for the sole purpose of amassing capitalist wealth. At home the policy leads to social deprivations in housing, health care, education, economic security, human equality, civil liberties and other needs vital to the kind of life people could and should lead, if our society was reorganized in a rational way. Abroad it leads to brutal wars against innocent people for the sole purpose of subjecting them to imperialist exploitation.

Rational Society

All this will be ended once labor and its allies take over the government and set out to reorganize society on a socialist basis. The banks and basic industries will be nationalized, as will the food trusts and all natural resources, including nuclear power. Necessary human labor will be arranged in a manner that provides jobs for all who are able to work and assures full care for those who can't. The workers and technicians will democratically organize, plan, and control production to serve everybody's needs on a fair basis. Society will be freed from every trace of discrimination and segregation. All will have an equal opportunity to prosper and to freely develop their human potentialities for the common good. Our country will lend a helping hand to peoples in other lands, instead of mobilizing and arming to make war on them.

Humanity will then be able to live in lasting peace, with freedom, equality and security for all. Man, as an intelligent social animal, will finally have come of age. □

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua

by Paul Le Blanc

This study offers a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua. Based on a variety of English-language sources and translations, it explores the socio-economic and historical background of the 1979 revolution and the political forces that were involved. It goes on to examine the advances, the problems, and the general trajectory of the Nicaraguan Revolution from July 1979 to September 1983.

Another purpose of this study is to test the value of the revolutionary theories of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky in light of the Nicaraguan experience. In particular, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is examined. At the same time, the distinctive contribution of the Sandinistas themselves to revolutionary theory is suggested.

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WHEN WILL THE BARNES LEADERSHIP LEARN?

I would like to congratulate Tom Barrett on his article "An Appeal to Former Members of the SWP" in the Oct. BIDOM.

He expressed in words what I have been thinking since I left the SWP in 1978.

I left the SWP for personal reasons also, at least that's what I said at the time. Deep down inside of me, though, I could feel something was not right about where the party was going and above all my role in the party as a rank-and-file member. I felt more and more isolated within the party as time went on, but I didn't know why I felt this way.

Comrade Barrett's article hit the nail right on the head for me in terms of understanding the post-1975 period and the party's assessment of it. However, I feel the party erred in its method of application rather than program at the time. I think the general line of the '75 Prospects resolution has a correct analysis of the class struggle.

I feel there wasn't enough discussion about the turn and that we were just carrying out what the National Committee decided on as to how the turn should be applied to everyday party life, instead of being a well-thought-out team effort.

I also think the structure of party branches -- to account for comrades with differing work schedules -- could have been more collectively thought out. Regular party activity for those comrades cannot always be possible. I know. I was once one of those nightshift workers.

I have always understood that a revolutionary socialist party is made up of human beings -- and human beings are not perfect, we do make mistakes. I also believe, however, that by following and enhancing the Leninist principles of party organization--that is, democratic centralism -- a revolutionary party can overcome bureaucratic mishandling and learn from its mistakes no matter how small that party is or how large in membership it is.

The question is when will the Barnes leadership learn from its mistakes and return the party "Back to Leninism"?

A former SWP member

'BULLETIN' COMES JUST IN TIME

I received the complimentary copy of BIDOM today. Thank you.

It came at a very good time. Indeed, I have resigned my provisional membership in the SWP. Many questions are unresolved in my mind about the SWP. I have not been associated with the party for long -- therefore I assumed my doubts were unique. I finally gave up on the U.S. members of the Fourth International. Your Bulletin has come as a relief.

I do hope you will inform me as to how I can join the F.I.T. and work for the SWP's return to a true Marxist party. Please put me on your mailing list, and please consider me a supporter of your movement as well as a friend of the SWP, working to return it to what it was, and what it must be for tomorrow. (It is funny and strange; I picked the SWP to join by reading about the different socialist parties. I picked the SWP for what it claimed to be. I still want it to be those things.)

Thank you again. It is reassuring to know I'm not alone in my concern about the SWP's relationship with the Fourth International. I'm also relieved to know that others have the same questions about the party -- questions comrades in the party deny even exist--as I have.

Also, keep your style! Avoid being murky and ponderous at all costs. Write, as you are doing, so that working people can read your stuff, and want to read it.

A comrade

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RAYMOND SPARROW, 1914-1985

Ray Sparrow, a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party, died of a heart attack in San Francisco on November 16. He was seventy-one. After the death of Jim Cannon in 1974 Sparrow observed that he had, through no special effort on his part, acquired the distinction of having the longest service in the Trotskyist movement of any living SWP member. Sparrow's service in the Trotskyist movement through the years was distinguished.

He joined the Communist League of America in Los Angeles in 1933, having broken politically with Stalinism and with his parents who remained in the Communist Party. As a former activist in the Young Communist League he became a member of Young Spartacus, the youth section of the CLA, and soon was one of its leaders.

When the Trotskyists prepared to enter the Socialist Party in 1936, he moved to Chicago at Cannon's suggestion where he spent the next two years. After the founding convention of the SWP there in 1938 he returned to the West Coast, settling in San Francisco where he served for a time as branch organizer.

He joined the Sailors Union of the Pacific and worked as a merchant seaman as this country plunged into World War II. In 1942 Ray made Seattle his home port with the idea of building a branch of the SWP there. He sailed in the "Alaska run" to help maintain the party branch which recruited youth and seamen and prospered during the war years.

Ray left Seattle before World War II ended and settled in New York where he continued to work in the maritime industry. He was a leader of the SWP's maritime fraction in the immediate post-war years, becoming a member of the National Maritime Union. The maritime fraction maintained a headquarters and meeting hall for seamen at 130 West 23rd Street in those years. It was the Chelsea branch of the SWP, the party's first industrial branch. Ray was one of the organizers of the Chelsea branch and a leader in the New York local of the party which then consisted of about half-a-dozen branches. He worked on the Militant, and for a time wrote a lively column on seamen and their struggles under the pen name Art Sharon. He was a

popular lecturer and teacher in the party.

After the purge of radicals in the maritime industry by the U.S. Coast Guard in collaboration with the war-spawned bureaucrats in the seamen's unions, Ray began working in the building industry and eventually became a widely respected superintendent of construction in commercial building. His service in the Trotskyist movement continued at the same high level as before. He continued as a leader in the New York local, later becoming a branch organizer in Philadelphia.

In 1951-52 he attended the Trotsky School at Mountain Spring Camp in New Jersey, returning eventually to San Francisco where he again earned his living in the construction industry.

In the late 1960s (1966-69) he represented the SWP National Committee in Europe as the fraternal delegate to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Those were exciting years for him, the time of the 1968 Paris uprising and subsequent events throughout Europe. Upon his return from Europe he again took up residence in San Francisco, working full time in the construction industry and participating actively in the burgeoning antiwar movement of the time. From the World War II years through the mid-70s Sparrow was a member of the National Committee of the SWP.

In recent years he withdrew from party activity, partly because of failing health. He never expressed sympathy for the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in the struggle against revisionism within the SWP that began in 1981. In earlier years, especially around 1978-79, he often voiced misgivings about the mannerisms, shortcomings, and political immaturity of what he then called the "younger leaders." He had detected the characteristics of what became the Barnes clique in the SWP. This clique, which refers to itself as the "leadership team," has discarded the principles of revolutionary socialism. These principles and the vision of the socialist future are what Ray Sparrow lived for during his more than 50 years in the Trotskyist movement. □

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EMERGENCY NATIONAL COUNCIL AGAINST U. S. INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA/THE CARIBBEAN

The United States government is deeply involved in war in Central America. Its actions in Honduras are designed to pave the way for direct massive U.S. military intervention to overthrow the Sandinista government. Meanwhile the contra war expands, the air war against the Salvadoran people intensifies, support for the Guatemalan and Honduran dictatorships increases and Costa Rica is forced to militarize.

Working people in the U.S. have no interest in supporting policies that protect corporate interests in Central America. U.S. supported regimes, which suppress unions and keep wages low, carry out these policies.

The Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean was established on the basis of the following purpose, program and principles:

PURPOSE

To educate and mobilize masses of Americans for urgently needed united actions in response to the emergency caused by U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean — with special emphasis on broadening the involvement of the trade union movement. Linking this struggle to the fight to end U.S. support for the apartheid regime in South Africa reinforces and strengthens both the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements.

PROGRAM

The Council supports the right of self-determination and demands an immediate end to U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, and an end to U.S. support of South Africa's apartheid government. These demands must be related to U.S. intervention in other areas of the world and to the critical economic and social problems facing the American people. Union-busting, high unemployment, and discrimination against minorities and women go hand-in-hand with U.S. foreign policies that deny to peoples in other lands the right to decide for themselves what kind of society they wish to build.

PRINCIPLES

- 1. Mass action.** The most effective vehicle for mobilizing the largest number of people in support of the Council's program is periodic massive demonstrations in the streets. Such mobilizations reflect the anti-intervention movement's power and depth of support and give the diverse currents in the movement focus, visibility and the means of uniting in action. The Council is committed to building mass actions as its central activity.
- 2. Labor orientation.** Recognizing the decisive role that the organized labor movement can play in the realization of the Council's demands and the stake working people have in winning these demands, the Council at all times places special emphasis on mobilization of the trade union movement, including its rank-and-file members, while trying to win workers generally to the anti-intervention cause.
- 3. Democratic procedures.** All decisions at all levels of the organizational structure shall be arrived at strictly in accordance with democratic procedures.
- 4. Non-partisan.** The Council shall not endorse political parties or candidates for public office. It works to educate and mobilize support for its program on a non-partisan and independent basis.

All individuals and organizations agreeing with the Council's purpose and program may affiliate with it, regardless of other beliefs and affiliations. Organizations affiliated with the Council have a voting representative on the national steering committee.

EMERGENCY NATIONAL COUNCIL AGAINST U.S. INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA/THE CARIBBEAN

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