

Information, Education, Discussion

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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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NEW YORK TRIBUTE TO GEORGE BREITMAN

by Stuart Brown

More than two hundred people gathered at the International Association of Machinists' hall on East 15th Street in New York City on Saturday evening, June 7, to honor the memory of George Breitman--founding member of the Socialist Workers Party and revolutionary militant for over fifty years, who died of a heart attack on April 19 (see obituary in Bulletin IDOM No. 31). Those in attendance included many of Breitman's political associates, personal friends, and family members.

The meeting was sponsored by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, of which Breitman was a leading member until the time of his death, and was cosponsored by Socialist Action and Solidarity, two other organizations which include members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party around the same time as Breitman. The Socialist Workers Party itself was also asked to cosponsor the event and send a representative to address the gathering, but it declined to do so.

A RICH AND VARIED LIFE

The speakers included many who had worked closely with Breitman. In addition, greetings were received which shared additional insights into his life and activities. The first part of the formal program consisted of a message by Dorothea Breitman, George's wife, comrade, and companion of 46 years. She presented reminiscences of her life with George, starting from the time she first met him as a member of the Spartacus Youth League in Newark, New Jersey, in the 1930s.

Another message came from James Kutcher, the "legless veteran," who was unable to attend due to illness. He spoke of his lifelong friendship with Breitman which began in the years before World War II.

Greetings from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International were written by Ernest Mandel, who told of

his first encounter with Breitman in Europe, after the war, while George was still serving as a draftee in the U.S. army, and of their continued correspondence and collaboration in future years. Far more messages were received than could be presented to the meeting, though many were read in part and all were acknowledged by Sarah Lovell, chairperson for the event.

FORMAL SPEAKERS

Of course, many of Breitman's friends and collaborators were present in person and spoke about their work with him, and about George as a human being. Jean Tussey described how she and Breitman were students together at the "Trotsky school" in 1951. The school was set up by the SWP to provide an intensive educational experience for its cadre, and Jean explained, "We were to challenge anything, to pay special attention to method, to say what we thought freely, not for the record or posterity. Nothing was sacred. Nothing could be proven by a quote from Marx or any other authority." These were concepts, Tussey explained, that George Breitman always understood and applied to his many activities in the revolutionary movement.

Evelyn Sell described her years in the Detroit branch, after George and

NOTICE TO OUR READERS:

Due to vacation schedules this issue of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is a special, expanded July-August issue. Our next issue will be published in August and dated September 1986. All subscribers, whether one year, six months, or introductory, will receive their full complement of twelve, six, or three issues of the Bulletin.

Dorothea moved there in 1954. It was in Detroit that George originated the idea for the Friday Night Socialist Forum, which was to become a basic party institution in cities all around the country. He helped to train new branch members by setting an example of honesty, sincerity, and hard work.

A young Black student of Malcolm X, Paul Lee--who has never been a member of the SWP or of any Trotskyist organization in the U.S.--told how he had been influenced by Breitman's work on Malcolm and about the discussions and generous correspondence between them which had helped invaluablely in his own research. He, too, explained how Breitman's meticulous attention to detail and to truth had set an example for others, including himself, to live up to.

TROTSKY'S WRITINGS

In the late 1960s Breitman suggested a project to Pathfinder Press--to publish an extensive collection of writings by Leon Trotsky in English. Naomi Allen, who worked with Breitman as one of the editors of these books, related what collaborating with him was like: "He never stopped to rest on his laurels and admire the latest results, and he never gave us a chance to rest on our laurels either. He was particularly fond of phoning with some new scheme or important revision at 7 a.m. on Sundays because he was sure he would find us home at that hour. He had an enormous capacity for work and he treated his collaborators with so much respect that he assumed they had the same capacity.

"In spite of the tremendous authority he had in our eyes, he treated us as equals in every way. He could be withering in his sarcasm and reproof when he faced bureaucratic obstacles, incompetence, or indifference; but given good will and an honest effort, he treated the humblest correspondent and the youngest, most inexperienced member with genuine respect, spoke to them frankly and without ceremony. He never patronized anyone because of youth or standing in the party or station in life. I was particularly aware that he addressed women exactly as he addressed men, with none of the courtly mannerisms that so often mask contempt."

Frank Lovell told about his years working with Breitman on the National Committee and in the Detroit branch. "He influenced the lives of many people more than we know. How did he do it? He had no secret powers. On many occasions I heard him explain, in different ways, that the key to meaningful action is education and training. And those who want to help educate others must first educate themselves. This is what distinguished George. He was a believer in learning. And he tried all his life--in all his many activities and projects--to educate himself and those he worked with."

Socialist Action's representative, Paul Siegel, and Alan Wald of Solidarity brought greetings from those organizations and shared some personal reminiscences about their own experiences with Breitman over the years. Paul Le Blanc, a member of the F.I.T. and a representative of a younger generation of revolutionaries who only came to know George in the most recent years, also said a few words.

The final speaker was Steve Bloom, national administrative secretary of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, who concluded his remarks: "Only those few who are able to maintain a broad and sweeping historic vision can lead the kind of life that George Breitman did. Those of us who are the product of his efforts, who have learned from and worked with him, on whom at least a little of his dedication to truth and a better world have worn off--we will now have to redouble our efforts to build a revolutionary organization of the U.S. working class which can overthrow this rotten and oppressive system, usher in humanity's socialist future, and transform human relations. Such an organization and such a transformation will stand as the most faithful memorial we could ever construct to this great man of American Trotskyism, George Breitman."

After singing the "Internationale," many remained to look over the display of Breitman's writings which were for sale in the back of the room, and for refreshments and informal discussion.

'FORWARD IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JIM CANNON AND OF GEORGE BREITMAN'

by Ernest Mandel

With George Breitman, the Fourth International has lost the last survivor of the central cadre which founded the Socialist Workers Party and assured the continuity of revolutionary Marxism in North America for half a century, a mainstay of that continuity on a world scale too.

Those who, like George, made up their minds in the thirties to support Trotsky against Stalin, to build new revolutionary parties instead of trying to operate through the traditional organizations of the working class, did not act because this was the easiest solution to the current problems of the class struggle, nationally and internationally. On the contrary: they were very conscious of the fact that they chose the difficult road, that they were swimming against the stream. Their opponents in the labor movement supported themselves on huge apparatuses, those of mass trade unions and of a mighty state, the USSR. They had tremendous material means at their disposal, all of which could not fail to exercise a power of attraction on many people. In addition they had the political credibility of strength. They were leading masses. They were going places, or so many supposed at least.

There was only one little thing the matter with these mighty opponents. They didn't consistently act in the interests of the working class. At decisive moments of world history, they strangled the opportunity for the workers to make a leap forward towards socialism. They caused terrible defeats. They had done so in Germany in 1918-1919. They had done so in China in 1927. They had caused the terrible defeat of Hitler seizing power unopposed in 1933. They had prevented the American workers from

building a labor party independent from the bosses during the rise of the CIO in the thirties. They would strangle the Spanish and French revolutionary possibilities in 1936. And the list would be stretched on and on, at the end of World War II, later in Indonesia, in May 1968 in France, then in Chile, in Portugal, in Iran.

Those who answered Trotsky's call for the Fourth International understood that it was necessary to challenge these misleaders of the working class. One had to challenge them on the field of program and theory. One had to challenge them on the field of action. There was nothing dogmatic or sectarian in that challenge. It meant acting side by side with millions of workers throughout the world, refusing to subordinate their ongoing struggles, their instinctive endeavors, their resolution and their hopes, to brakes and restrictions which in the last analysis express the interests of social forces alien to the working class. That is what people of George's generation started to understand. That is what history has proven ever since, again and again.

To build a new revolutionary party, a new revolutionary International against the stream, against the pressure of great bureaucratic machines and against the disorienting and demoralizing effects of defeats caused by these machines, necessitated not only great lucidity and deep convictions regarding the future of the working class and of the socialist revolution. It also required great moral qualities: courage, resolution, patience, firmness of character and of will power, the capacity to resist political and individual temptations. All these qualities George Breitman mustered to a high degree, rarely encountered in a single individual.

He was what all revolutionary cadres should strive to be: an all-round revolutionary, at home in the library as well as on the picket line, a gifted writer and an excellent organizer, great

This is the text of greetings to the Breitman memorial meeting from Ernest Mandel for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

at organizing election campaigns and at helping others to develop theory, an outstanding editor and a real workers' leader. His qualities as educator and popularizer, which stemmed from a rare gift of perceiving the essential and expressing it in a clear and simple way so that many can understand it, did not prevent him from being at the same time a deep and independent thinker, one of the few in our movement who have made a genuine contribution to the development of theory, in his case in the field of Black nationalism, and more generally the nationalism of the downtrodden and the oppressed everywhere in the world.

I first met George when he was in Europe in the aftermath of World War II and assisted, as an observer, in rebuilding a functioning center for our world movement. As the youngest participant in that effort, I learned a lot from him. In fact, if I would want to single out the persons from whom I learned most during the years following the war, I would name two SWP leaders: Morris Stein and George Breitman. This collaboration established the basis for a friendship which would last nearly forty years.

It was interrupted once, after the 1953 split in our movement. George and I were in the opposite camps of that split. But right after that split we exchanged a series of letters which became public, the only correspondence which maintained a dialogue between the two sectors of the split movement. For sure we both hotly argued for our--at the time different--causes. But if one rereads these letters today, one cannot fail to feel that behind the arguments, there was a sincere, even desperate wish to prevent all bridges from being burned, to keep open an avenue for healing the split. That's why the blind factionalists in both camps disapproved

of that correspondence. That's why we both were so happy when the split was healed in 1962-63, and felt that in a modest way we had prepared that reunification through our initial dialogue.

When George and his comrades started to be harassed, pestered, and ostracized inside the SWP because they continued to defend the program of the Fourth International, the overwhelming majority of its cadre and militants had no difficulty in defending them and standing beside them in that ordeal and after their unacceptable expulsion. We owed that to our Leninist tradition of programmatic firmness and of defending workers' democracy, to start with inside our own ranks. We shall continue to do so in the future.

George Breitman understood more than anybody else the importance of history, of historical continuity and historical causes for giving workers and the labor movement the drive and self-confidence necessary to realize the gigantic tasks they are confronted with. It is a great pity he had not learned before leaving us that we have just won a great historic victory: the complete rejection by the Chinese Communist Party of all the criminal slanders launched by Stalin and his henchmen against Leon Trotsky and his followers in the thirties.

This victory is symbolic for many others which will come to us. There is no future in this world for Stalinism, reformism, Social Democracy, labor fakery, or bourgeois nationalists. The future belongs to the working class, to revolutionary socialism, to the Fourth International! Forward in the footsteps of Jim Cannon and of George Breitman towards a revolutionary vanguard party of the American working class! Forward in the footsteps of Lenin and Trotsky towards a revolutionary vanguard International of the world proletariat.

APPEAL MADE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE 'BULLETIN IDOM'

Many friends and comrades of George Breitman have inquired whether a memorial fund is being established in his honor. At the meeting it was announced that those wishing to honor Breitman through a financial contribution should do so by making a donation to help sup-

port the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, the publication to which George devoted himself during his last two years and which plans to publish much of his work in the coming months. Send checks to: BIDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, N.Y. 10009.

GEORGE BREITMAN: GREAT MAN OF AMERICAN TROTSKYISM

by Steve Bloom

Last February we held the third national conference of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in Cleveland, Ohio. George was too ill to make the trip, and when we realized that it was just short of his 70th birthday, we voted to send him a message, a birthday greeting, which said a few nice things about his lifetime of dedication to the movement, and his courage in the face of physical ailments which would have caused many a less dedicated comrade to decide it was time to retire.

George complained in a letter which Paul Le Blanc showed me that the greetings were "overly laudatory," and expressed the same thought to me verbally. I don't think most of the delegates who voted to send the greetings would have agreed. But there was nothing phony or put-on about George's reaction.

His modesty, more than anything else I think, enabled George to relate to his comrades and to the party in the manner which has been described by many of the speakers here this evening. One quality which particularly impressed me was simply his willingness to respond "I don't know" when someone asked a question on a subject about which he was ignorant. He never felt that because he was a leader he was somehow obliged to know everything.

I don't have time to dwell on this side of George. I want to spend a few minutes talking a little about my work with him during the last few years, during the struggle against the liquidationist faction which took over the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party. This was the period in which I worked most closely with him and really came to know him.

Before I do that, however, I think there's another aspect to George Breit-

man's personality which deserves to be mentioned this evening. George was capable of great anger. That, too, is a useful trait for revolutionaries when directed at the proper target. Mostly George got angry at the bourgeoisie and the oppression of workers, Blacks, women, and others. But he was capable of expressing anger at his comrades or coworkers as well, when he perceived some slackness, some weakness, some stupidity on their part. And he got supremely angry at the present misleadership of the Socialist Workers Party for what it has done to that organization, and for the way it has chosen to treat an entire generation of comrades who spent decades working to build the movement.

I remember how George expressed his outrage over the refusal of the SWP to send a speaker--or even a message--to the memorial meetings for Larry Stewart and George Weissman when those comrades died. I don't think we can let the present occasion pass without expressing our own indignation over the failure, once again, of the party leaders to join us here this evening to acknowledge George Breitman's years of contributions and dedication to the SWP.

The way the SWP leaders have treated George's death, their attitude toward this memorial meeting, their refusal to cosponsor it or send a speaker, stands as the most eloquent testimony against their pretensions as proletarian revolutionists. Genuine proletarian fighters would be incapable of acting with the callousness exhibited by Barnes and company. They have laid bare the souls of petty bureaucrats and functionaries for all to see.

* * *

I said before that George did not give in to his many illnesses and opt for retirement, though no one would have blamed him if he had. It's a fact, though, that before the 1981 SWP convention George was thinking seriously about doing just that.

This is the text of remarks made to the Breitman memorial meeting by Steve Bloom, National Administrative Secretary of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

I remember my conversations with him, after the preconvention discussion opened that year. We began to have some very disturbing statements made by party leaders during the oral discussion in the Brooklyn branch. Two years earlier George had submitted a critique of the party leadership's position on Castroism, which no one else in the SWP had agreed with. I urged him to write something again, and told him that on the basis of the discussion so far, we might be able to elect a delegate from Brooklyn in favor of a moderation of the approach to Cuba and Nicaragua. He submitted the famous "Breitman Amendments," and we not only elected a delegate from Brooklyn, but four others from around the country--and got the support of another member of the NC, Frank Lovell.

In the course of preparations for the convention George confided in me that he was not feeling up to his old self. He was tired and sick. He found it almost impossible to write anything anymore. He didn't have the strength or the inclination to be on the National Committee of the party for another two years. Yet it would seem unserious after he submitted his amendments and made a fight at the convention if he declined to run.

The solution he struck upon was to ask me if I would make the report for our caucus to the convention, and allow him to nominate me for the NC. The convention didn't want to accept this, and tried to pressure George into continuing on the committee. But in the end he prevailed and I was elected as an alternate NC member.

Last summer George and Dorothea came out to have dinner at our apartment, and George offered a toast to me, saying that I had had no idea what kind of a struggle I was getting into when I agreed to be a candidate for the NC in 1981. I agreed, but countered with a toast to George, because he had also had no idea what he was getting into when he went into opposition at the '81 convention. He thought he would nominate me for the NC, and retire calmly to advisory status.

Periodically in the years after that, and especially after the mass purge in 1984 and the founding of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism and the F.I.T., George would say that he wasn't sure if he could continue. He was in too much pain. He was too tired. He was too ill. A few days later, however, George would call me and tell me that he had written a short article, had an idea for

a project he would work on, would try to talk to another comrade and help them in their project.

George contributed a pretty fair volume of written material to the Bulletin IDOM during the period after his expulsion. And I always appreciated his political criticisms or editorial comments on articles, reports, documents, etc. which I would submit to him.

But George's biggest contribution to our movement at this time was in the realm of ideas. He had one of the most creative minds I have ever met, and never stopped trying to think of new ways to advance our objectives--from big ideas, like the formation of the F.I.T. itself (which was George's suggestion after he and dozens of others were expelled) to little ones, like pamphlets or articles which we should publish, or ways to improve the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism.

* * *

George Breitman achieved something which many humans aspire to but few of us manage--to live a life which will transcend our own individual deaths. If I may borrow a much used cliché, George Breitman continues to live. He lives in his writings, which remain a legacy for our own and future generations to learn from and cherish; he lives in the methods of work and study he taught to younger revolutionaries; he lives in our memories and in the hearts of those who had the privilege to know him and to work with him. Most of all he lives in the ongoing revolutionary movement of the U.S. working class.

Today the organized, conscious nucleus that George labored a lifetime to build is a tiny, persecuted minority. We appear small and ineffectual to the superficial observer--hardly a legacy for George Breitman to have been proud of, hardly worth this half-century of sacrifice and dedication. But George knew better. He understood that for those who are fighting to bring about revolutionary change most of our time will be spent battling overwhelming odds. Yet the changes we are fighting for can come about if, and only if, a dedicated few refuse to be overwhelmed by those odds.

George knew what history has demonstrated time and again--that even tiny handfuls of conscious revolutionaries can grow, given favorable conditions, to the point where they lead great masses. That's why George's effort to build the Fourth Internationalist Tendency--a small group of conscious revolutionary

fighters who emerged out of the debacle which the Barnes leadership of the SWP has created for American Trotskyism--was far from wasted. It was, in fact, the most fruitful thing he could have done during the last two years of his life.

Only those few who are able to maintain a broad and sweeping historic vision can lead the kind of life that George Breitman did. Those of us who are the product of his efforts, who have learned from and worked with him, on

whom at least a little of his dedication to truth and a better world have worn off--we will now have to redouble our efforts to build a revolutionary organization of the U.S. working class which can overthrow this rotten and oppressive system, usher in humanity's socialist future, and transform human relations. Such an organization and such a transformation will stand as the most faithful memorial we could ever construct to this great man of American Trotskyism, George Breitman.

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Introduction by Frank Lovell

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FACT OR FICTION?

The FBI Takes Less Than Twelve Weeks to Solve a Mystery

Confessions of an FBI Agent

As Told to Albert Parker

From the September 25, 1950, *Militant*

My boss at the FBI says that sometimes I seem "disgruntled." Well, maybe I am, or I wouldn't be telling all this to you. And if I am, I have good reason to be. After all the years I've put in for the FBI, after all the dirty assignments I've carried out and never complained about, after all the people I've seen who got credit for my ideas and suggestions, it wouldn't be human nature if I was satisfied with the way I've been treated.

Glamorous! Everybody thinks our job is glamorous, but it just isn't so. Once I was given the assignment of joining one of those front organizations, Nature Friends. That was hard, grueling and dirty work, believe me. They had me walking up and down half the damned hills in New Jersey, and I caught a terrible case of poison ivy.

Of course J. Edgar had them added to the subversive list after I submitted my report, and my boss said he was recommending me for a promotion, but nothing ever came of it, except that I itch every time I think of it. Most people don't know the kind of sacrifices we have to make.

PATRIOTIC TOO

Of course, if you're lucky and get the breaks, it's a fine job and the way things are developing nowadays the steadiest kind of job around, next to being a soldier. J. Edgar has put in a request for more agents, and the President has asked Congress to fork over the money for it; there's hardly anything J. Edgar asks that he doesn't get. With the organization expanding all the time, there's a real future for clean-cut young Americans in this job, that's for sure. Plenty of agents are in politics now, members of Congress and so on. It's a lot better than chasing ambulances, that's for sure. And of course it's patriotic too.

Still and all, it has its setbacks. And dangers. Why, you take those registration bills they have up in Congress. You've probably not thought of it, but that really had the Bureau worried. Why? Because everybody belonging to these communist organizations would have to be registered by the officers, or would have to register themselves if the officers failed to do so.

What would happen to us agents who have joined these organizations — in line of duty, of course? Why, we'd have to register too, and then we'd be liable to the same penalties that the communists would. Sure, we'd be protected, but suppose something went wrong,

suppose something slipped up — why, we might be in the can for ten years. Stranger things have happened in the espionage business, you know. That's one of the reasons the Department was worried about those bills.

CURSE OF ANONYMITY

And one of the things that gripes a man is having to be anonymous. Other people get all the glory, but we have to stay in the background. Any twobit commie gets religion and recants, he can make a small fortune testifying before committees, making speeches and writing articles and getting a million dollars worth of publicity and glory. But us, we have to do all the work and keep quiet. It doesn't seem just to me, not the real American way.

Or take that fellow Fitzpatrick, who puts out that Red Channels booklet that got such a big play in the Jean Muir case. I've been in the FBI a damned sight longer than he was, but he quit and he's the big shot now, telling people to come and see him and beg him to take their names off his list. Well, where would he be if it wasn't for fellows like me? How would he be able to put out Red Channels if fellows like me didn't root around digging up information? Chasing an ambulance, that's where. Don't tell me that's justice.

NOT A BED OF ROSES

But the worst thing about being anonymous is that I lost my girl friend that way. I had to join a front organization — I won't mention which one, because I may have to get active in it again — and she found out about it. There was the devil to pay, she wouldn't even let me phone her. Not that I blame her altogether — her old man has a job as a watchman at the Post Office, and I guess she didn't want to take any chances.

So I had to ask my boss for permission to explain to her that I'm really an FBI agent doing my patriotic duty by joining that organization. It took a long time before my request went through channels and I got permission, and then it was too late. I stopped her on the street and made her listen, but she said that now she wouldn't want to have anything to do with me even if I was the last man on earth. So don't think my job is a bed of roses.

(Watch for the next installment in this sensational, behind-the-scenes, exclusive series.)

October 3, 1950

Director, FBI

Subject: Socialist Workers Party -- General
Internal Security -- SWP
Bureau file 100-16

Enclosed is "The Militant," issue of 9/25/50.

Your attention is directed to an article on page 2 entitled "Confessions of an FBI Agent." It purports to relate the experiences of a Bureau Agent, "as told to ALBERT PARKER." ALBERT PARKER is an alias of GEORGE BREITMAN, editor of "The Militant." He promises additional installments of these confessions.

A reading of the article suggests that the agent is a figment of Breitman's mind, as the article confuses the functions of an agent and a confidential informant.

However, it is noted that the so-called agent claims to have joined Nature Friends in New Jersey to assist the Bureau and claims to have worked for the Bureau over a long period. If an informant ever existed such as described, perhaps the Newark office can identify him.

CC-Newark .

Confessions of an FBI Agent (Part II)

As Told to Albert Parker

From the October 9, 1950, *Militant*

I had some more trouble with my boss the other day. I kept telling him I wanted to be put on the Gypsy Rose Lee case because in a backhanded way it is reflecting on the prestige of the FBI. But he ordered me to join up and work as an undercover man in a new front organization called the National Committee to Persuade Hollywood to Film Hiawatha. And when I tried to argue that Gypsy Rose Lee is a lot more important, he sneered and made a crack about this being the first time I ever volunteered and he wondered why.

That's a lie, and he knows it. Only last year I volunteered for something big. It was like this. I got to thinking about the way we send our operatives into all these organizations. And then the thought came to me — what's to stop the subversives from doing the same, that is, sending their agents right into the FBI itself?

When you stop and think about it, the possibilities are unlimited. Imagine all the damage a few subversives could do to the national security if they wormed their way into the FBI and got assigned to a job like tapping some congressman's phone, and then let him know about it.

My first impulse was to go right in to the boss and tell him. But then I thought no, how can I be sure HE isn't a commie agent himself? Besides, I know he would try to hog the credit for my ideas.

A VOLUNTEER

So I wrote a letter to J. Edgar's office itself. I outlined the dangers and the possibilities and so forth and so forth, and then I respectfully suggested that it might be advisable to quietly set up a special division within the FBI to kind of check on our own people. In conclusion, I volunteered to act as the representative of this division in the office I work out of.

A few days later, my boss calls me in. He is burning up, I can see that right away. "First of all, I want to tell you what Washington told me to tell you," he says, "and then I want to say something for myself.

"They told me to tell you that your alertness, initiative and discretion are appreciated, and will not be forgotten, but that the matter you raised is already under control. They also say that you should not raise this issue again or discuss it with anyone after this." Then his face got purple and his voice got loud and angry: "WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL AROUND HERE — YOUR OWN ROBERTSON CASE?"

So I'd better tell you a little about the Robertson case, which the Bureau has always kept quiet about, although there are plenty of cases like it. There was a man named Dalraux, foreign-born, naturalized in 1922, who became superintendent of a zipper factory four years ago.

We got interested in him because his assistant, named Robertson, called us to his house to say he was sure Dalraux was a communist

spy and saboteur. He said he'd seen him carrying radical literature, and that Dalraux was always cursing the "big shots" because "they can't even run the world without war."

I was put in charge of the investigation. First, we had to figure out an angle to explain our interest, but that was easy. In the last war, the soldiers had buttons on their pants, but this was cumbersome; I heard that many complained because zippers weren't used. Well, it's logical to expect in the next war zippers will be used, and of course on a big scale. So the zipper business will be an essential part of defense industry, and that justifies our interest in its personnel. Even the boss had to admit that was pretty neat.

We had only four men on the Dalraux case, but we did a pretty thorough job. We learned he had been a Loyalist sympathizer during the Spanish civil war, and that when he took the job of superintendent he openly said that as far as he was concerned, a colored worker is the same as a white worker and he'd just as soon have one hired as the other. That was pretty clearcut although we never found out anything about his reading radical literature or anybody who ever heard him speaking against war.

DALRAUX DEPARTS

I talked to the employer myself, a fine American type, a real patriot, and I didn't have any trouble at all. I told him that he might be interested in some of the things we had discovered about his superintendent, and that we weren't recommending anything but he might be looking for defense contracts pretty soon, and he got the point. A week later, he eased Dalraux out of the job, without letting him know what was what, of course.

The next day, I went into the office and my boss was red hot. It seems that Robertson had been promoted to superintendent, that he had got drunk the same night at a celebration, and had bragged that he had made up a cock-and-bull story about Dalraux and got the FBI to get him fired as a commie.

The worst thing about it, my boss shrieked, was he said this in front of five or six other employees and now it was all around the plant. Such things aren't good for the prestige of the FBI because most people don't seem to understand that in this business some bystanders are bound to get hurt now and then.

Anyhow, you can understand what my boss meant about my trying to pull a Robertson case on him. And honestly, I had never thought of such a thing — honestly.

So the only reward I ever got for volunteering was to have aspersions cast on my integrity and to be barred from the Gypsy Rose Lee case. That's the kind of thing that makes a patriot think about transferring from the FBI and getting a job with this Subversive Activities Control Board they're setting up under the McCarran law.

(Watch for another installment in this sensational, behind-the-scenes, exclusive series.)

November 20, 1950

Director, FBI

Subject: Socialist Workers Party -- General
Internal Security -- SWP
Bureau file 100-182800

Rebulet October 3, 1950, with a copy for the Newark Office, wherein you requested the Newark Office to endeavor to identify the individual who is supposedly furnishing information to Albert Parker for the latter's articles entitled, "Confessions of an FBI Agent," currently appearing in "The Militant," the official publication of the Socialist Workers Party.

The New York and Newark offices are requested to endeavor to either identify the individual who is responsible for furnishing Parker with the information or if the articles in question are fictitious, this fact should be established through confidential informants who may be in a position to discuss these articles with Albert Parker. The New York and Newark offices are instructed to follow this matter closely and to advise the Bureau as soon as any information is developed either establishing the identity of the person referred to as an FBI Agent in the aforementioned articles or proving that the articles in question are fictitious and created by Parker for publicity purposes only.

CC-Newark

Short Subjects

By John F. Petrone

From the November 20, 1950, *Militant*

In response to inquiries about further installments in "Confessions of an FBI Agent," the "sensational, behind-the-scenes, exclusive series" printed in the *Militant* several weeks ago, Albert Parker reports that there will be no further installments. The reason is that all FBI agents were put on a six-day week beginning Oct. 28; an FBI official told the press the agents had to give up their five-day week

because of "an increased volume of work." Parker says his FBI informant used to see him every Saturday, but that's out now. He also says his informant can't see him on Sundays because that's the day he devotes to drumming up publicity to get J. Edgar Hoover selected as the Man of the Year on the ground that he is the best representative of the spirit of 1950.

December 15, 1950

Director, FBI

Subject: Socialist Workers Party -- General
Internal Security -- SWP
Bureau file 100-182800

Rebulet 11/20/50 requesting the NY and Newark offices to ascertain whether the agent in "Confessions of an FBI Agent" written by Albert Parker for "The Militant" is fiction.

"The Militant" of November 20, 1950 at page 4 contained an article entitled "Short Subjects" by John F. Petrone. John F. Petrone is an alias of George Breitman, alias Albert Parker, editor of "The Militant." In this article he states there will be no further installments of the "Confessions" because all FBI agents must now work six days a week and his informant is for that reason unable to see him as usual on Saturdays; further the agent cannot see him on Sundays because "that's the day he devotes to drumming up publicity to get J. Edgar Hoover selected as the Man of the Year....."

It is obvious that Parker's FBI agent is a fiction.

CC-Newark

IMPERIALISM ATTEMPTS TO CONTAIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

by Tom Barrett

On the one hundredth anniversary of the workers' holiday May Day, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) staged the largest protest action in South Africa's history -- a general strike involving nearly two million workers. This was COSATU's first action as a unified trade union federation. It gave Pretoria and its supporters a taste of harsh reality: the Black workers whose labor generates the superprofits which fill the bank vaults of Johannesburg, New York, and London have had enough of exploitation. They are not fooled by the "abolition" of the pass laws--in reality, the exchange of the old pass laws for new ones. They do not believe that the government has any intention of ending white supremacy, and they refuse to be divided by appeals to tribalism coming from reactionary leaders like Zulu chief Buthelezi.

The strike was one of the most effective general strikes ever organized. The Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa reported that participation ranged from 70 to 100 percent in urban areas. The Port Elizabeth area was entirely shut down. Seventy percent participation was reported in Durban, with over eighty percent of the Johannesburg Black work force participating. In addition, about a million students stayed home from school in support of the strike. COSATU also organized rallies, bringing out thirty thousand in Soweto and ten thousand in Durban. The strike was successful in spite of attempts by the business organizations to have it declared illegal and in spite of threats by employers.

Though the strike raised the immediate demand that May 1 be made a national holiday, the strike's real target was the apartheid system itself. In spite of London's and Washington's worried attempts to force Pretoria to abolish apartheid, and in spite of the cosmetic "reforms" which Pretoria has made in response, white supremacy remains the law and the reality. Blacks are still

non-citizens in their own country. They cannot vote, and they are subject to deportation to the "tribal homelands" when they fight against their oppression. Black workers are restricted to the least desirable and most dangerous jobs, especially in the mines, South Africa's most important industry. They are paid only a fraction of what white workers earn. It is doubtful now that even if the formal structures of apartheid--those laws imposed by the National Party since 1948--were totally abolished that the Black majority would be content. Blacks will be content at this point with nothing less than full political rights and social equality, which would make impossible the high profits that South African and multinational corporations have raked in by paying Black workers so poorly. Pretoria and its imperialist backers are frantically looking for a solution--but as yet they haven't found one.

BOTHA FIGHTS BACK

It may seem that Pretoria's policy is self-contradictory, but it is actually quite consistent and thought out. The South African regime is fighting back on three political fronts: first, it is offering cosmetic reforms, such as the change in the pass laws and the repeal of the anti-miscegenation statutes, which it hopes will induce Blacks not to join anti-apartheid protests. Secondly, the government is promoting right-wing Black leaders such as Zulu chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who can, they hope, give legitimacy to the cosmetic reforms, speak out against the international campaign for sanctions--as Buthelezi has done--and be an auxiliary instrument of repression. Buthelezi's Inkatha organization has carried out physical attacks against United Democratic Front (UDF)-sponsored demonstrations--giving the government the double benefit of killing militants without the political cost and demonstrating to the business community

in Europe and North America that only the white-dominated regime can insure stability in South Africa and prevent "inter-tribal violence." Buthelezi himself took the occasion of May Day to launch a right-wing trade union organization, the United Workers Union of South Africa, as an attempt to counteract COSATU's appeal. Pretoria's policy had bloody results in the Crossroads township near Capetown.

Thirdly, Pretoria employs brutal repression against the anti-apartheid movement, specifically though not exclusively against the African National Congress, the largest and most visible organization. The government and South African bourgeoisie are finding the Bantustan governments a useful tool in this aspect of their defense. The "independent" governments in these "tribal homelands" can carry out systematic beatings and killings of anti-apartheid and trade union fighters without the South African government itself having to take the blame. It is the same thing as Inkatha's attacks, carried to the next level. When a Bantustan government is less than enthusiastic about doing Pretoria's dirty work for them it can find itself replaced--as happened in Lesotho.

The South African regime has never respected any kind of international borders--whether it created those borders or not--in its campaign of terror against Black Africans. On May 19 South African commandos attacked "suspected ANC facilities" in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana, an attack which embarrassed even the United States government (a peculiar embarrassment after its own attack on Libya). South African helicopters transported soldiers to Botswana's capital Gabarone, where they opened machine gun fire on civilians in a housing project. In Zambia South African troops attacked a United Nations refugee camp, killing one and wounding ten others, including several small children.

THE CROSSROADS MASSACRE

At the same time that Pretoria launched its raids against neighboring countries, right-wing Black vigilantes, known as witdoeke because of their white armbands, attacked anti-apartheid fighters, known popularly as "the comrades," in the Black township of Crossroads in the Western Cape. The police and army, as could be expected, stood by and watched. The fighting continued for two

weeks; when it was over 30 were dead, 100 were injured, and 30,000 were homeless. The government will not permit those whose homes were destroyed to return to the Crossroads, and it now seems clear that the government deliberately instigated the fighting. South Africa's ambassador to the United States, Herbert Beukes, speaking on the CBS News "Nightwatch," could scarcely hide his enthusiasm for the "conservative Blacks" responsible for the violence.

THE ARROGANCE OF THE RULING CLASS

The raids against the ANC and the Crossroads massacre are a demonstration of the arrogant attitude so many reactionaries hold: that oppressed people are content with their lot, but are instigated by outside forces conspiring against the regime and motivated by hidden agendas. If those "outside agitators," "Communist infiltrators," "foreign agents," "terrorists," or whatever else they may be called were eliminated then the workers and poor peasants could go on being happily exploited. During the Iranian revolution, for example, the Shah's supporters said that the reason masses of people participated in the anti-Shah demonstrations was because they were being paid! The going price was said to be twenty American dollars per demonstration. To admit that the working masses could desire and demonstrate for political rights and a decent standard of living would be too much. It would almost be admitting that the working masses are human.

If any country's experience disproves this ridiculous line of thought it would be South Africa's. The apartheid gang is unsurpassed when it comes to repressing its opponents. Its efficiency matches that of Hitler's Gestapo. Police repression prevents the ANC from maintaining its headquarters within South Africa; the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Pan-Africanist Congress were essentially destroyed as functioning organizations during the 1960s; Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu remain in prison after over twenty years of campaigns for their release. Yet the struggle against apartheid has continued. It has had its ebbs and flows, to be sure, as every struggle has, but in spite of the Sharpeville massacre, the jailing of Mandela, the murder of Biko, and other acts of state-sponsored terrorism, the Blacks have continued to fight back, and Pretoria's latest out-

JUNE 14, 1986

Just before this issue of the Bulletin IDOM went to press, the massive June 14 anti-apartheid march and rally took place in New York City. Tens of thousands of campus youth, trade unionists, human rights activists, and others--both Black and white--participated. The Bulletin in Defense of Marxism put out a special supplement for the event, selling for 75 cents, which reprinted articles on South Africa from previous issues. Salespeople from the New York Local Organizing Committee of the F.I.T. averaged almost thirty copies each.

rage will not stop them. It is their oppression, not "dark conspiratorial forces," which motivates them to continue the fight. Furthermore, they are not alone: the outpouring of international support has inspired them and dealt real blows against apartheid. In 1986 alone, forty-eight U.S.-based corporations have ceased doing business in South Africa, in part responding to political pressure from mass action and in part because of the instability within South Africa itself.

Supporters of the anti-apartheid struggle in the United States will be marching in the streets of New York on June 14. This action will demonstrate the real American outrage against South Africa's raids against its neighbors, rather than the hypocritical protest issued by Reagan's secretary of state George Shultz. Participating in--and helping to build--such actions are the best way that working people in the United States can fight apartheid.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

It is a matter of simple human decency to solidarize with the African National Congress against Pretoria's decades-long campaign of repression as

well as against the May 19 raids. All anti-racist fighters demand freedom for Nelson Mandela, for Walter Sisulu, and for other victims of the South African police state.

Furthermore, the ANC's positive role in organizing actions such as the May 1 general strike cannot be ignored. It has earned in action the loyalty of more Black South Africans than any other anti-apartheid organization. Though it does not speak for all anti-apartheid fighters, as it claims, and though its program is not a proletarian revolutionary one, as others claim, more Blacks acknowledge its leadership than any other organization's, and that is because the ANC has mobilized more people in action than any other organization, at least since 1984.

Mobilizing people in action is vitally important--there is no other way to fight to win. However, as imperialism uses more and more sophisticated tactics to defend its business interests in South Africa, Black leaders will be called upon to make complex decisions. A revolutionary proletarian world view and a thought-out program based on it are essential to working class leadership in a country as strategically important as South Africa. The South African people need a revolutionary party, and as yet they do not have one. Revolutionists who search for a substitute for a revolutionary party, or who make unwarranted claims for the existing organizations, do the struggle a disservice.

There are no magic formulas for building such a party, and certainly none that could be dictated from afar. However, the world crisis of revolutionary leadership has made no exception for South Africa, and only building a revolutionary party can resolve it. Internationalism, a proletarian orientation, and sober analysis of real facts, not wishful thinking, are as indispensable as activism and dedication to the struggle. As has been demonstrated so many times in so many countries, leadership can make the difference between victory and defeat.

June 1, 1986

SUBSCRIBE TO THE **Bulletin**
In Defense of Marxism

CHERNOBYL: BUREAUCRATIC MAYHEM

by June Martin

"Everything's under control? Nothing's under control....To this day, nothing's under control. How dumb do they think we are?" Remark by a resident near Three Mile Island about official claims that everything was in hand.

Let there be no mistake about it. Just because the bourgeois press in the U.S. made it sensational news does not mean that the Chernobyl nuclear accident was not an unnecessary and unparalleled human disaster. It was a disaster for the workers of the farms and cities of the Ukraine, of Europe East and West, and of large sections of our planet. The extent of the catastrophe in terms of the human lives, the land, our food and water is yet to be determined. But cancer and deaths resulting from it across the globe will surely number in the thousands and tens of thousands.

The bureaucratic caste ruling in the USSR, who are forging ahead in their drive to provide electrical power through nuclear energy, bemoan the degree to which the bourgeois press has been able to capitalize on the disaster. But it is a disaster of the bureaucrats' own making. Whose fault is it that the USSR is second only to the U.S. in the number of nuclear reactors operating within their borders? The U.S. has 115; the Soviet Union has around 50. Not only can it happen here, but in fact it has happened here, though not on such a serious scale as yet. But capitalist greed and corporate profit motives are responsible for these dire circumstances. In the Soviet Union, where capitalism has been abolished, there is no reason for the Soviet people to be subjected to the same dangers.

The potentially disastrous consequences of the efforts to harness nuclear fuel to produce electrical power are well documented. The Chernobyl accident went a step further in proving them. There is no need to elaborate on that now. Suffice it to say that there is no such thing as a "safe" nuclear

reactor. Certainly none of the some 370 reactors in the world today is "safe." The human environment can exist with a given amount of natural "background" radiation. But no one has been able to establish that levels of "acceptable" radiation can be added to our environment by reactor emissions or by the nuclear waste the reactors produce, not to mention larger-scale "leaks" which happen regularly. Anything above the "natural" radiation can cause untold harm to the cells of living things, including human cells, causing cell mutation, cancer, and death. That much is known. Honest scientists admit it.

The antinuclear movement in countries ruled by corporate greed have waged ongoing battles against these horrendous threats to life in our midst that nuclear reactors represent. In some countries, the movement has been able to stop the opening of nuclear power plants; in some countries it has slowed the growth of the industry. There is no doubt that it is only due to the antinuclear movement that the nuclear industry has been forced to submit to more stringent safety guidelines where these have been imposed; and in some cases to monitor the level of radioactivity in the environment and report increased levels, as in Sweden.

Despite these gains, the corporations continue construction of nuclear reactors in many countries.

There is no shortage of energy sources--there is the sun's energy, large amounts of natural gas, plenty of oil yet to be drilled, and water power and coal in abundant supplies. All of these can be safely used by humanity. The Soviet Union, if it were a genuine socialist, worker-controlled economy, would have set an example for humanity by harnessing these forces to produce safe energy. But instead, despite the enormous dangers posed by it, the Soviet rulers choose to mimic the capitalists and construct dozens of nuclear reactors in their territory.

The explosion and fire at unit No. 4 of the Chernobyl power plant -- on the edge of the water supply of Kiev, a city of 2.5 million--commencing April 26 at 1:23 a.m. did more than unleash into our earth's environment radioactive rays and particles of incalculable harm. It epitomized in a gigantic outpouring of destruction and death the character of the Soviet rulers as a self-serving and degenerate caste of bureaucrats who have total disregard and contempt for the needs and lives of the Soviet workers, the Ukrainian workers, and of all the workers of the world.

What has this "melting down," this uncontrolled "burning" of a 1,700-ton graphite core holding 192 tons of uranium fuel produced for us? After days of grim speculation as to what was transpiring, the following seems to be established:

1. It was two days after the disaster occurred before the Soviet officials admitted to the outside world that an accident in a reactor had taken place. And a bland admission it was with no indication of the vast seriousness of the consequences. By that time, the atmosphere over Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and, of course, the Ukrainian Republic and large areas of the USSR had been contaminated by deadly radioactive isotopes of iodine, cesium, lanthanum, barium, zirconium, and at least nine others--with half lives ranging from eight days to 60 years and much longer. The closer the area was to the reactor, the heavier and longer lasting were the particles which would settle. Swedish authorities stated that in the aftermath of the explosion every person in Sweden had radioactive iodine in their thyroid gland, which is known to cause thyroid cancer. A similar statement could probably be made about other Scandinavian countries, Poland, Eastern European countries, all the areas between the reactor and Scandinavia, and anywhere in the area of the globe where the wind currents carried the radioactive debris. Everyone was hoping the wind would carry the debris someplace else. There was contamination of food on a massive scale from dairy products to leafy vegetables and meat, not to mention the contamination of water supplies, especially for those who rely on rainwater like the people of Scotland. Tons and tons of food had to be dumped due to the contamination all across Europe. The list goes on.

2. The population within the "evacuation zone"--the area within a 19-mile radius of the reactor--was not evacuated

until 36 hours after the deadly radioactive debris from unit 4 had poisoned the environment. Eleven hundred buses were driven from Kiev, 70 miles away, to evacuate 40,000 or so inhabitants of the immediate vicinity.

MOST SERIOUS SUFFERERS

The most serious sufferers were, are, and will be the Soviet workers who were not kept abreast of the dangers of these installations in their midst. The town of Chernobyl, only 10-12 miles from the reactor, was not fully evacuated until Tuesday, a full three days after the disaster began. In all to date, at least 92,000 people were finally evacuated from the area.

It is unlikely that the Soviet people would find much humor in the comment of Leonid Kravchenko, first deputy chairman of the State Television and Radio Organization. Responding to questions as to why the official media waited so long to warn the population of the dangers, he stated that if the official media had reported the accident as it was happening, "you would have had gypsies rushing to the Urals to save themselves from radiation." (New York Times, May 3) Undoubtedly, he is right; and not only gypsies.

3. For ten days the officials continued to maintain that the situation was "normalized" when actually the graphite core was heating beyond control and continued to release deadly particles that floated as far as Albany, New York, and Japan. The ruling clique had no idea how to stop the process. Meanwhile, USSR government representatives were contacting foreign nuclear experts for manuals and literature on how to extinguish a graphite fire.

4. Although radiation levels continued to be high in Scandinavia and other areas bordering and outside the USSR in the week following the Chernobyl explosion, indicating the accident was not over, the USSR officials still downplayed the incident in announcements to their own people and to the outside world. They used soothing words, saying the situation was "stabilized," that radiation levels around the power station had been "reduced," that only two people had died and 197 were hospitalized, and that farms and enterprises "were functioning normally." No efforts were made until May 10, 14 days after the explosion, to inform the Soviet people of the extent of the health risks resulting from all the radioactive materials that had been released.

RADIATION EFFECTS

Speaking in West Germany on Friday, May 2, a Soviet Communist Party official Boris N. Yeltsin stated that radioactivity levels at the Chernobyl plant were still high--about 200 rems, presumably per hour. This, according to Gunnar Bengtsson, director of the National Institute of Radiation Protection in Sweden, is the minimum lethal dose "at which at least some people will die within a period of months....Exposure to 450 rems would be expected to kill half the people affected within 60 days, and radiation in excess of 600 rems would kill everyone who had been exposed within 30 days." (New York Times, May 3)

Considering the circumstances at unit 4--the explosion which blew the roof off the reactor and released a burst of radioactive materials into the air, the fact that the area was a populated one and that the evacuation did not commence until at least 36 hours after the explosion, and that the nearly 2,000 tons of molten nuclear material continued to "burn" for at least 14 days after the accident--the life-threatening emissions must have affected thousands.

5. There is no doubt, though no warnings appear to have been issued, that the water supply to Kiev has received a large share of radioactive material from the fallout. In warning Kiev residents of precautions to be taken to protect against radiation overexposure, the officials advised them to: "mop the floors often, bathe and wash their hair more often, stay indoors." But with what water is one to wash oneself, one's hair, and the floor? And what should one do with the radioactive water one has thus used? The cynicism of these warnings boggles the mind!

6. A mammoth effort, of a sort never before tried, is under way to try to seal the damaged reactor in concrete because it will be centuries before the material in the reactor stops emitting radiation. The threat is not only to the atmosphere and life on the earth, but to the underground water supplies. Yevgeny Velikhov, a physicist and vice president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, was quoted in Pravda May 13 as saying "the effort to seal off the reactor was complicated by the presence of a water reservoir beneath it." (New York Times, May 14) If molten radioactive material had reached either the reservoir or the ground water below, a violent explosion would have occurred and contamination of underground water would have been one result. The decontamination measures

being undertaken are on an unprecedented scale, involving thousands of people using techniques the consequences of which are unpredictable. Areas for miles around the reactor are uninhabitable. Trainloads of Kiev residents have been leaving the city for what they hope will be safer areas. Schools have been closed 10 days early for 250,000 students. Of the 35 men and women who were within yards of the reactor when it exploded, at least 13 have now died from radiation exposure. The total number hospitalized with varying degrees of exposure is said to be 299.

Mikhail Gorbachev in his speech on the accident May 14 stated: "The level of radiation in the station's zone and on the territory in the immediate vicinity still remains dangerous for human health." (New York Times, May 15)

7. Soviet officials, including the reactor's designer, have reiterated their confidence in their technology and their intention to continue their nuclear reactor construction program. Two more reactors are to be installed at Chernobyl as planned. The Soviet Union generates 11 percent of its electrical power with nuclear reactors. Thirty-two more reactors are projected to be in operation by 1990, producing 20 percent of the USSR's electrical power.

POLITICAL FALLOUT

8. The political fallout for the ruling caste is yet to come. So far, the tops have tried to shift the blame onto local Ukrainian officials of the organization of nuclear plant construction workers. But it is doubtful they can stop the retributions at that level. Although response of local residents to the disaster remains as yet fundamentally unknown, the New York Times of May 9 relayed a report from Sovietskaya Rossiya of the previous day saying "a delegation of agitated residents of Pripyat [the reactor settlement] appeared at the city offices April 26 and 27... 'a few tried to make trouble,'" General Berdov, deputy minister of Internal Affairs told the newspaper, "'but the troublemakers were hushed up.'" Undoubtedly they were. It is unlikely, however, that the bureaucratic rulers will be able to "hush up" all of the "agitated residents" who will "try to make trouble" in the aftermath of this disaster. Millions of workers in the cities and on the farms of the USSR have had a crash course in the dangers of nuclear power over the past month and repercussions of Chernobyl are yet to come.

In the wake of all the above, the Stalinist rulers in the USSR are trying to turn the accusing finger back at the imperialists and their press. And, undeniably, the imperialists are guilty as charged. Moreover, the U.S. ruling class is responsible for the nuclear arms buildup; and it is possible that if they had not been forced to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons, the ruling clique in the USSR would not have undertaken a nuclear reactor program. But all of this put together avoids the issue and misses the point.

The point is that the rulers in the USSR must be held accountable for what they have done, not just to the workers in the USSR but to workers abroad. Criticism of them on this point cannot be shunted aside with the admonition against "interfering in the Soviet Union's internal affairs." The Chernobyl accident has proven the lie to this defense. Nuclear power is not an internal or national problem; it is an international problem. And only the strength of the organized workers' movement can stop it both outside the USSR and within it.

DEMOCRACY NOT A LUXURY

We in the capitalist countries who are involved in antinuclear movements against nuclear reactors in our midst, and in all other movements against the evils caused by capitalism, should support those in the USSR who are fighting for democratic rights--in the Ukraine and throughout the Soviet Union. The Chernobyl nuclear accident demonstrates why. It shows that democracy is not a luxury. The ruling bureaucrats' anti-democratic methods of political rule in the USSR are not an "internal affair" of the Soviet people alone. The consequences of Stalinism, of the rule of that privileged bureaucratic caste who falsely claim to be Marxists and heirs of the Bolshevik revolution, have long been an international problem of the workers' movement. Not only has this identification of communism with a repressive system of rule caused incalculable damage to the building of the international workers' movement, but the imperialists can point to the crimes of Stalin and his heirs in the USSR and say "There! That's what the communists want for you!" The Chernobyl accident just gave them another such opportunity; and they grabbed it. But the conclusion to draw from all this is that defense of those in the USSR who are persecuted, arrest-

ed, imprisoned because they tried to exercise fundamental democratic rights is as much a part of the struggle to advance world revolution as is defense of workers in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Chile trying to exercise their democratic rights who are gunned down in the streets by U.S.-trained death squads. This includes defending workers organizing for independent trade unions, women organizing against oppressive conditions they still face, non-Russian peoples like the Ukrainians opposing Russification, and--yes--scientists striving for the right to function with free and open discussion about matters of concern to them.

Democracy for scientists, writers, and members of the Soviet intelligentsia is a vital issue. There can be no awareness of the dangers of radioactivity for all layers of Soviet society if there is no open arena in which scientists can know and discuss and make known their views to all the people. And this is precisely what must occur if the Soviet workers are to be able to organize to stop the nuclear reactor program the bureaucrats have undertaken.

But democracy on any level is anathema to the ruling clique. Openness on any question opens the way to discussion of all issues, including the history of the Russian revolution and how the present rulers came to power. It would soon be evident that Gorbachev and company are not the heirs of the revolution but the heirs of Stalin and the revolution's gravediggers. And that is too much for the ruling bureaucrats to risk.

Support for Soviet dissidents has not been considered important by many on the left, not now and not since bureaucratic control was consolidated by the annihilation of the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky beginning in the 1920's. It was called "anti-Soviet" by some and "anti-communist" by others. But it is the suppression of democracy that is anti-Soviet and anti-communist.

There can be no struggle to close down the nuclear reactors in the USSR today and to stop the bureaucratic policy of exporting nuclear power to other workers' states, like Cuba, without true soviet democracy, that is, without workers having the basic right--the basic democratic right--to organize themselves in their own way. That is where it all began sixty-nine years ago. Democracy for Soviet workers is not a luxury; it is a question of life or death.

That is the lesson of Chernobyl.

HANDS ACROSS AMERICA

Ruling Class Stages Mass Mobilization

by Stuart Brown

It was without doubt the largest mass demonstration in the United States in many years. Perhaps it was the largest of all time. It surpassed by several-fold the major demonstrations organized against the Vietnam war. It was called "Hands Across America" and according to newspaper accounts it succeeded on Sunday, May 25, in creating a human chain which linked the Atlantic Coast of the United States with the Pacific. As many as six million are said to have participated, with the declared objective of eliminating hunger and homelessness in the U.S.A.

That the U.S. ruling class was a driving force behind this action is indisputable. A number of major corporations were its primary sponsors. Legions of Democratic and Republican politicians joined the line, including that well-known opponent of hunger and homelessness, Ronald Reagan. Of course, Reagan had to be pressured into participating, and only announced that he would do so a few days before the event. It's tough to teach an old dog new tricks.

"Hands Across America" was supported by these ruling class politicians because it helped to reinforce the illusion that the causes of hunger and homelessness rest with individual failings of the average U.S. working person. "If only more people got involved and cared we could solve our problems." This was the line which came through loud and clear in the publicity put out by the organizers and in media accounts both before and after the event.

But this idea is a deception. It lets the capitalist class and the government, who must bear full responsibility for poverty, homelessness, and hunger in America, off the hook. Even if the figure of several tens of millions of dollars to feed the hungry raised by "Hands Across America" is accurate, the multi-billion dollar corporate sponsors of the day's activities could have raised that sum out of their petty-cash funds.

The reason for all the hoopla, the reason for organizing the action in the first place and asking every participant for a contribution of at least \$10 to

help the cause, was to reinforce the message that the burden of feeding the hungry is not going to be borne by corporate America -- which is currently raking in record profits at the expense of working people in this country and around the world--or by the government which represents the interests of those corporations.

The success of "Hands Across America" should not be surprising. The sentiments of ordinary people who want to do something to help their less fortunate sisters and brothers is not at all identical with the cynical motivations of big business. And raising money for stopgap measures to feed the hungry isn't wrong in and of itself. It's just ineffective as a longterm solution to the problem. Those who conceived and organized "Hands Across America" have no idea of how to attack the underlying factors which create these problems.

It's essential for an alternative voice to be raised, to begin to propose a different course of action, so that some of the available energy and effort can be put to more effective uses. The sentiments which motivated people to participate in "Hands Across America" are the same ones which can be tapped by the U.S. labor movement, along with its allies in the organizations of oppressed nationalities and of women, to fight for real social changes to alleviate the conditions which breed poverty.

We need a campaign for a shorter workweek with no reduction in weekly pay, so that everyone who wants to work can have a decent job. We need to fight for national health insurance and unemployment benefits at union wages for the full term of unemployment--which should include first-time job seekers. We should demand a massive public works program to build lowcost housing, schools, roads, hospitals, which will create new productive jobs and provide social services.

These are the kinds of steps that can move toward permanently eliminating hunger and homelessness and toward overcoming corporate greed and government indifference--the basic causes of poverty in the U.S.A.

SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE RAINBOW

by Melanie Benson

A front-page article in the April 30, 1986, issue of The Guardian, a self-described "independent radical newsweekly" lauds the founding convention of the National Rainbow Coalition, Inc.: "A triumph," "overwhelmingly progressive," "could dramatically change the course of U.S. politics."

At first glance the Guardian reporter's excitement might seem reasonable. This mid-April gathering brought together close to 800 individuals whose causes and constituencies have long been underrepresented, misrepresented, or unrepresented in U.S. political life: Blacks, farmers, Native Americans, organized labor, anti-nuclear and anti-intervention activists, and others. The fact that so many representatives of these groups have begun to think about how to promote their common interests in the political arena--the interests of the majority of the people of the United States for peace, jobs, human rights--is a significant development.

The economically and politically disenfranchised must organize their power and assert their right to political representation from those who have usurped it. Once that's established, however, the six-million-dollar question remains--what is the best way to achieve this political representation?

The Rainbow Coalition's answer is one we have heard before: to "create a significant force in the Democratic Party," or in the words of Kenneth T. Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, "Organize a force that the party has to reckon with." (New York Times, April 20). The coalition's intent is to use this "force" to promote candidates for public office who espouse "progressive" ideas.

Any critical analysis of this orientation and direction must first examine the character of the party that the Rainbow Coalition seeks to effect. What is its composition, its leadership, its platform, its history, its internal

functioning, and its role in the U.S. political arena? Similarly, an analysis of the Rainbow Coalition itself which includes an investigation of these same categories is essential. Once we take this closer look, much of the initial enthusiasm of Rainbow supporters should begin to fade. The difference between what the Democratic Party and the Rainbow Coalition claim to be, on the one hand, and what they actually are, on the other, is quite glaring.

TWO PARTIES

What is the Democratic Party? It is one of the two major political parties in the United States, vying with the Republican Party for political power, or so we're taught. It claims to represent the underprivileged sectors of the U.S. population--workers, women, farmers, minorities. It claims to be a party that promotes peace and human rights. The educational institutions and the media perpetuate this illusion. But what are the facts? Does the Democratic Party present a real alternative to the Republican Party, popularly portrayed as the party of big business? If it did it might be worth fighting for, the orientation of the Rainbow Coalition might make sense. But this is not the case.

While there are many women, unionists, minorities, and peace activists involved to varying degrees at different levels in the Democratic Party, a controlling interest in the party leadership and the overwhelming majority of its elected officials belong to another class entirely. They are capitalist employers and multimillionaires. Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca, whom some were promoting as Mondale's running mate, earns over 11 million dollars per year and masterminded one of the largest concessionary contracts in the auto industry. Mark Dayton, heir to a fortune in the retail business, could afford to spend 7.5 million dollars on his unsuccessful senatorial campaign against

Minnesota senator Dave Durenberger. The list is endless.

The campaign coffers of the Democrats are filled by others in the same social and economic class as Iacocca and Durenberger, not primarily by the hard-earned wages of workers. To whom will these politicians feel responsible? Whose interests will they defend? Why should they be more likely to accede to workers' demands in government than they are in their own corporations? These are the very people that workers and farmers should be fighting against, not alongside of.

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

Union members would think it absurd if, during contract negotiations, workers and management sat down on the same side of the bargaining table. Their interests are diametrically opposed so they sit facing each other, each with their own demands. Workers should do no less in the political arena. Unionists and Black activists should inspire and galvanize support for independent political parties that could challenge both the Democrats and Republicans for elective office and ultimate political power, instead of begging and compromising within the same party.

Jesse Jackson explicitly rejects this independent approach: "We have too much invested in the Democratic Party. When you have money in the bank you don't walk away from it." While this is a more appropriate metaphor than he might have intended (the Democratic Party is tied closely to the banking establishment), Jackson's basic argument is weak. Money invested in one "bank" can be taken out and reinvested in another that pays better interest, uses its funds for the benefit of the majority of its depositors, and doesn't require wheedling and begging before it pays back a few dollars on your investment. Independent Black and labor parties would represent just the kinds of "banks" we need to represent us.

INSIDE THE RAINBOW

Jackson's orientation, however, comes as no surprise when one examines the character, composition, and organization of the Rainbow Coalition itself: Black elected officials predominate in the leadership. They long ago mortgaged their lives and careers to the Demo-

cratic Party despite the fact that their holding public office has had no appreciable positive impact on the quality of life for Black Americans. Jackson and his aides handpicked all Rainbow board members, who now must approve the charter of any new state Rainbow group. Jackson himself must personally approve each state chairperson. The Guardian acknowledges that some delegates "expressed concern" and were "taken aback" by this level of centralization, even though Jackson promised "more democracy later."

There was "limited time for floor debate" at the Rainbow convention. Some issues (like abortion) were "ducked." Jackson encouraged delegates "not to be divided by unnecessary debates." Hardly an auspicious beginning for an organization designed to fight for the demands of the oppressed, but very appropriate for a loose coalition designed primarily to promote a few careers in the Democratic Party.

The approach of the Rainbow toward political differences was similar to the conduct of another meeting that took place two weeks later, in Atlanta, of the Democratic Policy Commission. Gathering to chart the future of the Democratic Party, "The meeting proceeded without a ripple of the ideological tension or politics of interest groups that once characterized Democratic policy debates," (New York Times, May 4, 1986). Atlanta mayor Andrew Young called that "mature politics." No doubt Jesse Jackson would agree.

Those who are truly sincere about and dedicated to effecting needed social and political change must study history. They must honestly ask themselves if change has ever been brought about by electing the "right" people into office, or if it has rather been forced by social movements for civil and human rights. Can elected representatives at any level, from either capitalist party, meaningfully intervene in or alter the dramatic and devastating cycles of capitalist expansion and decline?

Activists for social change must examine carefully those organizations offering to lead the fight, weigh the promises against the evidence of past performance, and separate illusion from reality. If they do this honestly and conscientiously, they will soon discover that there is no pot of gold at the end of this Rainbow.

SUPPORT SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

While many radicals and socialists are campaigning for "good" Democratic Party politicians in state and local elections this fall, the Socialist Workers Party is fielding candidates in many parts of the country who are stressing the need for working people to organize themselves independently in order to act in their own interests. SWP campaigns in almost twenty states are pressing the demands of oppressed minorities and women in the U.S., and are calling for support to peoples around the world fighting for self-determination, human rights, and revolutionary change.

SWP candidates, unlike the Democrats, have joined support demonstrations for P-9 workers challenging Hormel, participated in actions against contra aid, protested the U.S. air strike against Libya, were part of the 150,000 who marched in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles for women's right to choose, walked the picket lines with striking workers (such as TWA flight attendants), and engaged in support campaigns for family farmers facing foreclosure. These were not phoney, publicity-seeking stunts, but are part of the ongoing support of the SWP to such movements and activities.

The issues of labor solidarity and union democracy are featured in campaign

events and literature. Most of the SWP candidates are rank-and-file members of unions, including the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers, United Mine Workers, United Steelworkers of America, International Association of Machinists, United Auto Workers, International Union of Electrical Workers, and United Transportation Union.

Many of the SWP's candidates have visited countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua, and are able to present first-hand accounts of what they have seen as well as urging active support to the revolutionary efforts in Central America and the Caribbean. Support to the struggles in countries like the Philippines and South Africa is also a key part of their campaign. The party is running three candidates for University of Illinois Board of Trustees, for example, on a platform which includes, "the demand that the university divest itself of all investment in apartheid in South Africa" (Militant, May 9, 1986).

A vote for the Socialist Workers Party candidates is a vote for a clear working class alternative to the Democrats and Republicans -- who uphold the capitalist system in general and U.S. imperialist interests around the world in particular.

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Introducing *International Marxist Review*

(Reprinted from *International Marxist Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 1986.)

We are pleased to be able to recommence the publishing of an English language theoretical and analytical journal of the Fourth International with this issue of *International Marxist Review*. The appearance of this journal is somewhat overdue. For decades, albeit with some interruptions, our sister magazine in French, *Quatrième Internationale*, has provided its readers with in-depth articles which have underpinned the public statements and resolutions of the leading bodies of our world movement. In addition it has provided a forum within which the first approximations to such positions have been offered for comment and criticisms. It has debated other tendencies in the workers' movement, and published discussions which have arisen within our own ranks, where these have been of interest to a wider public. Now we offer readers in English a similar opportunity to gain access to these activities and debates.

However, given that there are other excellent English language journals which defend the viewpoint of Marxism, such as the London-based *New Left Review*, we should perhaps restate the particular role we see our magazine playing. The Fourth International understands very well the fact that we do not today represent the mass revolutionary international which it is our aspiration to build. Even the strongest of our sections are not the powerful revolutionary parties which will be the foundation stones of such an international. We are building ourselves today as the nuclei of such parties and such an international. Our main asset in this task is the programme of revolutionary Marxism, summarising a century and a half of class struggles, victories and defeats. Evidently this programme has to be continually re-evaluated in the light of the experiences both of our own sections and of revolutionary upsurges the world over. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International, this re-evaluation, carried out in the light of the internationalist practice of our sections, is a more and more pressing task. Thus *International Marxist Review* will act as a vehicle for this continuous process of trenchant defense and critical discussion of our fundamental programmatic tenets.

Nowhere has this debate been more fiercely concentrated than around the theory and practice of permanent revolution. In the opening article of this issue, Ernest Mandel, one of the best known leaders of the Fourth International, has succinctly restated the main tenets of the theory and practice of permanent revolution in the light of the five decades of experience since Leon Trotsky developed his general theory. In his thesis, Mandel amplifies Trotsky's view that the working class in less developed countries must gain national

hegemony through carrying out the reconstruction of the nation under its leadership, but that it cannot conquer state power without defending its own class interests. Extending this argument to the workers' states, Mandel asserts that the process of permanent revolution continues after the victorious socialist revolution and that workers should not hold back this process in order to wait for further victorious struggles in other countries. The theory is also expanded to deal with the advent of nuclear weapons and the new imperatives posed by the modern women's liberation movement. Finally Mandel deals with what permanent revolution is *not* in an attempt to shift the mountainous distortions which have been heaped on the theory by its opponents, and even by its erstwhile friends.

South Africa has long been regarded by the Fourth International as one of the countries where Trotsky's proposition that the dynamic of the bourgeois revolution would lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat would be decisively confirmed. The fight of the Black masses for one person, one vote within a single unified South African state evidently provides the main demand of the revolutionary upsurge today. Yet, as the report presented to the February 1985 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International maintains, the special nature of South African capitalism powerfully underlines this democratic demand's anti-capitalist thrust. The founding conference of the Congress of South African Trade Unions adopted a set of resolutions which provides a radical agenda of working class demands which combine with the national and democratic aims of the mass struggle today to reinforce that working class dynamic to the revolution. The report not only outlines the bare bones of this thesis, but provides substantial empirical evidence to prove its case. Its publication here, we believe, will be a substantial contribution to the international debate that has been spurred by the most recent upsurge of the mass movement and we hope will elicit a response from within the South African revolutionary movement itself.

In his article on the land question in Latin America, Margarito Montes Parra argues that when the theory of permanent revolution was being formulated, Trotsky took for his examples agrarian problems in extremely backward and underdeveloped countries. Margarito Montes Parra argues that capitalist penetration of the countryside in the majority of Latin American countries today confirms Trotsky's basic thesis that the land question cannot be resolved separately from the other basic problems of society, but is closely linked to the struggle for proletarian power. On the other hand, the role of the state in the countryside and the changing nature of the ruling class in Latin America means that this relationship is much more transparent than it was at

iINTERNATIONAL MARXIST REVIEW

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As a reader of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* you will be interested in the relaunching of *International Marxist Review*, the English-language theoretical journal of the Fourth International.

The new journal will aim to complement *International Viewpoint's* coverage of world events as they happen with in-depth analytical and theoretical articles written by leading members of the Fourth International and its sections, as well as publishing documents of its leading bodies.

International Marxist Review will be published three times a year in conjunction with the French-language *Quatrieme Internationale*.

Articles appearing in the first issue focus on the theory and strategy of permanent revolution today, including:

- The Fourth International's position on the current stage of the South African revolution.
- "What is the theory of permanent revolution" by Ernest Mandel.
- "The land question in Latin America today" by Margarito Montes Parra.
- "Reflections on the Polish revolution" by Zbigniew Kowalewski.

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the time when Trotsky wrote. This conclusion is based on practical experience. Margarito Montes Parra is a political committee member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). The PRT, one of the largest sections of the Fourth International, gained six deputies in the Mexican parliament in the July 1985 general elections. For some years it has carried out extensive work amongst the peasantry, participating in the leadership of one of the largest peasant organizations in Mexico. The author is his party's spokesperson on this work. His article is based on a report given to the political bureaus meeting of Latin American sections of the Fourth International which met in September of last year. It thereby reflects a broad span of experience on the continent.

The final contribution to the journal is likewise based on practical experience. Zbigniew Kowalewski was elected in June 1981 to the praesidium of the Lodz region leadership of Solidarnosc and was a delegate from that region to the national congress of the union. He was one of the main participants in the Lublin group, one of the two national centres for the self-management movement which was born within Solidarnosc. Caught outside Poland at the time of the imposition of martial law in December 1981, he has since lived in France. We publish here a chapter from his recent book *Rendez-vous nos usines!* (Paris: La Breche 1985). Kowalewski argues that the experience of the Polish revolution not only presage events in other Eastern European countries, but in fact will be decisive in terms of any

revolution where the working class plays the central role. He argues that the particular character of Solidarnosc, overcoming narrow trade divisions within the working class by its geographically-based forms of representation, represents a vital transitional form of working class organization. In a passage that will be controversial with many readers he argues that some insights of such 'council communist' thinkers as Pannekoek and Gorter have been too easily dismissed. He also contends that revolutionary Marxists in the West must take note of the view of such Eastern European socialists as Petr Uhl that workers must be freed not only in civic life but also at the point of production if they are to play a full role in constructing a new socialist society.

It can be seen from the range and character of the contributors that one of the first aims of the magazine is to base itself on and intersect with those forces which are actually in the process of formulating a line for their political practice. This process of trying to assimilate these experiences, both of our own and other revolutionary movements, is at the center of the Fourth International's work in all its different aspects. It is the core around which the Fourth International organizes its forces in over 50 countries and holds representative conferences to formulate an international understanding of world revolution. Our magazine aims to help promote that process as a modest contribution to the building of the mass revolutionary international which is our goal.

In the great tradition of Marxist polemics

BY ERNEST MANDEL

***Anatomy of a Split: Why the Australian
SWP Left the Fourth International***

On August 17, 1985, the leaders of the Australian Socialist Workers Party (SWP) decided to break with the Fourth International. This decision came after several years in which political and organizational differences continued to deepen. In response to this challenge to the programmatic gains and perspectives of the revolutionary Marxist movement, Ernest Mandel, a leader of the Fourth International for many years, restates the political foundations of the International, as well as its views on the orientation and tasks of revolutionists today.

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THE FAKE DEBATE ON THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL (PART 1)

by Frank Lovell

Last October the central leaders of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain broke with their former mentor Gerry Healy, accusing him of crimes against the working class. Since then a public debate has developed among them over the exact nature of his crimes, going back to his break with the Fourth International in 1963.

There appears to be agreement that one of Healy's crimes was a sustained 10-year campaign, involving a lawsuit in the U.S. federal court system, against leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, charging that they were secret agents of the CIA and FBI, and also linked to the KGB. This entire campaign of vilification, directed initially against Joseph Hansen and George Novack, former SWP leaders and two of Healy's earliest and most telling critics, has now been repudiated by some who helped promote it.

In these debates they also seem to be reassessing, from conflicting approaches, their attitude toward the Fourth International, whether it ought to be endorsed or at least acknowledged as the only potentially revolutionary international organization now in existence.

With the announcement of the split in the British WRP the Barnes group in control of the SWP in this country began sniffing around for some angle to exploit, mainly for the benefit of their factional allies in the British Trotskyist movement. In accordance with this objective they continue their rewriting of the history of the SWP and the FI. Doug Jenness, a member of the Barnes group and editor of Intercontinental Press, reported the breakup of the British Healyites in IP of Dec. 2, 1985. Since then IP has reprinted articles and documents from Workers Press, the London weekly published by the wing of the WRP that broke with Healy.

The March 10 IP ran an article by Jenness titled, "Giant blow to agent-baiting campaign: 'Workers Press' repudiates Healy's big lie." On the basis

of this repudiation Jenness subsequently wrote (IP April 7), "the WRP leaders who produce Workers Press have taken the first, necessary step toward having their views taken seriously as a legitimate part of the political debates that are occurring among revolutionists today."

This gratuitous recognition of the legitimacy of debate with the ex-Healyites is part of the contribution submitted by Jenness under the caption, "Debate on the Fourth International--'Workers Press' must face up to lessons of Cuban revolution," wherein the rewriting of the history of the Trotskyist movement continues apace. Jenness followed with a second article in the May 5 IP titled, "Answering Healyite myths about SWP--A genuine political discussion can take place only with facts."

In these two articles Jenness pretends to give a brief overview of the origins and development of the SWP and the FI, presumably to "correct" the false version of their histories that were invented and circulated by the Healyites during the past quarter century, as well as new distortions of Healy's apparent successor Michael Banda. While "correcting" these slanderous distortions, Jenness manages to introduce some recent Barnesite inventions.

FERMENT IN THE BRITISH LEFT--AND BEYOND

To fully appreciate what Jenness is up to in all this it is necessary to look in on what is happening in the British labor and socialist movements. The crisis of the Workers Revolutionary Party takes place within the context of a larger ferment in British radicalism. In the face of the economic crisis and onslaughts by the Thatcher government, and in the wake of the miners' strike, fissures have opened up within the trade union movement and the Labour Party over future directions. A conflict in the Communist Party of Great Britain has split the more openly class-collabora-

tionist "Eurocommunist" leadership from "pro-Soviet" elements who wave a banner of "militancy." And the British section of the Fourth International, Socialist Action, has also suffered a serious split.

In this last case, a minority composed of Barnes's and Jenness's cothinkers (who reject the Trotskyist program) have combined with another minority gathered around Alan Jones (who claim adherence to Trotskyism) to establish a majority bloc to control Socialist Action. In response to this several Trotskyist tendencies in the organization broke away from SA to form the International Group. This unfortunate split reflects a development taking place within the Fourth International on a world scale: an assault on the traditional revolutionary Marxist program of the Fourth International, spearheaded by the Barnes leadership of the SWP, for the purpose of facilitating the dissolution of that world organization into a projected "new international" following the political leadership of the Cuban Communist Party. It should be noted, however, that to date neither Fidel Castro nor any other Cuban leader has expressed an interest in the professed aims of this project nor have they indicated any interest whatsoever in the creation of a "new international." Nevertheless, Barnes, Jenness, and their cothinkers are stepping up their campaign to divide, conquer, and dissolve the world Trotskyist movement, which they claim has been "semisectarian" from its inception.

Among the ex-Healyites of the WRP, a somewhat similar disorientation is reflected in a recent article by Michael Banda (published in the February 7 issue of Workers Press, reprinted in IP, March 24) in which he characterizes the history of the Fourth International since 1940 as "an uninterrupted series of crises, splits, betrayals, treachery, stagnation and confusion," and a "sorry and lugubrious tale." In a lengthy, subjective outpouring, he specifically targets the SWP under the leadership of James P. Cannon as one of the primary villains among the "coteries of petty-bourgeois dilettantes, charlatans, and fantasists masquerading as a 'world party.'" He scores "Cannon's provincialism" and "Cannon's political cowardice and capitulation to the backward sections of the U.S. working class," etc., echoing five decades of sectarian detractors of American Trotskyism. Although Banda formally adheres to the

idea of building some kind of "Fourth International," his rehashing and elaboration of old slanders hardly inspires confidence in his commitments.

What is interesting, however, is the reaction to all this by some of his comrades. Another leader of the WRP, Bill Hunter, has responded in the Workers Press of February 15 (reprinted in IP, March 24) with an article titled "Mike Banda and the bad men theory of history." Hunter argues: "If Trotsky's program could only attract this sorry band of adventurers, maneuverers, and repellent individuals, what is to be said for that program?...We certainly learn nothing if we dismiss the activities of those we are surveying -- even if their policies were wrong -- with a sneer....All those individuals...were not attracted to Trotskyism by perfidy and betrayals, but only out of a desire to fight as communists."

Hunter's more balanced, thoughtful approach, and his concern to preserve the essentials of Trotsky's program in the face of the WRP's crisis, leads him to a more positive assessment of the Fourth International's history. Of the alleged problems of the SWP under Cannon during the 1930s and '40s, he comments: "These were the problems in a Party that was making a central contribution to world Trotskyism at the time. You will, of course, have none of these problems in a Party isolated from the working class and degenerating into a sect. So nothing is learned and we apply our abstractions to smother everything that lives and moves. Such a discussion [as that between Trotsky and SWP leaders in 1940] could not have taken place in the WRP during the last decade and a half. It will, however, occur in the Trotskyist movement of the future and will signify a beginning of its penetration into the working class."

Hunter asserts that "a great development of thinking is taking place in our Party as a result of the reality of struggle. It is the split which has brought every comrade to thinking on basic problems." One can only hope that Hunter is right, and that the crisis in the WRP will bring about a fundamental political reevaluation and a reconquest of the revolutionary Marxist program and method which can lead that organization's cadres closer to the Fourth International. It is certainly the case that internal struggles over political fundamentals are the only way in which the revolutionary left in Britain and elsewhere can be strengthened and ori-

ented to play a significant role in the larger struggles of the working class. The programmatic struggle within the Fourth International itself is absolutely necessary for the development and advance of the world Trotskyist movement.

It must be recognized, however, that the leadership of the SWP, in assigning Doug Jenness to initiate a debate over the history of the Trotskyist movement, clearly has something else in mind.

HISTORY AND HALF-TRUTHS

Readers of Bulletin in Defense of Marxism have been forewarned of traps in the Jenness school of historiography. Issue No. 27 of the Bulletin, February 1986, carried an article by Chester Hofla, "How History Is Rewritten on West Street," in which Hofla exposes the distortions of SWP history by Jenness on the question of the Cuban revolution and its influence on the SWP leadership. "The leaders of the SWP started re-writing the history of the Fourth International and the SWP around six years ago, and they show no sign of stopping now," Hofla charged. Further evidence confirming this charge is provided by Jenness in his sham debates with the ex-Healyites.

The most flagrant distortions are in the first "debate" article where Jenness argues that "Workers Press must face up to lessons of Cuban revolution." Here he reaches back to the origins of Trotskyism, or what he would like his readers to believe were its origins.

According to Jenness, "The Fourth International was formed out of the struggle to continue communist practice and strategy. The 'Trotskyist' label was placed on these communists by the Stalinists." This is true as far as it goes. But it is incomplete, leaving out the most important part of our heritage.

When James P. Cannon began his lectures on the history of American Trotskyism in 1942 he was careful to explain what Trotskyism really is. He said, "Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International."

There is a vast difference in content, meaning, and purpose between Jenness and Cannon. Cannon was a founder of the Communist movement in this country and the only central leader of the Com-

munist Party among all those who were expelled for "Trotskyism" in 1928. His task was to defend Trotskyism and explain that it was identical with the program of Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, that, as Lenin had said, "there was no better Bolshevik than Trotsky." During his lifetime as leader of the SWP and defender of Marxism Cannon fought those who tried to find differences and make distinctions between Leninism and Trotskyism.

Jenness is anxious to discard the "Trotskyist" label, implying it is nothing more than a Stalinist canard. But beyond this, Jenness, as a publicist for the Barnes group in the SWP, claims to have discovered fundamental programmatic differences between Lenin and Trotsky which mark a line of division between them during and after the Russian revolution. Unlike Cannon, Jenness is a detractor of Trotskyist politics, not a defender. He claims to understand and practice the politics of "Leninism" better than Cannon or Trotsky.

The slight oversight by Jenness in failing to note that the Fourth International was founded in the struggle to defend the program of world revolution that was then identified as "Trotskyism" is akin to the recent remark by Gorbachev that Stalinism is a term invented by enemies of the Soviet Union. Like Jenness, Gorbachev speaks in half-truths. During Stalin's time the program and practices of the Communist International were promulgated by the Soviet bureaucracy in the name of "Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism." Today it is conceded by many in Soviet political circles that Stalin was the gravedigger of the Russian revolution and the Soviet system. Gorbachev wants to disassociate himself from the Stalinist image, but of course for different reasons than Jenness has for wanting to discard Trotskyism. The urge to rewrite history for self-serving purposes strikes at all levels of political opportunism, hitting the high and mighty as well as the lowly servitor.

STALINGRAD AND WORLD REVOLUTION

Jenness pretends to defend the record of the Fourth International during World War II against criticisms of the ex-Healyites. In the course of reviewing events during and after the war he asserts that "The Soviet victory at Stalingrad in 1943 marked a historic turning point for the working people of the world." According to Jenness, "It

signified the beginning of a shift in the world relationship of class forces in favor of the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist rulers--an overall shift that has continued to this day."

The leading bodies of the FI do not endorse this interpretation of World War II history. This is an adaptation of a notion floated by Soviet historians anxious to portray the invincibility and enduring achievements of the Red Army. The assertion that the battle of Stalingrad marked "a shift in the world relationship of class forces" is a retrospective evaluation by the Barnesites to bolster their current contention that the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy count for little in the scale of history because in all crucial tests the revolutionary resiliency and military weight of the Soviet workers' state has proved decisive in world politics.

This was not the opinion of U.S. Trotskyists during the war. The resolution adopted at the first wartime convention of the SWP and published in the Militant of October 17, 1942, says the following on Stalinism and the Soviet Union at war:

"After five months of terrible defeats, workers from the factories joined the heroic Red Army warriors at the gates of Leningrad and Moscow and helped recover Rostov in the dark days last winter...

"What the Soviet Union requires to assure victory is the political arsenal by which Lenin and Trotsky saved the young Soviet republic from world capitalist intervention in 1918-1921. It requires the revival of the Soviets, the organs which mobilized the masses in all spheres and made possible the victory in the civil war. It requires the release from the jails and concentration camps of the tens of thousands of pro-Soviet political prisoners, restoring them to their rightful place in industry and the Red Army. Workers' democracy in the trade unions! And as part of the restoration of workers' democracy in the USSR, the legalization of all pro-Soviet political parties and their right to present their programs to the masses. These internal steps would guarantee the maximum mobilization of the energies of the masses for the struggles ahead. Instead, however, the Stalinist bureaucracy is attempting to tighten the hold of the totalitarian apparatus suppressing the initiative of the masses and striving to restrict their struggles

within completely bureaucratic channels."

The siege of Stalingrad began in September 1942 and on February 2, 1943, the German general, Friedrich von Paulus, surrendered the remnants of his army. Casualties on both sides were staggering, and the political consequences were alarming to the imperialist strategists in Washington and in London. Felix Morrow, editor of the magazine Fourth International and a member of the SWP Political Committee, wrote an article, "The Class Meaning of the Soviet Victories," for the March issue of the magazine. He quoted a New York Times editorial as an example of ruling class dismay and fear. "Swiftly, inexorably, the Russian armies continue to drive toward the west," said the Times. It reported that "fears and suspicions about Russia are based primarily on two considerations. The first is that Russia will use Communist groups in other countries as instruments of ideological conquest. And the second fear is that the power which has the greatest share in victory will also dictate the peace, and that Russia, having the power, will also use it for conquest, or at least for gaining 'strategic frontiers.'"

Does this mean that "a shift in the world relation of class forces" has occurred, as Jenness now asserts? What is clear from the Times editorial is that the U.S. ruling class and the Roosevelt administration, at that stage of the war, were preparing to safeguard capitalist property relations in Europe. They were confident that they could strike a deal with Stalin to insure their interests, which they did at Tehran before the year ended.

In his analysis of the relationship of class forces at the time Morrow expressed the hope of all proletarian revolutionists, especially those in the ranks of the FI, that working class uprisings in capitalist Europe would erupt. "Only the shock troops of proletarian revolution can redress the balance," he wrote. "In spite of Stalin and against Stalin, we are confident the strangled October revolution, which has so often demonstrated its persistent vitality, will find the road to unity with the European revolution." This is the exact opposite of what Jenness now writes (in the guise of "revolutionary continuity," of course). Implicit in the Jenness presentation is the concept of "global class war" in which the victorious Red Army will inspire uprisings in

the colonial and semicolonial world and eventually vanquish the forces of imperialism. The revolutionary position is that the working class forces on a world scale must be organized to overthrow the oppressors in the advanced capitalist countries, in the subjugated colonial nations, and in the bureaucratized workers' states.

CIVIL WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA

In 1943 a civil war broke out in Yugoslavia between the treacherous Cetnik forces of the native ruling class and the Partisans, consisting of workers and poor peasants. For two years these antagonistic class forces, under arms, had maintained an uneasy alliance in a local war against German military occupation. In retrospect Jenness now asserts that the Soviet victory at Stalingrad "was decisive in inspiring Yugoslav workers and peasants to carry their hard-fought struggle against German occupation and the profascist puppet regime in Croatia to a successful conclusion."

Was this the way it happened?

John G. Wright, a prominent SWP educator and journalist, contributed an analysis of the Yugoslav events, as they developed, based on information available at the time. His conclusions can be found in an article by him titled "The Civil War in Yugoslavia," published in the April 1943 issue of Fourth International. Wright recognized that "a close connection exists between the resistance in Yugoslavia and the heroic resistance of the Red Army and the Soviet masses.

"The revolutionary ferment which has manifested itself in Yugoslavia since the midsummer of 1941 [long before the battle of Stalingrad] is only in its initial stages," Wright said. "It has already brought to the fore all the fundamental problems of the European revolution." He predicted, "In its future development this workers' and peasants' movement can sweep over the heads not only of the Mikhailoviches and their allies [in Washington and London] but also the Kremlin clique."

This prediction is very close to what happened in Yugoslavia. If Jenness now has further factual information not available to Wright about how it happened, that might be useful to a better understanding of the revolutionary process. In fact, the spread of world revolution not only in Yugoslavia, but in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere, unfolded in spite of the foreign policy and influence of the Stalinist leaders of the USSR, who never abandoned the "spheres of influence" compromise with Western imperialism forged at Tehran. But the world revolution was too powerful to be held back.

The assertion that it all came about because of the victory at Stalingrad is of no help in understanding the class struggle or the historical process. It only enables us better to understand Jenness.

[This analysis of the falsification of history will continue in the September issue of Bulletin IDOM.]

CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

An Answer to Jack Barnes

BY CLIFF CONNER

F.I.T., P. O. Box 1947
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NICARAGUA: WORKERS' POWER AND MIXED ECONOMY

by Paul Le Blanc

Under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Nicaraguan people overthrew the hated Somoza dictatorship in 1979. The Sandinista revolution continues to develop as one of the most vibrant and hopeful struggles for human liberation in our time. In the 1983 study Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua, which offers a detailed account of the revolution up to September of that year, it is argued that--among other things--the Sandinista struggle has unfolded according to the dynamics which Leon Trotsky termed permanent revolution. According to Trotsky, the central idea of the theory of permanent revolution is "that democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and puts socialist tasks on the order of the day." (Leon Trotsky, Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970], p. 131. Also see Paul Le Blanc, Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua [New York: Fourth Internationalist Tendency, 1984].) In Nicaragua, we see a national-democratic struggle, involving the masses of workers and the oppressed, which has established the political rule of the working class (i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat) and is "flowing over" in a socialist direction. This view of Nicaraguan reality also happens to be the one taken by the Fourth International, as codified at its 1985 World Congress.

The realities of the Sandinista revolution, and the theoretical issues involved in trying to understand it, are complex. The manner in which we comprehend and explain them have profound implications for the revolutionary program, for the strategy and tactics which we advance in the struggle to overcome the tyranny of world capitalism. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Nicaraguan events have generated serious controversy among revolutionary socialists. In particular, the Socialist Workers Party leadership denies that a proletarian dictatorship, or workers' rule,

has been established there -- and it therefore claims that the Nicaraguan experience refutes Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

Similarly, David Finkel--one of the leaders of the new organization called Solidarity--has written: "Le Blanc seems to be telling us that Nicaragua is, perhaps without even knowing it, a proletarian state. Yet it should be clear that Nicaragua is no such thing, from any point of view." One of the key reasons for this, he argues, is that the Sandinistas themselves admit that "the possibility of socialism is limited by the fact that 'we haven't enough capital to run that which we have already taken over. We need the private sector to help keep the economy going.'" (David Finkel, "Some Problems of 'Permanent Revolution': Is Workers' Power a Perspective for Third World Revolutions?" Changes, July-August 1984, p. 14.) Finkel, like the SWP leaders, assumes that the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be said to exist until a nationalized and planned economy has been established. If the Sandinistas are right in not nationalizing the economy, they reason, then Trotsky's theory is called into question by reality itself.

This has points in common with the position of Socialist Action, another organization which--like the SWP and Fourth Internationalist Tendency--is in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International. Socialist Action, dissenting from the position of the Fourth International, has argued that the persistence of capitalism means that, far from proletarian rule, there is a "partially dismantled capitalist state" still existing in Nicaragua. Unlike the SWP leaders and David Finkel, however, Socialist Action neither rejects nor questions the theory of permanent revolution. Instead, defending what it claims is "permanent revolution as it has always been understood by the world Trotskyist movement," it questions the Sandinistas' preservation of capitalism within a "mixed economy," which they

warn may derail the Nicaraguan revolution. ("The Stakes in the Debate on Central America," Socialist Action, October, 1985, pp. 13, 12.)

In the April 1986 issue of Socialist Action, there are two articles by a French co-thinker, Etienne Hilaire, which also argue that "the war against the enemies of the revolution cannot be decisively won without breaking with the strategy of the 'mixed economy' and establishing in Nicaragua a workers' state based on the collective ownership of the means of production." (Etienne Hilaire, "Nicaragua's state of emergency: a closer look," Socialist Action, April 1986, p. 12.) Hilaire's arguments are a useful vantage point from which to review the situation in Nicaragua--and also to reexamine aspects of Trotsky's theory.

CRISIS IN NICARAGUA

There is no question that the economic situation in Nicaragua has deteriorated dramatically since 1984. In large measure, this is a "tribute" to the vicious policies of the U.S. government, which has sought to strangle the revolution through systematic economic sanctions, at the same time establishing and funding the contra guerrilla war to inflict thousands of casualties and millions of dollars in damage. In the wings is the massed might of the U.S. military, waiting for an opening that might "justify" air and naval attacks or even an invasion by ground troops.

In the face of this, more than 50 percent of Nicaragua's GNP now goes to defense. Consequently, numerous social programs have been cut back or discontinued. This constitutes a serious erosion of the "social wage" which had benefitted the working people and the poor of Nicaragua, and their living standards are also being eaten away both by inflation, which is higher than ever, and by shortages of basic consumer goods. One recent report by Abraham Brumberg notes that "the population of the capital has climbed to unmanageable proportions, largely as a result of migrations from the war zones in the north. About a third of the population, over 950,000 people, live in Managua, yet there is no sign of construction, let alone reconstruction. Black market activities thrive openly. And there can be no doubt that popular discontent is growing." Brumberg also suggests that the economic crisis cannot be attributed to the contra war alone: "Generally the

Sandinista officials I talked to were far more ready to concede their mistakes and failures than their foreign admirers." (Abraham Brumberg, "Nicaragua: A Mixture of Shades," Dissent, Spring 1986, p. 174. Also see Maria Merri, "The hardest year since the revolution," International Viewpoint, May 5, 1986, pp. 8-9.)

All of this is consistent with the report of Etienne Hilaire, who quotes Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega as noting "errors and deficiencies" of the government and saying: "We are not doing too well. We are having problems." Hilaire adds that "the commitment of the masses to the revolution has not been won once and for all. This commitment depends not on ideological preferences, but on the consolidation of tangible material gains." (Etienne Hilaire, "What way forward for the Nicaraguan revolution?" Socialist Action, April 1986, p. 8.)

The erosion of popular support for the FSLN should not be overstated. In 1984 its candidates won 67 percent of the popular vote, and as Abraham Brumberg notes, "the elections were not rigged. There was no need to rig them, if only because there was no doubt whatever that the FSLN still had the backing of the majority of the country." Brumberg's comments are particularly telling, coming from the former longtime editor of the U.S. State Department journal Problems of Communism. Also significant is the observation of Mario Vargas Llosa, a well-known Peruvian novelist and liberal, and a critic of the Sandinistas: "It would be wrong to assume that anger at Sandinista policies means that every Nicaraguan who complains is an enemy of the regime. Every one of the enraged women of Nagarote [a village where he heard bitter complaints about military conscription, shortages, high prices, and bureaucratic heavy-handedness] voted for the Sandinista Front. Says one of them: 'I pray that with President Ortega's help, things will get better.'" Despite the mounting hardships, "broad segments of the population, especially the poor, still favor the Government." (Brumberg, p. 177; Mario Vargas Llosa, "In Nicaragua," New York Times Magazine, April 28, 1985, p. 95.)

At the same time, the Sandinistas themselves recognize that ultimately their popular support rests largely on their ability to meet the needs of the people. Indeed, this was one of their initial arguments for a "mixed economy"

in the wake of the post-insurrectionary devastation: "We have to permit the bourgeoisie to reactivate the economy in order to protect the revolution. We must feed the people or they will throw us out like they did Somoza." (Orlando Nunez, quoted in John A. Booth, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution [Boulder: Westview Press, 1982], p. 197.) But it is precisely the "mixed economy" that has become the problem, according to Hilaire:

"The Sandinista leaders have justified this choice on the grounds that both 'national unity' and a 'people's war' are necessary to confront the imperialist aggression. But these two goals are potentially contradictory: to carry out a 'people's war' you must satisfy the needs of the people. To carry out a policy of 'national unity' you must satisfy the medium and large capitalists. Hence, the revolution cannot defend itself and advance if it does not overturn capitalist property relations." (Hilaire, "What way forward," p. 8.)

To come to grips with Hilaire's argument, we must understand more clearly the meaning of the "mixed economy" in present-day Nicaragua.

'UNLIKE ANY IN THE WORLD'

One of the earliest and most perceptive analyses of the Sandinista revolution was offered by Adolfo Gilly in 1980, and his discussion of the "mixed economy" is a useful starting point for us.

"An economy which is half capitalist and half socialist," wrote Gilly, "which would mean functioning half according to the logic of profit and half according to a logic opposing profit, doesn't exist and cannot exist in any country in the world. In all countries adopting the 'mixed economy' label, this only means capitalism with a more or less extensive state sector subordinated to the logic of accumulation for a strong private sector....The existence of a strong nationalized sector doesn't by itself guarantee a transition to socialism, nor is this guaranteed by the socialist intentions of those who direct the state. It's well known that private enterprise, particularly in industry, in many countries favors and advocates the existence of such a sector as a guarantee of lower costs, to develop the infrastructure and economic resources, freeing them from what would be severe financial commitments." (Adolfo Gilly,

La Nueva Nicaragua: antimperialismo y lucha de classes [Mexico: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1980], pp. 45-46.)

Gilly noted that this was precisely the program of the anti-Somoza capitalists whose initial support for the FSLN was designed to "incline it in a 'democratic' direction favorable to 'private business,'" and who "conceived of the revolution as a vast enterprise of modernizing the state and cleansing the economy, eliminating parasitical [i.e., somocista] sectors." But the dynamics of the revolution were characterized "by the combination of the armed struggle organized by a guerrilla army and the organization of the general strike and mass insurrection leading to the establishment of a new government." The decisive feature of this new power was that "it has obliterated, through the armed violence of the masses, the old army as well as the old state apparatus." In its place was the FSLN, enjoying mass support, and committed to establishing organizations such as the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) in the workplaces and the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) in the neighborhoods in order to "increase the specific weight and the central role of the relatively small Nicaraguan working class in the urban and rural lower classes which are weighed down by the semi-employment, the unemployment and the economic disorganization of the country." As Jaime Wheelock put it, "the state now is not the same state, it is a state of the workers, a state of the producers, who organize production and place it at the disposal of the people, and above all of the working class." (Ibid., pp. 46, 112-113, 48. Wheelock is quoted in George Black, Triumph of the People, The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua [London: Zed Press, 1981], p. 267.)

This gave the "mixed economy" a different meaning than that which it has traditionally had. Tomas Borge has pointed out that "mixed economies in other countries that have not had revolutions are not the same as the one in Nicaragua. There are more private enterprises here, relatively speaking, than in Venezuela, for example, but here political power is not in the hands of the businessmen." Indeed, Nicaraguan capitalists have come to take a dim view of the FSLN version of the "mixed economy." New York Times correspondent John Vinocur has echoed their complaints: "About 60 percent of the economy is thought, nominally at least, to be in

private hands. But because the Government controls the banks, all access to foreign currency and all jurisdiction over imports, and sets production quotas and designates priorities, the businessmen are not much more than crown agents whose salaries the Government does not need to pay." (Tomas Borge, "Large-Scale Aggression Is Being Prepared," Intercontinental Press, February 23, 1983, p. 118; John Vinocur, "Nicaragua: a Correspondent's Portrait," New York Times, August 16, 1983, p. 1.)

In all of this, we can see the unfolding of the dynamic first suggested by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto. "The first step in the revolution by the working class," they wrote, "is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." In Nicaragua this was initiated in 1979, secured in 1980, and reconfirmed in 1984. Marx and Engels continued: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class, and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible." Etienne Hilaire and his co-thinkers in Socialist Action argue that capital should be wrested from the bourgeoisie not by degrees but across the board and immediately. But Marx and Engels might well have answered them that "of course, in the beginning this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Selected Works, vol. 1 [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973], p. 126.)

In the present period, then, the Nicaraguans do have--to paraphrase Gilly--a "mixed economy" unlike any in the world, functioning according to two counterposed "logics." The measures of the Sandinistas certainly appear to be insufficient and untenable, but this is inherent in the transitional process. What is clear is that, unlike the mixed economy favored by bourgeois "modernizers," the structure of the Nicaraguan

economy is fraught with unique tensions which cannot generate a new period of stability and capitalist growth.

WORKERS' POWER AND MIXED ECONOMY

"The contra war is aimed at wearing down the revolution and undermining popular support for the government," Hilaire points out, "by forcing the FSLN to allocate 50 percent of the federal budget to defense; money has been diverted from essential economic and social programs. The war has also caused serious material and human losses." (Hilaire, "What way forward," p. 8.) He concludes:

"The material roots of this discontent--the economic crisis, due in large measure to the preservation of the 'mixed economy'--must be addressed and resolved.

"The reactionary forces in Nicaragua are seeking to exploit the popular discontent over the economic situation in order to create a broad internal opposition front. To defeat this reactionary offensive, however, requires radical economic measures that will undermine the basis for its support. It requires the expropriation of capitalist property and its management by the workers themselves through their own democratic organizations....

"The war against the enemies of the revolution cannot be decisively won without breaking with the strategy of the 'mixed economy' and establishing in Nicaragua a workers' state based on the collective ownership of the means of production." (Hilaire, "Nicaragua's state of emergency," p. 12.)

Hilaire and his co-thinkers in Socialist Action seem to feel that, in advancing this perspective, they--unlike the Fourth International--are being faithful to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, articulating a Bolshevik-Leninist orientation, and indicating a solution to the problems facing the Nicaraguan revolution. As we will see, all of this is questionable.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION ACCORDING TO TROTSKY

Trotsky first developed his theory under the impact of the Russian revolution of 1905, and partially through re-studying the experience of history's first proletarian dictatorship -- the Paris Commune of 1871. It is clear that for him the dictatorship of the proletariat (i.e., the political rule of the

working class) was not premised on the establishment of a collectivized, planned economy under workers' control. He believed the reverse to be true: "The Paris Commune of 1871 was not, of course, a socialist commune: its regime was not even a developed regime of socialist revolution. The Commune was only a prologue. It established the dictatorship of the proletariat, the necessary premise of the socialist revolution." (Emphasis added.) As we argued earlier, in the sense that Trotsky (and Marx) meant the term, such a proletarian dictatorship exists in Nicaragua today. Trotsky believed that national-democratic struggles in "backward" capitalist countries like Russia would result in the establishment of working class rule and would move in a socialist direction. But he did not believe that this would necessarily mean rapid nationalizations. His formulations seem more in harmony with those of the Sandinistas than with those of Hilaire and Socialist Action. They are worth quoting at length:

"The Parisian workers, says Marx, did not demand miracles from the Commune. Now too, we must not expect the dictatorship of the proletariat to produce miracles instantly. State power is not all-powerful. It would be absurd to think that all the proletariat has to do is acquire power and it can replace capitalism by socialism by means of a few decrees. The economic structure is not a product of the activity of the state. The proletariat can only apply state power, with all its energy, so as to ease and shorten the path of economic evolution in the direction of collectivism.

"The proletariat will begin with those reforms which enter into the so-called minimum program--and directly from them, by the very logic of its position, will be forced to go over to collectivist measures.

"To introduce the eight-hour day and a heavily progressive income tax will be a comparatively simple business, although here, too, the center of gravity lies not in the publication of the 'act' but in the organization of its execution. But the main difficulty (and here we go over to collectivism!) will consist in the organization of production by the state in those factories and plants which will be closed by their owners in answer to the publication of these acts....

"Expropriation with compensation offers political advantages but finan-

cial difficulties; expropriation without compensation offers financial advantages but political difficulties. But greater than either the financial or political difficulties will be the economic and organizational difficulties.

"We repeat: a government of the proletariat does not mean a government of miracles.

"The socialization of production will begin with those branches which present the least difficulties. In the first period the socialized sector of production will have the appearance of oases connected with private economic enterprises by the laws of commodity exchange."

In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat would pursue policies resulting in a kind of "mixed economy." Part of the reason for this, as Trotsky explained, was the impossibility of building socialism in a single country: "The Russian proletariat...will be able to carry its great cause to its conclusion only under one condition--that it knows how to break out of the national framework of our great revolution and make it the prologue to the world victory of labor." (Leon Trotsky, On the Paris Commune [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970], pp. 13, 25, 26.)

Many English-speaking interpreters of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, basing themselves in part on a faulty translation of a passage in a 1928 text, believe that he asserted that the proletarian dictatorship "will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and abolition of bourgeois property in city and village." (Leon Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970], p. 185.) (Emphases added.) This seems to be the interpretation of the leadership of the SWP and Socialist Action. We can see, however, that a correct translation of the same passage more clearly expresses Trotsky's view that it "will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and subversion of bourgeois property in city and village." (For full discussion and documentation of this point, see Dianne Feeley and Paul Le Blanc, In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity [San Francisco: Socialist Action, no date (1984)], pp. 48-50, 72.) This corresponds to the assertion in the Communist Manifesto that a workers' government will initially limit itself to making "despotic inroads" into bourgeois property relations.

THE BOLSHEVIK PRECEDENT

In a December 1917 interview, Trotsky explained that this was the orientation of the new Bolshevik regime: "We are not ready to take over all industry. That will come in time, but no one can say how soon. For the present, we expect out of the earnings of a factory to pay the owner five or six per cent yearly on his actual investment. What we aim at now is control rather than ownership." (E.A. Ross, "A Talk with Trotzky," The Independent, March 9, 1918; reprinted in Intercontinental Press, July 13, 1981, p. 743.) The parallel with present Sandinista policies in Nicaragua is obvious. As historian Stephen Cohen has noted, Lenin's early economic policies "called for an end to nationalization and expropriation, and a modus vivendi with large private capital. The new economic order would rely on limited state ownership, while preserving private (or joint) ownership and management in most enterprises.... The survival of his government, Lenin reasoned, required the technical collaboration of the large bourgeoisie, the termination of the revolution's destructive phase, and the reimposition of managerial authority." While Lenin utilized the term state capitalism, Cohen explains that this meant "a mixed economy combining a limited public sector with a large private one," adding that he "saw no contradiction in the proposition that a proletarian state might preside over a state capitalist economy." (Stephen Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution [New York: Vintage Books, 1975], pp. 70, 71, 76.)

A faction within the Bolshevik party, the Left Communists led by Nikolai Bukharin, protested: "State capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat--this is an absurdity, soft-boiled boots." Their alternative, similar to the position of Hilaire and Socialist Action, is summed up by Cohen: "Scornful of compromise, the Left's theses demanded an entirely different course: relentless hostility to the bourgeoisie; an assault on capitalist economic relations; nationalization and 'socialization' of industry; workers' control and preservation of the authority of local economic soviets; and support for poor peasants against the rich, as well as the development of large-scale collective farming.... Their warning [was] against traveling 'the ruinous path of petty bourgeois policies'..."

(Stephen Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution [New York: Vintage Books, 1975], pp. 70, 71, 76.)

Lenin responded that the workers "have no experience of independent work in organizing giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people." It was necessary, he insisted, "to learn from the capitalist organizers" and to proceed "cautiously" and "gradually." He stressed: "The difference between socialization and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by 'determination' alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, whereas socialization cannot be brought about without this ability." (Ibid., pp. 76, 71; V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty Bourgeois Mentality," Selected Works, vol. 2 [New York: International Publishers, 1967], pp. 707, 692.) He warned that the Left Communist proposals were a recipe for economic chaos and disaster. At this time, according to historian E.H. Carr, "a certain tacit community of interests could be detected between the government and the more sensible and moderate of the industrialists in bringing about some kind of orderly production." (E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, vol. 2 [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966], p. 87.)

As it turned out, however, by the summer of 1918 capitalist sabotage, civil war, and foreign intervention wrecked Lenin's and Trotsky's hopes for a "mixed economy" under the control of the proletarian dictatorship. As a defensive measure, the Bolshevik regime instituted a policy of sweeping and rapid nationalizations--which became known as "war communism." Regardless of how unavoidable this may have been, it led--as Lenin had feared--to economic collapse. This led, in turn, to the 1921 retreat to the "new economic policy."

The Sandinistas have been fortunate in being able to maintain for six years a transitional orientation which the Bolsheviks were unable to carry out for more than eight months.

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE 'MIXED ECONOMY'

Just as the Left Communists were not totally wrong about the problems inherent in Lenin's orientation, so Hilaire and Socialist Action are not totally wrong about contradictions inherent in Nicaragua's "mixed economy." Hilaire quotes (although somewhat selectively) from an important report by

Swedish economist Claes Brundenius, who served as an advisor to the Sandinistas. It is worth taking note of the contradictions which Brundenius identifies:

"The approximately one-third share of state participation in industry is problematic for two reasons. First of all it is too small in order to constitute a solid and viable base for industrial planning, especially in strategic sectors such as chemicals, paper, and transport equipment. On the other hand, it is sufficiently big in order to alienate large sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie who look with growing suspicion at the Sandinista commitment to 'a mixed economy based on political pluralism.' This contradiction in the present transitional phase of the Nicaraguan society is by no means easy to solve.

"If the industrial bourgeoisie resists accepting the rules of the game and their role as partners in national development plans, drawn up within the framework of the ideology of the Sandinista revolution, and instead starts decapitalizing and even taking capital out of the country, the outcome can only be one: increasing confiscation of private property and the subsequent increase in state participation. This, it is true, would lead to a more solid base for socialist planning but would no doubt create a vicious circle with increasing distrust of the industrial bourgeoisie in the long-term objectives of the Sandinista revolution, leading to further confiscations, etc. This situation is particularly fragile since the private sector has such an overwhelming control over the intermediate goods sector--perhaps the most strategic industrial sector in the present phase." (Claes Brundenius, "Industrial Development and Strategies in Revolutionary Nicaragua," mimeographed, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Pittsburgh, March 1984, pp.25, 27.)

Whereas Hilaire and Socialist Action want the Nicaraguans to forge ahead toward rapid nationalizations, Brundenius is more cautious: "In constructing a new society, a revolutionary, socialist-oriented government is limited by several factors, the most important one being the heritage of the past. There are thus certain parameters within which any government can act, or as Karl Marx put it over a hundred years ago: 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please. They do not make it under circumstances chosen by

themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.'" He adds that "industrial planning cannot rest on desires and wishful thinking," that it must be grounded in an "understanding of the heritage of the past, and the limitations this means for planning for the future." (Ibid., pp. 1, 16.)

Another economic advisor to the Sandinistas, Roberto Pizarro, explained some of the reasons why Hilaire's proposal, "which is possible in the abstract,...would not only be naive but also deeply irresponsible in the case of Nicaragua." Hilaire quotes Pizarro's reasons, then waves them aside, but they are worth considering: "This is due to the regional geo-political situation and to the fact that the economic results would be disastrous in a country whose economic structure is marked by the important weight of agricultural production and by the atomization of property in the countryside, in industry, and in commerce." (Hilaire, "What way forward," p. 11.) The "geo-political situation" includes the fact that a violently hostile United State considers Central America to be its backyard, and Nicaragua has no borders with any friendly countries. There is also what Omar Cabezas refers to as "the umbrella that protected our revolution against U.S. intervention from 1980 to 1985," i.e., economic and political support from Western European and Latin American countries--which would be jeopardized by a sudden leftward shift. (Omar Cabezas, "Our Revolution Will Not Be Destroyed," Socialist Action, April 1986, p. 7.) There is also the question of who would administer a nationalized economy. It is questionable whether the workers of Nicaragua today are better able to deal with this task than were the Russian workers of Lenin's time. "In Nicaragua," writes one sympathetic observer, "the majority of workers were, and still are, deeply immersed in an everyday struggle for material survival. This--together with the historical effects of low cultural development--places objective limitations on their ability to take on the tasks of administering production." As Carlos Carrion summed it up in 1980, "we believe that we will move faster towards socialism if we approach it slowly. Otherwise, there is the risk of complete bankruptcy, chaos and foreign intervention." (Gary Ruchwanger, "Workers Control in Nicaragua," Against the Current, Winter 1984, p. 21; Carrion quoted in

Henri Weber, Nicaragua, The Sandinist Revolution [London: Verso, 1981], p. 70.)

TOWARD NICARAGUAN SOCIALISM

It may be that, finally, the contradictions of the "mixed economy" will -- as in Russia -- force the revolutionaries to move faster than they would like, and that the prescriptions advocated by Hilaire will be implemented sooner rather than later. But to see this as a measure that will solve the problems of Nicaragua is remarkably naive. Anticipating such a development, Victor Tirado commented: "It is necessary to take into account that socialism is going to be constructed in a backward country, without large-scale industry, and in a country whose economy basically revolves around agriculture and the processing of agricultural products. In a country that has few trained cadres to organize, administer, and direct industrial, agricultural, and service enterprises....In a nutshell, socialism will not be constructed starting from great abundance, as would be ideal, but rather from the little that we have." (Bruce Marcus, ed., Nicaragua, The Sandinista People's Revolution [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1985], p. 99.)

In fact, Marx argued that socialism cannot be realized under such circumstances, that the "development of productive forces...is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it want is merely made general, and with destitution the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced." As Trotsky observed in regard to the experience of the USSR: "The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all." (Marx and Engels, Selected Works, vol. 1, p. 37; Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed

[New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970], p. 112.) Should the Sandinistas be criticized for not running forward to such a fate?

Omar Cabezas argued--specifically in response to the urgings of Socialist Action leader Jeff Mackler--that "the overturn of these [capitalist] socio-economic property relations cannot be carried out by decree." Rather than rushing toward a premature dissolution of the mixed economy, "the most important thing here is to preserve power so that those socio-economic structures can be overturned at the appropriate time in the future; at a time [when] the objective and subjective conditions in Nicaragua and Central America are gathered." Specifically, Cabezas refers to the need "to buy time and to give time to our brothers and sisters in the rest of Central America to deepen and advance their revolutionary movements." (Cabezas, p. 7.)

This raises what is at this moment the primary aspect of permanent revolution in Nicaragua--its revolutionary-internationalist dimension. For the contradictions of the "mixed economy" to be resolved in a genuinely socialist manner, the socialist revolution will have to triumph beyond the borders of Nicaragua, and ultimately beyond the region of Central America. Of course, the impact of successful revolutions in one region of Latin America will be felt in other regions, and the winds of revolution can spread from one continent to another. The hopes of Nicaraguan revolutionaries mesh with the fears of U.S. policymakers to make this one of the most explosive points of confrontation in world politics.

Although the Sandinistas have accomplished a great deal, it is important not to idealize them. On the other hand, it is a mistake to underestimate them.

May 1986

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua

by Paul Le Blanc \$3.00

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

REPORTS

F.I.T. NATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE LAUNCHES 'BIDOM' SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

by Steve Bloom

On June 8th, members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency's National Organizing Committee met in New York to discuss current opportunities and problems facing the organization, and facing the broader Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States. The meeting voted to launch a campaign to broaden the circulation of the F.I.T.'s magazine, the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, and to recruit new members to the organization. In pursuit of the subscription drive, the Bulletin IDOM is establishing an introductory rate of \$5.00 for three issues and will ask those who send in or renew subscriptions for a year or more to submit the name of a friend or acquaintance who might like to receive a free sample copy.

A decision was also made that F.I.T. members around the country should solicit financial contributions to aid the new English-language theoretical magazine of the Fourth International, the International Marxist Review. NOCers expressed enthusiasm about the contents of the first issue of the IMR, which became available in late May. A general consensus emerged that this publication will become an important tool for pursuing the programmatic and ideological struggle against the faction in the FI, inspired by the Barnes leadership of the U.S. SWP, which is attempting to undermine the essential programmatic foundations of our world movement.

Another major topic of concern at the NOC meeting was the continued organizational division and divergence of perspective between the four groups in the U.S. which are in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International--the Socialist Workers Party, the F.I.T., Socialist Action, and the Fourth International Caucus of the newly fused organization, Solidarity. The NOC reaffirmed the perspective of the F.I.T. with regard to pursuing a basic programmatic clarification and debate about the important issues that separate these groups.

At the same time, the F.I.T. will continue to stress the need for common work, to the extent it is possible. This joint activity can take place both in the mass movements--such as Central America, anti-apartheid, Hormel strike support--and in projects which objectively support the process of winning people to the program of the FI. For example, the F.I.T., Socialist Action, and Solidarity have all taken part in building meetings for Goran Jacobsson, a member of the Swedish Socialist Party who is presently touring the United States, speaking on his experiences both in Poland where he spent several weeks in jail for activities in support of the Solidarnosc movement, and in Central America, where he was travelling in the months before his trip to the U.S.A.

Of special concern to the NOC was the long-standing problem of the SWP's "exclusion policy," which dictates that party bookstores, forums, campaign rallies, and other public events are closed to anyone who belongs to the F.I.T., Socialist Action, or the FI Caucus of Solidarity. The NOC voted to continue the ongoing efforts of the F.I.T. to get this policy reversed.

ENC NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS IN NEW YORK

by Bill Onasch

Dozens of anti-intervention activists from around the country participated in the Steering Committee meeting of the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean, held in New York City on June 7. The gathering heard an update on the political and military situation in Central America, presented by Jim Cockcroft, a professor at the University of Vermont; an assessment of labor's participation in spring anti-intervention and anti-apartheid actions, delivered by Bill Henning, vice president of Communications Workers of America Local 1180; as well as a roundup of spring campus actions by Josh Nessen, national student coordinator of the American Committee on Africa.

One point which was stressed in both Henning's and Nessen's reports, as

well as in the discussion by Steering Committee members, was the importance of the June 14 anti-apartheid action scheduled for New York's Central Park. Members of the Philadelphia ENC are helping to organize busses to bring people to the demonstration, and the New York ENC is working with other Central American groups to organize an anti-intervention contingent in the march, which can help link the issues of South Africa and Central America.

Steering Committee members from Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Seattle, Cleveland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and New York discussed some of the developments this spring in their localities. Though each situation was different, in all cases the ENC had been active with other groups in building picket lines, rallies, etc. to protest the efforts of the Reagan administration to push aid to the Nicaraguan contras through Congress. In some places there had also been public protests against the bombing of Libya.

A perspectives report was given by ENC national coordinator Jerry Gordon, and was adopted unanimously by the body. It included the following projections for the basic policy of the ENC toward current political developments: 1) It affirmed the decision of the ENC Executive Committee to issue a statement denouncing the bombing of Libya (see BIDOM

No. 31, p. 31), and pledged the organization to participate actively in protesting any similar aggressive acts by the U.S. administration. 2) It expressed the support of the ENC to sanctuary leaders facing jail terms as a result of prosecution by the government. 3) It reaffirmed the ENC's special relationship to the anti-apartheid movement, making efforts to link the struggles against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean with the problem of how to end apartheid.

Gordon noted that while there are many anti-intervention activists around the country committed to building mass actions, the ENC remains the only organized national grouping consistently working for this perspective. He proposed that the ENC continue to look for openings to build united national and local actions, and explain to other organizations the importance of putting together a democratic national coalition to organize the mass sentiment that exists in opposition to Washington's war moves in Central America.

Gordon also projected that the ENC undertake more educational activities, such as local conferences and forums. He reported that a pamphlet would be published by the ENC soon on the topic of "Why Mass Action?".

The Steering Committee set its next meeting for Cleveland in December.

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FOR A MASS ACTION ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

A Mass Action Strategy for Peace, Jobs and Justice, by Carl Finamore, a Socialist Action Pamphlet, 24 pp., \$.75.

This pamphlet, written by a national leader of Socialist Action, is divided into two parts: a reprint of Finamore's article, "A Response to Critics: SF Coalition Sets Example for Antiwar Movement," which appeared in the June 1985 issue of Socialist Action newspaper; and an "Introduction" which, though undated, was clearly written sometime in 1986.

In the earlier piece, Finamore convincingly establishes some of the basic positions held by the mass action wing of the antiwar movement. He counterposes the power of independent mass mobilizations as "a central strategy to force a change in the government's policies" to an electoral strategy which led so much of the movement to support Walter Mondale in the 1984 elections. He argues the need for a broad anti-intervention movement, which would include the solidarity component, rather than an "orientation of making political support to the revolutionary forces in Central America" the central axis for the movement and a precondition for participating in it.

Finamore also makes a clear and forceful statement on the need for anti-intervention forces to coalesce:

"With full recognition of the differences that exist, the political goal of the anti-intervention movement must be to forge the broadest possible unity against the U.S. government's war policies.

"The reason for building a coalition in the first place might seem elementary, but some participants in the movement don't seem to understand it. The idea is to find the points of unity among the various groups and to set the disagreements aside....

"This seems self-evident and almost everyone will proclaim their support for

such an approach. But yet this unity in action is extremely difficult to attain in practice."

Discussing some of the difficulties, Finamore defends Socialist Action against two criticisms of positions it took in building the San Francisco April 20, 1985 demonstration: 1) its support for the decision not to have representatives from the Salvadoran FDR/FMLN or from the Nicaraguan FSLN as speakers, and 2) its opposition to including the slogan "No U.S. Intervention in the Middle East" as one of the demands. He explains that these involved tactical considerations, and contends that they required a flexible approach in order to maintain broad labor support for the action.

LACK OF FOCUS IN THE INTRODUCTION

Finamore's introduction to the June 1985 article attempts to catalog and update the major political developments since it was written. In eight pages he talks about the latest stage in the capitalist economic crisis; the problem of the debt; international inflation; depressed living standards for the world's workers; U.S. military support to Duarte, Marcos, Pinochet, and Botha; cuts in social programs; declining real wages; concessionary bargaining; New York's aborted antinuclear referendum; the growth of the sanctuary movement; the growth of the anti-apartheid movement on the campuses; the role of federal mediation and arbitration in demobilizing activist and militant union membership; the effect of Taft-Hartley, Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin, and other anti-labor laws; bureaucratic policies of top union officials; the role of the Democratic and Republican parties as political arms of the capitalist class; the Hormel strike; the "Buy America" campaign; the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation strike, and the Chicago Tribune demonstration. All are apparent-

ly cited to prove that "a truly massive labor-led movement for peace, jobs and justice can be built in this country."

But Finamore does not demonstrate how these developments can be linked in an effective way to advance the independent mass action strategy. And the contention that labor can take the lead in building a "peace, jobs and justice" movement does not mean that it is prepared to do so now, given its current priorities and the class collaborationist policies followed by its top officialdom.

PROBLEMS OF THE MOVEMENT

Let's suppose, however, that such a movement were a realistic immediate prospect. What, specifically, should antiwar fighters do to help bring it into existence? "Do what we did in San Francisco" is no answer for activists around the country, who may work with a local labor movement with different traditions and with a different level of consciousness than is found in the Bay Area.

Even in San Francisco the Coalition for Peace, Jobs, and Justice faces an uncertain future. At its April 19 demonstration this year, no plans were announced for future activities, and many of the trade union leaders who have in the past been active in the coalition are now increasingly turning toward electoral pursuits.

Socialist Action's emphasis on the need for maximum trade union involvement and participation in the anti-intervention movement is correct. At the same time, work must proceed with all antiwar forces, both in and out of the labor movement, who are prepared to carry out the mass action perspective. Building united front actions locally against U.S. intervention and unifying the movement into a broad-based national coalition remain cardinal objectives.

ISSUES AND SLOGANS

Writing at a time when the U.S. anti-intervention movement faced perhaps its most significant confrontation to date with the Reagan administration over

the issue of contra aid, Finamore failed to highlight the centrality of this. To be sure, he mentions the contra aid dispute a couple of times in the Introduction, but it is raised only in passing and is buried among the host of other questions discussed.

Local Central America coalitions and groups were extremely active this spring organizing demonstrations on this question in an estimated 300 cities in mid-April alone. Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets in the last few months to demand no aid to the contras. But this upsurge in anti-intervention actions--limited and uncoordinated as it was--was neither called for in Finamore's Introduction nor foreseen by its author. Why?

A reading of the Socialist Action newspaper plainly shows that it is not because Finamore believed the contra-aid fight to be of limited importance. Socialist Action joined in urging maximum mobilization against U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries.

The problem is Finamore's contention that building the broadest and most powerful antiwar movement in this country today requires raising multiple demands at every step. But issues develop unevenly and vary in their potential for bringing about the most timely and effective mobilizations. An effective strategy for building a sustained, national antiwar movement requires that it have specific, defined, and clear-cut demands and objectives, with concurrent developments linked in ways that do not obscure the central focus. (Such strengthening links are customarily made through speakers at rallies, highly visible banners, the distribution of literature and other materials, etc.)

Socialist Action's pamphlet demonstrates a serious weakness in its attempt to take up virtually the entire range of political issues without prioritizing the central and most immediate ones. At the same time its strength lies in putting forward a generally correct strategic perspective for building a mass action movement against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

--Reviewed by Samuel Adams

LETTERS

WORKERS STRUGGLE - BOURGEOISIE MANEUVERS

This last week the farmers' strike against the FmHA office in Chillicothe, Missouri, forced the transfer of the chief loan officer of that federal lending agency. His refusal to make supervisor loans to farmers suffering dire consequences from hard times had forced area farmers to blockade the office with tractors and other farm equipment since March 17. The loan officer was transferred to Columbia, Missouri, to attend management school!

May 7 was the high point of the farmers' strike against FmHA. At that time a protest rally brought support from Kansas City, St. Louis, and Austin, Minnesota, workers. Many solidarity groups were there.

In contrast to this workers' and farmers' movement for a different approach to government, the two capitalist parties had "business-as-usual" last week in our state. A poll was released which showed our two senators -- liberal Democrat Eagleton and Reagan's company man Danforth -- to be two of the richest men in the Senate. Many representatives, like Gene Taylor, (R) 7th District, seemed well fixed, too, quickly approaching millionaire status. Our former governor Kit Bond comes from a powerful Kansas City family.

The best item, though, was the fracas between elitist Democratic senatorial hopeful, Lt. Gov. Harriet Woods --Eagleton is retiring and she wants his seat -- who campaigns disguised as a feminist. It seems Jane Fonda gave Ms. Woods a \$2,000 contribution for her campaign and the GOP insists that Ms. Woods give it back because Jane was in North Vietnam during the U.S. military actions in the south of that country. Wow! The excitement is building. But somehow, when these silly maneuverings are compared to the struggle in Chillicothe, they seem a bit absurd.

Please send a copy of The Workers' and Farmers' Government pamphlet. It seems a good time to read it. Enclosed is \$2. Thank you.

A comrade
Fordland, Missouri

NEARSIGHTED BOSSES

I agree with the comments made in your June "Letters" column by "A reader" about getting more people to write to the Bulletin with their thoughts and suggestions. That would really liven up your publication even more.

However, I disagree about the attitude of the ruling class toward the trade union bureaucracy, in the P-9 strike or in any other situation. I believe Dave Riehle is correct when he says that the packinghouse bosses would prefer to have no union at all in the industry, and do not consider the UFCW bureaucracy as their ally, even when it sabotages a strike like that in Austin Minnesota and hamstring the workers.

The ruling class isn't particularly farsighted. In one sense it's probably true, as "a reader" comments, that, "The bosses need the bureaucracy more than ever, for it is their strongest support." But the bosses don't see things that way, and from their own perspective they are correct.

For the capitalists, any union, whether bureaucratized or not, is an obstacle to the imposition of unrestricted control over the workplace. They don't like even the minimal limitations on corporate authority which the bureaucrats must maintain in order to preserve the passivity of a decisive layer of the workers. Still worse, from the bosses' point of view, is the possibility that the bureaucrats might be ousted and a fighting leadership installed--which remains a possibility as long as there is any union at all, as the P-9 struggle itself illustrates full well.

For all of these reasons, the ruling class only tolerates the bureaucracy as a lesser evil to a genuine union movement run by and for the rank and file. Whenever possible, the bosses would much rather deal with no union at all. The idea of the union bureaucracy as a "partner" of the bosses is an illusion cherished by the top layers of the AFL-CIO. But it is not shared at all by the capitalists.

Keep up the good work in publishing a fine magazine.

A friend
Brooklyn, New York

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