

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

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EDITORIAL BOARD: Naomi Allen, Steve Bloom, Laura Cole, Paul Le Blanc, Frank Lovell, Sarah Lovell, Bill Onasch, George Saunders, Evelyn Sell, Rita Shaw, Jean Tussey

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY WINS SUIT AGAINST FBI

by Stuart Brown

After a delay of five years, Federal District Court Judge Thomas P. Griesa has announced a decision in the Socialist Workers Party's lawsuit against the FBI and other Federal agencies. The SWP charged in the suit that there had been a concerted campaign to harass and spy on the organization, in violation of the party's constitutional rights—and those of its members—to free speech and political association.

Griesa, on August 25, 1986, presented his findings from the trial, which took place in 1981. He stated that the SWP proved the existence of an illegal disruption campaign directed against it by the government, and awarded \$264,000 in damages.

FREEDOM SOCIALIST PARTY CONTINUES COURT FIGHT FOR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The Freedom Socialist Party has appealed to the Washington State Supreme Court in an effort to reverse a lower court decision requiring it to turn over minutes of its meetings. The decision came as part of proceedings in a lawsuit brought by disgruntled ex-member, Richard Snedigar, who claims that the FSP took money from him under false pretenses.

On October 10, 1985, King County Superior Court Judge Robert Dixon ordered the FSP either to give Snedigar the minutes he was requesting or turn them over to a judge for review. However, as a July 31 news release from the FSP explains: "In its latest appeal, the FSP notes that the courts are an arm of a government to which the party is politically opposed." Turning over internal FSP documents to a state judge would be just as much an invasion of the party's rights as turning them over to Snedigar.

The FSP has circulated a list of endorsers for its defense effort, which consists of scores of organizations and individuals from across the country, along with over a hundred additional names from the Pacific Coast region. Those wishing to get more information, or offer support in this important case can contact the party at 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle, WA. 98118.

According to an article in the August 26 *New York Times*, Griesa "held that the F.B.I. had violated the party's First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly and that the surreptitious entering of premises had violated Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and seizures." Despite the almost \$2 million paid by the FBI to agents in and around the SWP over the course of its "investigation" of the party, there is, as Griesa acknowledged, "no indication that any informant ever observed any violation of Federal law or gave information leading to a single arrest for any Federal law violation."

While Griesa's decision is an important victory for free speech, its scope remains limited and, as noted constitutional attorney Leonard Boudin said upon hearing of the award, "the amount of damages is not really proportionate to the damage done." The SWP had asked for \$40 million when it filed the suit. In addition to monetary compensation, the SWP had sought a court order barring the FBI and other government agencies from engaging in similar activities in the future. This Griesa refused to grant, on the grounds that there is "no present or threatened activity which warrants such a remedy." While finding for the party on the single point of the illegal government disruption campaign, Griesa rejected a number of other damage claims by the party, along with three individual claims, on legal technicalities.

An additional damage claim by Morris Star-sky—a member of the SWP who was fired from his job as associate professor of philosophy at Arizona State University in the late 1960s as a result of FBI harassment—was rejected on the basis that an adequate case had not been made.

Despite the limitations of Griesa's decision, it represents a significant victory which will be of importance to the SWP and other left groups in the effort to defend democratic rights for those who oppose U.S. government policy. As Boudin also pointed out in his comments, Griesa's ruling "actually addressed the government's counterintelligence program and held that a political organization has a right to privacy."

The government has not yet announced whether it will appeal Griesa's ruling.

August 27, 1986

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE HORMEL WORKERS' STRUGGLE

by Dave Riehle

The Wynn leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers International has spent millions attempting to crush Local P-9 in its strike against the Geo. A. Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota—mailing out voluminous diatribes against P-9 to every central labor body and international union in the country, hiring high priced lawyers, and sending in over 20 "organizers" to Austin, after calling off the strike, at \$100 per diem expenses, plus wages.

The UFCW printed and circulated thousands of dollars worth of fancy stickers to vending machine operators urging consumers to "Buy Hormel—A Union Made Product." Many operators, having their attention directed to the hot controversy surrounding Hormel, and frequently receiving dire threats from workers in whose plants the machines were located, decided to drop them altogether.

Nevertheless, the fact that the UFCW bureaucrats can mobilize the resources of the million-member union against the embattled Hormel workers has been a terrible handicap to their struggle. If such a policy had been submitted to a democratic vote of the members of the UFCW, there is no doubt that it would have been overwhelmingly rejected.

P-9 Workers Fight Back

Having long anticipated the blows that were leveled against them in June through the trusteeship and the court (see article, "Hormel Strike—UFCW Bureaucracy Imposes Trustee," by Dave Riehle, *Bulletin IDOM* No. 33, September 1986), the Hormel workers and their friends responded promptly. Within a day of their eviction from their headquarters, they had established not one, but two new offices in Austin. Only a few blocks away from the Austin Labor Center, one serves as the headquarters of the United Support Group. Another is now the base of operation for the North American Meatpackers Union (NAMPU).

Thus the unquenchable struggle of the Hormel workers created yet another new development. Having concluded that their inalienable right as workers—to democratically decide under what wages and conditions they would agree to work, and to select a leadership to carry out their decisions—was blocked by the court-sanctioned trusteeship, they reorganized their forces. They petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for a "recertification" election. Under this procedure, the NLRB would conduct an election to redetermine the legally recognized bargaining agent for the

HORMEL STRIKE UPDATE

On August 28, after this article was completed, a tentative contract was agreed to by the Hormel Company and the UFCW trustee in charge of Local P-9. A mail ballot was held during the week before September 12, with those still on strike plus workers inside the plant being eligible to vote. In a defeat for the strikers the agreement was approved by a two to one margin. The results will be challenged. No text of the contract was available to workers before the vote, which was based on a summary of its provisions. Top wages under the negotiated agreement, which will be reached in 1990, are \$10.70 per hour. This compares to a wage of \$10.69 per hour which was the standard in the plant ten years previous to that date—in 1980.

In imposing the trusteeship, the UFCW International pledged itself to negotiate an agreement which would retain the jobs of striking workers and bring the expiration date of the Austin contract in line with other plants in the Hormel chain. The new agreement does neither. The Hormel Company says that there are no openings available to hire back striking workers, and although the contract covering Austin was negotiated as part of a package including seven or eight Hormel plants, its expiration date is a year later than those for the other cities.

The North American Meatpackers Union (NAMPU) held a meeting on August 31 to discuss the proposed agreement. Six to eight hundred attended, and the overwhelming sentiment was in opposition to the terms of the contract. The NAMPU plans to continue its organizing efforts.

workers. Three choices were to be presented on the ballot: 1) UFCW P-9 (the International's operation), 2) Original P-9, 3) No union. When signatures from close to 50 percent of the eligible workers, including both former strikers and strike-breakers now working in the plant, were submitted, the NLRB attempted to sabotage the effort by ruling that "Original P-9" was too close to "UFCW P-9" and might confuse some honest workers who hadn't heard about the dispute.

Within days, another petition was submitted, this time on behalf of the "North American Meatpackers Union." The NLRB was forced to rule that the petition was valid. For a representation election to take place, however, would virtually as-

sure a victory for the NAMPU. There is even significant support for this alternative within the plant itself, and the new union has distributed literature at the plant gate urging support from those on the inside. Consequently, the regional NLRB office has ruled that no election can be conducted until all unfair labor practice charges pending are resolved, thus postponing any election to the indefinite future.

It is quite likely, if that time ever arrives, that the NLRB will find some formula to rule that the former strikers are ineligible to vote. This, however, will be one more step in unmasking the NLRB as yet another agent of the employers, along with the courts, cops, elected officials, and union bureaucrats.

Those directing the antilabor offensive against the Austin workers will have to balance the political costs of their actions against the benefits derived from delivering another blow to the workers. The employers always confront this political dilemma—that they undermine the image of their institutions as impartial, standing above the class struggle, when these bodies intervene directly on behalf of the bosses. The more openly and uncompromisingly a struggle is waged, the more all these institutions are stripped of their pretensions.

That kind of political clarity is a necessity for advancing the struggle to the next stage—to begin to be able to generalize about the social forces at work in society, and to begin to organize politically, on a class basis, to counter them. The seeds of this are contained in every serious battle. One of the real historic contributions of the Hormel workers' struggle, especially in its relentless optimism, audacity, and perseverance, is that by refusing to quit they have step by step begun to force out into the open many of the hidden social relationships inherent in the class struggle.

The Union Bureaucracy Exposed

Probably more than anything else, they have begun to demystify the union bureaucracy, the institution referred to by millions of workers in their respective unions as "the International." By their persistence they forced the UFCW hierarchy to show its real colors, and by the solidarity extended to the Wynn leadership from their fellow "Internationalists," this lesson is being generalized.

Their struggle is also beginning to demystify the power wielded by these fat cats through their legions of lawyers, researchers, editors, "organizers," and other flunkys. Their multimillion dollar strike funds and all the other weapons in the arsenal of a powerful organization meant little in the P-9 strike, and were even brought to bear *against* the Hormel workers. Yet they have carried on for more than a year while almost totally unemployed, with contributions from 3,000 local unions in all 50 states, hundreds of volun-

teer organizers, and a deep reservoir of working class solidarity exerted through a pervasive consumer boycott. They have been able to mobilize thousands in demonstrations, rallies, and other forms of solidarity, both in Austin and all across the country.

And now, rather than knuckling under, they are going to organize their own union, with no jobs, no "International," and, as Carl Skoglund once said about the Minneapolis Teamsters, no friends except the workers. In a sense, the Hormel workers have now come full circle. This is where they started out 53 years ago. The Independent Union of All Workers, Local 1, received its charter from the workers in Austin, and nobody else.

IUAW Local 1 set out to get a national packinghouse workers union. They organized some 15 locals in the Midwest area, and persistently campaigned for the formation of a democratic national union. Under the leadership of a group of Trotskyists and others, whose history is only now beginning to be assembled, the Austin local played a vanguard role in the formation of the United Packinghouse Workers of America (CIO). Although the press likes to refer to the UFCW as P-9's parent union, it's really the other way around.

Assessing the Present Stage

Faced with the willingness of the courts to enforce the theft of their rights by the UFCW leaders, the Austin workers are certainly within their rights to utilize every and any means to resist, including demanding enforcement of rights formally assured them in Federal labor legislation. The fact that these formal rights—the right to democratically select the organization and leadership to represent them—are in contradiction with the real procapitalist policy of the courts and the NLRB is a contradiction for which they need not assume responsibility.

The contradictions between formal democratic guarantees and fundamental capitalist interests are legacies of past struggles, contradictions inherent in bourgeois society, which every intelligent proletarian leadership attempts to utilize, whether they formulate it that way or not. To carry on the struggle, the Hormel workers clearly have to have an organization of their own. And they need to find every possibility for strengthening its formal legality and legitimacy.

Nevertheless, some fainthearted friends of P-9 have utilized this decision on the part of the Austin workers to excuse themselves from the struggle. The various components of the labor officialdom, who base themselves on more concrete material considerations, have all long ago established their position on the P-9 question. The recertification effort has affected them only insofar as it could be utilized as an additional argument to discredit the struggle, and to cut off funds. However, some elements of the left uncomfortable with unambiguous support for the Austin workers—which places them at odds with more

influential forces they look to in the labor movement—have seized on the recertification petition as an excuse to retreat. (The *Guardian* and *In These Times*, for example, have dropped P-9 from their list of priority topics.)

These forces point out that if this maneuver is carried out successfully, the Hormel workers will be outside the AFL-CIO, indeed, outside any national union. But the only alternative that the UFCW bureaucracy has presented them is to be quietly strangled while they remain a part of "official" organized labor.

The Hormel workers' decision is not the product of anyone's schema for reconstructing the union movement from the outside. It is the outcome of an entirely justifiable struggle that step by step has reached this stage. Whether it can succeed remains an open question, the ultimate answer to which depends on the reaction of much larger forces in the U.S. class struggle.

To say that the Austin workers cannot legitimately make the tactical choice which they have is to say that they were wrong to continue their fight at all after the opposition of the Wynn leadership became clear. That, of course, is the real position of all opponents of the P-9 struggle within the labor movement. Those who are taking the recertification attempt as their exit cue are simply expressing a delayed capitulation to the union bureaucracy and its political supporters.

The Fight Moves Forward

Austin is where the accumulating forces of rebellion in the U.S. labor movement broke through because the *combination* of factors necessary to begin open struggle against the antilabor offensive were present there—the confidence engendered by a new plant and a young work force; the deep historical tradition and continuity of the Austin local; the erosion of the authority and influence of the union bureaucracy in the meatpacking industry; the election of a new leadership, with direct ties to the militant tradition; and the ability of progressive forces in the Minnesota labor movement to mobilize early to provide crucial support.

Under those conditions such a fight must go forward, whether or not broader forces are developed enough to decisively intervene in support. This is how the historical law of uneven and combined development expresses itself—just as it did when the Paris Communards attempted, in 1871, to overthrow the French bourgeois system even though the existence of the potential resources for establishing socialism and the development of

a national and international class struggle capable of giving them the support they needed was problematical at best. The task of revolutionaries is not to lament that "this is not the time," but to give the struggle all out and unconditional support (while at the same time, of course, never sacrificing our critical faculties).

It is by no means a certainty that the Austin workers are going to fail in their attempt to reconstitute their organization. They have a number of factors in their favor, despite the seemingly overwhelming odds against them.

First, they are able to exert continuing pressure on the Hormel Company. The national boycott continues, supported by millions of individual working people. The company has not yet found a way to resume full production without incorporating the skilled and experienced workers who struck. According to workers in Austin, as of July 1986 there were only about 650 strikebreakers in the plant, down from 1,100 at the peak of the strike last February.

The company has only about a third of the former work force at the Ottumwa, Iowa, plant, its second largest, where 505 workers were fired for honoring P-9's roving picket line. The Hormel Co. is sitting with a seven-year-old \$100-million plant in Austin that would be very difficult to shut down and walk away from. To do so would in all probability destroy the Hormel Company and risk setting in motion even more chaos in the meatpacking industry. The Austin workers continue to base their fight on appealing to workers throughout the entire meatpacking industry.

Workers throughout the industry, their contempt for the UFCW and the Wynn leadership at an all time high, and inspired by the dauntless Hormel workers, may be prepared to take matters into their own hands. Naturally, any attempt to launch a new union outside the framework of the existing labor movement—and in this case even in opposition to it—contains the risk of isolation and defeat. History is littered with the wreckage of similar attempts. But it is only the striking Hormel workers themselves who are in a position to decide whether this risk is one they choose to take in the face of alternative prospects which are also none too promising.

The class struggle has always proven capable of carving out new channels for itself. It is often said that political theory is gray, but the tree of life is eternally green. The Hormel workers of Austin may yet again lead the way in helping to reorder the U.S. labor movement, as they did when they first set out on their own in 1933.

August 25, 1986

MID-ATLANTIC COALITION FORMED TO OPPOSE U.S. INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

by David Williams

In the seven years since the Nicaraguan revolution took power, the United States has engaged in a steadily increasing campaign of aggression against the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean. Both the Carter and Reagan administrations have provided arms and training to the reactionary government in El Salvador. Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada in 1983, imposing a pro-U.S. government which promptly named its new airport in his honor. Now both houses of the U.S. Congress have appropriated \$100 million to the gang of reactionary cutthroats known as the *contras*. Their aim is the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government. Their practice is the murder and torture of Nicaraguan civilians. Not since the end of the Vietnam war has the U.S. carried on such unmitigated, brazen aggression. The situation clearly calls for action on the part of all those who believe that the people of Central America and the Caribbean have a right to run their own affairs without interference from Washington.

In those seven years, action in the U.S. in opposition to these policies has been spotty at best. There have been good demonstrations on occasion, such as the massive march in Washington on April 20, 1985. However, the majority sentiment against U.S. intervention has not been consistently translated into action. Although there are many organizations in existence that do reflect this sentiment, the movement as a whole remains fragmented and confused. One activist in New York has compiled a list of forty-six anti-intervention/solidarity groups in that city alone, each working in isolation from the other forty-five. Obviously, this state of affairs does not help us to defend the Nicaraguan revolution or the fighters in El Salvador and Guatemala.

In the Washington, D.C., area a new awareness of this problem has given rise to the Washington Area Coalition to Stop the U.S. War on Nicaragua. This group has, since Congress opened debate on *contra* aid, organized a number of successful local protests. In doing so it has brought together activists from Washington, D.C., itself, from all over Maryland, and from Virginia. In July the D.C. coalition decided to invite anti-intervention fighters from other Mid-Atlantic states to a conference to form a Mid-Atlantic regional coalition. That conference, which was held on July 27, was attended by more than 75 people from 10 states and from many different organizations.

In the meantime, three national actions had been called for the fall by different constituen-

cies. The religious wing of the anti-intervention movement, whose main work has been to provide sanctuary for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, proposed a March/Pilgrimage for Sanctuary September 28 in Washington. Solidarity groups and trade unions are being encouraged to come to Washington and participate.

Fall Actions

At a student anti-apartheid conference in June, participants decided to organize local demonstrations against apartheid on October 10 and 11 in opposition to Reagan's "constructive engagement" charade.

In July, an "invitations-only" meeting in Philadelphia called for demonstrations in local areas on October 25. Unlike September 28, which has a clear focus on Central America, or the October 10/11 call, which concentrates on South Africa, the October 25 call raised a series of demands, the most prominent of which related to arms-control. The demands listed on its leaflet are: "Abolish All Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2000," "Stop the U.S. War in Central America and End Intervention in the Middle East," "Redirect Resources from the Military to Meet Human Needs and Defend Human Rights," and "Cut All Ties with South Africa and End Racism at Home." Some of the people involved in calling October 25 made it clear that one of their aims was to help elect "progressive" Democratic candidates in the 1986 elections.

Since that initial meeting, the supporters of October 25 have had a tough time selling their idea, and their biggest problem has been resistance to "burying" Central America in a variety of other demands. In Los Angeles, for example, a coalition of more than 35 organizations rejected the October 25 call and is holding a demonstration on November 1, whose central demand is "U.S. Out of Central America." Activists in San Francisco also decided against building an event on October 25.

In Washington, D.C., the demonstration will have a different character from the one projected in the Philadelphia meeting. That was one of the results of the July Mid-Atlantic conference. The call from the Washington area coalition is to "Say No to the U.S. War on Nicaragua." Though it lists other demands on its leaflet, the Washington coalition is building an October 25 demonstration whose central focus is unmistakable.

Establish a National Anti-Intervention Coalition Now!

by Jerry Gordon and Jim Lafferty

How many more escalations must take place before the U.S. anti-intervention movement unites and establishes a national anti-intervention coalition which can call coordinated mass actions?

The latest escalation—the June 25 vote by the U.S. House of Representatives approving aid to the contras—underscores how critical the situation has become. The U.S. government has virtually declared war on Nicaragua.

The question is, how will the U.S. anti-intervention movement react to this situation? Shall we continue as a splintered, fragmented, and divided movement with the major sectors of the movement—labor, solidarity, and religious—going their separate ways? Or shall we at last unite and create a broad, all-embracing, non-exclusionary national coalition that can bring these sectors together, along with local Central America coalitions, and all other concerned forces, so that larger mobilizations can be mounted in the streets to reflect the popular opposition to U.S. policies in Central America and the Caribbean?

After the June 25 vote, is it not essential that activists take an in-depth, critical look at the state of the U.S. anti-intervention movement in order to assess why the contra aid fight was lost and what must be done now to strengthen the movement so that it can forestall future planned U.S. escalations and end the U.S. wars against the peoples of Central America?

In the first half of 1986, the U.S. anti-intervention movement experienced a real upsurge. Tens of thousands participated in hundreds of demonstrations around the country, demanding "No Aid to the Contras!" These actions, nearly all

called and organized by local Central America coalitions, were the highly visible expression of opposition that was so vitally needed. Without them, contra aid would likely have sailed through on the first vote in April.

Yet the demonstrations failed to realize their potential in reflecting the popular opposition to contra aid. They did not produce the outpouring of masses of people that the situation required. There were two reasons for that. The first was that in the absence of an authoritative national anti-intervention coalition, local groups were left to organize actions on their own that were not regionally or nationally coordinated. Instead of the entire movement uniting to set dates for all to mobilize around, the actions called were scattered, isolated, and limited in impact. This reflects the splintered state of the U.S. anti-intervention movement.

By contrast, the anti-apartheid movement targeted June 14 and over 100,000 people turned out in New York City alone. The NOW demonstrations on March 9 and 16 mobilized over 150,000 people in support of abortion rights. These actions prove again how important it is for any social movement to have specific rallying points.

The second reason was that significant forces in the anti-intervention movement, not at present convinced that united mass action should be the movement's central strategy for getting the U.S. out of Central America and the Caribbean, instead pursued small group lobbying as their priority. As a consequence, they did not throw themselves into building or participating in the demonstrations that were called.

Some people in the anti-intervention movement have lost faith in the movement's ability to turn out substantial numbers of people. Yet on May 3, 1981—five years and

numerous escalations ago—100,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., to oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvador. And on April 20, 1985, 125,000 people took to the streets in several cities to protest U.S. policies in Central America, among other demands. Over 100,000 Americans have visited Nicaragua since 1979. Popular sentiment continues to run strong against Reagan's Central America policies, with the polls on the eve of the contra aid vote showing a 62 percent to 29 percent majority opposed. The problem is not that the people are not ready to march to protest U.S. policies in Central America, but rather that there has not been a united anti-intervention movement to lead them into the streets.

Lobbying as a central strategy has been tried and found wanting. Electing new or different Democrats and Republicans who agree on the need to crush the Sandinista government and who differ only on how or when, is certainly no answer either. Small civil disobedience actions can never be a substitute for moving large masses of people.

Specifically, we urge the major national anti-intervention organizations, together with local Central America coalitions, to convene a broadly representative national conference or meeting to establish a national anti-intervention coalition. This coalition should have a clear-cut focus: the demand that the U.S. end all intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

The main purpose of the coalition would be to call united and nationally coordinated demonstrations in support of its demands. This would in no way interfere with the many and diversified activities carried out by participating groups independent of the coalition.

The urgent need for the U.S. anti-intervention movement to unite now is more evident than ever. The task remains to take the concrete organizational steps to make this unity a reality.

These are excerpts from a July 16 statement issued by the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC).

Mid-Atlantic Conference

The Washington coalition is composed of serious activists who want to build effective actions. It represents a broad political cross-section of those who oppose U.S. intervention in Central America. Many of these individuals thought it would be good to build an action on October 25 in order to have nationally united demonstrations, without necessarily agreeing with the pro-Democratic Party/multi-issue orientation of the key national Peace, Jobs, and Justice Coalition leaders. They felt that, as the builders of the anti-intervention movement in the Washington area, they, and not a small group of self-selected individuals meeting behind closed doors, should determine the character of a demonstration in their city. Others felt that it would cause more disunity if the Washington coalition attempted to impose its politics on another group's demonstration, and that it would be best to go along with the demands projected nationally for October 25. Still others thought that the best way to resolve the problem was not to organize an October 25 action at all, but concentrate on the other fall dates.

These disagreements were clearly drawn at the July 27 Mid-Atlantic conference. At the D.C. coalition steering committee meeting held the day before, October 25 supporters convinced a majority to support the October 25 *demands* as well as the date. The action proposal which they brought into the conference the next day listed four slogans: "Abolish All Nuclear Weapons," "Stop the U.S. War in Central America and U.S. Intervention in the Middle East," "Redirect Resources from the Military to Meet Human Needs," and "Cut All Ties with South Africa and End Racism at Home."

The conference was completely open and democratic, which allowed a solution to the disagreement over dates and slogans to be hammered out. After the steering committee representative motivated its action proposal, Jim Lafferty, from the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean, was given equal time to motivate a different proposal submitted by that group. He argued that a demonstration lacking a clear focus on Central America would not be helpful. It would be best to concentrate on September 28 and October 10/11, and not to get involved with October 25.

In the ensuing discussion, the merits of single versus multiple demands were debated. Many participants expressed opposition to diluting the Central America issue in a host of other slogans. October 25 supporters, for their part, stated that they were in no way counterposing October 25 to September 28, and that their action proposal included both dates. One of the supporters of October 25 explained that the demonstration would be an anti-intervention demonstration, and that the other demands were, in his words, "sub-demands" after the demand of stopping the U.S. war on Nicaragua.



Roger Barricada/Managua

As the debate was drawing to a close a compromise was reached. Lafferty proposed an amendment to the steering committee proposal which strengthened its support to the September 28 action. This was accepted as friendly by the proposal's sponsors. Karen Davis, a representative of the Christic Institute and one of the organizers of the September 28 march, then offered an amendment to change the demands of October 25. She proposed that the issue of Central America be separated from the slogan on the Middle East, and that Central America come first on the list. Her amendment was not accepted as friendly, but was nevertheless adopted when put to a vote. A third amendment, accepted and approved, was that through the building of the three actions, a Mid-Atlantic regional coalition to stop the U.S. war on Central America be organized. The amended action proposal was then approved overwhelmingly.

The conference also voted to draw up a preliminary leaflet for the fall actions and to send copies of the conference minutes and action proposals as amended to all conference participants, and within three weeks that decision was carried out. At a steering committee meeting of the Mid-Atlantic coalition held on August 24, plans made by the conference for the fall actions in Washington were strengthened, and the focus on Central America confirmed.

The September 28 and October 25 demonstrations in Washington will be focused squarely against U.S. intervention in Central America. They deserve the support of all in the Mid-Atlantic region who can attend, as do the October 10/11 anti-apartheid dates.

The Washington area coalition has related very well so far with anti-intervention groups in other East Coast cities who are participating in the Mid-Atlantic coalition. It appears that this new coalition can be effective in mobilizing the already existing sentiment against U.S. intervention and against *contra* aid—mobilization which at the present time is sorely needed. It can only be hoped that the example of the Mid-Atlantic region will be duplicated in other areas and on a national level in the coming months.

August 26, 1986

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL CAVES IN ON CENTRAL AMERICA

by Jack Bresee

The Socialist International (SI) has caved in on Central America. For several years, since the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, the international organization of the Social Democracy has made noises about supporting the Sandinista government, as well as the struggle of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. It even provided some important material aid. But no more.

This, of course, comes as no surprise to anyone familiar with the history of the SI—which capitulates regularly to the imperialist ruling classes around the world whenever the going gets rough. Nevertheless, its new approach to Central America, adopted at the June SI Congress in Lima, Peru, must come as a blow to many Nicaraguans and Salvadorans who have looked to the SI for support.

An article appearing in the June 29 *Miami Herald* by Lucy Komisar, a New York based writer who covered the Lima congress, explained some of the changes. For the first time the SI did not endorse by name the FMLN. Indeed, it adopted a resolution calling for "an end to foreign support for irregular forces and subversive groups operating . . . in the region."

Vice president of the SI, former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber, explained how the SI position on El Salvador had changed. It now backs Duarte. The SI, he said, feels Duarte was elected in a process "as democratic as that in Nicaragua or Mexico." In Mexico? We won't give him any argument there. And let's throw in Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala—and all of South America too. But Nicaragua? There is simply no comparison. The SI itself admitted as much by its own statements during the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan elections, and they make liars of themselves with their policy shift.

But that character flaw has never bothered the SI before. Memory of its own past doesn't serve well—it's about as meaningful as a history book written by George Orwell's Winston Smith at the Department of Truth. Even language calling for the "deepening" of Salvadoran democracy—urged by former Venezuelan President Carlos Perez—was too much. During Duarte's election the SI called it a hoax. Now it says, "Duarte's government is democratic." Armed action in El Salvador is not justified.

As for Nicaragua, Willie Brandt of West Germany now speaks of being "anti-Somocista" as opposed to supporting the Sandinistas. The SI invited a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) directorate to their congress but felt compelled to bring a contra leader too, in order to be fair. Bayardo Arce came from the FSLN, and Alfredo Cesar from the southern contra forces. At least the congress rejected a proposal to invite Arturo Cruz—connected with the National Guard.

What can we conclude from the SI's latest series of programmatic gymnastics? Not much has changed in El Salvador and Nicaragua during the last two years. Duarte's government has had little success in selling his image. The death squads are still active in El Salvador according to Amnesty International—though press coverage has dwindled. D'Aubuisson's fascist supporters still claim that only killing leftist oppositionists can solve the problem. The basic policies of the FSLN haven't been modified in Nicaragua, and there is no indication that the contras have any more popular support for their war of terror.

What has changed, of course, is the pressure from U.S. imperialism. The FSLN is hard pressed—by newly introduced gunships and "Huey" helicopters, with U.S. pilots and advisors and all the help CIA money can buy (though they still retain control over much of the country). The U.S. Congress has just passed a bill granting financial assistance to the contras, and this will breathe new life into their terrorist war.

It is unlikely that, after the peoples of Central America have held out this long, the SI's withdrawal of support will cause a collapse in either the FMLN or the Sandinistas. But the probable cutback in aid—both political and material—which the Central American revolutionary forces might otherwise expect will certainly create new problems. In the long run, of course, the change in policy of the SI was to be expected given its track record of betrayal and sabotage against the interests of working people around the world. What is surprising is that the Social Democratic International's original support to the fight for self-determination in Central America lasted as long as it did.

STOP THE CAMPAIGN OF TERROR AGAINST ARAB-AMERICANS

by Michael Smith

On July 16, 1986, the House Committee on the Judiciary's Sub-committee on Criminal Justice held hearings on a little-publicized wave of anti-Arab violence that has swept across the country, particularly after Reagan's bombing raid on Libya. These racist attacks have ranged from bombing and defiling of mosques to political assassination, as in the case of Alex Odeh, the Los Angeles regional organizer of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee.

The FBI, in the person of Oliver Revell, a top spokesman, stated that the arrest of Odeh's murderers is their anti-terrorist section's top priority. However, no visible action has yet been taken. Revell stated that the investigation has now gone beyond American borders, evidently to Israel, where, it is suspected, the murderers came from and fled to.

We are printing below excerpts from the testimony to the House Sub-committee by Michael Steven Smith, a New York attorney who is participating in the effort to defend Arab activists.

I have represented Mrs. Bonnie Rimawi since last fall when, because of her activities with the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, she was marked for political assassination. Mrs. Rimawi was, before she was forced to take a leave of absence, the New York organizer of the ADC.

Last October 11, Mrs. Rimawi's counterpart on the West Coast, Mr. Alex Odeh, the Los Angeles organizer of the ADC, was blown in half by a pipe bomb fastened to the inside of the ADC office door. His name was on a list describing him as "an enemy of the Jewish people." The list was prepared and circulated by Mordechai Levy's Jewish Defense Organization (JDO), a spin-off of and close collaborator with Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League (JDL).

Immediately after the Odeh murder the New York office of the ADC was forced to close because other tenants in their building were frightened. Mrs. Rimawi was constrained to take a leave. A sustained campaign of threats and harassment by the JDO/JDL had taken a terrible toll on her health.

Her name also had just been put on the JDO's "hit list" and the list was being circulated. The list had been given to Mr. Samuel Jacobs, the editor and publisher of *American Jewish Life*, and appeared prominently featured on the front page of the October 25, 1985, edition of his newspaper.

Not only was Mrs. Rimawi's name listed but so was what was erroneously thought to be her home address. The ADC was also on the list. At the

bottom of the list readers were advised that in the past other "enemies of the Jewish people" had been recipients of collect phone calls, beatings, and bombings.

Putting Bonnie Rimawi's name on a "hit list," inviting her assassination, inviting harm to her husband and children, is obviously a crime. It violates a Federal Civil Rights Act, 18 USC &245.

Mrs. Rimawi went to the FBI telling them of the "hit list," its circulation by JDO head Mordechai Levy, and its publication in the *American Jewish Voice*. All the FBI had to do was to ask Samuel Jacobs who gave him the list, but we have no indication that they even did this.

Three-quarters of a year have passed since then. The Washington headquarters of the ADC has been torched in the interim, yet Levy and company continue to organize, continue their activity. As for the New York ADC, the office has not been able to reopen. The victims of this smothering of free speech are ADC members in the first place. But in the larger sense, all of us are victims.

The roots of anti-Arab violence here, like its leader and chief spokesman Meir Kahane, are to be found in Israel. In a tightly argued and well researched article in the May 6, 1986, *Village Voice*, JDL expert Robert I. Friedman persuasively argues that the Jewish terrorist underground in Israel has reached into the U.S. as well. Although JDL leader Kahane moved to Israel and stepped aside from his official position as JDL head last August, a New York JDL leader is quoted by Friedman as stating that Kahane "is still the spiritual leader of the JDL and we are in very close touch with him."

Friedman writes that, "In 1975, according to Israeli police officials, Kahane began to build an anti-Arab terrorist underground, the TNT, which in the next few years would stage dozens of bloody raids against West Bank Arabs.

"In 1979, Kahane called for the establishment of a similar terrorist underground in America that would 'quietly and professionally [and here he is writing of persons like Bonnie Rimawi—to give an indication of the man's pathological mind—M.S.S.] eliminate those modern-day Hitlers . . . that threaten our very existence.'"

Mordechai Levy and the JDO and the JDL mistake the American people for fools if they think they can pose as the moral legatees of the victims of the holocaust, and liken Arab Americans to modern-day Hitlers.

SOUTH AFRICA—SOLIDARITY URGENTLY NEEDED

The wave of arrests that accompanied the clampdown of the state of emergency in South Africa on June 12 has been bigger and more widespread than the series of detentions that had been going on since the summer of 1985. This fact comes out clearly from the first investigations made into the number and the names of people detained since June 12, estimated at present to be around 4,500.

From mid-June, an initial list of 1,034 detainees was established by the Detainees Parents' Support Committee and published in the South African *Weekly Mail* on June 20, 1986. It was explained clearly in this report that the new wave of detentions is more extensive than the previous in three respects: "more organizations were affected; more small towns and rural areas were hit; and lower levels of activists—down to shop stewards and street committee members—were detained."

It emerges from these initial findings that activists in the community associations, which are mostly affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF), have paid a heavy price in the repression. But in addition, this time, the union movement has also been directly attacked.

All the currents of the anti-apartheid movement have been affected by the repression: numerous members of the civic associations in the townships; sympathizers of the African National Congress (ANC); members of the UDF; trade unionists in the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) or the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA); militants of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), and other political currents. Such is the broad spectrum of organizations targeted by the repression. The mass character of the arrests and the geographical extension of areas affected illustrate the extent of the social roots of the movement fighting apartheid. The regime does not want things to go on like this. The Botha government has already announced its intention to charge 780 of the people arrested, which will enable it to inflict a punishment of even longer imprisonments than those already allowed by the state of emergency.

The fact that the government has launched such repression today, only a few months after lifting the regional states of emergencies, reflects the ineffectiveness of the previous repressive wave to set back the growth of the mass movement in any lasting way. The Botha government

certainly could have adopted other measures on June 12. But already the scale of the popular mobilization set a limit to the effectiveness of any political maneuvers that the regime could launch in order to take advantage of the situation to slip through some modifications of apartheid and give substance to certain of its schemes for institutional changes.

Resistance Continues

Resistance to the state of emergency is getting organized. After a first moment of difficulty linked to the scale of the arrests, numerous clandestine meetings were held to organize the resistance. Thus the leadership of COSATU has met secretly and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) decided on stoppages in certain mines to demand that the bosses intercede with the government in order to obtain the release of imprisoned union leaders.

On July 8, 1,200 Black miners stopped work in the Finsch diamond mine near Kimberley, while a representative of the De Beers company acknowledged that 2,000 miners had been on strike a week earlier in four other mines. In total, 16,000 miners have participated in these actions. Alongside this, the metal workers union MAWU, a member of COSATU, has taken the government to court.

It appears that the trade union movement's strategy is to put pressure on the most sensitive sections of the employers to get them to condemn the arrests of union leaders and call for their release. COSATU has also planned an action for mid-July, if the leaders are not released. The place that the trade union movement assumes in the struggle against the state of emergency will be an important test of its organizational capabilities.

Furthermore, the movement of community organizations is also organizing resistance, alongside these other protests. On June 13, three leaders of the UDF held a press conference in which they announced among other things that Blacks in Port Elizabeth were launching a rent strike in protest of the state of emergency.

Step Up Solidarity

In the face of this wave of arrests and the beginnings of popular resistance, international solidarity with the Black masses in South Africa must be stepped up without delay. This solidarity must be unified, and take into account the fact that all the currents fighting apartheid are being hit by the repression today. Solidarity mobilizations must set as their central task winning the

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release of all political prisoners and the lifting of the state of emergency, as well as exposing the complicity of Western governments.

Mass actions have already taken place in the United States and in Britain. On June 28 in London there was a demonstration of 250,000 people, representing the biggest anti-apartheid demonstration in Britain's history. Moreover, solidarity initiatives may take very diverse forms of action. The campaign for sanctions in general will assume a specific form depending on the country concerned.

More direct solidarity still could take the form of refusing to load or unload ships coming from or going to the apartheid regime, and of freezing consignments of spare parts for South African industries. Imaginative forms of action used in other campaigns can be put to use in the solidarity work with Black people of South Africa. For example, solidarity leaflets could be put into cargo bound for South Africa to show the Black masses that they have the sympathy of the international workers' and democratic movements.

Because the South African trade union movement is a target of the repression, the international trade union movement must build actions focused particularly on this aspect of the struggle. Trade unions in companies that have subsidiaries in South Africa should find out the identities of arrested union activists or workers in these subsidiaries in order to mount a campaign for sponsorship of detainees and to get their managements to condemn the repression. Motions



condemning the arrests and supporting those imprisoned should be put to trade union branches and national trade unions and trade union congresses. Where the situation is favorable to such actions, the workers' movement can go further and organize symbolic strikes in solidarity, as was done in certain countries at the time of the anti-missile struggle.

Solidarity demonstrations to back up the resistance movement of the Black masses and unlock the repressive vise of the South African regime are a priority task for the international working class and democratic movements.

iINTERNATIONAL **NAL** MARXIST REVIEW

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.

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.
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A SOCIALIST APPROACH TO DEFEATING 'REAGANISM'

by Paul Le Blanc

In a previous article "Socialists and the Democratic Party" we argued that they should join it if they're ready to give up on socialism. This flows not from the "Marx-manship" of sidelines dogmatism, but from the hard realities of the two-party electoral system in the United States. To make our point, we drew not from old theoretical texts, but primarily from contemporary studies by various political scientists. Much of what we found is summed up by Michael Parenti:

"Of the various functions a political party might serve—(1) selecting candidates and waging election campaigns, (2) articulating and debating major issues, (3) formulating coherent and distinct programs, (4) implementing a national program when in office—our parties fulfill only the first with any devotion or success. The parties are loose conglomerates of local factions organized around one common purpose: the pursuit of office. For this reason, American parties have been characterized as 'nonideological.' And indeed they are—in the sense that their profound ideological commitment to capitalism at home and abroad and to the ongoing class structure is seldom made an explicit issue. But even as they evade most important policy questions and refrain from commitment to distinct, coherent programs, the parties have a conservative effect on the consciousness of the electorate and on the performance of representative government. They operate from a commonly shared ideological perspective which is best served by the avoidance of certain ideas and the suppression of co-optation of dissenters."¹

We also noted that, from the 1940s through the 1970s, the major decisions of American politics—made by policy-makers *between* elections—had been shaped by the influence of the corporate-liberal capitalist elite, yielding a "bipartisan consensus": an array of moderately liberal domestic social programs, combined with a relatively benign attitude toward organized labor; plus an anti-communist and interventionist foreign policy. This was, however, severely strained by the civil rights movement and by the anti-Vietnam War movement in the 1960s and early '70s; by the impact of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam; and by the development of a world economic crisis, which more sharply counterposed the needs of the working class and the profits of the capitalists. This has generated a rightward shift among the corporate and political elites in the United States, culminating in policies which have been personalized by the label of "Reaganism."

This is a new development, and many socialists who've migrated to the Democratic Party explain their migration as a response to it—as a means for actually stopping "Reaganism." Some of them might respond to our previous analysis: "To be quite honest, socialism is a beautiful idea, but it doesn't seem like a practical proposition in the United States at the moment. Perhaps we *will* have to give up on socialism—at least for now—and just concentrate on beating Reaganism. After that maybe it will be relevant to talk about building a socialist movement in the United States. But first we need to mobilize an anti-Reaganite majority to get these reactionaries out of office."

In what follows, in part through a further examination of recent analyses of certain political scientists, we will consider the fallacy of this approach to "stopping Reaganism" and will indicate the practical value of the revolutionary Marxist approach.

The Current Crisis in American Politics

Professor Walter Dean Burnham of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is one of the most highly respected and challenging figures in the field of political science. In 1982 he wrote an important essay which is well worth reading in its entirety. Extracts from it will form a useful starting point for our own discussion.

"Ronald Reagan and his allies," Burnham tells us, "have wrought one of the largest and most comprehensive policy changes in modern times. The growth of the domestic public sector, a fixture of American politics for nearly two decades, has been truncated, and a long-term tax cut primarily benefiting the wealthy has been adopted. . . . Keynesian economics, once so mainstream that even Richard Nixon proclaimed himself a Keynesian, is now widely discredited. The inheritance is being claimed on one side by monetarists, and on the other by supply-siders—both intensely conservative and both concerned with 'liberating' the private capitalist sector to 'reindustrialize' the American economy. While the liberal left is now in severe disarray, the right is well organized, enthusiastic, sure of itself."²

Burnham draws attention to foreign policy questions to help explain the background of this development: "To a much greater extent than is commonly realized, the permanent international struggle [against communism and revolution] has

been decisive in paralyzing and undermining the cohesion of the [Democratic Party] left in this country. This is a very long-term process. It began in and just after World War I at about the time of the 'great red scare' and has continued to unfold ever since, though by no means smoothly. It speeded up again, after a temporary hiatus following the Vietnam excesses, in the late 1970s." The Democratic Party "left" had been committed, no less than the Republicans, to the notion of the "American Century," which actually lasted from 1945 to about 1965. "The economics of these 'good old days' were chiefly dominated by the overwhelming ascendancy of American capitalism in the world economy following the mass destruction overseas wrought by World War II. . . . In this supposedly golden age, the imperial system that grew out of the ruins of World War II appeared to function relatively efficiently and under American control." He adds:

"To be sure, this control was not perfect. Its most conspicuous failure—with long-lasting and still-ramifying effects, not least on the behavior of American political elites—was the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the CIA's spectacular failure to overthrow Fidel Castro at the Bay of Pigs (1961). But the imperial *lines* were successfully defended from attack in Korea (1950-53), and an apparently viable partition solution was imposed with the end of French colonial rule in Vietnam (1954-56). Above all, this was a period of formal decolonization in the Third World, but one in which the excolonial powers and the United States retained impressive economic and military control over the decolonization process."³

But in the 1960s and '70s, this "American Century" which provided the basis for the policies of the corporate-liberal elite, began to erode and crumble. "The old Cold War Democratic left permitted its obsessions with Communism to bring about the moral and material disaster that was the American misadventure in Vietnam." Nor was the Democratic Party able to develop a coherent new approach to international politics, as revolutionary developments began to spread to other areas. Combined with this has been the slippage of American economic power, which results from "the rise of formidable competition from other capitalist nations (Western Europe and especially Japan); the aging of American industrial plant, along with the declining investment in research and development, declining productivity, and declining profitability; the explosion of the 'debt economy,' at the governmental, corporate and consumer levels; and, finally, the impact of dramatic upward shifts in energy costs after the consolidation of OPEC as an effective price cartel (1973-74)."⁴

Aspects of this crisis began to be felt during the Republican administration of Nixon and Ford, who shared much of the corporate-liberal approach despite their reactionary-conservative credentials, and who were further damaged by the Watergate scandal. In 1976, many socialists urged support for Democratic Party candidate Jimmy Car-

ter as a recipe for "relevancy." Burnham's comment is worth noting:

"Carter . . . was in a real sense the artifact of a political vacuum arising from the general American crisis. His tenure in office greatly deepened this vacuum and directly led to the victory of Ronald Reagan at what was, for Reagan personally, the last possible moment. Jimmy Carter's administration was plagued by misadventure and bad luck. But it was also, and decisively, plagued by his lack of any clear objectives and the resultant incoherence of his administration. He did not really know what he wanted to do with the power he had so narrowly won (a problem which, for better or for worse, is certainly not shared by his successor)."⁵

Under Carter, the continued deterioration of the economy "entailed the highest 'discomfort index' to occur in any presidential election year since 1932, when another incumbent seeking reelection was repudiated by the voters." Carter, "the most conservative Democratic president on 'core' economic issues since Grover Cleveland left office in 1897," responded to the problem by dramatically beginning to cut back social programs. On the other hand, he sought to maintain U.S. imperial power (sometimes with obvious lack of success) through a variety of measures, ranging from subtle hostility toward Central American revolutionaries to not-so-subtle support to the Shah of Iran even after that despot was overthrown. This sparked the Iranian hostage crisis, which Carter used to create a "'rally 'round the flag' atmosphere" for the purpose of drumming up support for his own administration—though the resurgent "patriotism" was manipulated more skillfully by the Republicans. Burnham writes: "When [Edward M.] Kennedy charged that Carter was 'Ronald Reagan's clone' he exaggerated greatly, in the fashion of politicians on the stump. But he had something; indeed he had a large part of the 1980 puzzle." In the face of the economic "discomfort index" and cutbacks, according to Burnham, large numbers of working class Democrats joined the "party of non-voters." Ronald Reagan, with "a strong core of support among social-issue conservatives and among imperial-policy 'hawks,' along with very large parts of the business and lower middle classes in the Sunbelt states," also enjoyed the fact that "the corporate boardrooms . . . rallied nicely in the end"—resulting in a powerful candidacy to demolish a weak opponent who clearly had no solutions.⁶ Indeed, this dynamic remained strong in the 1984 election as well, as the Democratic Party socialists joined in the debacle of Walter Mondale.

Far from "stopping Reaganism," the Democratic Party socialists inadvertently did their bit to ensure its triumph by throwing themselves into the no-win campaigns of Carter and Mondale.

The Framework for Stopping "Reaganism"

In surveying the terrain of American politics under Reagan, Walter Dean Burnham provides valu-

able insights, although his analysis also contains a fatal flaw. He observes that "it does not take much perspicacity to see that the longer the administration's ideological program remains in place, the greater the probability that something approximating class warfare will occur in America—quite apart from its international economic ramifications." It's dangerous to slide over international realities as Burnham does here, given the central importance which he himself has noted that they have for domestic politics. But let's follow his line of thought: "Very broadly, there have been three major approaches to the problems of late capitalism in recent decades. These are socialism, one or another variety of political capitalism with a more or less elaborate welfare state, and neo-laissez faire capitalist revitalization [i.e., "Reaganism"]. In the United States, of course, socialism or even social democracy is an excluded alternative a priori."⁷ This sweeping statement seems justified, perhaps, by the current size and fragmentation of the organized socialist movement, and it certainly simplifies Burnham's task of analyzing the American political scene—yet it is precisely this, as we shall see, which constitutes the fatal flaw in his analysis. But, again, let's return to his argument:

"The choice has been narrowed therefore to political capitalism and business-corporate conservatism: in short, to the Democratic and Republican parties and the power blocs they represent in the electoral market. Crucial to the ideology of political capitalism is the gospel of social harmony among classes and other definable population groups that are capable of political organization. As we have seen, political capitalism at work, under specifically American institutional and cultural conditions, has failed to accomplish this objective. But the dominant ideology of its leadership remains dead set against any philosophy that accepts the necessity of organized disharmony in politics, i.e., the 'class struggle' or something like it. Its policy recipes, accordingly, are so organized as to avoid wherever humanly possible the making of hard choices, no matter what the circumstances. But for effectiveness, credibility, and legitimacy, this requires the reality of assured, sustained economic growth, precisely the condition that no longer exists.

"The other two traditions [i.e., socialism and business-corporate conservatism] are, on the other hand, quite unafraid to make hard choices, though of course diametrically opposite ones. In the case of right-wing capitalist ideology, this is of course veiled in various ways—by appeals to patriotic emotion, by insistence upon the general well-being that will arise as the private sector trickles down its benefits to the public, and so on. But the reality is that of class struggle on behalf of the owners and managers of the country's major economic assets. When the business press and others talk, therefore, of 'reindustrializing America' through the 'liberation' of corporate enterprise from bondage to government

regulation and extraction, they are talking about the repeal of relative social harmony in America, both in theory and in practice."⁸

Burnham points out: "Obviously the class struggle thus proclaimed is at present wholly one-sided in its political impact." He adds: "Considering the *posture* of the Democratic party, the one-sidedness of the struggle is inevitable *at this stage*." (emphases added) What seems to be implied here is that if the Democratic Party changes its posture at a later stage it can become a vehicle for the workers' side of the class struggle. But as we've argued earlier, and as Burnham himself has indicated, it is not simply the "posture" but the ideology, structure, and very nature of the Democratic Party which prevents it from being such a vehicle. He writes that "political opposition to a hegemonic ["Reaganite"] coalition cannot fail to be ineffective if it refuses to reorganize its political perspectives and organization into a mode that accepts this [class] conflict as the inescapable core of political action. But such an acceptance of conflict by an opposition must also entail the radicalization of that opposition. Only when that point is clearly understood, and when life-and-death issues are at stake, will the one-sided struggle now going on become more competitive."⁹ Those who hope for the Democratic Party to become a radical class-struggle force leading a life-and-death battle for the workers against the capitalists are doomed to be crushingly disappointed.

It seems clear that the "major approach" which Burnham excluded a priori—socialism—is the only one which can guide a successful struggle against "Reaganism." But if the Democratic Party cannot be expected to embrace this approach, how can this approach become an effective political force?

An Exception That Proves the Rule

One of the most dramatic developments in U.S. politics recently has been the Jesse Jackson phenomenon, which appears to run counter to the dynamics which we have been examining. Mike Davis offers a contradictory analysis in *New Left Review*, in part reflecting a contradictory reality. Hailing the Jackson campaign as "the harbinger of a progressive realignment" in the United States, Davis suggests that Jackson had "the notion of somehow rekindling a protest movement *within* the Democratic Party to force it to reaffirm its commitment to a Second Reconstruction. . . . That is to say, Jackson built upon an ethos of Black self-organization while limiting its aims to a renegotiation of the 'contract' between Black Democrats and their national party." Davis affirms the "practicality of a 'Rainbow Coalition' of minority communities, white progressives, and elements of the trade union movement. . . . Where the loyalist camp followed the line of defeating Reagan at any price, the insurgent current represented by the Jackson campaign responded that a Democratic vic-

tory might be meaningless unless the party returned to supporting full employment and the welfare state." Jackson did an impressive job in generating real debate, excitement, and a significant bloc of votes around issues of peace and social justice, constituting what Davis asserts "was arguably the first social-democratic alternative seriously offered to the American electorate in a presidential campaign."

Yet this turned out to be an exception which proved the rule. Jackson and other "Rainbow Coalition" leaders remained solidly in the Democratic Party. The Jackson campaign, while impressive in its accomplishments, was doomed to defeat from the beginning—but Jackson knew that. It is true, as Davis writes, that "there was a political chasm between the radical positions of the Jackson campaign and the varieties of 'Reaganism with a human face' offered by Mondale and [Gary] Hart," but one of the goals of the campaign was to bridge the chasm, to deliver a sizable Black and radical vote to the Democratic Party in order to give the "Rainbow" leaders greater leverage in the old party. Davis himself points out: "The Jackson campaign had a complex, ambiguous significance. On the one hand, it tested the waters for a left politics of jobs and peace based on a multi-racial coalition of the most oppressed groups in American society. . . . On the other hand, the Jackson candidacy remained circumscribed by its self-defeating goal of renegotiating the terms of Black *subordinacy* in the Democratic Party."¹⁰

Far from transforming the Democratic Party into a radical force, the Jackson campaign transformed certain radical forces into appendages of a capitalist party, helping to utilize radical idealism to get votes for its *real* (and inevitably non-radical) candidates. And it has proved to be a failure as a means for defeating "Reaganism."

According to Rainbow Coalition and North Star Network supporter Kevin J. Kelley, "it is painfully apparent that the Rainbow exists more as a memory than a viable political presence" and that the prospects for significant Rainbow breakthroughs "are today dim indeed." Kelley and others believe in the possibilities of a resurgence, however, and continue to project an approach of "working both inside and outside of the Democratic Party." One suspects that this reflects not some sophisticated strategy, but rather a serious ambivalence among Rainbow activists. Kelley concedes that "the Democratic Party works to frustrate and stifle challenges to its own and to the broader status quo," yet as William A. Ryan has noted in the *Guardian*, the goal articulated at the April 1986 conference of the Rainbow Coalition "is to create a significant left force in the Democratic Party, one that will reverse the party's rush to the right." The bottom line of Rainbow Coalition practice has been to channel activists' energies into what Kelley rather delicately calls "the nation's oldest and largest party." Judy Ashkenaz expresses it all succinctly in *Monthly Review*: "Why bother with the Democrats? remains a legiti-

mate question as the Democratic Party moves ever rightward in its quest for the 'new ideas' that will recapture the elusive white male vote. The reason for bothering may be a purely strategic one, but it is nonetheless still valid: in a winner-take-all electoral system, it is not possible for the left to ignore the Democratic Party altogether."¹¹

Indeed, it is not possible for the left to ignore either of the two capitalist parties. But there is more than one way to "not ignore" them. The experience of the Rainbow Coalition hasn't proved to be the most successful strategy so far, and its prospects seem "dim." Fortunately there is a different approach which has been shown to be far more effective.

Not Working Within the System

Garry Wills started out as a young *National Review* conservative in the 1950s, but one who opposed racism and certain other injustices. As the 1960s wore on, he became aware of the insensitivity and hypocrisy of many who call themselves conservatives, and he also developed doubts about the wisdom and morality of the war in Vietnam. As a nationally syndicated columnist, however, he lectured civil rights and antiwar activists that they must "work within the system" (i.e., through the electoral process, through lobbying, etc.)—until he made the discovery, through careful observation, that this simply doesn't work. "Elections . . . did not stimulate, encourage, or direct reform. They put the brakes on that. . . . If they did not initiate difficult changes, what did? Something must, for important and resisted change had taken place. I do not mean popular change, or that introduced because unopposed, or that brought about by technical advisors and inventors. I was interested in the resisted change that politicians find too hot to handle at election time, or even after."¹²

Looking at events happening around him, and then studying American history more carefully, he concluded that "change is initiated by the principled few, not the compromising many; by the 'crazies' in the streets, not by politicians on the hustings." Reevaluating the role of Martin Luther King, Jr., he noted: "Dr. King led a lobby in the streets. He did not mute debate, or remove it from the electoral process. He opened up debate, initiated it after electioneering had stifled it." The same had been true of the radical suffragist Alice Paul, who in 1917 had initiated militant action for women's rights. "She spoke not through a candidate darkly, not with one silent vote," Wills observed, and he came to see her militant tactics and King's as a highly effective form of lobbying. "The difference between this lobbying and that of the 'advisors' is that the public at large, resent it or approve it, at least has the means to know all about the public lobbying. . . . The public does not know what goes on when lobbyists meet officials for dinner."¹³ Such

visible demonstrations can have a profound impact on public attitudes, popular consciousness, and the political climate.

"Resisted changes of a deep sort," Wills found, "begin with a few uncompromising fools who just know that slavery is *wrong*, or that voting is a woman's right; that Jim Crow laws are a disgrace, or that the Vietnam War is immoral. They are not running for office, so they do not have to soothe and placate. They are not politicians, so they do not have to say the Emperor is, perhaps, 'inadequately' clothed. They are dismissed with a laugh—ridicule may prevent them from becoming a nuisance. They prove their folly by being undeterred. They are scared; but so are others, increasingly, as a few people start listening to the fools. Repression draws attention to their case. The 'unthinkable' is thought about. . . . If such crazies win, it is not by convincing 51 per cent of the electorate that their cause is right. Perhaps they need only 10 per cent or 20 per cent of the people behind them, but that 10 per cent or 20 per cent is intense." One is reminded of Rosa Luxemburg's insight that revolutionary change is not won by electoral majorities—instead, popular majorities are won through effective revolutionary action.¹⁴

Wills points out that this is the dynamic which generates reforms, and that such reforms often don't shut the radicals up, as the policy-makers hope, but "makes them develop new kinds of demands. . . . Yesterday's radicalism becomes today's common sense, from which radicalisms take their point of departure." He adds: "But the first proponents of that 'common sense' must pay a terrible price. They are resented, since they ask for change, and people find change hard. They are put off as long as they can be, dismissed, treated at first as invisible and then as affronts. Such 'fanatics' are mocked, threatened, jailed, beat up, shot at—think of William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, Margaret Sanger, Mary Church Terrell, A. J. Muste, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez. Political change does not come easily, by way of campaign promises and congressional log-rolling. It begins with individual risk and heroism."¹⁵ One might want to make some changes in Wills's list, but the point is that such figures represent movements which won certain struggles only by refusing to "work within the system."

Wills calls the uncompromising radicals "our spiritual elite" and argues: "The national life owes more to these people than to the long line of Presidents."¹⁶ At the same time, maverick-conservative that he is, he hopes that such people will never succeed in winning a majority to a revolutionary program; instead he hopes that they remain perpetually out of power, doing no more than forcing the ruling class to make necessary corrective changes in capitalist society. While revolutionary Marxists cannot agree that this is a desirable, or ultimately even a realistic, scenario, we are compelled to acknowledge that this mav-

erick-conservative—far, far more than our "practical-minded" Democratic Party socialists—has a better grasp of how real social change comes about.

The best way to stop "Reaganism" is not to "work within the system," but to fight against it.

The Responsibility of Socialists

Revolutionary socialists understand that the best way to fight "Reaganism" is also the best way to create conditions from which a mass socialist movement can come into being. Rather than becoming entangled in the Democratic Party, we must remain politically independent of both capitalist parties and we must encourage all others to do likewise. Almost 25 years ago, commenting on the argument that socialists should avoid "isolation" in the aftermath of the McCarthy period by working in the Democratic Party, George Breitman argued: "You can't create idealism, you can't maintain militancy and devotion to the great goals of the socialist future through such maneuvers."¹⁷ Nor can we in that way mount the crusade that can smash "Reaganism." We must devote our intelligence, our moral passion, and our energies to building struggles that will directly challenge the injustices generated by the capitalist system—intervention in Central America, support to apartheid, racism and the oppression of women, unemployment, the exploitation and degradation of working people. To the extent that we are successful in building militant, politically independent mass movements around such issues, we will be able to generate real changes—and we'll also be better able to generate opposition to the system which breeds the injustices.

Socialists have a responsibility to help build mass movements that can be as effective as possible in opposing intervention in Central America, in opposing apartheid in South Africa, and in advancing the rights of working people and oppressed groups in the United States. This includes a variety of tasks: ongoing efforts to educate, organize, and mobilize around the issues; developing serious analyses that will illuminate the issues; developing strategic and tactical perspectives that will draw more people into the struggle and generate victories. It involves building mass pressure that will affect the behavior of politicians, which can never be done from the vantage-point of their campaign bandwagons.

We also have a responsibility, at the same time, to spread and deepen socialist consciousness. This includes developing our own Marxist understanding of the realities we face and the possibilities of the future, and also carrying out broader educational work that will help increasing numbers of people understand the problems and injustices inherent in capitalism, the meaning of socialism, the ways and means through which socialism can be achieved, etc.

Along with all of this, we have a responsibility to build an organization and a movement

which can attract, develop, and sustain socialist activists as they seek to carry out these tasks, helping them to coordinate their activities as effectively as possible. This will be, to use Wills's terms, a "spiritual elite" which is essential for bringing about "resisted changes," but an "elite" which seeks to eliminate itself by creat-

ing a "spiritual"—that is, a socialist—majority that will transform society.

This approach, rather than the strategy of losing ourselves in the Democratic Party, is worthy of socialists; these are the labors consistent both with our short-term and long-range aspirations.

NOTES

1. Michael Parenti, Democracy for the Few, second edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 205-6.
2. Walter Dean Burnham, The Crisis in American Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 268-9.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 270-1, 272.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 274.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 285, 291.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 310-11.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312-313.
10. Mike Davis, "The Lesser Evil? The Left and the Democratic Party," New Left Review #155, Jan.-Feb. 1986, pp. 16, 17, 19, 21, 36.
11. Kevin J. Kelley, "Which Way to Run a Rainbow?" The North

- Star, Spring 1986, pp. 13, 14, 16-17; William A. Ryan, "Wider, Brighter Rainbow," Guardian, April 30, 1986, p. 1; Judy Ashkenaz, "The Vermont Rainbow Experience," Monthly Review, May 1986, p. 21.
12. Garry Wills, Confessions of a Conservative (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1980), pp. 161, 163.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-2.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-4.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 164, 165; Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, ed. Mary-Alice Waters (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 374.
16. Wills, p. 168.
17. George Breitman, "Should Progressives Work in the Democratic Party?" in Duncan Williams, ed., The Lesser Evil? The Left Debates the Democratic Party and Social Change (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), p. 110.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

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— From the preface by George Breitman.

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THE LIBERATING INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (Part 1)

by George Breitman

At the memorial meeting held for George Breitman on June 7, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency announced that financial contributions in his honor would be allocated to the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism which plans to publish selections from his work. In this issue we begin with tran-

scripts of talks he made in 1974 on the transitional program, in particular on the questions of the Ludlow amendment and the labor party, published in a Socialist Workers Party Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 5, June 1975. Because of the length of the transcripts we are presenting them serially.

Explanation

The following are transcripts of three talks I gave under the title "The Liberating Influence of the Transitional Program" at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference held in Ohio in August 1974. They are part of a larger study I am trying to prepare about important chapters in the history of the Socialist Workers party and its predecessors that were not dealt with or not dealt with much by James P. Cannon's *History of American*

Trotskyism. These transcripts can be considered "work-in-progress," which I hope to revise and improve (especially the talk on the labor party) before their publication in final form. I hope this will spark criticisms and suggestions that will help improve them.

George Breitman
May 1975

1. The Ludlow Amendment

Many of you know that in our movement there are no official versions of history, whether it's the history of our own movement or anything else. But for the benefit of those who don't know it, I want to mention it at the outset. The only thing you have to accept in order to join our party is its program and the obligation to promote it in accord with its rules and constitution, which of course includes the right to try to persuade the party to change this or that part of its program or constitution. You don't have to agree with every conclusion in Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, with every formulation in Cannon's books about party-building and the development of the Socialist Workers party and its predecessors, with every opinion in the books by Farrell Dobbs and Art Preis on the Teamsters and the CIO, or the writings of George Novack on the philosophy of Marxism, of Mary-Alice Waters on the relations between feminism and the Marxist movement, of Evelyn Reed on anthropology and the matriarchy. We publish and circulate these works because of their value for our Marxist education, because of their general consonance with our revolutionary program, but it would be as silly to demand that all of us must agree with everything they write as it would be to demand that they should write only what we would all agree with one hundred percent.

This is my way of saying that my remarks today about certain aspects of the early history of our party, centering around the year 1938, are neither "official" nor "approved." All they represent is my opinion, which is based partly on my memory of that period and partly on recent research, including the reading of documents that I had not seen at that time. I think that the facts I will cite are reliable, and I hope that you will be able to distinguish without difficulty between those facts and my interpretation of them.

In November of this year it will be 46 years since James P. Cannon, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, expelled from the leadership of the Communist party, began publishing the *Militant*. But it wasn't until New Year's, 1938, in the tenth year of our movement, that the Socialist Workers party was founded at a national convention in Chicago. 1938 was also the year when the Fourth International was founded at an international conference in Paris in September, one year before the start of World War II. At this founding conference the delegates adopted as their major programmatic document a resolution written by Trotsky in Mexico, entitled "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," which later came to be referred to as the "Transitional Program."

I am going to talk about some of the problems that arose in the process by which the SWP endorsed the Transitional Program, and changes resulting from this endorsement that continue to influence the SWP to this day. If I do not speak as much about the Transitional Program itself as the title of this talk might have led you to expect, it is because of (1) a lack of time, (2) the belief that most of you already know about the Transitional Program, and (3) the abundance of literature available on the subject in the book, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*. Published last year, that book contains the Transitional Program resolution itself, a series of discussions by Trotsky with different SWP leaders and members about the program, and at least two useful introductions by Joseph Hansen and George Novack. A second edition of this book has just been published, and that contains a number of additional stenograms of Trotsky's discussions on the transitional program, taken down before the program itself was written, some of which are relevant to my talks.

However, I do want to say a couple of things about the Transitional Program and the transitional method. Of Trotsky's many valuable contributions to Marxist theory there are two in my opinion, that stand out above the others. One is his theory of the permanent revolution, conceived when he was twenty-six years old, which challenged the conventional wisdom of the movement of his time about the possibilities and perspectives of revolution in most of the world and, after it was confirmed by the Russian Revolution of 1917, became a keystone in the reorientation of the international Marxist vanguard (although for a number of years after 1917 the term "permanent revolution" was not used by anyone).

The other contribution of which I speak was made by Trotsky in 1938, when he was fifty-eight years old and completing the fortieth year of his revolutionary career. Here, in his full maturity, a few weeks after Stalin's liquidation of Bukharin and Rykov in the third big Moscow trial and two-and-a-half years before his own death, Lenin's collaborator and continuator drew on the experiences of the most eventful four decades in revolutionary history and put them together in a new synthesis which we call the Transitional Program.

That is usually what new great ideas consist of—a rearrangement of old ones, the sifting out of some, a new emphasis for others, a recasting of priorities and relationships. In and of itself, there was not much that was new in the Transitional Program; some of the parts dated back, as Trotsky noted, ninety years to the *Communist Manifesto*; other parts were so recent that they had not yet been assimilated or expressed in writing, deriving from the actions of the workers themselves, such as the sitdown strikes in the mid-'30s in France and the United States.

Trotsky's contribution was to take these parts and put them together, to unify them, in a way that even his closest collaborators were at first to find unique, maybe even disturbing. His aim was to write a program that would help the revolutionary vanguard to intervene successfully in the class struggle in a period when conditions were objectively pre-revolutionary but the masses were still under the influence of the counterrevolutionary Second and Third Internationals or without any leadership at all. As he put it:

"The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion; the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The Transitional Program was written for specific purposes, in the midst of a world depression, on the eve of a world war, for the founding conference of the Fourth International. That has led some people to question or belittle its usefulness for today or tomorrow, when conditions are different. This seems to me the worst kind of formalist thinking, if thinking is the right word. In the first place, it overlooks the fact that the essential conditions are not different—that the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard is even greater and more pregnant than it was in 1938. If not all of the 1938 demands are applicable today (some weren't even applicable yet in 1938), the essential tasks are the same, and the *method* of the Transitional Program as it was written in 1938 is absolutely applicable today. In fact, the transitional method, in my opinion, is an even greater contribution than the Transitional Program itself.

In presenting the Transitional Program Trotsky emphasized its continuity with the past, rather than what was innovative in it. He said that it "draws the balance of the already accumulated experience of our national sections and on the basis of this experience opens up broader international perspectives." But this was even truer of the transitional method than of the Transitional Program itself. The transitional method was being used by us before the Transitional Program was written—after all, the disparity between the maturity of objective conditions and the subjective immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard did not begin in 1938, and the need of bridges between the vanguard and the masses had existed for a long time.

But before 1938 we weren't conscious of the transitional method that we used on occasion; we certainly were not fully conscious, and we used it haphazardly therefore, or incompletely, or empirically. Trotsky generalized it, concretized it, drew out its implications, showed its logic and necessity, named it, and indelibly imprinted it in our consciousness. For most of us the exposition of the transitional method was quite a revelation, even bigger than the one the Moliere character had when he learned that he had been speaking prose all his life.

In 1938 the SWP was rather an exceptional organization. That also is an opinion, but there is plenty of objective evidence to back it up. It was the only organization in the United States that fought against the prevailing tidal waves of New Deal reformism and

Stalinist opportunism from a revolutionary standpoint, and it was the only organization inside the movement for the Fourth International that approached the norms of Bolshevism in the quality of its cadres, the solidity of its principles, and the level of its organizational practice. This is not to say that it was free of serious weaknesses, but it is to say that it had serious strengths as well. This was Trotsky's opinion, and it was for this reason in 1938 that he turned to the SWP leaders for discussion before writing the Transitional Program and that he asked the SWP to adopt and sponsor it at the founding conference.

A history of our movement in this country from its inception in 1928 to the founding of the SWP in 1938 has been written by Comrade Cannon in the book called *The History of American Trotskyism*. It will have to suffice here to say that the first major turning point in this history came in 1933, after Hitler's victory in Germany, when our movement discontinued its efforts to reform the Communist International and its affiliated parties and set out here in the United States to gather the cadres of a new Marxist party as part of a new, Fourth International.

This meant that we now turned our primary attention away from the Communist Party, and that our main activity, the dissemination of propaganda, began to be combined with intervention and action, where possible, in the class struggle. At the end of 1934, after the Minneapolis strike had shown our competence in intervention and action, our movement merged with a left-centrist current led by A.J. Muste (this became the Workers Party) and then, in the spring of 1936, we entered the Socialist party in order to merge with young revolutionary elements who had been attracted to that organization. Our forces, considerably augmented, were expelled from the Socialist party and its youth organization, the Young People's Socialist League, in the summer of 1937 (although they represented the majority of the YPSL). The expelled left-wingers then called a national convention to create a new revolutionary party affiliated with the Fourth International movement and, after an extensive internal discussion, that is how the SWP came to be founded in 1938.

The discussion preceding that convention was very rich, covering a broad number of current international and national problems as well as the fundamental principles to govern and guide the new revolutionary party. From Mexico, Trotsky, who had recently completed his historic work of exposing the Moscow trial frameups, participated in this discussion to some extent, but chiefly on the so-called international questions—the Spanish civil war, the Sino-Japanese war, the class character of the Soviet Union, and the nature of democratic centralism in general.

A declaration of principles and a constitution were adopted; a political resolution, resolutions on trade union and unemployed work, resolutions on the Soviet Union and Spain, a resolution on organizational principles and standards, reports on the International movement, the youth movement, the election of a national committee—these were only some of the important things taken up and acted on at the convention. As a young delegate to the convention, I left it not only tired but inspired and certain that we had taken a big step toward the American revolution; and I am sure that that attitude was shared by most of the rank-and-file delegates.

In 1937 Trotsky had been pressing for an international conference to found the Fourth International. He felt the international conference of July 1936 had made a mistake in not taking that step then, and he kept urging after his arrival in Mexico in 1937 that it be done by the end of that year. But it didn't prove possible, for various reasons, one of them being that the U.S. leadership felt it had to concentrate first on the founding of the SWP. So after the new party was launched, it was agreed that a delegation of SWP leaders would go to Mexico for talks about the international conference and related matters. And this took place at the end of March 1938, less than three months after the SWP convention.

The SWP delegation consisted of Cannon, Shachtman, V.R. Dunne and Rose Karsner, and they met with Trotsky and others at Trotsky's home for an entire week. After some initial, introductory discussion, more formal sessions were held on six consecutive days, four of which were devoted entirely or largely to the Transitional Program and the method it implied. Stenograms were made of these six discussions, which were not corrected or revised by the participants but gave the essence of the exchanges. For security reasons mainly—to protect Trotsky's right of asylum in Mexico—these six stenograms were shown only to the National Committee members of the SWP at a plenum the next month and then were retrieved.

None was ever published in any form, even an internal bulletin, during Trotsky's life, and until just this year none was ever published anywhere with one exception—a discussion about the labor party, which was printed in an SWP educational bulletin in 1948. Fortunately, copies of the six stenograms were kept by Trotsky and included by him in the archives sold to Harvard in 1940. Last year Pathfinder Press got access to the stenograms for the first time and permission to print them, and they have just been published as material added in the second edition of *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*. There, in the back of the volume, you can read the material from the four stenograms that dealt with the Transitional Program (and next year you will be able to read the rest of these stenograms, dealing with other questions, in the second edition of the *Writings 1937-38*). The newly added material should not be confused with the other stenograms about the Transitional Program in that book, most of them from the period after Trotsky wrote the program, which were in the first edition.

No memoirs or reminiscences of the discussions have been published, but it is clear from the stenograms—not just by reading between the lines, but from some passages—that the SWPers must have been startled and even shaken up by some of Trotsky's proposals and arguments and his way of looking at certain things that struck them as new.

On the fourth day of the discussions transcribed, Trotsky began the session by saying, "In the preceding discussions some comrades had the impression that some of my propositions or demands were opportunistic, and others that they were too revolutionary, not corresponding to the objective situation. And this combination is very compromising, and that's why I'll briefly defend this apparent contradiction." Perhaps Trotsky was exaggerating a little here, but he apparently felt that he had not yet

fully convinced the other participants in the discussions, because they were not sure about the "orthodoxy" (a word I dislike), or the realism of his positions.

In a number of places the stenograms show them asking Trotsky the same questions, getting him to restate his arguments so that they can grasp them better; in other places, they voice doubts or reservations; in still others, disagreement (Shachtman in particular could not see how slogans on workers' control and workers' militia were applicable in the United States in 1938).

Such a thing is of course quite common, even inevitable, in any free political discussion where new proposals are introduced that require reconsideration of long-established patterns of thought. Besides, this was not an ordinary discussion or an abstract discussion. Some of the positions Trotsky was asking them to reconsider had been passionately reaffirmed less than three months before, in the declaration of principles and the political resolution adopted by the founding SWP convention. So they wanted to be damned sure they understood what Trotsky was proposing, because even if they were convinced, that wouldn't settle it—they would still have to go home and convince first the Political Committee, then the National Committee, and then the party as a whole. So nobody reading those stenograms today is entitled to cheap feelings of condescension toward those comrades, who bore heavy responsibilities in this situation and acquitted themselves well.

Trotsky himself was aware of the problem facing the SWPers, and his tone throughout was patient, friendly and pedagogic, for he was talking to close comrades, not opponents. And by the time they left to return to the United States, they had become convinced, if perhaps not fully aware of all the implications, and had agreed they would ask the SWP to sponsor the Transitional Program at the coming international conference and to modify certain important points in its national program.

Before continuing the narrative, I am going to turn to two of the questions on which Trotsky wanted the SWP to change its positions. These, I think, are at the heart of the transitional method and discussing them in some detail will be my substitute for discussing the Transitional Program and the method as a whole, which I've said has already been done more than adequately by Comrades Hansen and Novack in their introductions to the Transitional Program book. I should add that I am inclined to do it this way because these two questions were the ones that I personally, as a young SWP activist, found the hardest to figure out.

These two questions were the Ludlow amendment and the labor party.

[The next installment in this series will appear in our November issue.]

LEON TROTSKY and the ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES of the REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

By Dianne Feeley, Paul Le Blanc, and Tom Twiss

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

\$5.00 (includes 4th class postage)

This is the first comprehensive examination of Trotsky's views on revolutionary organizational principles and norms from 1917 to 1940. It consists primarily of quotations and is organized into three sections: 1) a summary of his basic conception of organizational principles; 2) an account of his defense of Bolshevik norms during the struggle of the Left Opposition from 1923 to 1929; and 3) a survey of his views during his exile, 1929 to 1940, when he led the International Left Opposition and the Fourth International.

CHINESE WRITERS PARTIALLY REHABILITATE TROTSKY

by Ernest Mandel

We are reprinting here major excerpts from an article which appeared in the May 19, 1986, issue of International Viewpoint.

LI XIANRONG, a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has recently published a book entitled *Critical Biography of Trotsky*. The work, which was commissioned by the Institute for Research in World History, a subsidiary of the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of China, has not yet reached the West.

But another important member of the CCP has just published a review of the book in the journal, *Shijie Lishi (World History)*, No. 7, 1985 which has shown up in Europe, the United States and Hong Kong. The article, "My View of the Critical Evaluation of Important Figures in World History," constitutes a complete juridical rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky in relation to the "crimes" attributed to him by Stalinist historiography, as well as his partial political rehabilitation as the founder of our movement.

The authors of the book and the article are not obscure individuals but important cadres of the CCP, and these publications should be seen in the far broader context of a critical examination of the entire past of the international communist movement. The rehabilitation indicated by the lifting of the bans on the publication of such texts, then, undoubtedly represents the opinions of at least some, if not all, of the CCP's leadership.

Zhu Tingguan's article, judging from this translation, and Li Xianrong's book, according to Chinese readers, who are for the moment our only references, categorically reject the accusations made at the Moscow Trial against Leon Trotsky and his comrades, that they were spies, agents, counterrevolutionary renegades, or even objective tools of imperialism and counterrevolution. These authors condemn his assassination for what it was — a murder — and implicitly attribute the responsibility for it to his "persecutors," Stalin and his accomplices.

They also categorically reject the version that is to be found in *The History of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR: a Short Survey*, of Trotsky's role in the Russian and international workers' movements, in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, as well as in the building of the Soviet state.

This book was officially adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1938 and has been the international Stalinist bible on the question of Trotsky and Trotskyism

for more than two decades. It inspired the Maoists in China even as recently as the 1970s. It is now judged contemptuously to be a falsification of history, pure and simple.

Completely at odds with this falsification, the writings of CCP members, Li Xianrong and Zhu Tingguan, characterize Leon Trotsky as one of the CPSU's chief leaders, who prepared and initiated the Petrograd insurrection during the October revolution, who then created the Red Army and ensured its victory in the civil war, thanks to a correct strategic orientation.

The publication of these writings, then, constitutes an important political event for the entire international revolutionary and workers' movements. For the first time — if one leaves aside the special case of the Communist League of Yugoslavia — a Communist Party in power, the largest Communist Party in the world, is going much further than Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.

This party is no longer content to pillory Stalin in general terms for his crimes against the communists. It is rehabilitating the most eminent of



Leon Trotsky (DR)

those victims. What Khrushchev either did not dare to do, or could not, despite the implicit promises made at the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses of the CPSU, the Chinese Communist leaders are doing today. Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and their comrades are again presented as authentic communists.

The conflict between the Stalinist faction and the other factions within the CPSU and the Communist International is presented as a clash inside the party, not as a battle with an enemy and/or agents. All of the blood let by the Stalinist faction — a million communists murdered — and all of the mud slung at the victims is thus losing all of its adhesiveness, all of its class justification.

Although Zhu Tingguan does not explicitly recognize it, the conclusion is inevitable: the massive and barbaric repression carried out by Stalin against his political adversaries inside the communist movement was criminal. (1) It delivered a terrible blow

1. It seems that Li Xianrong may have been even more explicit on this point in his book by describing Trotsky's assassination as a "vile crime." But verification of this point will have to wait until the book becomes available.

to the interests of communism, to the workers in the USSR and to the world proletariat.

The use of the formula, "inner-party struggle," to characterize the political struggle between the Stalinist faction, the Trotskyist faction — later the unified Trotsky-Zinoviev Left Opposition — and the Bukharinist faction, is not accidental. It harks back to two famous articles by Mao Tse-tung: *On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* and *On the Contradictions Within the People*, written shortly after the Khrushchev revelations to the CPSU Twentieth Congress.

In these articles Mao made a judgement implicitly supporting the denunciation of Stalinist methods. In the same vein, he violently opposed the Soviet Army's intervention in Poland when Wladyslaw Gomulka returned to power in October 1956.

Later, the Chinese leader changed his mind and rehabilitated Stalin. Was that because of the impact of the Hungarian revolution? Was he influenced by the explosion of critical and oppositional opinion in China itself at the time of the "Hundred Flowers" experience in 1957? Was it a function of the exigencies of his factional struggle inside the CCP? To analyze the stages and the motivating forces of this about face in greater depth would strain the limits of this article.

In any case, the defence of Stalin profoundly branded Maoism for two decades, from 1957 to 1977. The stance now taken by Li Xianrong and Zhu Tinguan constitutes at the very least a return to Mao Tse-tung's initial attitude toward the Khrushchev revelations — and, indeed, goes far beyond it.

Not only is the denunciation of Stalin's cult of personality vigorously seconded. But from the methodological point of view, the writers have reestablished two principles that were challenged by Stalinism, and yet which are close to the very heart of Marxism.

Out of the dusty archives with the 1920s debates

First of all, the Chinese authors insist on the primacy of historical truth above any considerations of state, of party or of *realpolitik*. They reiterate that one must "fight superstition," "liberate thought," rigorously verify the facts, in order to be able to speak authoritatively about the building of socialism. In other words, they are sending us

back to that basic principle, so often affirmed by Marx and Engels, that only the truth is revolutionary.

Then, the Chinese authors refer explicitly to the international character of the revolution and the revolutionary experience. The debates that took place inside the CPSU during the 1920s are not just literary phenomena, masses of dusty archives to be classified and studied. The experience of those debates is a source of political enlightenment for all countries and parties, for all leaders, cadres and activists, who are today confronted with the problems of the survival of the revolution in the midst of a hostile capitalist environment, who are faced with class relationships specific to the conditions of relative underdevelopment in their countries and with the problem of the timing and the forms necessary for building a classless society. The rigorously scientific study of this experience is therefore indispensable to better equip the communist movement to solve the problems confronting it today.

For all of these reasons we must salute the partial political rehabilitation of Trotsky by the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party as an event of great importance, one that continues the tradition of the Khrushchev report to the Twentieth Congress. In spite of all the reservations that we have and the criticisms we can offer in regard to the limits and contradictions of this rehabilitation — in spite of our overall judgement of the political and social nature of the present Chinese bureaucracy, which we are not modifying one iota — it is apparent that taking such a position greatly favors the development of critical thought in all those who look to communism and to the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

After the "liberalization" instituted by Deng Xiaoping, some of the authors banned in the USSR and in most of the other workers' states — once again with the honorable exception of Yugoslavia — began to be published in China, albeit on a limited scale. Contrary to the periods of "liberalization" in the USSR (the Khrushchev era), in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1968-69), in Poland (1980-81) and partially in Hungary, this opening in China was available not only to novelists and petty-bourgeois scholars and ideologues, but also to Marxist and anarchist authors who were considered to be nonconformist and to the left of the CCP officials. Thus, specific works by Bakunin, Bukharin, Kro-

potkin, Luxemburg and Kardelj, still banned in the USSR, have appeared in the People's Republic of China.

This lifting of the prohibition likewise applies to works by authors associated with the Trotskyist current as well as to the works of Leon Trotsky himself. Trotsky's *My Life*, *Diary in Exile* and *Results and Prospects* have been published in China. And apparently *The Permanent Revolution* is on its way to publication.

Among other works published in China are: Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin; Pierre Frank's *History of the Fourth International* and Ernest Mandel's *Marxist Economic Theory, Late Capitalism, Critique of Eurocommunism*, (published in a run of 6,000 and with a favorable commentary printed on the cover), and *Theories of Transitional Societies* (combining *The Political Economy of the Transition Period* and *On Bureaucracy*), of which 10,000 copies were published.

Publications thaw necessary for modernization

This thaw belongs in the political context of Deng Xiaoping's overall orientation. The policy of modernization and accelerated growth implies a rapprochement with the intelligentsia who were repressed during the cultural revolution, and a strengthening of the technocratic layers of the bureaucracy, as well as of the "scientific" currents. It is impossible to carry out such a rapprochement and to succeed in a policy of modernization without increasing the latitude for discussion and debate, and consequently the variety of publications.

More generally, since the rupture with the "gang of four" and orthodox Maoism, the leadership of the Chinese CP has been facing a serious problem of historical identity. (2) It no longer considers itself either Maoist or Stalinist, but only Marxist. Between Marx and contemporary reality there is obviously a gap that the leadership hopes somehow or other to fill up with a critical investigation of the contributions made to Marxism not only by Lenin, but also by Luxemburg, Gramsci, Mao and the principal

2. The members of the "gang of four", including Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, were brought to trial in the early 1980s as part of the process of the reevaluation of Mao's role and ideas that the Chinese Communist party was engaged in at that time.

Yugoslav theoreticians. This can lead in both good and bad directions, but it involves a tolerably objective approach. Trotsky is no longer excluded a priori from possible reexamination.

He is explicitly mentioned in this context by Su Shaozhi, the director of the Mao Tse-tung Institute of Marxist-Leninist Thought of the Academy of Social Sciences of the People's Republic of China and, so it seems, a member of the Central Committee of the CCP. He declared:

"The discovery and publication of an enormous body of literature and other data concerning the history of the international communist movement — that is the publication of the deleted parts of the text of the previous editions of Lenin's *Works*; of the daily records written by Lenin's secretary during his illness; of Lenin's will; of the memoirs of some famous persons and their letters to family members; of the original data regarding some major events; of many unofficial histories whose authenticity we should naturally ascertain — have made it possible to reassess many important events and personalities in the history of the international communist movement.

"This means reassessment of, for instance, 'war communism,' the 'new economic policy,' Stalin's 'road to industrialization' and his 'revolution from top to bottom,' the truth of the magnification of the scope of the Soviet struggle against the counter-revolutionaries, the historical role of the Third International, the relationship between Trotsky and the Fourth International and the theories of Rosa Luxemburg, Nikolay Bukharin and Antonio Gramsci.

"The publication of the works Lenin wrote shortly before his death and the related background material has all the more aroused the interest of people in his thinking in the evening of his life. During later years Lenin found that, despite the great successes of the cause initiated by the October Revolution, it suffered from quite a few defects and inadequacies, and that is why he raised the questions of democratizing the organs of the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviets, of opposing bureaucratization and over-concentration of powers and of giving full play to the role of cooperatives. Stalin deviated from Lenin's thinking on these questions and this led to serious tragedy for the Soviet party and state as well as for Stalin himself." (3)

At the same time, this course is fraught with danger for the bureaucratic faction in power. There is the danger of ultraleft reactions from conservative layers and/or Maoists, who stress that such openings may unleash differentiations that run the risk of ending up in explosions. And there is also the danger of popular rebellions (both urban — by workers and students — and rural, on the part of the poor peasants) against the growing inequality brought on by the "economic liberalization."

This is all the more the case where Trotsky is concerned. Although this question is less explosive for the bureaucracy as a whole in China than in the USSR, it entails no fewer consequences for the appreciation of the history of the Chinese CP itself, at least from the 1950s until the "Hundred Flowers" episode, or even later.

As Zhu Tinguan himself recalls, Chen Duxiu quickly rejoined Trotsky and the Chinese and international Left Opposition after their expulsion from the Communist International. In fact, Chen Duxiu is a pivotal figure in the history of the Chinese CP, one of the central personages in all of Chinese twentieth-century history. It was he who introduced Marxism to China. He was a sort of Chinese Plekhanov. He was a passionate advocate of China's assimilation of Western culture, a culture which he believed had Marxism as its logical outcome. In this sense he can be considered the "ancestor" of Deng Xiaoping in the intense struggle between the "Occidentalists" and the "traditionalists" that took place within the progressive Chinese intelligentsia throughout the twentieth century.

But Chen Duxiu was more than a theoretician. He was first and foremost the real founder of the Chinese workers' movement and later the Chinese Communist Party, which he headed for eight years as general secretary. It is impossible to discuss Trotsky and Trotskyism in China without at the same time taking up Chen Duxiu and Chinese Trotskyism. And it is impossible to carry out an objective evaluation of Chen Duxiu — just as of Stalin, Bukharin and Trotsky — without making a critical judgement about the second Chinese revolution of 1925-27 and of the course imposed on the Chinese CP by the Communist International during that revolution, and without assigning exact responsibility for the April 1927 defeat in Shanghai.

It is also significant that although the article by Zhu Tinguan continues to accuse Chen Duxiu of having formed a "liquidationist clique in opposition to the correct line of armed struggle defended by Mao Tse-tung," this accusation relates to debates concerning the period after the 1927 events and not to the events themselves.

The same article abandons the accusation long directed at the Chinese Trotskyists that they were agents of the Kuomintang and even spies for Japanese imperialism. The CCP cadres today explicitly reject this charge brought against Chen Duxiu and attribute it to Kang Sheng, a famous factional adversary of Mao's.

Moreover, two works by early Trotskyists have also been published in China, albeit in strictly limited editions and with circumscribed distribution. These are the *Memoirs* of Zheng Chaolin and Wang Fanxi's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*. There is also a partial rehabilitation of Chinese Trotskyists implied in the recent positions taken on the question of Trotsky.

The place of Trotsky in Chinese-Soviet talks

Finally, we must not overlook the international aspect of this process, that of the relationship between Peking and Moscow. The Deng leadership team is engaged in delicate, protracted negotiations with the leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy. The question of Trotsky also takes its place in that context.

These steps toward the limited rehabilitation of Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks are a discreet way of exerting pressure on the Kremlin. The Chinese bureaucracy is reminding Moscow that with the resources at its disposal, it could make a real nuisance of itself to the Gorbachev team inasmuch as the latter did not, contrary to some expectations, announce a return to the Khrushchev policies in this area at the recently held CPSU Twenty-Seventh Congress.

On the other hand, a complete rehabilitation of Trotsky and the

3. Su Shaozhi, "Developing Marxism under Contemporary Conditions," published in commemoration of the centennial of the death of Karl Marx and translated in "Marxism in China," edited and with a preface by Ken Coates, Nottingham, England, *The Spokesman*, 1983, pp. 33-34.

publication of all of his main works and those of his principal allies would be viewed by Peking as a major obstacle on the road to normalization of its relations with Moscow.

Zhu Tinguan asserts that Trotsky "degenerated into an anti-Soviet exile" after 1928. But he recognizes at the same time that Stalin had "excessively broadened the inner-party struggle." By stating this he has said both too much and too little. Does this "broadening" imply the use of inadmissible methods of repression in 1924 against the Opposition — methods that were never employed in Lenin's time — long before the bloody purges of 1936-38, or does it not?

Questions that must be answered

Were Trotsky, his wife and son exiled from the USSR by Stalin and his acolytes, against their will and despite their vehement protests, or were they not? How can he be reproached under these conditions with his exile for which he bears no responsibility? How can he be characterized as "anti-Soviet" without specifying the political and analytical positions on the nature of the USSR that he held after 1928; without making clear particularly that he remained a stalwart supporter of the military defence of the Soviet Union until the end of his days; without publishing all of his writings on the USSR beginning with *The Revolution Betrayed*, *The Fourth International and the USSR* and *The Defence of Marxism*?

For the same reasons the accusation of "anti-party factional activities" hurled at Trotsky, as well as the charge that he had "split" the Russian and international communist movement, is meaningless. Should he have capitulated to Stalin's acts of repression and his crimes — crimes not only against those in opposition but against all communists and against the entire Russian and international proletariat? That is the real question!

Let us remember that neither Trotsky nor the Opposition ever refused to recognize the discipline of the party or of the Communist International before their expulsion; that they never refused to apply the majority decisions of the party congresses and the Central Committee.

What Trotsky and the Opposition found unacceptable was not the demand to respect discipline, but

the requirement that they declare themselves mistaken, although to do so would be totally at odds with their convictions. This organizational and political innovation — to oblige party members to take positions inside the party that were contrary to their convictions — could only lead to duplicity, to the destruction of cadres, to bureaucratic monolithism, to obscurantism and to the demoralization of the entire party. That is exactly what happened. A thousand times Trotsky had reasons to oppose this Stalinist principle, which was totally foreign to the spirit and the practice of Marx and Lenin.

The Chinese Communists are in a rather uncomfortable position in this regard. For Stalin and Khrushchev had many a time demanded of them — beginning with Mao Tse-tung himself — the same sort of capitulation. It is to the credit of the Chinese that they refused, and, indeed, without making such a stand, they could not have been victorious in the Chinese revolution of 1949. It was for this reason that the Soviet bureaucracy has resorted to repression and economic and military pressure against the People's Republic of China. In this "factional struggle" the Chinese CP has been 100 per cent right to oppose this pressure. We were, and we continue to be, completely on its side in this matter.

But has not the CCP contributed through that stand to "dividing the international communist movement"? Rather, does not the responsibility for such divisions fall upon those who would impose such shackles, not on those who are defending themselves against such inadmissible practices? Why would the resistance of the Chinese CP be legitimate, despite the "divisions" that it "broadened", and that of Trotsky be illegitimate solely on the basis of "divisions" and "factionalism"?

Chinese charges against Soviets have far outstripped Trotsky's

In the light of historical materialism, a more fundamental question must finally be posed. The "excessive broadening" of the struggle within the party and of the repression inside the USSR has not concerned only the oppositional tendencies, which are rather limited even if the tens of thousands of Communists are included. It has concerned entire layers

of Soviet society. It has brought about structural modification of the state and of a part of the relations of production. Leaders of industry have been proclaimed the only captains of the ship by the application of the principle of "one-man leadership."

The workers and the trade unions have lost the right of effective control over economic management. The right to strike has been suppressed. One of the most repressive bodies of labor law in the world has been in effect for more than 15 years. A bloody repression has been launched against the workers and peasants. At the same time, the bureaucracy has been provided with enormous material privileges, which continue to exist today.

Contrary to the former Maoist theory, the Chinese leadership today agrees with Trotsky and the Fourth International that there is no question of a restoration of capitalism, that is, a social counterrevolution, in the USSR, but, at least from that time on, what exists is a political counterrevolution, that is a Soviet Thermidor.

If one does not at least acknowledge this hypothesis — explicitly considered possible by Lenin from 1922 on — one is forced to pull back from historical materialism in favor of historical idealism to explain the evolution of the USSR since the 1920s. But if one allows the existence of a Soviet Thermidor, then Trotsky's fight against this Thermidor, far from being a sin of factionalism, was an elementary duty of a proletarian revolutionary; it was an indispensable struggle to defend the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat.

The contradictions in the positions of the Chinese leadership on the question of Trotsky are difficult to resolve if the question of the bureaucracy is not addressed in a critical and scientific manner. Now the question of the bureaucracy turns back on China just as much as on the USSR. Therein lies the objective, social basis for the inadequacies in the stands taken by Li Xianrong and Zhu Tinguan. But that in no way diminishes the importance of their having taken a stand. It represents a constructive contribution in the battle of communists to restore historical truth. This battle is indispensable to the cleaning up of the political situation in all of the workers' states, indispensable to the struggle for socialist democracy, indispensable for the elimination of all bureaucratic roadblocks in the path of the building of socialism and the world revolution.

ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH AND SPANISH POPULAR FRONTS

by Rafael Sabatini

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1936 Popular Front governments in France and Spain; a period rich in hopes, but marked primarily by betrayals, crushing defeats, and above all lessons for the working class and its allies. Ironically, the workers of both of these countries are today victims of capitalist austerity drives administered by Social Democratic parties whose forerunners, along with the Stalinist Communist parties, led them to defeat.

While the last fifty years have seen several examples of the tragedies flowing from popular frontism, the Popular Fronts of France and Spain remain among the most classic examples of this phenomenon. Thus it is useful to reexamine the main features of these experiences in order to draw their lessons.

Briefly, a Popular Front government is one which comprises liberal bourgeois and mass working class parties and in which the working class organizations strive to preserve their coalition with the bourgeoisie at the expense of any defense of the real interests of the masses. From a Marxist point of view, political parties are merely the organized reflection of class interests. Thus the Popular Front, by grouping political parties reflecting antagonistic class interests in one government, denies the irreconcilability of the opposing class forces they represent in favor of high-sounding but empty phrases about "democracy" or "national unity." These high-flown phrases notwithstanding, such a government is bound to defend the class interests of one or another of the contending classes—the proletariat or the bourgeoisie—present in the government. Formed in the context of the bourgeois state, it was not surprising that the Popular Front governments in France and Spain defended the interests of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the proletariat.

Another characteristic of the Popular Front is that it usually comes into being in the context of a sharp working class upsurge. The experiences of the Popular Fronts in the 1930s and afterwards demonstrate that, in times of crises, the bourgeoisie will often enlist non-revolutionary "leaders" of the working class in their struggle to keep the workers from overthrowing the capitalist state. Thus, sections of the French and Spanish bourgeoisies agreed to participate in governments with representatives of the working class. But once the bourgeoisie had regained the upper hand and reestablished its confidence, the workers' parties were unceremoniously expelled from the government.

The Popular Front in France

The worldwide economic crisis which began in 1929 hit France in 1931. By the time fascism triumphed in Germany in 1933 France was experiencing violent strikes, particularly among the textile workers and miners in the north, the agricultural workers in the south, and eventually the powerful metal workers in the Paris region.

The inability of the French government to offer solutions to the crisis spawned not only left-wing working class militancy but fascist, antiparliamentary sentiment as well. The '30s saw a profusion of extreme right-wing, fascist-like "leagues" such as Colonel de la Rocque's "Croix de Feu" and the pro-royalist "l'Action Francaise." These leagues clashed often—and for a time daily—in bloody street battles with revolutionary-minded workers, many of whom were militants of the Communist Party (CP) and the SFIO (the forerunner of the French Socialist Party).

On February 6, 1934, several thousand fascist thugs armed with pistols, clubs, and knives rallied at the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Their goal was to overthrow the parliamentary regime of the Third Republic in favor of a fascist dictatorship. The Republic was not overthrown, but the liberal Daladier government was replaced by the reactionary government of Gaston Doumergue.

The overwhelming sentiment among French workers in the aftermath of February 6 was to answer the fascist threat. However they were hampered by the policy of the CP leaders, who at that time had an ultraleft and sectarian outlook. They characterized the Social Democracy as "social-fascist," and on this basis refused united front actions with the SFIO. Nevertheless, rank-and-file pressure forced the CP leadership to give formal approval to a demonstration on February 12, which brought over one million workers into the streets.

Leon Trotsky, the International Left Opposition, and its French affiliate the "Bolshevik-Leninists" addressed themselves to the fascist threat and called for a united front of workers' organizations. The French crisis had created a pre-revolutionary situation in Trotsky's view. Accordingly, in response to the arming of fascist gangs by finance capital, the Bolshevik-Leninists called for armed workers' detachments to defend working class organizations. The CP denounced these calls as "provocations" while looking to the bourgeois government to disarm the fascist bands. But the government was beholden to the very forces responsible for the financing of the fascists!

In the aftermath of Hitler's ascension to power in Germany, the Kremlin made a dramatic shift in policy. Seeking admission to the League of Nations and good relations with various capitalist countries, it directed affiliates of the Comintern in certain countries to seek united work with Social Democratic and eventually with bourgeois parties. Thus a dramatic about-face was made by the French CP in June 1934. It now called for an antifascist front—reflecting the immediate needs of the Soviet bureaucracy as much as the fascist threat in France. That fall the French CP called for a "People's Front" of themselves, the SFIO, and the Radical Party.

Though the word "radical" has left-wing connotations to U.S. ears, the French Radical Party was in fact the largest bourgeois party in France. More specifically, it was the party toward which the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, the small landholding peasants of rural France, and the small and medium shopkeepers of its cities had historically looked to defend their interests.

Sensing both the revolutionary mood of the workers and the conservative reformist policies of the leaders of that class—the CP and SFIO—a wing of the French bourgeoisie favored the Popular Front as a way to enlist the heads of these mass working class organizations in their fight to derail the revolutionary march of working people and their allies. At the same time the more reactionary layers of the bourgeoisie continued to arm and support the fascist bands.

The growth of both the CP and SFIO during that period added to the pressure on the Radical Party's left wing to accept CP-SFIO overtures. The Popular Front was formally begun on July 14, 1935, in a demonstration where Blum, Thorez, and Daladier (leaders of the SFIO, CP, and the Radicals) marched together. The red flag of the workers' movement mingled with the tricolor of Republican France, and the Internationale was sung along with the Marseillaise.

The three parties of the Popular Front won a decisive majority—378 out of 598 seats in the Chamber of Deputies—in the spring elections of 1936. On June 4, 1936, Leon Blum of the SFIO became France's first Socialist prime minister. The growing working class strength that these elections reflected led to the massive May-June strike wave, the most powerful show of working class militancy in France since the Paris Commune of 1871. Wage increases of 7-15 percent, the 40-hour workweek, and two-week paid vacations were won from the employers in the negotiations known as the "Matignon accords."

The Stalinists have long maintained that these reforms were a result of the Popular Front. In reality, they were achieved despite the Popular Front which actually served as a break on the movement, preventing it from going forward. In the end, the French working class parties' support to their bourgeois allies, their insistence that the workers of France not pursue their own demands and stop short of revolution in order to keep

their liberal allies in the "fight against fascism," meant that the French bourgeoisie had time to reconsolidate its forces and preserve its rule.

The Popular Front in Spain

While the French Popular Front marked a period of missed opportunities, the results of popular frontism in Spain were far more tragic. There, the Stalinist and Social Democratic betrayals paved the way for a bloody civil war and the installation of forty years of brutal fascist rule.

Unlike France, with its parliamentary (i.e. bourgeois-democratic) political institutions, Spain remained a semifeudal monarchy until the third decade of the twentieth century. The loosening of autocratic rule that accompanied the proclamation of the republic in 1931 gave impetus to militant industrial strikes and attempted land take-overs by peasants who had none. These actions were met with the same brutal repression meted out during the monarchy.

The republic rested on a coalition between the Socialist Party and the liberal bourgeoisie—a direct precursor of the Popular Front government of 1936. Though responsible for a limited number of reforms of a bourgeois-democratic nature, the republic was unable and unwilling to solve the most pressing problems facing the backward Spanish economy, most notably the land question.

The ownership of two-thirds of Spain's arable land by wealthy landlords employing archaic farming methods meant misery for the overwhelming majority of Spanish peasants. A thoroughgoing land reform was required. But due to the strength of the landowners and the reactionary church on the one hand, and the weakness of the liberal bourgeoisie on the other, the only way a land reform could be brought about was through the revolutionary mobilization of the workers and landless peasants. However, the program of the Spanish CP and SP was to defend the republic against the growing strength of antirepublican reactionary forces through an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie. Such an alliance precluded a genuine fight around the land question.

The elections of February 1936 brought the Spanish Popular Front to power, a government composed of the bourgeois republican left and the Socialist and Communist parties. The Anarchists, contrary to their principle of nonparticipation in government elections, first supported the slate and then joined the government in November. The POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification—some of whose leaders were ex-Trotskyists), which had previously denounced the concept of popular frontism, gave it critical support. Later that year, in September, the POUM along with the Anarchists entered the regional government of Catalonia, where the Anarchists and POUM were strongest.

Popular pressure had forced the liberal bourgeoisie into joining with the reformist workers' parties in forming a government. The pressure

from the masses only increased after the founding of the Popular Front. But the mass radicalization in the period before the elections and in its aftermath also created another reaction in the feverish growth of fascist currents. The Popular Front regime treated the fascist elements with kid gloves and refused to take steps to purge the reactionary officer corps of the army. At the same time, the government actually suppressed the independent mobilization of the masses. All of this was done under the direction of the SP and CP, and with the agreement of the Anarchists and the POUM, an agreement which led to the crushing of their forces.

July 17, 1936, saw the beginning of the fascist revolt by General Francisco Franco. Rather than arm the workers and peasants and turn the productive forces of the nation—the land and factories—over to the toilers as a sure way of defeating fascism, the Popular Front refused to distribute arms. The attitude of the CP and the Comintern toward this policy was demonstrated by Stalin's December 21, 1936, letter to Largo Caballero of the SP. He insisted on the protection of private property in order to maintain the support of the liberal bourgeoisie.

The French Popular Front refused to come to the aid of the besieged Spanish Popular Front. In fact, Blum was the author of the policy of "non-intervention" by which the Western "democracies" refused aid to republican Spain while German and Italian fascism supplied Franco with large quantities of weapons. Thus, the Spanish workers and peasants were left to their own fate. The sympathies of the capitalist countries were further demonstrated by their recognition of the Franco regime in early 1939, while republican forces still controlled one-third of the country. By March 1939, Franco's forces had conquered the rest of Spain.

Historic Lessons

The tragic defeats of the French and Spanish proletariat in the 1930s were made possible by the treachery of their reformist and class-collaborationist misleaders. Their Popular Front policy demonstrated once again the bankruptcy of the Second and Third Internationals and confirmed the correctness of the Left Opposition's call, from 1933, for the formation of a Fourth International. Yet, due to the iron grip of Stalinist and Social Democratic parties throughout the world, the mistakes of the Popular Front were to be repeated more than once over the next decades: in China, Indonesia, Ceylon, Portugal, Chile, and other countries.

Even among non-Stalinist and non-Social Democratic currents, the lessons of popular frontism have been too often misunderstood. While Marxists call on working class organizations to unite to defend their interests, episodic alliances with bourgeois parties or politicians on specific is-

FURTHER READING ON THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE AND SPAIN:

Leon Trotsky on France
Monad Press, New York

The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)
by Leon Trotsky
Pathfinder Press, New York

Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain
by Felix Morrow
Pathfinder Press, New York

sues are not precluded in principle. (In Nicaragua after the 1979 revolution, we even saw a case of some bourgeois parties actually participating in a government which was dominated completely by proletarian revolutionary forces.)

The formula developed by the Bolsheviks for such situations is "march separately, strike together." Trotsky elaborated on this question and its relation to the Popular Front in an article, "France at the Turning Point." Citing practical agreements concluded with revolutionary petty-bourgeois organizations and the Bolsheviks in Czarist Russia, he explained that there were "No common 'programs,' no common and permanent institutions, no renunciation of the criticism of temporary allies. Such episodic agreements and compromises, confined strictly to practical aims—and Lenin never spoke of any other kind—have absolutely nothing in common with the People's Front, which represents a conglomeration of heterogeneous organizations, a long-term alliance between different classes, which are bound for an entire period—and what a period!—by a common program and a common policy" (*Leon Trotsky on France*, p. 146).

Similar considerations apply in any alliance between the proletariat and forces representing other classes. The key question which the working class must address is not whether, at one time or another, on one question or another, it may find itself in an episodic alliance with some elements of the bourgeoisie. The central problem is how to maintain alliances with other class forces (whether bourgeois or petty bourgeois) in the course of the struggle without giving up the independence of the working class and the fight for its own interests. What created the great betrayals of the French and Spanish Popular Fronts was precisely that this element—the element of working class independence—was sacrificed. In the name of "defending democracy," or "fighting fascism," the misleaders of the workers tied to the Second and Third Internationals called on the masses to stop their struggle, to give up their own demands, and to rely completely on the goodwill of the liberal wing of the ruling class. That was, and remains, a formula for disaster.

Zina: A film written by Ken McMullen and Terry James, directed and produced by Ken McMullen.

Zina, a 1985 British film, made its premiere in this country in New York last July. It tells the story of the last two years in the life of Zina Bronstein, Leon Trotsky's oldest child. It is a remarkable personal and political drama.

The focus is on Zina and the sessions with her doctor, Kronfeld, as she undergoes psychoanalysis in Berlin in 1932, and much of the narrative unfolds through the associations and memories and fantasies evoked in her analysis. She describes herself in her introduction to Kronfeld as "the good-for-nothing daughter of the most important man of our time," and her neurosis is explored as both rejection and domination by Trotsky and his ideas. Whatever merit this interpretation may have, Zina was a passionate political person in her own right. The political and emotional elements of her personality interact and merge. In one of her fantasies she imagines herself, like Antigone, devoted daughter of the blind and banished Oedipus, the eyes of her father.

Dual Themes

The narrative moves along against a backdrop of historical events in Trotsky's life and political career to the period of his exile on Prinkipo and the rise of fascism in Germany. One of the themes is the parallel between Zina's psychosis and analysis in Berlin and the social psychosis of fascism engulfing the city. Another theme is the contest between reason and instinct, as personified in the relations between Trotsky and Zina. This theme is echoed on the social plane as political reason confronting the irrationality of the Stalinist regime and the irrationality of the Nazi onslaught.

Zina is McMullen's first 35mm feature film. He began making films as an extension of painting. The photography, in color and in black and white, is stunning, gorgeous scenes on Prinkipo, grim scenes in Berlin, realistic and surrealistic, as the camera shifts between different time periods and different levels of reality.

It has won acclaim as an art film, one "that could captivate arthouse audiences in all countries" according to a review of the film when it was shown at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain last year. For those of us who are familiar with the writings of Trotsky and the cataclysmic events of the time, and who care about the vicissitudes in the lives of Trotsky and his family, the film will be of special interest on that account, exciting and devastating.

Research for the film drew upon Trotsky's writings, Zina's personal letters, and Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky; Tamara Deutscher served as a research consultant. A surprising

amount of material is covered, from historical references, excerpts from Trotsky's works and Zina's letters, to personal episodes.

Trotsky on Prinkipo

A prologue documentary consists of newsreel taken of Trotsky and Natalia visiting Pompeii on their trip to Copenhagen where Trotsky had been invited to speak in celebration of the Russian revolution by a Social Democratic student group in the fall of 1932. It was the only time Trotsky was granted a visa to travel abroad during his four-year exile on Prinkipo, an island off the coast of Turkey.

We come to Prinkipo principally through flashbacks when Zina recalls the months she spent on the island. She arrived in January 1931, sick and emotionally exhausted; her younger sister had died of consumption and her husband had been deported to Siberia. She had medical treatment, but her agitation increased. Trotsky convinced her to go to Berlin, where Trotsky's son Lyova and his wife Jeanne were living, for psychoanalysis.

It is difficult to know at times where the "truth" ends and Zina's imagination takes over. There are realistic scenes and fantastic ones that convey emotional reality. But I wanted to know what was fact and what was fiction, and that sent me back to the books.

Of those present in the Trotsky household, I can identify only two: Pierre Frank, Trotsky's secretary and a leader of the French Left Opposition, and Andre Breton, a founder of the surrealist movement. Breton first visited Trotsky in Mexico in 1938 when they collaborated in writing a "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art," but poetic license has him at Prinkipo. Among the others, whom I'm quite sure have fictitious names, is an American who is representative of the journalists and editors who came to Prinkipo to interview Trotsky or to discuss publication of an article or book.

Trotsky was in the process of completing his *History of the Russian Revolution*. Citations from that work are communicated in various ways, for example as Trotsky is dictating. One, thematically significant, is reminiscent of or taken from the following quotation, an excerpt from the introduction to the second and third volumes of the *History*:

"Revolutions take place according to certain laws. This does not mean that the masses in action are aware of the laws of revolution, but it does mean that the changes in mass consciousness are not accidental, but are subject to an objective necessity which is capable of theoretic explanation, and thus makes both prophesy and leadership possible."

Trotsky was mainly occupied with the events in Germany. The many articles he wrote explaining

the nature of fascism and urging a course of action to defeat the fascists are compiled in the book *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*. Trotsky said the key to success was unity of the German workers, a united front between the Communists and Social Democrats. His appeals were addressed to the German Communist Party, then in its ultraleft "third period" during which it characterized the Social Democrats as "social fascists." This excerpt resembles the one cited in the film, or may be the one used in abbreviated form, leaving out the reference to political parties which was crucial to Trotsky's analysis. It is from the article "For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism":

"Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions; you cannot leave for anyplace; there are not enough passports for you. Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank. Your salvation lies in merciless struggle. And only a fighting unity with the Social Democratic workers can bring victory. Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left!"

Tragic Conclusion

The two parallel tragedies come to their conclusion. Zina committed suicide in January 1933, at the age of thirty, shortly before Hitler became

Chancellor of Germany. Earlier she had looked with horror from her room as a gang of Storm Troopers beat a man, leaving him dead on the street in the rain. We see Zina, lying dead on the steps of a building, in the rain.

In fact, Zina had barricaded herself in her room and turned on the gas. In the film, Lyova and Jeanne call up to her from the street, their voices fading as a vapor permeates the atmosphere, in the rain.

There is an epilogue, 1942. Kronfeld had fled Germany and was now in the Soviet Union, in a building that is being bombed. On a wall he sees the name "Trotsky," roughly inscribed. To him, I believe or would like to believe, it is seen as a vindication and affirmation.

The acting is superb. Zina is wonderfully portrayed by Domiziana Giordano and Kronfeld by Ian McKellen. Philip Madoc gives a credible performance as Trotsky.

The film appeared in New York as part of the "Channel 4 Festival: A tribute to New British Cinema." It is distributed by IFEX, 201 West 52 St., New York, N.Y. 10019. It is scheduled to be shown at art movie houses in Los Angeles, September-October; it may be shown in other cities. There's a good chance that it will appear again in New York at the Shakespeare Festival Public Theater in December.

Reviewed by Sarah Lovell

Letters

Very Respectable Journal

You publish a very respectable theoretical journal as well as the only key to what has happened in the SWP. Your evolution from the documentation of resignations and appeals of the expelled opposition through the suppressed documents of that opposition, to a quality journal of Marxist politics has been noted and appreciated by many of us. I can only imagine and regret the personal toll that this has taken on each of you.

The most distressing aspect of this mess is the current SWP membership not protesting at least the method used in expelling these loyal comrades. If they agreed with everything Barnes said, his authoritarian handling of internal procedures should make every current comrade suspicious and angry.

If the SWP leadership had confronted this whole debate in a democratic manner and had faced these issues honestly, the SWP would still be a respected force in left politics. It had the chance to become a real viable political party with a thinking and critical-minded cadre capable of the best activist politics in the country. Instead it bans fellow comrades of the Fourth International from the bookstores and meetings, substitutes the word "anti-imperialist" for an

analysis of the class struggle, and changes its program by liquidation. It is a shameful display.

An appreciative reader and
fading supporter of the SWP
Texas

Hormel Strike

I have read and listened to several accounts of the Hormel strike, but Dave Riehle's *analysis* is the first genuine explanation of the situation which makes clear the forces at work and the motivations of the various actors in it.

It is now very obvious that Local P-9 had no alternative but to pursue an independent course. What emerges is evidence of an internal dialectic within the international leading to a regroupment of forces towards a new international.

Riehle's analysis illuminates the internal process, which hitherto has not been cited clearly. It thereby constitutes a concrete example of the application of historical materialism to a living process in the best tradition of Marxism.

Nathan Simon
New York City

New Subscriber

I received a complimentary issue of *Bulletin IDOM* from you. I was happy to get it.

It came at a time when finding an objective, clearly written, and brief explanation of current political happenings was hard—if not impossible—to find.

Please accept this \$20 as an enrollment on a subscription to *Bulletin IDOM*.

A comrade
Miami, Florida

Spread the Word

I find the *Bulletin* very informative and its contributors giving very good Marxist interpretations of events.

I don't think urging readers to get friends to read the *Bulletin* is enough to increase the circulation. I think we should set up a fund to cover the costs of advertising in periodicals like the *Guardian* and even the *Village Voice*. This would make it possible for thousands to become aware of our views on Nicaragua, South Africa, etc.

Also special compilations should be made available at a price below the \$3.00 charge. The Special Supplement on South Africa which was offered at the New York anti-apartheid demonstration at \$.75 is an example of what we should advertise.

I think the article by Le Blanc on "Nicaragua: Workers' Power and Mixed Economy" is a very timely subject which I am sure thousands of radicals would be interested in reading. We should advertise it far and wide.

Enclosed is my contribution to such a fund

Joe Carroll
Newark, N.J.

Orders Vs. Recommendations

At the 1985 convention of the Socialist Workers Party the delegates had to deal with the demand, made by the world congress of the Fourth International earlier that year, for the SWP to readmit all members who had been expelled during the leadership faction's purge of oppositionists between 1981 and 1984. In the course of the discussions at that convention, Jack Barnes asked the representative of the United Secretariat to explain whether the world congress's vote constituted a set of "orders" to the party, or merely "recommendations."

I remembered this when I read a formulation in a recent internal information bulletin of the SWP. The bulletin deals with a problem which arose in one branch of the party, the nature of which needn't concern us here. The party Control

Commission investigated the matter and issued a report, which was approved by the Political Committee. One of the questions dealt with by the Control Commission was "whether the branch had given an 'order' to two individuals, or had it 'only made a 'recommendation.'" Here is how the report dealt with this question:

"As party members, our attitude can never be, 'Let's see how much we can get away with in relationship to the functioning of the party without getting into trouble.' Whether the report and the minutes showed the branch decision as a recommendation or a cease-and-desist order, all the comrades should think out the implications of consciously deciding to ignore what was voted by the majority of the branch after a lengthy discussion, in which the branch decided that an important political question for the party was at stake."

If we substitute "the Fourth International" for "the party," "world congress" for "branch," and "an organization in fraternal solidarity with the FI" for "party members" in the above quote, it describes pretty well the correct answer to Barnes's question. The current SWP leadership would do well to apply to themselves the same standards of conduct in their relations with the FI as they expect party members to carry out within the SWP.

A loyal supporter
New York City

'Global Class War'

Frank Lovell in his *Bulletin IDOM* article "The Fake Debate in the Fourth International (Part 1)" (July-August 1986) makes a number of good points in his defense of the FI against its attackers, whether of the WRP or SWP varieties. At one point, Lovell attacks the false analysis behind the SWP's abandonment of the fight for political revolution in the deformed workers' states. Unfortunately, he equates this false analysis with the concept of "global class war" (p. 28, last paragraph), a concept which actually hammers home the desperate need for political revolution today. In misrepresenting the views of the Global Class War Tendency, of which I am a supporter, and with which the concept of "global class war" is widely identified, you do a disservice to your readers. I believe it is also in contradiction to your avowed desire for a real debate about the history of the FI.

The Global Class War Tendency developed within the SWP in the early 1950s, based largely around workers in heavy industry in the Buffalo-Youngstown area. It is perhaps best known for its fight within the SWP for a critical but unconditional defense of the workers' states, whether in its analysis of the new workers' state power in China in 1949, or of the capitalist restorationist Hungarian uprising in 1956. Organizationally, it won the respect of Cannon and the SWP majority for

its principled conduct during the 1952-53 struggle with Cochran-Clarke (see Cannon's *Speeches to the Party*). Unfortunately, it also seriously erred in failing to struggle internally against the SWP's split from the FI in 1953.

The "global class war" concept was the simple recognition of one tightly-knit world economy as it emerged after World War II, consisting of imperialism, centralized and concentrated around Wall Street, and the international working class, whose greatest objective strength lay in the workers' states. The situation was really one of global dual power. By no means did this deny the necessity of socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. The present FI majority's view of "three sectors of world revolution" makes this revolution seem more difficult, with this theory's tendency to divide the struggles into separate and distinct compartments, precisely at the time when the unity of the workers of the world has become such a *strategic necessity*.

In polemicizing against the SWP, Lovell focuses in on Jenness's statement that the Red Army's victory in Stalingrad in 1943 "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." But one need not agree with the SWP's capitulation to Stalinism to agree that Stalingrad was a turning point. The victory of the heroic Soviet working class was a victory *despite* the Stalinist bureaucracy, *not because* of it. And, six years later, the triumph of the Chinese revolution was *despite*

Stalin's realpolitik—and, also, *because* of the victory of the Soviet workers and peasants in that cold and fateful winter of 1943.

Does recognition of this new relationship of class forces render the Trotskyist party superfluous? Of course not. As I am sure Trotsky would have told us, objective forces may favor the proletariat world wide, but there is still the burning question of leadership. As GCW Tendency supporter V. Grey wrote in *Fourth International* (Summer, 1954), "Each succeeding 'repetition' of China (if there are to be any at all) will not increase the contradictions of the *ideology* of Stalinism, as Pablo theorizes, but on the contrary will confront the various national Stalinist leaderships, each time the question of power is raised, with tasks which become more and more impossible without *breaking* with Stalinism—not obliquely or by implication, but openly and consciously. . . . To any serious revolutionary, this means that there must be a fighting organization of Trotskyism."

In 1959 the GCWT seriously erred in abandoning the FI to pursue its own nationally limited existence in the U.S. as Workers World Party. Today WWP suppresses the very documents we base our tendency upon. A serious study of *our* history led us over a year ago to correct the grievous error of 1959 by applying to join the United Secretariat of the FI. Build the Fourth International!

Chris B.
for the Global Class War Tendency

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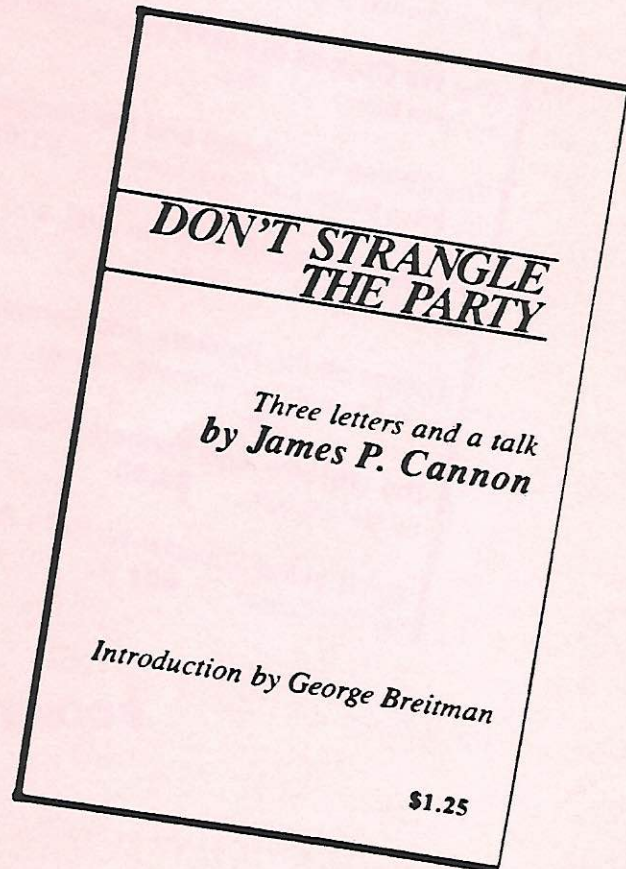
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