

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.

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LOS ANGELES EMERGENCY NATIONAL CONFERENCE CALLS FOR UNITED ACTION

by Melanie Benson

Anti-intervention activists from around the country met in Los Angeles Jan. 24-26, 1986, at the third Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Among the 108 who registered for the entire weekend were members of 20 different unions, 22 solidarity groups, 5 women's rights organizations, students from 5 campuses, and representatives of an array of social justice and socialist organizations. In addition, 60 more attended one or another of the two public rallies on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Perhaps the highlight of the weekend was the participation of representatives from the Salvadoran Labor Center in Los Angeles, and two other Salvadoran groups from the L.A. area: AMPES (Association of Progressive Women of El Salvador) and MASPS (Broad Movement in Support of the Salvadoran People). Their insight and contribution to all of the sessions were invaluable.

ACTION PROPOSALS

An important programmatic discussion took place at the conference--on the relationship of the Central America movement to the fight against apartheid in South Africa, and whether the ENC should include the South Africa issue as part of its basic program. This was stimulated by the introduction of two action proposals on Saturday morning which took different approaches to this problem. The discussion of this question began at the "Strategy and Tactics of the Anti-Intervention Movement" workshop on Saturday afternoon, where the relative merits of involvement in electoral politics, civil disobedience, mass demonstrations, and other types of solidarity activities were also considered by the panelists and workshop participants.

In the other Saturday workshop, "Involving Labor in the Anti-Intervention Movement," much of the discussion centered on the opposition that already exists in the U.S. labor movement to

U.S. intervention in Central America and the further openings to broaden that sentiment following the position taken at the national AFL-CIO convention, which formally opposed "military solutions" in Central America. Labor tours to Central America and tours of Central American unionists here in the United States were recognized as effective means of countering the inaccuracies and distortions in the U.S. media. As Alejandro Molina Lara of the Salvadoran Labor Center pointed out: education is a necessary prerequisite for mobilization.

The discussion on the Central America/South Africa connection dominated the plenary session where the action proposals were considered. The resolution which was adopted came from the Executive Committee of the Council, and agreed that the South Africa issue had to be addressed by the ENC. Some of its major provisions are:

I. NO AID TO THE CONTRAS -- "Demonstrations all across the country must be organized in the weeks and months ahead to demand, 'NO AID TO THE CONTRAS!' The broadest sections of the population must be reached, especially the labor movement."

II. END U.S. INTERVENTION IN ALL OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN-- This section explains the effects of U.S. involvement in each country of the region.

III. END U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE APARTHEID REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA -- Here there is a recognition of the capacity of the anti-apartheid and anti-intervention movements to strengthen one another in the defense of the right of oppressed people to self-determination.

IV. INVOLVE THE LABOR MOVEMENT MORE FULLY IN THE ANTI-INTERVENTION STRUGGLE--"relating labor's needs at home to the fight to end U.S. interventionism abroad."

V. UNIFY THE ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT -- "Immediate agreement is needed by local coalitions to sponsor united anti-intervention actions focused on defeating contra aid. The growth of

local anti-intervention coalitions around an action will spur the growth of the movement as a whole and will give impetus to the creation of a national anti-intervention coalition."

VI. A CALL TO ACTION--"United mass anti-intervention demonstrations in local areas in the weeks and months ahead with a special focus on defeating aid to the contras." Other points in this section included supporting the National Weeks of Anti-Apartheid Actions from March 21-April 6, continuing to campaign for a national coalition, and building contingents in demonstrations like the April 19 action called by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice in San Francisco.

Several amendments from the conference were accepted as part of the final adopted proposal. One was presented by AMPES, to call for the formation of coalitions to unite for frequent mass street demonstrations to demand an end to the bombing of the civilian populations of El Salvador and Guatemala.

SOLIDARITY RALLIES

Speakers at the Friday night "Labor Speaks Out Against U.S. Intervention and Against Apartheid" rally stressed the importance of and the potential for involving labor in the fight against U.S. policy in Central America and Southern Africa. Marion Porro, president of AFSCME Local 1930 in New York, representing library workers, described how the Central America Committee of AFSCME District Council 37 raised \$4,000 for a children's library in Nicaragua, providing the book budget for an entire year. Rita Shaw, member of the Puget Sound Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Lodge 1380, described the success in the Seattle area of winning labor support for the April 20 actions last spring.

Alejandro Molina Lara emphasized the gravity of the situation in El Salvador. Despite Duarte's campaign promises, repression continues. Jailings, torture, and "disappearances" are still daily occurrences. Fifty percent of Salvador's national budget is used to buy weapons for the army that serves the interests of the oligarchy, whereas the budget of the national university has not been approved. Salaries were frozen from 1981 to 1985 as the cost of living climbed 241 percent. The resolve of the workers to better their conditions was demonstrated in 1985, as a total of 60,000 participated in 261 strikes despite the repression.

Bob Massi, a member of District 65, of the Distributive Workers Union in New York, affiliated to the UAW, further developed this theme of the common interests of workers in Central America and the United States, united in a "brotherhood of blood and sweat," whose unions have no interest in oppression and who have the collective power to change government policies.

Barney Oursler, former steelworker and now coordinator of the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee of Southwest Pennsylvania, explained how workers' understanding of domestic and foreign policies is radically altered when their own economic security is threatened or destroyed by layoffs and plant closings. He explained that workers who believed in 1981 that the military budget was an answer to U.S. economic problems voted for a "jobs with peace" resolution in 1983. Many who went to Washington D.C. in March of 1985 to save unemployment benefits returned on April 20 to march against U.S. intervention in Central America. He reported the positive reaction when Francisco Acosta, a Salvadoran labor leader, spoke to them on his East Coast tour, and said, "I need the right to organize in my country. I need you to keep your military out of my country so I can fight for my rights."

Speakers at the Saturday morning session brought more information on the current situation in Central America, in South Africa, and in the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements.

Martha Alicia de Rivera of ANDES, the Salvadoran teachers union, reiterated that all aid to El Salvador goes to repression. To date, she reported, 356 teachers in that country have been murdered, 700 have disappeared, and 2,000 schools have been bombed or destroyed. In Guatemala, the illiteracy rate is 70 percent and bombing campaigns against Indians are unrelenting. Honduras has been converted into a military base. She appealed to the American people to work together to prevent further suffering and bloodshed.

Sheldon Liss, professor of Latin American History and Government at the University of Akron and a member of the Executive Committee of the Emergency National Council, recently returned from Central America, observed that popular support for the FMLN in El Salvador is greater than ever before; and that in Nicaragua, U.S. officials show open disdain for international law. In their view, three options exist for U.S. policy in Nicaragua: 1) open invasion by

U.S. forces, which has, at least for now, been ruled out; 2) termination of efforts to topple the Nicaraguan government, which appears unlikely; and 3) sustaining of the contra war "for years to come," the option that seems to have been chosen.

The subject of building the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. was addressed by Kathleen Geathers, member of the Executive Board of Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice of the Cleveland area and also of the ENC Coordinating Committee, who likened the reservations and ghettos of the United States to the Bantustans of South Africa. She condemned the governments of the U.S., Israel, France, and Great Britain for arming South Africa "to the teeth" with weapons and torture devices to use against the Black majority. Her concrete suggestions for action to protest U.S. complicity with apartheid included: a boycott of Del Monte and Shell Oil, the gathering of information and the launching of an educational process, the solicitation of support and the formation of coalitions, promotion of divestment, opposition to aid for UNITA in Angola, and aid to the liberation forces of the South West Africa People's Organization and the African National Congress.

The current fragmented state of the anti-intervention movement and the critical need to unite it were the themes of remarks by Jim Lafferty, associate director of the Center for Seafarers' Rights in New York City and ENC Executive Committee member. Lafferty stressed the need for united spring actions against contra aid, cautioning that no one group can hope to end intervention alone. He explained that united massive, peaceful, legal actions are the best way to forestall demoralization in the movement and in the population as a whole, where there is still majority opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

Saturday night's solidarity program, chaired by actor John Randolph

("Prizzi's Honor"), moved and inspired those attending with Peruvian folk music by Mario and Martin, poetry by Naomi Quinonez and Julia Stein, and speakers Ulises Torres, U.S. official representative of the FMLN-FDR, as well as by the L.A. chairperson of the African National Congress.

PROBLEMS FACING THE MOVEMENT

The Sunday morning plenary session of members of the Emergency National Council took up organizational questions, elected a coordinating committee, and heard a report from national coordinator Jerry Gordon. Gordon verbalized the disappointment that many conference participants felt in the small attendance at the L.A. conference, but made it clear that it is precisely this lull in the movement that the conference had been called to address. He encouraged those present to "shake up" the movement, to press it to do, to act, to respond, and to March. ENC affiliates will have the objective of functioning as a "mass action caucus" in many of the more than 1,000 Central America solidarity groups already existing in the U.S.

Two members of AMPES and MASPS were elected to the Coordinating Committee of the ENC, and AMPES member Silvia Escalante was elected as a consultative member of the Executive Committee. The lessons brought to the conference by these Salvadoran sisters and brothers were consistent with the broad themes of mass action and solidarity that ran through all of the discussions in Los Angeles. They are lessons that the entire movement can learn from and be heartened by. One of the Salvadorans spoke in the labor workshop on the question of mobilizing the unions. He counseled, "Have faith that the workers will respond. If we lose faith, we won't be able to mobilize them. There is a tremendous capacity among workers. Recognizing that is one of the secrets of leadership." □

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT DEBATES PERSPECTIVES

by Diane Phillips

Within the National Organization for Women, and the women's movement as a whole, there has been increasing discussion of whether mass actions are effective. This discussion is healthy, as it clarifies the issues.

Although the last NOW convention voted overwhelmingly for a national demonstration in Washington D.C. on March 9 for reproductive rights, some still retain their doubts. Because Eleanor Smeal advocates this event, those who opposed her candidacy on various grounds have tended to downplay the importance of mass actions. They prefer the quieter approach of Judy Goldsmith, who stresses lobbying and negotiation more than demonstrations.

However, one should judge a particular proposal on its own merits, regardless of one's opinion of its proponent. During Ms. Smeal's former presidency, there were periods when mass actions were put on the back burner. Nevertheless, she seems to have begun to realize that the right wing was using mass demonstrations to its advantage, while there was no corresponding response on a national level from the pro-choice movement. The misogynist anti-abortion movement has held demonstrations of up to forty thousand people in Washington. Because the pro-choice movement has not had as much experience in mass organizing, it faces an uphill battle. However, the violence and the harassment of the right have infuriated many feminists, and may motivate them to take a stronger stand.

WHY WE NEED MASS ACTION

Large public mass actions provide a way to energize and mobilize people. Speakers can enlighten and artists can enthuse the participants. It takes much more commitment to spend several hours en route to and at a rally than to write

a letter to Congress. The government objectively recognizes this fact. NOW won a temporary extension for the Equal Rights Amendment after a huge mobilization several years ago. After this, however, demonstrations were downplayed and electing "sympathetic" state legislators became NOW's strategy. The result was the defeat of the ERA.

The public seldom learns how many letters are written on a particular subject. However, even the sexist media cannot afford to totally ignore large actions. Therefore, mass actions inform the public that there is an organized pro-choice movement. The majority of Americans who support basic abortion rights are encouraged. In addition, those women who seek the services of abortion clinics no longer feel isolated.

Rallies which are independent of the major parties provide a force which the government cannot manipulate. Too often, women have devoted their energies to electing "feminist" candidates (both female and male) who then vote against women's interests. Sometimes these candidates throw us a few crumbs in order to satisfy their female constituents, yet their main loyalty is to the business community and the two parties which represent it. Even women government officials, who do experience oppression as women and therefore may be somewhat more sympathetic, give lip service to abstract equality but often vote for the cutbacks and other policies which disproportionately hurt women and minorities.

Therefore, NOW's policy of supporting "feminist" candidates is a dead end. Though still a factor, Ms. Smeal emphasizes this electoral policy less than her predecessor. Writing letters and sending delegations to officials is not a principled question. Even leftists have urged people to send letters and delegations to officials on behalf of some political prisoner, for instance. Nevertheless, when these tactics substitute for mass action, and simply rely on the good will of politicians, they become a waste of time. Politicians are

Diane Phillips is a member of New York City NOW and an independent socialist feminist.

far more afraid of the masses organizing independently.

Another question raised by some feminists is organizational. These women claim that groups lose a lot of money on demonstrations. Also, they complain, too much energy is expended on building them. However, March 9 has brought in new activists. Much money has been raised through phone banking and more is expected. Letters have been sent to a

wide range of organizations asking for assistance.

In order to assure a successful turnout, everyone who supports reproductive rights should help build March 9. Contact your local NOW office. Volunteer to take leaflets and make phone calls. Encourage your union or other organization to participate. With the cooperation of all, March 9 can be a significant success for the women's movement. □

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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DRAFT PLATFORM OF THE WORKERS OPPOSITION IN POLAND

One of the best features of International Viewpoint is its frequent and informative reporting and analysis of developments inside the Polish underground movement, especially Solidarnosc. IV No. 89 was especially rich in this respect. It featured two articles and three documents of a quality that will not be found in any other English language periodical. We are reprinting one of these documents, adopted last year by a new current in the Polish underground called Workers Opposition, which brought together the representatives of four revolutionary journals as the Press Alliance of the Workers Opposition (PPOR). The four journals, described in IV No. 89, are Front Robotniczy, Sprawa Robotnicza, Glosno, and Wolny Robotnik.

1. *The class struggle.* The political struggle that has been going on in Poland since 1980, which has been generally termed a fight between the society and the regime, is primarily a class struggle. It is essentially a struggle between the working class, which is subjected to economic exploitation and deprived of all political or economic power, and the bureaucratic state power, which is based on the PZPR, as well as on the military and police machine and the economic and administrative apparatus. Only the working class has the capacity to overthrow the bureaucracy, and it is only thanks to it that the social groups can liberate themselves from the yoke of the bureaucracy.

2. *Self-management.* The fundamental aim of our struggle is to get the working class to transform itself from an object into a subject. This will only be possible through a system of generalized self-management. Such a system would involve self-management councils in the enterprises, linked together by horizontal and vertical structures on the regional and national scale, as well as institutions of self-management organized on a territorial basis. Self-management, a form of direct political and economic democracy, will thus become the principal factor in organizing social and political life.

3. *Political pluralism.* Self-management can only function in conditions of unrestricted political pluralism. It cannot be foreseen today what will be the exact forms of the social organizations and representative bodies set up. We cannot say exactly what will be the role of the free elections to the Diet that we would like to see. But it is clear from the start that the principle of political pluralism has to govern all forms of participation in political life for the society.

4. *The revolutionary struggle.* The transformation of the working class from an object into a subject is only possible through revolutionary changes. The belief in the possibility of a compromise with the bureaucracy is a dangerous illusion that could prove fatal. In fact, there is no way to reconcile the introduction of a system of self-management, that is, the realization of the interests of the working class, with the domination of the bureaucracy. One course for the antibureaucratic uprising could be a revolutionary general strike turning into an active strike [ie, a takeover of the factories by the workers], supported by actions outside the factories. It is only in such revolutionary conditions that we could expect a part of the army, primarily ordinary soldiers, to join in the uprising of the

working class, when they see that the working-class forces have a chance of success.

5. *Self-organization.* A revolutionary goal for the struggle requires a revolutionary strategy, that is, a strategy based on consistently advancing the self-organization of the working class. Such self-organization is the common element in all the phases of the development of the workers' struggle, from the present fight for partial objectives to the future struggle for a system of self-management, in which the principle of self-management will find its fullest expression. Every battle, even on the most limited question, bears within it an embryo of the future revolution, inasmuch as it contributes to the self-organization of the workers. This is why the demands put forward by the workers movement in its programmatic documents must always take into account three elements:

— They have to correspond to the needs of the working class.

— They have to be in tune with the level of consciousness of the workers at the time.

— They have to make it possible, in the struggle itself and on the basis of its success, to raise the level of self-organization of the working class and of the other social groups allied with it.

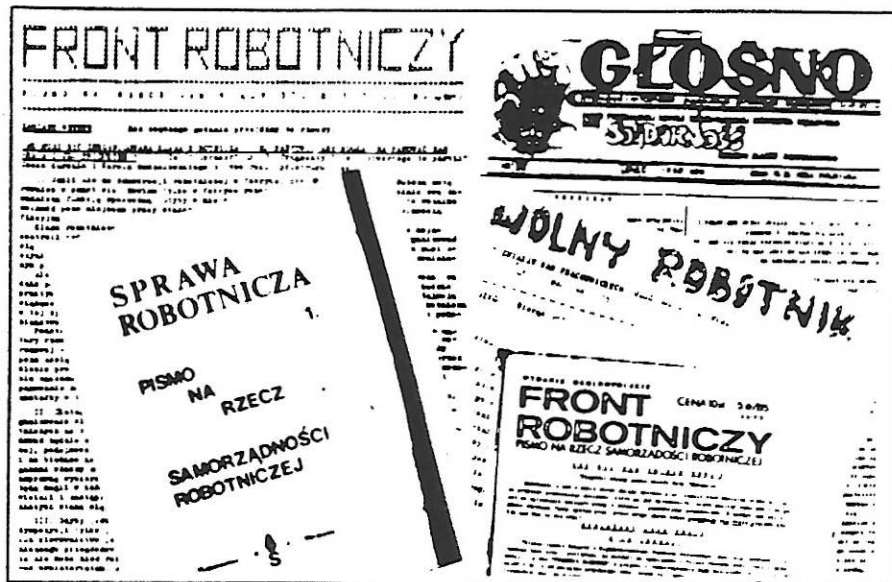
6. *The independence of the workers movement.* Today, the existence of an independent workers movement is the main form of self-organization and the main precondition for the struggle of the working class. The fight against the bureaucracy entered a qualitatively new phase in 1980, when the strikes opened up the way for the formation of Solidarnosc, the first national independent structure representing the workers that we have seen in the history of the bureaucratic system in Poland. Today, building and strengthening workers organizations in the plants independent from any organization or institution outside the working class remains the principal task.

7. *Pluralism within the workers movement.* Pluralism is necessary within the workers movement in order for it to be able to develop politically.

The right of the workers to organize freely in clubs, groups, currents, and political organizations has to be defended. Open politicalization of the workers movement, based on clear principles, can only strengthen it. Attempts to smother this process, under the pretext that it "weakens the union," is "factional" activity, or "provocation," on the other hand, can only undermine the movement, or in fact divide it, and they involve all the characteristics of provocation.

8. *Self-determination.* Understanding the class character of social relations in Poland involves rejecting the nationalist imagery that reduces our fight to a struggle against the Soviet Union for independence. The basic dividing line in our nation is not a schematic opposition between patriots and traitors but one of opposing interests among different social groups. This is why national independence, as an effect of the struggle of the working class for social liberation represents from the standpoint of the working class, the full achievement of the indispensable right to self-determination.

9. *International workers solidarity.* The Polish working class is not isolated in the struggle. It has friends and allies abroad. They are the workers of the entire world. The Polish workers movement can and must draw on the strength of international workers solidarity. The differences between East and West cannot hide the fact that the workers of both camps are linked by common interests, by a common struggle for a common end — the transformation of the working class from object into subject — against common enemies. The question of international solidarity is one of close cooperation of the various national contingents of the revolutionary workers movement; it is one of interaction between the development of the class struggle, for example, in Poland, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain.



10. *Socialization.* The indispensable precondition for the liberation of the working class is for it to lay the economic foundations of its liberty, that is, socialization, outside of the state and in the framework of a system of workers self-management, of the means of production that are today statized. It is in this way that the working class will obtain the material guarantee of realizing its interests, as well as the legitimate interests of the other groups in society. The aim of the revolutionary workers movement, flowing from the essence of the social relations against which it rebels, is not the reprivatization of state property or giving it autonomy but to genuinely socialize it. We regard the taking of political power as a means for the working class to assume economic power.

Joint work by radical worker activists with a view toward forming a workers opposition to the bureaucracy is essential to draw up a program for the Polish workers movement and to gain support for the revolutionary struggle aimed at establishing a system of self-management, a self-managed republic in the full sense

of the term. By establishing coordination among the organizations, or in the future by building revolutionary parties, we are not opposing ourselves to the workers movement in the broad sense. To the contrary, we want the revolutionary current, which is a component of this movement, to be consolidated within its own structures so that it can better contribute to building an independent mass workers movement. From that flows the basic significance of this platform. That is, the victory of the Polish workers depends in the first instance on adopting a strategy for revolutionary struggle against the bureaucracy. In practice, the advance to social self-management has to be based on a revolutionary political identification by the workers. It involves the workers becoming conscious of their social and economic interests, as well as the independence of the political-organizational institutions of the working class. This is why it is the responsibility of those who share the ideas expressed in this platform to unite their forces in the struggle for our common cause. □

'Wolny Robotnik', No. 30, June 1985

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U.S. UNIONS IN THE 1920s AND 1980s

by Frank Lovell

Discussion of various cures for the ailing unions has dominated the organized labor movement recently. There were some militant strikes and a few partial victories in the last year or so, but the weakened condition of the unions remained unchanged and this is what continues to prompt reassessment of their prospects for survival. Unavoidable comparison is made to the similar decline of the unions in the 1920s.

A few random examples will suffice to indicate the scope and character of this discussion to date.

* Last September, when the AFL-CIO Executive Council was holding its annual meeting in Florida, a television interviewer observed that according to all reports "an almost tangible feeling of depression" pervaded the meeting of top union officials. One reason, he said, was the "shattering defeat" of Walter Mondale, their choice for president in 1984. Another reason was the relative decline of union membership from 32 percent of the work force in 1953 to 20 percent in 1983.

The question under discussion was: "Can organized labor survive in an economy that is changing? From low tech to high tech. From producing goods to delivering services. From brawn to brains."

Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO president, appeared on the program. He responded evasively. "We find that the labor movement has demonstrated notable resilience during a period of especially rapid and destabilizing change," he said. "Somehow, something mystical maybe tells me that when the vultures are circling, most out amongst the seagulls, that is the moment in which we are on the threshold of resurgence, revival and growth."

The question for the labor movement, of course, is how resurgence, revival, and growth can be achieved. Since August 1982 the AFL-CIO Executive Council has been seeking answers to this question, with the assistance and advice of a host of labor historians, economists, sociologists, and other experts.

* In August 1983 a preliminary report was issued, titled "The Future of Work." This report found that "the United States is a labor surplus society...." It warned of a labor surplus

of four to six million unemployed workers. "This labor surplus underclass," it said, "threatens the stability of the nation's economic, social, and political institutions and weakens the U.S. competitive position in the world economy."

* A second report in February 1985, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions," recommended "new approaches" to union problems. These included ways to increase membership participation in their unions, better communication with the public, and improving organizing techniques.

The new recommendations were predicated on old premises: the efficacy of the capitalist system and the sanctity of private ownership in the means of production. "Organized labor believes," declared the report, "that each worker is entitled to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. That pay should include a share in the profits the worker helps to create and, thus, unions seek a larger share of those profits than 'market forces' might dictate. And we recognize that those profits can only be created in a well-managed enterprise, where both capital and labor contribute to the result."

This summarizes the traditional class-collaborationist position of the union bureaucracy since the time of Gompers and the 1920s "prosperity era."

* James L. Medoff, an economics professor at Harvard University and one of the many advisers to the AFL-CIO Executive Council in its search for solutions to its problems, noted in a New York Times Op-Ed page article last September that organized labor was in serious shape in the early 1930s and that it is equally bad off in the 1980s. He said, "Its image is tattered. Its organizing machinery is running poorly.

... And management is resorting to increasingly aggressive tactics to weaken collective bargaining." He offered "a prescription for our ailing unions," consisting of an improved public image, regaining the lost political influence that unions once enjoyed, and "a willingness to work with management and owners who are sincere in their desire to cooperate."

* Lance Compa, an official of the independent United Electrical Workers (UE), presented (in collaboration with

Barbara Reisman, an experienced unionist and active environmentalist) "The case for adversarial unions." Their arguments against the traditional class collaborationism of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy appeared in the May-June 1985 issue of Harvard Business Review. They reviewed the steady decline of the unions in the 1980s to demonstrate that all attempts to collaborate with the employers by accepting wage cuts and making other concessions had tarnished the image of the unions, contributed to their loss of political influence, and hampered their ability to organize. Compa/Reisman say, "American workers want an adversarial union, if they want a union at all. There is simply no other reason to have one."

They answered the current labor-management "power sharing" fad by recalling that it is nothing more than a revival of similar schemes promoted in the 1920s, pointing out that the union movement declined steadily at that time and was not revitalized until the unions began fighting back in the early 1930s.

Compa/Reisman see signs of change. "The seeds of organization are taking root now with incipient organizing committees among high-tech, service, and clerical workers and in other sectors of the economy that many see as impossible to organize," they say. Furthermore, "we can testify to a rising mood among the rank and file to fight back against concessions and collaboration." They are convinced that "in the long run workers will organize to defend their jobs and improve their working conditions." They warned the entrenched union bureaucracy and other interested parties that "workers will find other approaches and methods" if existing unions fail to satisfy their needs, as happened in 1935 with the formation of the CIO.

COMPARISON WITH 1920s

In the search for cures to the seemingly mysterious sickness that is stripping the unions of their vitality today, there is constant reference to the plague of the 1920s that sapped the strength of the union movement then, and to the subsequent revitalization of the movement in the 1930s.

This comparison of the labor movement today with that of the 1920s is as good as any other beginning. Along with that a better understanding of the transformation in the early 1930s will most certainly help in the organization now of a similar transformation.

Throughout the decade of the 1920s, as now, the union movement was in steady

decline. One of the reasons for this was the wartime servility of the union leadership. During World War I the craft unions seemed to prosper. A series of strikes in 1917 prompted the Wilson administration to set up a Mediation Commission which in turn led to the establishment of the War Labor Board in early 1918. Samuel Gompers, as AFL president, endorsed the main objective of the board, which was to prevent strikes. In exchange the government tacitly recognized the AFL unions as collective bargaining agencies in the war industries. As a result the unions gained over a million new members, reaching a peak of more than five million in 1920. Union treasuries swelled commensurately as dues payments increased.

Gompers and other union leaders began to take an active part in affairs of state, serving the government in their capacity as representatives of labor. Gompers became president of the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy (AALD), a "labor front" sponsored by the Wilson administration to drum up prowar sentiment among working people. Later Gompers embarked on a mission to Europe, at the behest of the administration, to bolster the war effort when European workers were showing signs of war weariness. For these and other services to the U.S. ruling class Gompers gained a certain renown among heads of state and captains of industry, but the workers he claimed to represent and the unions he was supposed to serve gained nothing.

This ingratiating performance was repeated in almost exact replica during World War II by the successors of Gompers in the AFL and the CIO unions. Both William Green for the AFL and Philip Murray for the CIO welcomed Roosevelt's War Labor Board, accepted the wartime no-strike pledge, and fully endorsed the imperialist war aims of the U.S. government. After the war they participated in the stabilization of capitalism in Europe and in the cold war against the Soviet Union. And, of course, the union movement appeared to benefit during and after World War II. When the two labor bodies merged and founded the AFL-CIO in 1955 the new organization boasted a membership of 15 million, and it was growing. Some of the big industrial unions had millions in their treasuries. All this had the appearance of a repeat performance of the unions in World War I, but with one important difference. In the post-World War II period the unions continued to grow and the membership continued to benefit for three decades, until about 1975.

After World War I labor-management cooperation did not last at all. The employers of that time made only modest objections to union representation and the collection of union dues in the war industries during the war, but tolerating unions in private industry during peacetime was another matter. The ruling class in this country in those years strongly favored what they called "the American plan," meaning no unions allowed.

The AFL craft unions affiliated to the Chicago Federation of Labor sought to organize the packinghouse workers in 1917-18 with some limited success. This was due largely to the extraordinary talents of William Z. Foster, who was the AFL organizer in charge. When Foster, with the endorsement and backing of Gompers, attempted to organize the steel industry in 1919 through the AFL craft union setup, the effort failed. The steel strike was joined by a third of a million steelworkers, who closed the mills in 50 cities in ten states, and it lasted 108 days. But it was eventually crushed by the steel barons, who refused to negotiate, and compliant government agencies.

Thus the decade of the 1920s began. It soon became clear that the employers were determined to destroy the union movement in order to slash the wartime wage standard which was considered far too high, and to increase their already excessive profits. In some instances it appeared that the employers deliberately reduced wages to provoke strikes. They then invoked the police power of the government to break the strike and destroy the union.

What has been called "the greatest strike of the decade," the railway shopmen's strike, was provoked by a drastic wage cut in 1922. Almost from the beginning the federal government intervened on the side of the railroad companies. Attorney General Harry Daugherty secured a federal restraining order against the strike. Anyone who was in any way connected with the shop crafts was forbidden to do or say anything in furtherance of the strike. The legal basis of the injunction was the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Any striker or supporter of the strike could be charged with conspiracy against the free flow of trade and commerce. The railroads remained free to dictate wages and working conditions, and to hire strikebreakers and an army of private guards to herd them on the job. The strike was crushed and many strikers blacklisted, never able to get their jobs back. In this way one union after another was destroyed.

When Samuel Gompers died in 1924 his successor as AFL president, William Green, found himself in charge of an organizational structure that was hardly more than a shell. He sought to rebuild the organization through close cooperation with the employers. Less than a year in office, he announced his willingness to cooperate in any joint program to make production more efficient. "More and more," he said in 1925, "organized labor is coming to believe that its best interests are promoted through concord rather than conflict."

The employing class was of a different mind. They saw no reason to collaborate with unions. They sought other ways to increase efficiency and improve profits. The textile industry is an example. This industry had been highly organized in New England. In the early 1920s the employers began moving their mills to the South where they found the complete collaboration of local and state officials in the discouragement of all attempts to unionize far more profitable than the proffered cooperation of AFL union officials.

By 1927 67 percent of all U.S. cotton textile production was concentrated in the South where sporadic strikes were frequent but union contracts unknown. Because of overproduction the textile industry was already listed among the "sick industries." Competition forced wages below subsistence levels. In 1929, as the "open shop decade" came to a close, the average mill wage in the South was \$12.83 for a 60-hour week. This condition tended to depress wages in that sector of the industry that remained in the North.

The best organized and most nearly successful strike of the decade was the textile strike at the Botany mills in Passaic, New Jersey, which began in January 1926 as a result of a 10 percent wage cut. The AFL United Textile Workers (UTW) and other textile unions had no presence in Passaic at the time. But an organizing committee, calling itself the United Front Committee of Textile Workers, began agitation against the wage cut and soon recruited 1,000 members. When the committee presented demands to the employers to rescind the wage cut, for time-and-a-half for overtime, and no discrimination against union members, the bosses fired all 45 members of the committee. That was when the strike began. Five thousand Botany workers walked out and spread the strike to the other mills in Passaic. Soon more than 15,000 workers were on strike, tying up the whole Passaic textile industry.

The Passaic strike was organized

and led from the beginning by a member of the Communist Party, Albert Weisbord. It was endorsed and supported by the CP-controlled Trade Union Educational League. William Z. Foster, who was in charge of CP trade union work at the time, later described the strike in the following way:

"By terrorism and duplicity the bosses were unable to break the strike so, after six months of it, in July, they decided on a maneuver to defeat the workers; they announced that they would deal with the strikers provided the Communist leadership was removed and the strikers were affiliated to the U.T.W. To agree to take out the mass leaders was a difficult condition for us, but the strike was in a hard situation; so, refusing to let the issue of communism stand in the way of a settlement, we called the bosses' bluff and withdrew the official leader of the strike, and we also affiliated the workers to the U.T.W.

"The employers, seeing that their maneuver had failed, then stated they would not deal with the A. F. of L. either. In consequence, the strike dragged on, bitterly fought (under our leadership -- the U.T.W. doing nothing) until December 13, when the big Botany Mills capitulated to the union by restoring the wage cut, agreeing not to discriminate against union members and recognizing grievance committees. The other mills soon followed suit. Thus ended almost a year of struggle. It was a hard-won, if only partial, victory, but it produced little tangible results in organization. The union, weakened by the long struggle and neglected by the U.T.W. conservative McMahon leadership, was unable to follow up with a vigorous campaign for organization and against blacklisting."

In his well-documented book on U.S. workers in the 1920s and early '30s, The Lean Years, Irving Bernstein summarizes what happened to the AFL. "A significant feature of labor's decline in the twenties," he says, "is that it struck especially hard at organizations that were either wholly or predominantly industrial in structure. This was true of the coal miners, of Mine Mill, of the Textile Workers, of the ILGWU, and of the Brewery Workers. At the same time many craft unions either held their own or made gains. The building trades, for example, advanced from a membership of 78,950 in 1923 to 919,000 in 1929, the printing trades from 150,900 to 162,500, and the railway organizations declined modestly from 596,600 to 564,600. This shift in membership strength was re-

flected increasingly within the American Federation of Labor. Craft organizations, with their conservative outlook on both internal and general matters, came to dominate both the Executive Council and the conventions of the AFL, with the inevitable impact upon policy."

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In comparing the state of the unions in our decade with what happened to the unions more than half a century ago the first question is "What are the similarities and differences?"

The one similarity most harped on is the unions were in decline then and they are in decline now. True.

The reasons for this state of affairs, then and now, are also similar. In both instances -- for the period following World War I and the longer period following World War II -- capitalism on a world scale achieved an uneasy stability and the U.S. economy benefited. The employers launched an antiunion offensive, which caught the unions by surprise both times.

As in the 1920s so in the 1980s the employing class has acquired a false sense of self-confidence and imagines that it is no longer dependent on the working class. This illusion is propagated so assiduously by all agencies of government, by the educational system, and by the capitalist press that the worker-employer relationship seems to be reversed. Instead of employers being dependent upon workers to produce goods and profits, the workers are said to be dependent upon their employers for their means of livelihood. They are told their future must be bleak unless they can find a kind employer who will give them a job and pay at least the minimum wage required by law. This is not much. But it beats government welfare and charity.

The long time lapse after World War II until the employing class launched its present antiunion offensive is different from the post-World War I period. After World War I the employers launched their antiunion offensive almost immediately. They waited 34 years after World War II before finally reaching a consensus to move against the unions.

It is true that some politically important sectors of the ruling class wanted to repeat in 1946 the union-smashing history of 1919 and all that followed. But the 1946 strike wave led by the CIO unions convinced the employers that head-on union busting was out of date. They decided to use different tactics, to entangle the unions in legal restrictions defined by the 1947 Taft-

Hartley law, and in this way tame the unions and live with them as manageable house pets. As history has demonstrated, this worked to the satisfaction of the employers for more than three decades, largely because of U.S. domination in the world system of capitalist economy. That was not the case, certainly not to such an extent, after World War I. And it is no longer the case. The relationship of forces, as well as the world structure of capitalism, had shifted drastically by the early 1970s when the Nixon administration introduced the "new economic policy" of U.S. imperialism.

By 1978 the ruling class had made the necessary adjustment and adopted a new labor policy, their present anti-union policy. The first overt response from the union movement came from Douglas Fraser, then president of the United Auto Workers.

Fraser had served, along with AFL-CIO president George Meany and six other top union officials of that time, on a nongovernmental committee headed by former secretary of labor John Dunlop, known as the Labor-Management Group. It was a very top-level committee, consisting of an equal number of union officials and representatives of the corporate elite. It met regularly to make deals on how each side would handle important social issues of the day, such as energy problems, inflation, unemployment, rising health costs, and other matters, including labor legislation.

The union movement had expected Congress and the midterm Carter administration to enact the Labor Law Reform Bill, and the union officials thought they had agreement with their management counterparts. Instead, the financial and political resources of big business launched an antiunion campaign and defeated the bill.

Fraser then resigned from the Labor-Management Group (July 1978), charging that the capitalists had "chosen to wage a one-sided class war...a war against working people, the unemployed, the poor, the minorities, the very young and the very old, and even many in the middle class of our society."

He said, "General Motors Corp. is a specific case in point. GM, the largest manufacturing corporation in the world, has received responsibility, productivity and cooperation from the UAW and its members. In return, GM has given us a Southern strategy designed to set up a non-union network that threatens the hard-fought gains won by the UAW. We have given stability and have been rewarded with hostility. Overseas, it is the same. General Motors not only in-

vests heavily in South Africa, it refuses to recognize the black union there.

"My message," said Fraser, "should be very clear: if corporations like General Motors want confrontation, they cannot expect cooperation in return from labor."

For more than seven years now since Fraser's resignation from the Labor-Management Group, the giant corporations of this country have received nothing but cooperation from the AFL-CIO top officialdom, and from all members of the UAW executive committee including Fraser and his successor as UAW president Owen Bieber.

The long period of labor-management collaboration -- from the outbreak of World War II in 1939 until 1978 when the employers openly expressed their innate antiunion nature -- may influence the manner of transformation within the unions. When the unions are revitalized, the process may be somewhat different from the transformation of the union movement in the 1930s. At that time an unexpected split occurred within the old AFL bureaucracy and a group led by John L. Lewis formed the Committee for Industrial Organization in 1935.

The present crop of entrenched AFL-CIO officials doesn't know anything different from what they were taught during the long years of union-management collaboration. By this time they are a second- and third-generation of housebroken "labor representatives." They think the unions are social institutions created to arbitrate worker grievances. They are supposed to represent the interests of union members but they habitually function as "impartial" arbitrators. They have learned to see both sides of every dispute between workers and employers, and they usually see the employers' side more clearly because of their training.

Many of them never worked in actual production a day in their lives. Some are lawyers and accountants and the only work they ever did was as employees of some union. Lane Kirkland once belonged to the Masters, Mates, & Pilots union because he got a wartime license as a ship's officer, but he never stood a dogwatch at sea. His interests lay elsewhere, and he got a fill-in job at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, eventually doing speech-writing for Meany and becoming his assistant. Even if these people wanted to lead a fight, they wouldn't know how. It is not in their experience. They have no idea of how to organize a class-struggle defense of workers' rights.

This does not apply to the hundreds of present-day local strike leaders. In the past year alone there have been many militantly fought strikes, organized by local leaders.

* The hotel strike in New York registered partial successes. But there is little hope among the workers involved that their top officials will follow up on the gains.

* The well organized UAW strike against General Dynamics, the nation's largest defense contractor, for catch-up wages equivalent to pay scales in the auto industry was compromised by top UAW leaders. After eight weeks the strike was settled on terms generally favorable to GD and at least \$1.50 per hour below wages in auto. Strikers at the big GD tank plant in Warren, Michigan, were maneuvered into narrowly accepting the agreement on the grounds that other smaller UAW locals had already accepted the company's terms. James Coakley, president of UAW local 1200 in Warren and the local strike leader, urged a no vote on the contract against pressure from UAW top negotiators.

* After a three-month strike against the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp., 8,000 steelworkers returned to work at wages \$5 per hour below the average scale in basic steel. W-P, the nation's seventh-largest steelmaker, declared bankruptcy in April to scuttle its contract with the United Steelworkers. The strikers returned to work at the urging of top officials of the Steelworkers union.

The best organized strike of 1985, the strike of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 against wage cuts at the Hormel flagship plant in Austin, Minnesota, was opposed from the beginning by UFCWA president William Wynn and his local representative. After five months, the strikers faced a company sponsored back-to-work movement in January of this year. Their ranks remained solid. The company's December offer containing wage cuts was rejected. Jim Guyette, Local P-9 president, vowed to continue the strike until the company agrees to restore union wages and conditions.

Similar examples of militancy at the local level in contrast to top leadership willingness to give up can be multiplied several times from the record of 1985 strikes alone. It is a long list. This is different from strikes in the 1920s. The bosses were stronger then, and they were able to crush most strikes quickly. Today, even when strikes are lost or settled on unfavor-

able terms, the workers begin almost immediately to reorganize their ranks.

This is a measure of how the AFL-CIO looks today in contrast to the AFL unions of the 1920s. In proportion to the working class the old AFL was numerically smaller than the AFL-CIO. It was also financially more impoverished. The leadership today may appear more sophisticated but the capitalist-oriented worker-management ideologies of Samuel Gompers and Lane Kirkland are identical. On balance the AFL-CIO would appear to be better off because of its 13.1-million members, plus its other resources. It remains a potentially powerful social and political force. But its future at this juncture is no different from that of the old AFL 60 years ago. It will undergo radical transformation or it will continue to decline and eventually go under.

THE DECISIVE INFLUENCE

When comparisons are made between the weakened state of the AFL-CIO unions and the old decrepit AFL craft union structure of the early 1930s it should be remembered that it was the radical wing of the labor movement that initiated the reorientation of the unions and made the struggle for industrial unionism a reality in 1934.

In this connection, two indisputable facts in the history of organized labor must be recognized: 1) Working class radicals, the anticapitalist political wing of the movement, organized the unions initially to involve masses of workers in defense of their elementary legal rights and to raise their standard of living under capitalism, and the revolutionary socialists of each succeeding generation have worked within the labor movement to convert the unions into instruments of struggle against capitalism and for socialism. 2) The scientific laws of capitalist development as first discovered by Karl Marx have provided the basic guidelines for radicals, and the successes and failures of the class-struggle left wing are indicators of the fluctuations in the health of the union movement. When the left wing prospers and wins positions of leadership, the entire labor movement comes to life. But when the left wing suffers defeats, the unions become quiescent and decline. This is the history of organized labor from its earliest beginnings to the present.

The class-struggle left wing in the union movement from World War I to the present will be the subject of a future article. □

MORE ON THE NEW SWP POSITION ON SOUTH AFRICA

Letters About the Barnes Article in 'New International'

In our last issue we published an article by Tom Barrett about South Africa "Proletarian or Bourgeois Revolution?" which took up some of the political issues raised by Jack Barnes in "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" (New International, Fall 1985). The Barnes text asserts that the present struggle in South Africa is a strictly limited, bourgeois-democratic one. He counterposes this to the perspective of a proletarian revolution in that country. This he puts off to some later date, after the establishment of a "bourgeois republic." For the first time in their present process of political evolution, the leadership of the SWP has publicly presented a two-stage conception, or more precisely, a two-revolutions conception. A number of readers of Bulletin IDOM around the country have sent us letters commenting on the Barnes article. Some of these letters seemed of general interest to all our readers, so we are printing excerpts from them.

UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT

When I read Jack Barnes's New International article on South Africa, I was struck by how far the SWP leadership has come from the kind of approach I remember from when I was in the party. In those days we always stressed that there was no contradiction between the bourgeois-democratic and proletarian tasks of the revolutionary process in the world today, that these must be combined as part of a single, continuous process. I remember we even had a name for it--"combined revolution"--and we applied it not only to the anti-colonial struggle, but to the revolution in the United States as well, regarding the relationship of the workers' fight for socialism and the demand of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities for self-determination.

The concept of combined revolution flowed from our appreciation of the law of uneven and combined development--which explained that it wasn't necessary for every individual nation to go through every specific stage of cultural and technological evolution. More backward cultures could borrow aspects directly from more advanced ones. Hunting and gathering societies, for example, could change over to modern agricultural methods, without necessarily having to first go through a stage of pulling a wooden plow with a horse or an ox.

It seems to me that South Africa is a prime example of uneven and combined development in the world today, with advanced industry existing side-by-side with pre-capitalist features. Yet Barnes has apparently forgotten this basic Marxist law since it is only by ignoring uneven and combined development that he can present the absurd notion of the need for a strictly bourgeois-demo-

cratic revolution in South Africa at the present time.

On page 44 of his text, he even goes so far as to assert that only "the right-wingers and friends of apartheid in Washington" should be interested in making "socialism" an issue in the debate about South Africa. That sort of attack against anyone who tries to inject a conscious socialist component into the discussion is a close relation to more traditional kinds of red-baiting. We are used to getting that variety of "discussion" from opponents of the SWP, and it's a great disappointment to see it introduced by the present party leadership.

GOODBYE, COMBINED REVOLUTION?

In Jack Barnes's article the SWP leadership has said goodbye to the concept of combined revolution, which they insisted in the 1960s and 70s applied fully to South Africa.

But if combined revolution is no longer valid for South Africa, is it still applicable to the Black liberation struggle in the United States?

We haven't heard anything on this score from the SWP leaders for quite some time. They had a report on the Black struggle at their national convention last August, but the report has not been published, and the brief Militant article about the report did not deal with the question of combined revolution.

Before his death in 1984, Larry Stewart asked the Barnesites if their renunciation of permanent revolution implied any change in their position advocating combined revolution in the U.S. They never answered him, but it remains a timely question, especially after their new position on South Africa.

IMPERIALIST BUT NOT BOURGEOIS?

Barnes is categorical about what the class character of the state will be after the coming revolution in South Africa -- it must and will be a bourgeois republic, he says. But I challenge any other reader of his article to say definitely what Barnes says or thinks about the class character of the present South African state.

In his New International article, Barnes says on page 26 that "Nicaragua under the Somoza regime was a bourgeois republic, although an extremely repressive and undemocratic one, and one exploited by imperialism. The South African regime, however, is not a republic even in this sense. It bears more resemblance to some of the state structures of ancient Greece and Rome...." Barnes means to say South Africa is not a bourgeois republic even in the sense that Nicaragua was, but he prefers to be ambiguous, perhaps because he is not sure of his footing.

On page 12, Barnes refers to South Africa as an imperialist power, although one that is qualitatively weaker than the major imperialist powers. Does this mean that he regards South Africa as an imperialist but non-bourgeois power? An imperialist country, according to Lenin, has reached "the highest stage of capitalism." Why would a country that has reached the highest stage of capitalism require a bourgeois-democratic revolution to establish a bourgeois republic?

How can people so confused about the class character of the present South African state be assumed to know what they are talking about in relation to the class character of the future South African state?

THEORY AND ACTION

It has always been an accepted truth in our movement that revolutionary theory is a guide to revolutionary action. Jack Barnes has been fond of repeating that formula. But he doesn't seem to be so fond of applying it in life. A better description of his actual approach would be that theory is a rationale to justify a desired course of action. The action, not the theory, is given primacy.

Back about 1979, Barnes decided to make a turn toward the Castroist current on a world scale. But our old theories --like permanent revolution--got in the way. How to solve the problem? Why of

course, let's change our theories. Despite all of the excuses and rhetoric, the theoretical innovations of Barnes and company (actually not new theory at all but a modern rehash of old ones, "served up with a new sauce" as Lenin was fond of saying) don't flow from any new world reality. They flow strictly from the empirically perceived tactical necessities of the moment. That's why the party leadership was unable to defend their ideas in an open debate in the party itself, and had to rely on slanders and expulsions against the opposition.

Now, it seems, Barnes wants to orient to the ANC in South Africa. Once again, the old theoretical framework is an obstacle--even the recent framework erected by Barnes himself with his caricature of the "workers' and farmers' government" as a necessary first stage of the anti-capitalist revolution. The ANC, it seems, isn't interested in any stage of the anti-capitalist revolution. What to do? Out the window with the workers' and farmers' government, and open the front door to the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

NOT A NEW POSITION

Excuse me, but what's so new about the SWP's new position on South Africa?

It's new for the SWP, of course, but otherwise it really has been around a long time -- since almost the start of the century.

Jack Barnes's NI article tries to garnish this old position, hoping to make it more palatable for people who used to know better and rejected it.

He throws in some flim-flam about "estates" in order to confuse the question of whether the present South Africa state is bourgeois, and he tries to silence people who want to discuss the possibility of going beyond a "bourgeois republic."

But aside from that the Stalinists have been peddling this two-stage prescription -- don't combine any anti-capitalist tasks with democratic tasks -- ever since the 1920s.

And the Social Democratic reformists, going back to the Russian Mensheviks in 1905, can claim the real authorship of this policy which led to the defeat of so many revolutions in this century. If the SWP has forgotten this long and tragic history, it will end up along with the Social Democrats and Stalinists.

STRAWPERSON POLEMICS

I enjoyed Tom Barrett's article on South Africa in your February issue. I wanted to add my own two cents about a typical dishonest method of polemic utilized by Barnes in his New International piece against the views of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

On page 53 Barnes quotes the following sentence which appeared in International Viewpoint: "In order to achieve this [the goals of the South African revolution], it will, therefore, be necessary to sweep away apartheid and capitalist rule." Barnes then proceeds for several paragraphs to polemicize against an idea which is quite different from what he quotes and is never stated by International Viewpoint: "But [the revolution] won't sweep away capitalist relations" (emphasis added by me).

This, of course, is the same schematic "strawperson" presentation of permanent revolution that the Barnesites have been setting up for years now in order to knock it down--that sweeping away capitalist rule (i.e., establishing a proletarian dictatorship) is the same as abolishing capitalist economic relations. What's interesting about this example, however, is that Barnes doesn't

even bother to attempt his usual sleight of hand with his opponents' views in order to give his own polemic an appearance of legitimacy. Instead he simply, openly, and baldly misstates what he himself had quoted only a few lines earlier.

Either Barnes has become so disoriented by the revisionist process he has initiated that he actually cannot detect the difference between these two ideas anymore; or else he believes his audience is so politically unsophisticated or disinterested that they won't be able to or won't take the trouble to notice the discrepancy; or else he has reached a point of cynicism where he doesn't even care. In any case this sort of polemic has more in common with dishonest demagoguery than with serious theoretical debate and discussion among revolutionary Marxists. Unfortunately, such methods have become a hallmark of the present SWP leadership.

STAKES ARE LARGER NOW

In many ways Barnes's article on South Africa (NI, Fall 1985) is a logical extension of his article renouncing permanent revolution and Trotsky's "leftism" (NI, Fall 1983). But some of the circumstances are different, which may cause the latest revision to have different results or consequences.

In the earlier case Barnes was attempting to theorize his adaptation to the weak sides of Castroism after the Nicaraguan revolution, when the revolutionary forces had come to power. This was relatively safe; what Barnes tried to put over about the invalidity of permanent revolution in Central America and elsewhere could not be tested soon in action, and didn't seem all that urgent to most of Barnes's readers.

But the latest article is more risky for the Barnesites. It not only advocates opposition to combined revolution in South Africa but it predicts that the tasks of the coming revolution will be restricted or limited to setting up a bourgeois republic.

Events will, relatively soon, show what the Barnesite predictions and program are worth. Isn't that why a tone of nervous excitement can be detected throughout the Barnes article?

ON 'DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP':

LENIN, 1917; BARNES, 1985

V.I. LENIN, April 1917: "The person who now speaks only of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' is behind the times, consequently, he has in effect gone over to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of 'old Bolsheviks')." (Collected Works, Vol. 24, "Letters on Tactics," p. 45)

JACK BARNES, August 1985: "The [South African] working class is striding forward to lead the national, democratic revolution to overthrow the apartheid state and replace it with a democratic dictatorship of the South African workers and peasants." (New International, Fall 1985, "The Coming Revolution in South Africa," pp. 8-9 and repeatedly elsewhere)

Continuing the Discussion in the Fourth International: THE WORKERS' AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Questions of Class, Program, and Leadership: An Answer to Livio Maitan

by Tom Barrett and Steve Bloom

Differences of opinion in assessing events in the class struggle and the relationship of Marxist theory to these events are natural among revolutionists who think for themselves. There can be no better education for the cadres charged with leading the working class to the ultimate conquest of state power than the head-to-head clash of different ideas held by people with a common revolutionary goal.

It is in this spirit, the spirit of a debate among comrades who share a common purpose, that we wish to comment on Livio Maitan's article in the March 1, 1985, issue of Quatrieme Internationale (published in English in the Fall 1985 New International). It is titled, "Once Again on the Workers' and Peasants' Government and the Workers' State: A Self-Criticism." Maitan's article is in response to an earlier piece by Salah Jaber.

While correctly attacking the perversion of the concept of the workers' and farmers' government at the hands of Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, Maitan makes an opposite error--rejecting the concept of the workers' and farmers' government, if not entirely, then certainly in the way Fourth Internationalists have used it for the past forty years. It is clear from the character and timing of Maitan's "self-criticism" that the theoretical perspectives he is defending are consistent with a change in the thinking of a broader current in the Fourth International. This change, in turn, was responsible for the terminological approach taken to the Nicaraguan revolution in the resolution adopted at the 1985 world congress.

For our part, we are not primarily interested in questions of terminology. To be sure, we have a terminological difference with Maitan and Jaber over whether the label "workers' and farmers' government" is applicable to revolutions which have taken place since the Second World War. But what makes it worth taking time over the terminology is a more substantive problem which underlies it--Maitan's failure to present a cor-

rect class analysis of social overturns such as those in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, etc. In this regard, the discussion of Nicaragua probably sheds the least light on our disagreement with Maitan, since we have no fundamental political differences with the FI majority over what the rule of the FSLN has meant from a class point of view. What terminological disagreements may remain on this are therefore quite secondary and we will leave them aside for the purposes of this article. (Nicaragua is, by contrast, most important for our common fight against Barnes and the SWP leadership.)

A GENERAL THEORETICAL PROBLEM

The whole debate over the workers' and farmers' government/dictatorship of the proletariat/workers' state revolves around a fundamental methodological problem which is not unique to revolutionary Marxism among the sciences: how to deal with the transitional stages by which one reality is becoming transformed into another. Comrade Maitan's definition is quite correct: "The state is a political-military apparatus whose aim is to maintain existing relationships of production and property relations and the rule of the social classes that profit from them" (New International, p. 176). A workers' state, then, is a "political-military apparatus whose aim is to maintain existing [proletarian] relationships of production and property relations and the rule of the [working class and poor peasantry] that profit from them."

But we immediately confront a problem. In the transition between a bourgeois state and a workers' state a "political-military apparatus" must come to power which will have as its goal not "to maintain existing" property forms "and the rule of the class which profits from them" (i.e., the bourgeoisie at the point of transition), but their overthrow. What is this state during this period? The fact is that it has features of both a bourgeois and a workers'

state. If the transition is delayed for any length of time (as in Nicaragua) the bourgeois features are not inconsiderable. Even after the transition to a socialist economy the workers' state remains a "bourgeois" state in the sense that it must "maintain the existing [i.e. bourgeois] norms" of distribution.

If anyone insists that there is an absolute, clear-cut, and definitive terminological solution for this complex theoretical difficulty of the transitional phase they are engaging in pure fantasy. We believe that the best view is that the simple conquest of governmental power does not necessarily settle the question of what "relations of production" will be maintained (or created) by the new state. Historical experience bears out the necessity for such caution.

This is why the question of consciousness and program can be correctly placed on the scales in considering the problem of the transition to a workers' state. In the case of a completely conscious proletarian leadership, the program of the revolutionary party becomes a definitive promise that the new state will carry out a proletarian policy (unless it is physically overthrown), and we have little hesitation about proclaiming that a workers' state has come into existence with the seizure of power, even though it does not yet "maintain" proletarian property. In the case of a government created by a party that lacks such a program, this promise does not exist (in fact the promise has been quite the opposite), and reservations are legitimate. We prefer to insist on definitive proof in action that the new state will opt for a socialist solution--rather than for accommodation with the bourgeoisie or imperialism--before concluding that a qualitative transformation has indeed taken place.

We agree completely with Maitan that the decisive point in the proletarian revolutionary process is the forceful breaking up of the state which defends bourgeois property relations and the creation of a state which has as its goal the establishment and defense of new property relations. But we note that there are two variables in this equation, which do not necessarily coincide. It follows, therefore, that we agree with Maitan's use of the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" as opposed to the false way it is presented by Barnes and Waters.

When Jack Barnes "discovered" that there are indeed situations in which a revolutionary government cannot proceed

immediately to establish socialist property forms he thought that this disproved permanent revolution. In fact, it only proved that Barnes never understood the theory of permanent revolution--or has forgotten what he once knew. Trotsky's theory was counterposed to the concept of a "capitalist stage" in those countries where native bourgeois rule had never been consolidated. Trotsky's position that the historic political tasks associated with bourgeois democracy could only be carried out under the dictatorship of the proletariat didn't mean that the revolutionary government immediately had to expropriate the bourgeoisie and establish socialist property forms on the spot. What Marxists have always meant by proletarian dictatorship is exactly that--state power in the hands of the working class, nothing more, nothing less.

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DIFFERENCES

The experience of the pre-World War II period convinced Trotsky and the Fourth International that Stalinism, like Social Democracy, was a counter-revolutionary current in the workers' movement. We need not recite the list of betrayals from 1926-40. After the definitive betrayal by the Comintern in Germany in 1933, it was simply a "given" for our movement that only true Bolshevism--that is, Trotskyism--was capable of leading the working class to victory.

In the period after World War II, however, parties which had been part of the Stalinist movement led revolutionary struggles, came to power, and within a matter of a few years established socialist property forms. This raised new questions. As Jaber and Maitan note, the Fourth International was often slow and imprecise in its understanding of the social transformations which came on the heels of the Second World War. We still have not come to a complete understanding of or agreement on the postwar revolutions--or we would not be having this discussion now.

In its analysis of the Yugoslavian and Chinese revolutions, the Fourth International employed the term "workers' and farmers' government," a term which Trotsky used in the 1938 transitional program in two distinct ways. One of these--the sense in which it was considered applicable to the postwar scene--described a government which comes to power after the smashing of the old bourgeois state apparatus but which nevertheless does not represent proletarian power. In Trotsky's opinion, and ours, such a government could only be

short-lived. It must yield either to bourgeois counterrevolution or the establishment of a genuine proletarian dictatorship and the growing over of the revolution in a socialist direction. (We should note here that Trotsky never considered it possible for such a workers' and farmers' government to transform itself into a proletarian dictatorship. The alternative Trotsky saw to bourgeois restoration was the development of a Bolshevik tendency which could win the revolutionary power away from the reformists. But as usual, history shows itself to be richer than theory anticipated.)

Trotsky also discussed another meaning of the term workers' and farmers' government in the transitional program: to describe the dictatorship of the proletariat before the overturn of capitalist property relations (the sense in which the term was used by the Bolsheviks in Russia after October 1917). There is an important distinction between these two meanings of workers' and farmers' government--between those governments which have the conscious and stated aim of overturning capitalist property forms and those which do not. Trotsky maintained that distinction scrupulously throughout all of his writings.

Jack Barnes, in his analysis of the workers' and farmers' government, refuses to recognize any difference between these two senses of the term, and blends them together eclectically as if they were one and the same thing. For Barnes, every transitional government is a "workers' and farmers' government" more or less the same as any other. Maitan, too, treats qualitatively different kinds of transitional regimes as if there were no distinction necessary between them. Unlike Barnes, however, he asserts that they are all simply proletarian dictatorships, or workers' states. This also blurs the essential distinction, on which Trotsky insisted, between proletarian and petty-bourgeois transitional regimes. Though not intended, a consistent application of Maitan's approach could begin to call into question the same points of programmatic perspective and party-building as the view presented by Barnes.

The kinds of regimes which the Fourth International has, up to now, characterized as workers' and farmers' governments (of the nonproletarian type) have come in two varieties: 1) governments led by parties which were committed politically to the overall programmatic approach of the Stalinist Third International; and 2) petty-bour-

geois nationalist governments, whose formal program was limited to a struggle for national independence and democracy and which didn't openly challenge the bourgeoisie, but which began to undermine bourgeois rule in practice. Let's examine some of the theoretical assumptions and practical questions which underlay this application of terminology, and the problems which Comrades Maitan and Jaber raise about our past approach.

THE NATURE OF STALINISM

Maitan traces the errors he believes were made in the Fourth International's analysis of Yugoslavia and China (we will take up these specific cases shortly) to "two premises which weighed heavily." They were that "the Yugoslav [or Chinese] Communist Party was a Stalinist party like the others; and such a party was incapable of leading a victorious revolution" (p. 179). It is certainly true that these ideas were important in the FI's analysis of Yugoslav and Chinese events. But Comrade Maitan is mistaken in identifying the portion that is invalid. The Yugoslavian and Chinese CPs were obviously not "Stalinist parties like the others." Maitan concludes, therefore, that they were not Stalinist parties. We believe that a better approach is to conclude that they were simply not like other Stalinist parties.

There has been a tendency in our movement to lose sight of what Stalinism is--a living, breathing political phenomenon. As a living current within the workers' movement, Stalinism is not bound to a rigid set of rules. It is capable of adjusting to specific conditions in the class struggle.

Though Stalinism does seek "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and with the native bourgeoisie, this is not its defining characteristic. The perspective of peaceful coexistence is derivative from Stalinism's main goal--the preservation of the bureaucracy and its privileges. Its course will not be consistent. To the extent that it defends its bureaucratic privileges it endangers the workers' state on which it is based; to the extent that it defends the workers' state it must work against itself as a bureaucracy. The result, as history has shown, has been a zig-zagging course--wild swings from rank class collaboration to mad ultraleftism and back again.

In what does the difference between the Yugoslav or Chinese kind of Stalinist party and the more traditional va-

riety which is "incapable of leading a victorious revolution" lie? Precisely that these parties chose to defend not the interests of the bureaucracy in power in the USSR but the interests of their own bureaucracies, at first in power only within the party, but as a result of successful revolution becoming a bureaucratic power in their own workers' states. To defend the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Yugoslav or Chinese CP would have had to commit suicide. This they chose not to do.

To be sure, many CPs have chosen the suicidal course (Germany, Spain, Greece, China in 1927, Vietnam in 1946, Indonesia, etc., etc.), but why must we insist that this choice is a necessary characteristic of Stalinism? Certainly the ideological limitations of a Stalinist outlook create a strong predilection in this direction. Most Stalinist parties are simply unable to see that the class-collaborationist perspectives they are pursuing will lead to their own destruction. But a more perspicacious bureaucratic leadership is certainly capable of such perception.

One of the most interesting features of the postwar developments, in fact, is that in two cases where Stalinist parties led successful revolutions--Vietnam and China--the costs of class collaborationism had been previously bludgeoned into their heads (1927 and 1946) as a result of bloody confrontations with the bourgeoisie when they had unilaterally accepted it as an ally in the "anti-imperialist" "democratic" struggle. The leaderships of the CPs reacted to these lessons in an empirical, bureaucratic--that is, typically Stalinist--fashion, but sufficiently nonetheless to alter their behavior when similar choices confronted them at a future time.

But if these three parties--the Chinese, Yugoslav, and Vietnamese--differed so dramatically from other Stalinist parties what is the advantage of maintaining our characterization of them as "Stalinist" at all? Because it defines them correctly as parties whose primary objective is the defense of the interests of a bureaucracy in power in a workers' state. It is common within the Fourth International to speak of these CPs as parties "which come from a Stalinist tradition" or "have a Stalinist background," or some similar formulation. But there is more than their background, training, and tradition that link them to Stalinism. The fact that each of these parties, once having

achieved power, constructed workers' states which were deformed from birth and have followed a typically Stalinist international policy must play a role in our analysis.

A broader definition of Stalinism should not be so difficult to accept. After all, we do not define Social Democracy, or even revolutionary Marxism, in such a restrictive way as to require that they act exactly the same way when confronted with a given historical condition. Social Democracy is the political expression of the interests of the trade union bureaucracy. Within that context many, and even conflicting, reactions to concrete events are possible. The trade union bureaucracy is in general inimical to the need for union solidarity and militant class organization. Yet at times wings of the bureaucracy are capable of participating in, and even leading, extremely militant struggles.

If we can understand and accept this without challenging our fundamental characterization of the trade union bureaucracy or of Social Democracy, why should similar contradictory behavior by specific wings of the Stalinist movement throw us into a theoretical crisis? We must distinguish between what are fundamental, defining characteristics of Stalinism, and what aspects of its behavior are derivative. Stalinism's counter-revolutionary role in any particular situation is derivative from, and therefore subordinate to, its overall defense of bureaucratic privilege.

SPAIN AND YUGOSLAVIA: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS - AND SIMILARITIES

Stalinist forces picked up the gun to fight Franco in Spain; at the same time, they strangled the social revolution which could have insured victory. The result was, in spite of the courage displayed by the rank-and-file troops under Stalinist leadership, the victory of fascism. However, we should ask ourselves this question: Did Stalinist policy alone make possible the victory of fascism or did the policies of Franco and his German and Italian allies have something to do with it? We should keep this question in mind when we look at the historical record of Yugoslavia and China.

No one in our movement has ever questioned the fact that the Spanish CP was Stalinist. It took its orders from Moscow; it followed the line of the bureaucratized Communist International; it used brutally undemocratic methods to impose its leadership on the antifascist

movement, etc. Yet, can one say that on these counts the Yugoslavian CP was any different? The Yugoslavian CP's policy with respect to bourgeois property relations during the course of the anti-fascist struggle was identical to that of the Spanish. Its policy with respect to workers' democracy was identical as well. There was only one point in which it could be said that the Yugoslavian CP did not follow orders from Moscow: it did not follow Stalin's directive to form a coalition with the monarchist chetnik forces to fight the Nazis and Italians. The reason: the chetniks had formed a coalition with the Nazis and Italians to fight the CP-led Partisans. It would have been nothing more nor less than suicide for Tito to lead his forces into the arms of the chetniks. His refusal to do so had nothing to do with any considerations of revolutionary political program, but with physical survival and with fighting against the Axis forces which were, after all, the enemies of the Soviet Union.

Milovan Djilas, who was a leader of the Yugoslavian CP until 1954, writes, "The Yugoslav Communist Party was not only as ideologically unified as the Soviet, but faithfulness to Soviet leadership was one of the essential elements of its development and its activity. Stalin was not only the undisputed leader of genius, he was the incarnation of the very idea and dream of the new society" (Conversations with Stalin, p. 11). That did not prevent Tito from making decisions based on "Our first duty is to look after our own army and our own people" (*Ibid.*, p. 10).

How was it, then, that the YCP carried out a socialist revolution in Yugoslavia and established a workers' state? Let us rephrase the question posed above about Spain: Did Yugoslav Communist Party policy alone make possible the victory of the Yugoslav revolution or did the policies of the Yugoslavian bourgeoisie and the "democratic" imperialists have something to do with it? In fact, the "democratic" imperialist powers--the United States, and Britain in particular--played a very different role in relation to Yugoslavia than to Spain, providing much material aid to the former and blocking aid and arms for the Spanish Republic.

Franco, on the other hand, had total support from Germany and Italy, including Italian ground troops. The overwhelming majority of the Spanish bourgeoisie, military officers, and clergy came over to his side. Because of the failure of the Spanish Republic to respond to the legitimate national

aspirations of the Moroccan people, Franco was able to recruit his foot soldiers there. Considering the fascists' material advantages added to the refusal of the Spanish Republic and its Stalinist supporters to carry on an all-out economic and political offensive against the bourgeoisie, it is quite a tribute to the Spanish workers that they held out as long as they did.

In the case of Yugoslavia--which, let us not forget, was not under the thumb of native-born fascists, but occupied by German and Italian troops--the British provided aid to the Partisans and actually persuaded Stalin to do the same. The Partisans' enemies were not only fighting them, but the British in North Africa, the Americans in Italy (and later in France), and the Soviets in Russia. By the end of 1943 the Italian enemy was out of the picture. Germany was defeated in May 1945. The only forces in Yugoslavia which had opposed German occupation were the Partisans. Moreover, no other Allied force had participated in the fighting in Yugoslavia. (The same was true in Albania.) Consequently, it was the Partisan forces who formed the new government.

As it was, the policy of the Partisan government was not to attack the property rights of the bourgeoisie. The Partisan-led Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia, meeting in Bihac in November 1942, said the following in its final resolution: "The Yugoslav National Liberation Movement is composed of all true patriots irrespective of political or religious convictions or of national origin." Its stated aims included:

"1. The liberation of the country from the invaders and the achievement of independence and true democratic rights for all the peoples of Yugoslavia.

"2. The inviolability of private property and the providing of every possibility for individual initiative in industry, trade and agriculture.

**Permanent Revolution,
Combined Revolution,
and Black Liberation
in the U.S.**

by Larry Stewart

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WRITE: F.I.T., P.O. Box 1947
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"3. No radical changes whatsoever in the social life and activities of the people except for the replacement of reactionary village authorities and gendarmes who may have gone over to the service of the invaders by popularly elected representatives, truly democratic and popular in character. All the most important questions of social life and State organization will be settled by the people themselves through representatives who will be properly elected by the people after the war" (Vladimir Dedijer, Dnevnik, Vol. I, p. 366, quoted in Fitzroy MacLean, Tito: The Man Who Defied Hitler and Stalin, pp. 157-158).

Though the bourgeoisie was not involved in the new government, the Partisans attempted to get them involved, even going so far as to invite the former king back to his throne. Only when it became clear that without the capitulation of the Partisan government the Yugoslavian economy would never be reestablished with private investment were steps taken to put industry and commerce under state control. The question is what can we call the government which took power in 1945 (in some territories, as early as 1943), which had the very clear intention to protect bourgeois property rights? Can such a government be called a workers' state? On the other hand, it had smashed the fascist-supporting bourgeois state and was totally independent of the bourgeoisie as a class. Can such a government be called a bourgeois state?

In fact, the workers' and farmers' government did exist for a short period in Yugoslavia, only long enough for it to become clear that the bourgeoisie would not invest in Yugoslavia under the rule of the Partisans, and that the survival of the workers and peasants (and in particular the survival of the Yugoslav CP) depended on state control of industry and commerce. The fact that this could be done in spite of the Stalinist program of the leadership is evidence of the "ripeness" of revolutionary conditions, as Trotsky expressed it, in this epoch.

CHINA: THE POSTWAR BATTLEGROUND

As we all know, U.S. imperialism considered China to be the prize to be won in World War II; at the end of the war, Truman threw his support behind Chiang Kai-shek's counterrevolutionary forces. The program of the Chinese CP had not changed since the 1927 defeat. It remained "the bloc of four classes." The Red Army was not fighting for prole-

tarian rule, but for "New Democracy"--an "intermediate stage" between imperialist domination and working class dictatorship. Those American agents who were on the scene, most notably General Stilwell, were aware of the CCP's political program and opposed Truman's policies. They argued that the forces under Mao's leadership were larger and had far more authority than those led by Chiang, and that if Washington were to cooperate with the CCP it would prove to be no threat to U.S. interests.

Imperialism had no time for "peaceful coexistence" in the post-World War II period. Churchill and Truman openly proclaimed their intention to "roll back Communism" and in fact restore capitalism in the USSR itself. In China the "Cold War" was hot. Chiang Kai-shek attempted to repeat his military victory of 1927; this time, however, the guerrilla forces assembled in the war against Japan proved to be too strong for him. Furthermore, because the alliance between the "democratic" imperialists and the USSR had turned into open hostility, the CCP did not have to break with Moscow to defend itself against Chiang's attack. In 1949 the CCP established its "New Democratic" government--a government which, again, formally proclaimed its intention to protect bourgeois property rights, even though the bourgeoisie was in headlong flight to Taiwan.

By the fall of 1950 regular U.S. ground troops were poised at the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. China defended itself--it entered the Korean war, this time not fighting an imperialist puppet like Chiang, but the United States directly. It became immediately clear that the economic demands of wartime could not be met while important sectors of the economy remained in the hands of the bourgeoisie. They were not interested in any "bloc of four classes"; for them it was all or nothing. The defense of China required the decisive expropriation of private industry. The workers' and farmers' government gave way to a workers' state, in spite of the original intentions of the Stalinist CCP.

CLASS NATURE OF STALINISM

As we have seen, Stalinism programatically stands against proletarian revolution, even when it has been placed by objective events in a position where it must choose between carrying it out or permitting its own liquidation. When it does proceed on a "revolutionary" course, it does so in a counterrevolutionary manner, suppressing workers'

rights and establishing a bureaucratically deformed workers' state.

Stalinism represents the interests of a parasitic caste which has affixed itself to the workers' state--in Trotsky's time, only to the Soviet Union, but today to many others as well. This caste has as much in common with the working class as any parasite has with its host organism. It cannot kill the host without also killing itself, and that's about it. We characterize the Stalinist bureaucracy as petty-bourgeois for this reason. It is not part of, and its interests are inimical to those of, the class of producers. We characterize the trade union bureaucracy in the same way, and for the same reasons.

In the two successful Stalinist-led revolutions we have examined--the Yugoslavian and the Chinese--the revolutionary forces could not be said to be predominantly proletarian in composition. Both Yugoslavia and China were underdeveloped, predominantly peasant, countries (China far more so than Yugoslavia). In China, the urban population played no role whatsoever after 1927, and in fact was considered a nuisance by the CCP leadership.

Consequently, the Fourth International was correct not to conclude that the working class had come to power in either China or Yugoslavia. It was correct to conclude that the new state power which had overthrown the bourgeois state was a workers' and farmers' government, and that the question of whose property rights it would defend remained to be settled one way or the other. In Yugoslavia and China the workers' and farmers' government settled the question in favor of the proletariat.

It is argued that the Stalinist leaders of both Yugoslavia and China had the conscious intention, from the beginning, of making socialist revolution in their countries, that their ultimate goal was always the expropriation of the bourgeoisie--but only when "conditions were ripe." On one level, there is a grain of truth in this--Tito, Mao, Zhou Enlai, Ho Chi Minh and other Stalinist leaders of their generation joined the revolutionary Communist International after its foundation in 1919. They began their political careers as revolutionary Marxists. When the Soviet bureaucracy took control of the Communist International and destroyed it as a revolutionary organization, these leaders sided with Stalin, not so much because they fully understood what was at stake and supported the Stalinist bureaucracy, but because they accepted Soviet leadership unquestioningly.

In the case of Yugoslavia the Partisans sometimes had to ignore Soviet directives, as we have seen. However, there was no reason to assume that the leaders of the Yugoslavian and Chinese revolutions--who openly proclaimed themselves to be Stalinists--would consistently carry out policies in contradiction to those of Moscow. Many Spanish, Greek, French, and other Communist leaders had the same background and the same general, long-range commitment to socialism (at least insofar as they understood it). The Chinese leaders themselves had not changed their overall ideology since 1927, when it led to a bloody defeat. The Fourth International could not accept on faith that the new revolutionary governments would proceed as they did and not be handed back to the bourgeoisie as People's Front-type formations.

CUBA, ALGERIA, AND THE ANTICOLONIAL REVOLUTIONS

The thirty years which followed the Second World War may be called the era of the colonial revolution. The Stalinist-led revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and, actually, Yugoslavia and Albania, were part of this phenomenon; however, many more anticolonial movements were led by bourgeois-nationalist forces. In most cases the outcome was governments based on the native bourgeoisie, which maintained previously existing economic relationships with the imperialist metropolises. Many of these neocolonial regimes came to power at the head of mass struggles, in some cases armed struggles. The bourgeois nationalist program--summed up by Sukarno's slogan, "A Third Way for the Third World"--can be judged by its results: in India, Indonesia, Egypt, Kenya, Ghana, and so forth.

When the Cuban and Algerian revolutions came to victorious conclusions the Fourth International had been learning lessons from the anticolonial movement for over a decade. We had had a chance to observe and assess the achievements of anticolonial struggles led by bourgeois forces. This confirmed the conviction that true national liberation, not limited to formal political independence, can only be achieved by permanent revolution, that is, by establishing a proletarian dictatorship. It goes without saying that regardless of the character of the leadership, we supported, and continue to support unconditionally, all struggles for colonial independence. In both program and composition, the July 26 Movement did not seem quali-

tatively different from the bourgeois-nationalist leaderships in many other colonial revolutions. Its leadership was composed of radical intellectuals who in general did not identify with any tendency in the workers' movement. The revolutionary fighters were predominantly peasant in composition. The working class in Cuba, as in most dominated countries, was a minority of the population.

CUBA

In program, the July 26th Movement was not socialist. Castro and his associates did not fully understand that the oppression the Cuban people suffered at the hands of the Yanquis was based on economic laws which drive U.S. corporations to dominate the underdeveloped world, not simply on unenlightened policies. When the Cuban revolution initially came to power its leaders sincerely tried to establish friendly relations with Washington. They found out the hard way that friendly relations with Washington carry a high price tag, and it is to their eternal credit that they refused to pay it.

In light of the previous experience of anticolonial struggles there could have been no basis to characterize the new Cuban regime as a workers' state at the time it first came to power. But having smashed the old state apparatus, it had the potential to accomplish more than it first set out to. We recognized it as a formation independent of the bourgeoisie, but not proletarian either --a workers' and farmers' government, and we understood that it could not remain one for an extended period.

When the imperialists and their native collaborators attempted to sabotage the Cuban economy in order to restore a proimperialist dictatorship the Castro team responded swiftly and decisively. The workers' and farmers' government transformed itself into a workers' state. The Cuban leaders are the first to acknowledge that they learned socialism "on the job," and learned a lot from their own mistakes; we certainly can't criticize them for that. However, we should recognize that under the circumstances a workers' state can hardly be said to have come to power immediately upon the overthrow of Batista. We supported the Castro-led government and defended it, but it was not yet conscious of its proletarian tasks.

THE ALGERIAN 'COUNTER-EXAMPLE'

Whereas Comrade Maitan deals with Algeria almost as an afterthought, Jaber

has written about it extensively. In an article which is noteworthy for its incisive analysis, however, the rather schematic discussion of the Algerian events is disappointing. Jaber compares the National Liberation Army (ALN), which was led by Houari Boumedienne, with the revolutionary armed forces in countries discussed previously. While Jaber's points are significant he misses the main one--what was the relationship of the ALN to the Algerian bourgeoisie and what was the relationship of the Algerian bourgeoisie to the anticolonial struggle?

All questions of the command structure, the location of the garrisons, even of the actual class composition of the ranks are subordinate to the question of whose class interests does this military force serve? The simple fact is that from 1962 to 1965 that question remained unanswered.

Algeria had been more than a French colony--it had been in many ways economically and politically integrated into metropolitan France. Its relationship to France was quite similar to Puerto Rico's to the United States today. A native bourgeoisie separate and distinct from the French did not exist in the same way that it did in other colonies. That is not to say that there were no bourgeois Algerians, but only that those bourgeois Algerians were making profits in a French economy. Whereas in many colonial revolutions the struggle for national independence does not ipso facto pose the question of which class shall rule, in Algeria it did. It was for that reason that de Gaulle made the decision to make peace with the revolutionary forces in 1962, and the French ruling class did not respond to the Algerian revolution in the same way that the U.S. ruling class responded to the Cuban.

Paris made a decision to organize the transition in Algeria from an economy integrated into the metropolitan French economy to a national market in which France would continue to play a predominant role, in short, a neocolonial economy. It was never a foregone conclusion which way the Algerian leaders would respond. There was no inexorable material reality which prevented them from acting in the way that Castro had in Cuba, but there was equally no unavoidable dynamic which forced them to act as they did in reality. And even though the Ben Bella leadership proved unable to take the necessary action, it was not excluded that some other forces within the revolution might have stepped forward to lead the way. Would such an

event have required a new insurrection and the smashing of the state apparatus? This sort of situation, fraught with various possibilities, is the essence of the petty-bourgeois type of workers' and farmers' government. That is why it is so unstable and inevitably so short-lived.

JOSEPH HANSEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

When Joseph Hansen died in 1979, the public opinion of our International credited him with having made many crucial contributions to the solution of the new political and theoretical problems posed for us since World War II. But today there are many in the Fourth International who believe that the root of the U.S. SWP's degeneration lies in theoretical errors committed by Hansen in his elaboration of the workers' and farmers' government theory. This is false. The SWP is not degenerating because it has a wrong theory on the workers' and farmers' government. Instead, since Hansen's death, its leadership has grabbed onto some of the imprecisions and incompleteness of his initial work on the workers' and farmers' government and twisted them to fit its theoretical retreat. We need an analysis to explain the overall process which has been undertaken by the Barnes current, but this cannot hinge around an ideological detail.

Hansen is not responsible for Barnes's posthumous abuse of his work any more than Lenin can be held responsible for Stalin's abuse of the imprecisions and incompleteness in the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" formula. In each case, the epigones must bear full responsibility for their own development.

We believe it is useful to enumerate and clarify two points on which there is some confusion about Hansen's approach. This confusion exists because his application of the workers' and farmers' government concept to the post-war revolutions was very much a work-in-progress, and by no means a finished and completely rounded theory. These two points have been major stumbling blocks in this discussion so far: 1) his occasional blurring of distinctions between the two qualitatively different kinds of workers' and farmers' governments we have been discussing--the petty-bourgeois variety (China, Yugoslavia, Cuba) which is "a short stage in the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat" (or else a short phase before the reconsolidation of bourgeois rule), and the Bolshevik type (Russia in 1917)

ADDITIONAL READING ON THE WORKERS' AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT

Education for Socialists bulletins, available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014:

"The Workers' and Farmers' Government," by Joseph Hansen

"Workers' and Farmers' Governments Since the Second World War," by Robert Chester

"For a Workers' and Farmers' Government in the United States," by Jack Barnes

A Document from the Struggle in the SWP and the FI, available from F.I.T., P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009:

"Theses on the Workers' and Farmers' Government," by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus, and "The Workers' and Farmers' Government and the Socialist Revolution," by Steve Bloom.

Published in New International, 14 Charles Lane, New York, NY 10014:

"The Workers' and Farmers' Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship," by Mary-Alice Waters (Spring-Summer 1984)

"Once Again on the Workers' and Peasants' Government and the Workers' State: A Self-Criticism," by Livio Maitan (Fall 1985)

in which the term "workers' and farmers' government" is simply a synonym for and popularization of the already established proletarian dictatorship; and 2) his choice of the term "workers' state" to denote the period of the revolution after the decisive expropriation of the economy in every proletarian revolution.

That Hansen certainly made a distinction between the two kinds of workers' and farmers' governments cannot be disputed by anyone who objectively approaches his work. The statement (often quoted by the U.S. SWP leadership) that the workers' and farmers' government "is the first kind of government we can expect to see after every successful proletarian revolution" does leave open the specific class character of that government--a point which Barnes uses to his advantage. But it would hardly be faithful to Hansen to assert that he is referring to the petty-bourgeois form as a universal stage.

The problem of the "workers' state" is more complex. We agree with Hansen that for the cases he was attempting to analyze (i.e., China, Yugoslavia, Cuba) the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat was consummated with the transformation of the bourgeois economy into a nationalized economy. It was this act--and this act alone--that demonstrated a decisive commitment by the governments concerned to a socialist solution of their contradiction. In these cases, the nationalization of the economy, not the change in governmental power, marked the qualitative change to a proletarian state ("a political-military apparatus whose aim is to maintain [socialist] relations of production and property relations and the rule of the [working class].")

It would be wrong, however, to overgeneralize this. Hansen never for-

mally codified an approach which equated these two factors (nationalizations and workers' states) for all times and places. The proper course is for us to take each concrete experience of revolutionary transformation and analyze it in its own right, on the basis of its own dynamics.

Whatever terms we choose, however, the distinction between the first phase of the revolution, before the expropriation of the economy, and the period following this turning point remains important--both practically and theoretically--even in cases where a clear proletarian power is installed with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. We need to find a way to express this problem terminologically, and note the possible relevance of a distinction which Trotsky made at times between the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "socialist dictatorship of the proletariat."

CLASS AND PROGRAM:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PARTY

As Marxists we understand that the driving force of history is the class struggle, that the interaction of class forces is the framework in which all historical events take place. However, Marxists are not vulgar historical determinists: classes are made up of living people, who think, act, and make decisions. Marx himself summed it up as follows: "Men make history, but not always as they would choose." Within the class struggle there is room for maneuver, and the action of one class does not with any certainty dictate a particular response from another class.

The danger in this discussion is that we fall into the trap of putting "labels" on revolutionary struggles and using "checklists" to determine what labels to use. Equally useless is a debate over the validity of the "Russian model" as opposed to the "Cuban model" or "Chinese model" or any other kind of "model." Every revolution takes place in its own historical context, with the unique social and economic conditions of its own country, within the broader context of world history and the world economy.

What is at issue in this debate is the importance of building the revolutionary party on the foundation of a Marxist analysis of society. What is at issue is the centrality of the proletariat, both its historic class interests and its actual role in the revolutionary struggle. The debate around these two issues has been going on since



Marx's time, and it will continue until socialist revolution has been successfully concluded in the advanced capitalist countries. So let us not think that any of us has said the last word on the subject!

During Trotsky's lifetime revolutionary Marxists contended that a revolutionary party was indispensable for socialist revolution, for the establishment of a workers' state. History has shown conclusively that that is not always true. Conditions are so ripe for socialist revolution that workers' states have been established without revolutionary parties in the leadership. Does that mean that we have been wrong for most of this century about the need to build the vanguard party?

Let us ask what it is we want to accomplish. Do our goals stop with the establishment of a workers' state within the borders of a single country--even of several countries? No workers' state anywhere, including the Soviet workers' state, is totally secure until capitalism is overthrown on a global scale. Our goal is the liberation of the working people of the entire world and the building of a new world economy based on need rather than profit. It is no accident that none of the postwar revolutions has led to the creation of an international proletarian revolutionary movement. That single fact speaks volumes about the limitations of the process which we are discussing.

In addition, even within the borders of a single country, revolution does not stop with the establishment of a workers' state. People must be fed, clothed, and housed; democratic rights and the quality of life must be advanced. The rights of national minori-

Theses on the Workers' and Farmers' Government

by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus

and

The Workers' and Farmers' Government and the Socialist Revolution

by Steve Bloom

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

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ties and of women must be developed. The revolution has to be defended from domestic counterrevolutionaries and foreign imperialism. The struggle for power and establishment of a workers' state are not the end of the revolutionary process. In many ways they are just the beginning.

It is completely in order to re-examine critically the Fourth International's thinking on the workers' and farmers' government in the light of new experiences. However, after looking at recent events and reviewing the history of the post-World War II revolutions it is our opinion that, while our theory can be enriched and made more precise, the concept of the workers' and farmers' government has served us well, and should be maintained. □

FROM THE ARSENAL OF MARXISM
CUBA CONFIRMS THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION (1961)

by Joseph Hansen

"Permanent Revolution"

The tendency for a bourgeois revolution to transcend its bourgeois-democratic limits, that is, proceed toward socialistic forms of property, was noted by Marx and Engels in the upsurge they participated in as young men. In fact they began their revolutionary careers as bourgeois democrats and ended as the founders of scientific socialism. It was not until the appearance of Leon Trotsky, however, that this tendency received rounded theoretical development. As early as 1904, the youth who was to become co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution had reached that deep insight into the main course of the revolutions of our time which was to win him world recognition as one of the greatest of revolutionary theoreticians. He named his theoretical contribution the "Permanent Revolution," taking the title from the following suggestive declarations made by Marx and Engels in an Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League, dated March 1850:

This excerpt from the April 24, 1961, Militant was part of a pamphlet written just before the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba. The pamphlet, In Defense of the Cuban Revolution, was Hansen's answer to anti-Cuban propaganda by the State Department and Theodore Draper, and was reprinted in his book, Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution (Pathfinder Press, 1978). Hansen died a year later, still defending the theory of permanent revolution which the SWP leadership was to renounce openly in 1982.

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above [reform] demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one." The battle cry of the workers must be, said the Address in conclusion: "The Revolution in Permanence."

The basis of Trotsky's theory was the uneven development of capitalism on a world scale. In the old capitalist centers technology is so advanced that society is rotten ripe for socialist reorganization. In the underdeveloped areas of the world, however, pre-capitalist relations are still strong, and the main revolutionary tasks are thus bourgeois in character. But the pattern of change does not simply repeat the pattern of the early bourgeois revolutions in which the working class was scarcely developed. The underdeveloped countries do not live in isolation from the rest of the world. In fact imperialist capitalism has penetrated them, bringing the most advanced technology. ("Brazil seems to have jumped from the ox cart to the age of the air," notes Charles Wagley, professor of anthropology at Columbia University; ". . . young Brazilians who have never driven an automobile have 'soloed' in the

air.") And along with this, imperialism injects the most advanced class relations into the antiquated social structure. (Highly exploited sugar workers, for instance, in Cuba.) The working class, even though it may be numerically thin, consequently has far greater political weight than its prototypes at the dawn of capitalism. When it enters the political arena, it tends to draw on the most advanced political thought of the world's great metropolitan centers. Together with backwardness, even primitiveness, is combined the very latest in scientific thought and achievement.

It is possible, therefore, for the working class, in alliance with the peasantry — which is pressing for bourgeois reforms in property relations on the land — to win political power in a backward country even sooner than in an advanced country. In power it has no choice but to proceed with the economic and social tasks inherent to its class position: expropriation of capital, building of a planned economy, etc. These are socialist in principle no matter how limited or distorted they may be in fact. The victory of the workers in such countries cannot be maintained, however, without the aid of the workers of the advanced centers; that is, without the extension or continuation of the revolution on an international scale, above all into the old capitalist powers.*

Through this theory, Trotsky was able to predict correctly the course of the 1917 Revolution in Russia, some twelve years before it occurred.

Interestingly enough, Lenin did not agree with Trotsky's prognosis. In 1905 Lenin wrote: "We cannot jump out of the bourgeois-democratic framework of the Russian Revolution, but we can consid-

* For an explanation by Trotsky himself of the theory, see The Permanent Revolution, The History of the Russian Revolution, or "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution" in Stalin—An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence.

erably broaden that framework." He repeated this in innumerable articles and speeches year after year until after the February 1917 Revolution. Not until April of that year did he change his views. When he finally did change, it precipitated a crisis in the Bolshevik party, which was convinced that the revolution had only a bourgeois-democratic character as Lenin had repeatedly insisted. But Lenin's prestige was such that he succeeded in getting the party to adopt the new position despite the cries of capitulation to "Trotskyism."

It was on the solid basis of this shift, plus his own recognition of Lenin's correctness on the need for a democratic-centralist party, that Trotsky, together with his following, joined the Bolsheviks and helped the second revolution to emerge from the first one.

Only Rational Theory

Of course it can be argued, as it was at the time and has been perennially ever since, that the Bolsheviks did wrong in accepting power in an underdeveloped country like Russia. A book could be devoted to this topic alone. Aside from the "morality" of it all, the point is that Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution enabled him to foresee with accuracy the actual main pattern of the Russian Revolution and that this theory offers the only rational ex-

planation for such revolutions as the one in Cuba.

No utterly novel "new type of system" has emerged, as Draper maintains. Cuba has simply gone beyond capitalism in some important respects and begun to build institutions that are basically socialist in principle. The country is in *transition* between capitalism and socialism. How long it remains in transition depends on international forces and events, primarily the ultimate fate of the old capitalist powers. When the United States goes socialist, Cuba will be among the first to benefit and will certainly complete the change-over in record time.

The question of the absence of direct proletarian leadership in the 1958-59 Cuban Revolution offers a complication it is true,* but on the main question—the tendency of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in an underdeveloped country to go beyond its bourgeois-democratic limits — Cuba offers once again the most striking confirmation of Trotsky's famous theory. That the Cuban revolutionaries were unaware they were confirming something seemingly so abstract and remote makes it all the more impressive.

The fact that these same rev-

* On this see my articles, "Theory of the Cuban Revolution" in the *International Socialist Review*, Winter 1961, and "Ideology of the Cuban Revolution" in the Summer 1960 issue.

olutionaries, without knowing Trotsky's theory, proved capable of transcending their own limited previous political positions speaks completely in their favor. It demonstrates that in caliber they belong to the great tradition of genuine revolutionary leaders, beginning with the leaders of our own American revolution.

Cuba is at present a fortress under siege by American imperialism. To offer to judge what goes on inside that fortress, without taking into account the siege, represents the utter prostration and abasement of theory. That Draper's preconceptions required him to do this is sufficient to discount his views completely.

The Cuban revolution is another link in the chain of revolutions going back to the Paris Commune of 1871 and the revolutionary upheavals of 1848. As such it has much in common with these revolutions although like all revolutions it has its own peculiarities. It offers great new lessons, above all on the pattern to be expected in other coming revolutions in Latin America. All of these revolutions, it can be predicted with absolute surety, will proceed from the bourgeois-democratic to the proletarian stage with extraordinary speed. If for no other reason, they will do this because American imperialism offers them no choice but death or permanent revolution.

The Cuban Revolution, The Castroist Current, and the Fourth International

Resolution of the International Executive Committee,
adopted May 1981

Why We Oppose the SWP's New Line on Castroism

by Steve Bloom

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THE FIGHT AGAINST U.S. INTERVENTION AFTER THE AFL-CIO CONVENTION

by Haskell Berman

The debate on U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the Caribbean at the AFL-CIO convention in November 1985 was significant on a number of counts: 1) It projected for the labor movement the possibility of a more distinct and separate policy by labor from that of the State Department. 2) It neutralized the formidable right-wing red-baiting attack that was initiated in the fall by Lane Kirkland against the tours of Central American unionists sponsored by the National Labor Committee for Human Rights in Central America and the Caribbean. 3) Most importantly, it provided a basis for union militants to press for an extension of the debate and discussion throughout the union movement and to involve the union membership. Such involvement can educate the ranks about the necessity for an independent labor foreign policy.

This does not mean that the resolution which was finally passed had a character and perspective that is very different from that of the Reagan administration. While it supported trade union rights in South Africa and opposed apartheid, it justified the invasion of Grenada, strongly condemned the Sandinista regime as totalitarian, and complimented AIFLD-type programs promoting U.S. financial intervention in the Caribbean and Central American unions.

The "liberal wing" of the leadership supported this "global" resolution as a compromise because it did not include support for military aid to the contras in Nicaragua and because it called for a political rather than a military solution in Central America. The resolution, however, permits the conservative reactionary wing of the labor leadership to fall into step with the Reagan "peace" policy.

The U.S. covertly arms and supports the contras in Nicaragua and is preparing through Congress to do this openly. In El Salvador they openly support the military. At the same time they call for a peaceful "political" solution -- by which they mean a capitulation of the revolutionary forces. In Nicaragua the Sandinistas are asked to hold new elec-

tions, and recognize the contras and their counterrevolutionary allies as a political entity to be taken into the government. In El Salvador the rebels are asked to give up their arms, and accept the Duarte regime and the staged elections of 1984. This type of "peaceful" political solution is consistent with the propaganda line of U.S. policy. We must recognize that logically the next alternative phase of this policy is to condemn the revolutionary forces as nonpeaceful terrorists -- to justify a "necessary military solution": intervention.

It is to the credit of the National Labor Committee and its supporters that for the first time at an AFL-CIO convention a critical discussion of U.S. foreign policy took place. However, this compromise should not have been accepted. Only the representatives of the Hospital Workers Union voted against the resolution. Some who voted for the resolution spoke out against its provisions. Truth, justice, and the potential for garnering mass support in the ranks for a principled resolution is possible. An attempt by the right wing to pass a pro-contra resolution had been soundly defeated in the Minnesota state AFL-CIO convention shortly before the national gathering. This was probably one factor that convinced the conservative wing to project the "compromise." Another consideration, voiced by Albert Shanker, was the desire to project a positive public image of a unified movement that does not air its differences in public.

The compromise agreed to by the liberals, the Social Democrat and DSA types is a reflection of their political priorities within the union movement, their own insecurity, and their political perspectives for the working class. What is required is a principled stand, which they are unprepared to take. By accepting the compromise they sought to avoid the heat of ideological conflict, an open struggle in support of the Central American revolutions and for a complete break with the anti-communist and pro-imperialist policies of the State Department. They make the defense

of unions and unionists -- insofar as they understand these tasks -- their maximum position of struggle. They depend upon support from liberal capitalist party politicians, and fail to mobilize and educate the ranks in their own unions. They have no perspective and commitment to mass action, and no perspective to establish an independent political movement of labor.

It is understandable, then, why they accepted this compromise. They had little in their arsenal to counterbalance the scales of the apparatus even had they wanted to. It is questionable whether this "progressive" leadership can carry out the necessary struggle, the mobilization of the ranks. As noted by Steve Bloom in Bulletin in Defense of Marxism No. 25 the basis for mass opposition to Reagan's policies is there: "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 blatantly anti-worker pro-capitalist social and economic policies at home."

Mass opinion and pressure is also affected by economic and political struggles internationally. The situation in South Africa and the rising support for that liberation struggle within the labor movement will have a radicalizing effect on the consciousness of workers concerning Central America. This too can change their view with regard to the type of leadership and the instruments of struggle that are necessary at home against ruling class policy.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TODAY?

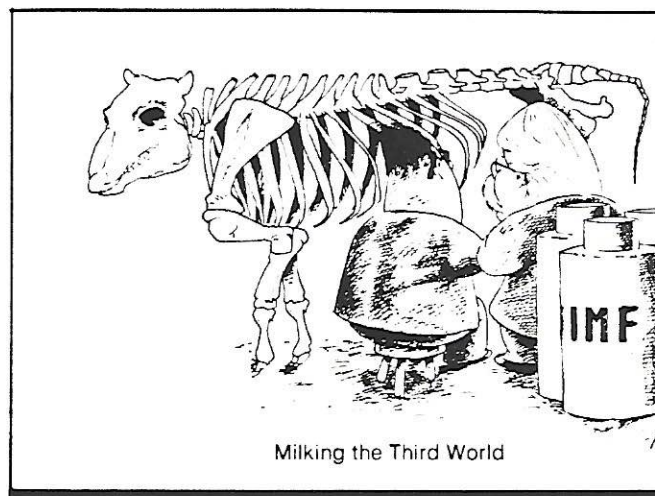
The question posed for union militants who are also anti-interventionists is what can be done today? How, in the immediate more positive atmosphere created by the debate at the AFL-CIO convention, can we bring about a change in labor's attitude regarding U.S. foreign policy? It would be wishful thinking to believe that the most conservative leaders can be made to support a full-blown program in defense of the Central American revolutions. Only ousting such a leadership would make that alternative possible and the mass of workers are not yet prepared for this. On the other hand to wash one's hands of seeking to effect some change would be a capitulation to the right-wing's reactionary program.

What is realistically possible is a campaign to organize a conscious layer

of rank-and-file workers who ideologically identify their interests with a defense of the right to self-determination in Central America and Southern Africa. Already we see some motion in this direction: the successful struggle at the Minneapolis state convention, the good work of local labor committees around the country, the many unions that have come out in support of the struggles against apartheid. Much more education outreach and organizing must yet be done.

To avoid some potential pitfalls the following suggestions should be considered. The labor committees are solidarity organizations by their nature and should be kept that way. This means that they should not become vehicles for sectarian purposes with regard to the political ambitions of any particular individual or group who seeks union office or in support of any particular political party outside the union. It is the responsibility of militants and progressive unionists to see to it that all elements of the union movement are appealed to in solidarity work and no section should be written off. Meetings should be open to all supporters and members of the labor committee. Recently in Philadelphia the attendance by local committee members was discouraged at an East Coast Conference of the Labor Committee for Human Rights in Central America. In general, the organizers of these groups see them as "leadership" committees, not rank-and-file organizations. This is not how a broadly based anti-intervention wing of the labor movement can be or should be built.

The necessity of expanding the work and effectiveness of local committees is imperative. Citywide committees should seek to do outreach to every union local in the area, and urge each local to send



representatives to their local citywide monthly meetings. These meetings should have an educational segment, as well as dealing with the routine business of the committee. They should also seek to set up new labor committees in adjacent towns or cities. Wherever possible ad hoc committees within the local unions should be encouraged for liaison with the citywide committee. To repeat, the work in the labor movement should be oriented to reach the ranks, and not exclusively toward the leadership or only known radicals and activists.

A few ideological imperatives have become important in this struggle:

1. To explain clearly how the U.S. war policy overseas is related to the austerity policy at home.
2. To explain the historical roots of the revolutionary process in Central America and the interventionist role of the U.S. in that process.
3. To contradict administration propaganda that Cuban, Russian, or Nicaraguan intervention is the source of the problems in Central America.
4. To explain in non-rhetorical terms what imperialism means for workers in Central America.
5. To explain the commonality in the struggle of workers in Central America and in the U.S.
6. To explain what each of us in the labor movement can do to change labor policy and the disastrous consequences of existing policy.
7. To promote the necessity for workers and their unions to rely on their own resources and their potential allies, which are their numbers in mass demonstrations and independent political action.

A NEW CHALLENGE FOR LABOR

A new challenge exists to extend the initiatives for an open debate and ideological struggle, to reach into the membership of the union movement. The debate at the convention presents an opportunity. The door has been opened a small crack and we can begin to use that as leverage by insisting that local and national papers carry all sides of the necessary debate. Letters to the editors of the local and international union press, resolutions before local union bodies and state conventions, labor committee leafleting of union meetings to educate the membership about the issues in the debate are all possible.

It would be foolish to restrict our view solely to the organized labor movement in our anti-intervention work. The majority of youth, women, and Blacks are workers but are not members of labor unions. Some workers in unions view their lives and their social concerns as unrelated to the unions to which they belong. The necessity for broad coalitions that include and recruit these workers is another avenue for building allies for the labor movement, and for its anti-intervention wing. Working with coalitions that build mass demonstrations, like the April Actions Coalition that sponsored April 20th in Washington and San Francisco -- which brought out 125,000 demonstrators -- and like the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean is important. They have the potential of mobilizing and recruiting thousands of members of the working class to a common perspective and to action. Only that kind of mass pressure can stay the reactionary policies of the right wing in the labor movement and the Reagan administration, and bring about a fundamental change in trade union policy. □

HOW TO COMBAT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

by Stuart Brown

Terrorism is in the news these days; and it's in the speeches of Reagan and other capitalist politicians. They wax indignant at incidents such as the attack on El Al Airlines terminals, or the hijacking of planes and ships. They find every conceivable despicable adjective to describe those who, driven to desperation, are willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of others to make a political statement. The bourgeois politicians, of course, shed copious tears for the victims of these events.

What hypocrisy--from the same government which is presently raining napalm on the population of El Salvador, which provides "humanitarian aid" to contras so they can rape and murder civilians in Nicaragua, which refuses to take action against those who bomb abortion clinics in the United States, and which stands idly by as the racist rulers of South Africa institute a genuine reign of terror against the majority of the country.

But it isn't enough just to point out the hypocrisy of the politicians and let things go at that. The problem of "what to do about international terrorism" is one that affects the consciousness of masses of ordinary working people. And the revolutionary movement can't allow the bourgeois press and politicians their pretense that they are the ones who are really concerned about this issue and who have a plan to end it. Only revolutionaries can explain the genuine causes of terrorism in the world today, and only we can offer a clear, consistent, and workable solution for ending such acts.

To begin, of course, we must point out that there are two kinds of "terrorism," and that only one upsets the ruling rich--acts carried out by oppressed peoples in their struggle for liberation. The terrorism perpetrated by the U.S. government, or by other reactionary forces, against those struggling for their liberation, or simply for basic human rights, goes under the ruling class code name of "the fight for freedom and democracy."

Most of the time, the state-sponsored terrorism of the U.S. and its allies throughout the world is not reported in the daily press or in the TV and radio news. The population of this country knows little about it, and has little opportunity, therefore, to become indignant over it. This is in marked contrast to the efforts of Palestinian guerrillas, for example. The results of their actions are broadcast over TV and graphically illustrated on the front pages of daily newspapers. Imagine the reaction if a TV crew or news photographer accompanied the Nicaraguan contras on one of their excursions.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF WORKING PEOPLE

There are occasional exceptions to this rule, of course. During the Vietnam war, tens of millions became aware of what the actions of their government really meant in Southeast Asia. The result was a massive outpouring of revulsion and opposition. A similar reaction has occurred against the apartheid regime in South Africa; and increasing layers are beginning to understand what is taking place in Central America.

When working people get a chance to find out the truth about what's happening in the world, they demonstrate that their sympathy for the innocent victims of terrorism is genuine; it includes all such victims, regardless of what political ideology was responsible for their death. This is in stark contrast to the hypocrisy of Reagan and company. That sincere reaction on the part of the average working person is the main reason why random terror carried out by a revolutionary movement is such a counterproductive tactic under most circumstances. It does not aid the revolutionary forces in mobilizing the sympathy of the masses which is required for victory.

It is for this reason also that the present ruling class crusade against "international terrorism" is a powerful force in the hands of the media and the government. Most people simply don't understand that the underlying cause of

both terrorism by the oppressed, and terrorism by the oppressor, is a basic international class conflict over whether or not the imperialist countries will maintain their "right" to expropriate the resources and labor of people all over the world for their own profits. That is the reality which we have to find ways to explain.

CLASS CONFLICT

It follows from this that the solution to international terror-- whether of the reactionary or revolutionary variety--is to resolve the class conflict which underlies it. And since the only permanent resolution for that conflict lies in the victory of the revolutionary forces, what we must emphasize is the need to respect the basic right of self-determination for all oppressed nations. By fighting for our own government to respect and defend that right, whether in Central America, South

Africa, the Philippines, or Palestine, working people in this country can make a massive contribution to the abolition of international terrorism.

We must also point out that the contrary solution, offered by Reagan and company, is no solution whatsoever. All of the ruling class's efforts at repression, i.e., all the efforts at a reactionary military resolution of the basic class conflict which causes terrorism, are destined to fail. Greater repression can result only in greater desperation on the part of those who are repressed. This, in turn, lays the basis for further acts of desperation--more terrorism.

Only the proletarian revolutionary solution to terrorism can really work. Only through the creation of a world in which the freedom of each individual, and of each nationality, is the prerequisite for the freedom of all, can we bring about a just and humane international community in which there will be no basis whatsoever for any kind of terrorism. □

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CORRECTION

On page 20 of Bulletin IDOM No. 27, in the article "A Welding of Marxism and Biology," the sentence, "Vernadsky proclaimed that the October revolution, by introducing conscious planning, constituted a biological revolution," should have read, "Vernadsky proclaimed that the October revolution, by introducing conscious planning, constituted a geological revolution."

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FOURTH INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY TO HOLD THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency will be holding the third national conference since its formation on the weekend of February 15-17, 1986, in Cleveland, Ohio. Since last September a discussion has been taking place in Local Organizing Committees and through a written national discussion bulletin. Members of the F.I.T. have, in particular, been considering the political implications of events leading up to and since the August 1985 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

At that convention, the party failed to take even a single step toward carrying out the decisions of the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International. The delegates to the congress, representing the overwhelming majority of our world movement, had demanded the readmission of all those ousted from the party during the Barnes leadership's

political purge--which began at the end of 1982. Since the August convention, despite further appeals by the leading committees of the FI, the SWP has continued on its course of defiance against these decisions.

The F.I.T. conference will take up the implications of these events for the expelled opposition in general, and for the F.I.T. in particular. It will adopt a tasks and perspectives resolution to guide its work in the light of the overall situation within the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States. In addition, the conference agenda includes a discussion on the present situation in the FI as a whole, a point on building an anti-intervention movement in this country, and the election of a new National Organizing Committee for the F.I.T. □

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ATTACKING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS THROUGH COURT SUITS

The Freedom Socialist Party in Seattle is currently engaged in an important civil liberties defense case. According to information distributed by the party, an ex-member of the FSP, Richard Snedigar, is suing for the return of \$22,500 which he contributed to an FSP fund drive in 1979. Snedigar claims that the money was solicited under false pretenses.

A leaflet put out to solicit support in the case explains that as part of the legal proceedings, Snedigar's attorneys "have tried to force the FSP to turn over membership and contributors' lists, names of ex-members and supporters, bank records and minutes of party meetings. The FSP has refused."

Those familiar with the suit of Alan Gelfand against the Socialist Workers Party (see "Defending Democratic Rights" in Bulletin IDOM No. 26) will recognize some of the same issues at stake in the Seattle suit. Gelfand and Snedigar threaten the basic ability of

left-wing political groups to function without interference from the federal courts.

If Snedigar is successful in insisting that the court order the FSP to reveal confidential records it will have a chilling effect on the functioning of all political organizations in this country who oppose the policies of the U.S. government. As with the Gelfand case, the mere fact that the court has accepted jurisdiction in the suit constitutes an undue governmental interference with the right to free political association--which is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The FSP is asking for endorsements and financial support to their defense effort. To make a contribution or to get more of the literature which the party is distributing write to: Freedom Socialist Party, 3815 5th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. □

BAY AREA DEMONSTRATION CALLED FOR APRIL 19

Dear editor,

An unsigned article in your January, 1986, issue explained that the successful November 2 Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice conference in San Francisco declined to call for a spring demonstration because "they were waiting for the national call from the April Actions coalition." You attributed this statement to "some conference organizers."

This is not accurate. It's true that the national antiwar movement is divided over whether to call a Spring action. But, the Mobilization was not "waiting." It consciously sought to utilize the November 2 conference as the springboard for an agreement on future protests.

Because of the refusal by the National April Actions coalition to call for demonstrations, some Bay Area peace groups began to have doubts about the possibilities for a Spring Mobilization. The coalition decided the best approach, therefore, would be to show that broad support for an action actually does exist.

We took the time necessary to convince vacillating sections of the movement so that a more united agreement could be reached for an April action.

Just as we had hoped, the extensive

labor, community, and religious support for the conference combined with the overall enthusiasm generated by the numerous references to the need for a Spring action, encouraged several new groups, such as CISPES and the Bay Area Peace Council, to join the Mobilization.

Immediately after the conference, a Bay Area demonstration based on the four demands of the coalition was called for April 19, 1986. Posters, buttons, T-Shirts, and leaflets are already in production.

As you can see, rather than "pinning their hopes on a national call from the April Actions" or "waiting," the Mobilization was trying to figure out the best way, under difficult circumstances, to issue an authoritative and united call for a Bay Area demonstration.

To a large extent we have succeeded. In fact, the last steering committee meeting voted to encourage other cities to consider similar actions. I hope you will join in endorsing our efforts.

Sincerely,
Carl Finamore
Staff, November 2 Conference
Coordinating Committee Member,
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