

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

THE DEBUNKING OF THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY by Tom Barrett	1
WASHINGTON'S POLITICAL CRISIS by Frank Lovell	4
FRENCH STUDENTS FORCE GOVERNMENT RETREAT by Rafael Sabatini	6
GUERRILLA WARFARE AND MASS INSURRECTION IN THE PHILIPPINES Military Cease-fire, Political Instability by Steve Bloom	8
REAL JUSTICE NEEDED IN GRENADA by Stuart Brown	11
THE ZIONIST BOMB from <i>International Viewpoint</i>	12
<hr/>	
HORMEL STRIKERS: AFTER THE TRUSTEE Interview with Jim Guyette and Ray Rogers	13
<hr/>	
THE RETURN OF THE OLD MAID by Mary Scully	18
NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN (continued) 4. Standards of Human Behavior by Mikhail Baitalsky	21
THE LIBERATING INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (Part 5) by George Breitman	24
REPORTS:	
ENC NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE PLEDGES SUPPORT TO APRIL 25 by David Williams	28
F.I.T. NATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETS by Steve Bloom	28
REVIEWS:	
A NEW MARXIST CLASSIC by Paul Le Blanc	30
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY WELL WORTH READING by Jean Y. Tussey	32
LETTERS	35

Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism, No. 38, February 1987

Closing date January 2, 1987

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

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.

To subscribe to Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, send \$24 for 12 monthly issues or \$15 for 6 issues to Bulletin IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, N.Y. 10009.
Back issues are \$3.00 each.

THE DEBUNKING OF THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

by Tom Barrett

Ronald Reagan's presidency has begun to fall apart. The shallowness of his support among the American people was demonstrated during the first week of December by a 20-point drop in his approval rating within a matter of days, falling below 50 percent for the first time since his inauguration. He and his staff have been shown to be as inept as the Jimmy Carter team and as dishonest as the Nixon team.

The unraveling of Reagan's credibility has opened new opportunities for those working for positive social change, especially for those opposing U.S. intervention in Central America. The exposure of illegal military action in support of the contra terrorists will only harden opposition to war against Nicaragua among a population which has never supported it. The demonstrations planned for Washington and the West Coast on April 25, 1987, have every chance of being the biggest and most important protests in many years.

What Happened?

Reagan's electoral victories and approval rating have never been based on popular support for his reactionary ideas and policies. Rather, the former movie actor and public-relations representative (for General Electric) had a consummate ability to use the media to appeal to people's emotions. Reagan's body language, Madison Avenue phrases, and avuncular speaking tone are designed not to communicate ideas, but to put forward an image of himself and of the country: "America is standing tall again." One of this correspondent's co-workers, who voted for Reagan in 1984, explained that every time he heard Reagan actually express his political ideas during the campaign it made him think about voting for Mondale, so he simply stopped watching Reagan's speeches! He, like millions of other Americans, voted for Reagan simply because he "liked him."

Throughout his presidency Reagan has attempted to generate hysteria about "terrorism" and to use it to his advantage. He used the Iranian hostage crisis to get himself elected initially and has used "terrorism" as an excuse to carry out acts of war against those countries that refuse to "cry uncle" to him—Libya and Nicaragua specifically. "Ayatollah-bashing" has been for Reagan a cheap way of attempting to generate support for his war policies. "We will not negotiate with terrorists" has been the constant refrain from Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz, Secretary of Defense Weinberger, and all the rest of the Reagan gang.

The revelation by an Iranian official shortly after David Jacobsen's release from captivity in Lebanon that former national security adviser Robert McFarlane had been in Iran negotiating an arms deal implied that the Reagan administration had traded arms for Jacobsen's release. Whatever the complexities of the situation, all the talk of "no negotiations with terrorists" was shown to be nothing but bluster.

After the initial revelations, new and more damaging reports came out with startling rapidity. It was shown that arms trading with Iran had been going on since 1983, and that Israel and Saudi Arabia had acted as go-betweens. Most damning of all was the information that the profits from the Iranian arms deals had been secretly deposited in a Swiss bank account and turned over from them to the Nicaraguan contras. Besides being a moral crime, that act also happened to be against U.S. law. The principal architects of the arrangement—national security adviser Adm. John Poindexter and National Security Council staff member Lt. Col. Oliver North—have both taken the Fifth Amendment in response to Congressional investigations of what has become a full-blown Washington scandal.

That scandal has given socialists a big opportunity to expose the Reagan administration's crimes. However, to take advantage of it fully socialists need a clear understanding of what it means. It would be a shame to see the Democrats reap the biggest gains from the situation, for their record in affairs of this kind is every bit as sordid as the Republicans'.

Terrorism and Iran

This affair has exposed Reagan's—and Thatcher's, Chirac's, and other imperialist leaders'—rhetoric about "international terrorism" to be a thorough fraud. It has shown conclusively that military attacks on so-called "terrorist states" have nothing to do with concern about terrorism; rather, they are attempts by the imperialist military powers to impose their will on states and peoples who are trying to achieve some measure of independence. Robert McFarlane admitted knowing that the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut was probably carried out by a group with ideological ties to Iran *before* he began arms negotiations with Iranian representatives. The revelation that Israel—the most strident voice in the international "anti-terrorist" chorus but which in fact carries out its own state-sponsored terror

campaign against the Palestinians—was involved in the arms shipments, exposes the fraud even further.

In addition, if one adds up the number of U.S. citizens who have fallen victim to terrorist acts over the past quarter-century, the largest number have been victims of the counterrevolutionary Cuban exile groups. Gangs like Omega-7 and Alpha-66 exercise a vicious tyranny over Cuban communities in North American cities and do not hesitate to execute summarily anyone who gets in their way. These terrorists are providing money and material aid to their contra counterparts in Nicaragua—and they are directly implicated in this latest scandal. The Reagan administration bombs Libya, but gives money to those who perpetrate car-bombings in Miami! Furthermore, in recent years the grossly misnamed "Right-to-Life" movement has carried on a terrorist campaign of its own, fire-bombing abortion clinics, supposedly to teach "respect for life." More Americans have fallen victim to the anti-abortion mobs' terrorism than to political violence in the Middle East. Reagan's only response is to continue to denounce abortion and to say nothing about the fire-bombings.

The cynicism of all parties in this business is revolting. Among the participants in the arms trading with Iran was Saudi Arabia—which has officially sided with Iraq since the war began. While the Reagan White House was shipping arms to Iran, the CIA has been providing Iraq with intelligence information to aid its bombing of Iranian oil installations and other strategic targets. The U.S., Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the private arms businessmen seem only to want the war to continue

indefinitely. They are indulging in an obscene orgy of money and death.

The Contra Connection

While it is important to point out the administration's barefaced hypocrisy with respect to terrorism and Iran, the crime which deserves the greatest outrage in this whole affair is the diversion of yet more money to the Nicaraguan contras. It was bad enough that Congress legally appropriated \$100 million dollars to finance a very real form of "state-sponsored terrorism." The revelation that Reagan White House aides have been involved in illegally channeling money—over and above the \$100 million—makes it that much worse.

The latest "dirty trick" to be exposed is that not only has money been diverted to the contras, it has also been used—illegally—in U.S. political campaigns to defeat members of Congress who oppose contra aid. Of all the revelations to date this is the most reminiscent of Nixon's Watergate scandal.

This entire affair has begun to blow the lid off of Washington's dirty war against the Nicaraguan people. The revelations which began after Eugene Hasenfus was shot down delivering arms to the contras have exposed a network of the CIA, Cuban exiles, right-wing businessmen, and mercenary soldiers attempting to overthrow the Sandinista government—a government which rules in the interests of the workers and peasants, and a government which in no way constitutes a threat to North American working people. The contras and their supporters have in fact been no match for the Nicaraguan army in head-on combat; however, they have killed thousands of unarmed civilians, disrupted important agricultural activities such as the coffee harvest, and forced the Nicaraguan government to devote a disproportionate amount of its resources to defense—thus slowing down the pace of improvements in the people's standard of living.

Washington does not entertain any illusions that the contras, by themselves, can overthrow the Sandinistas. The U.S. government is hoping that the Nicaraguan people's will to resist can be worn down so that a Grenada-style quick strike can put an end to the Nicaraguan revolution. This is unlikely, however—for the Nicaraguan people, whatever their problems, have no intention of relinquishing the governmental power which they have conquered at such a huge cost.

It may be that the Iran-contra arms scandal reflects a split in the U.S. ruling class, with one wing consciously seeking to prevent the U.S. from getting involved in a war which it cannot win quickly and which can unleash—at a higher level—the same kind of social unrest generated by the fiasco of Vietnam in the 1960s and early 70s; while the pro-Reagan wing wants to drive ahead whatever the cost and sees the main priority to be pursuing the military battle against the Nicaraguan revolution.



Our Response

If the Iran-contra arms scandal proves anything it is that U.S. foreign policy has nothing to do with justice, democracy, the safety of American citizens, or anything of importance to working people anywhere. In Central America and Southern Africa, workers, peasants, and other oppressed are fighting to put an end to foreign domination and exploitation by the wealthy. Washington is trying to stop them. Those in this country who support the rights of the Central Americans and South African Blacks to determine their own future should use this scandal to expose the U.S. government. It is up to no good wherever it intervenes. It has no business interfering in the affairs of any other country in the world.

Even before the scandal broke, the movement against Reagan's war policies had begun to set in motion the machinery to respond in the necessary fashion. Work has already begun on organizing a march on Washington for next April 25, with a simultaneous action or actions on the West Coast, to demand an end to U.S. intervention in Central America and an end to apartheid in South Africa. These demonstrations will be the best response to the dirty business which has actually been going on for years behind the backs of the

American people, but which has only now begun to be exposed.

It is not only the illegal contra aid that we want stopped—we want *all* contra aid stopped! And it is important to keep in mind that the activities of the U.S. government would not be significantly different if some other capitalist politician besides Ronald Reagan were president. We know that the same kinds of activities went on under Democrats like John F. Kennedy (Bay of Pigs), Lyndon Johnson (Vietnam), and Jimmy Carter (Iran)—not to mention other Republicans like Richard Nixon.

The revelation that U.S. foreign policy is a cynical game of greed and murder and has nothing in common with the interests and values of working people is a problem for the entire ruling class, not just for Reagan. Conversely, it is the working class—not its Democratic Party "friends"—who should respond to the current crisis. If Reagan's presidency is the only casualty of this affair, then we will have missed our opportunity. Working people of the United States should do their best to turn this scandal into the unraveling of the entire bipartisan counterrevolutionary foreign policy of our government and use it as a strong argument in favor of a break by the labor movement from its policy of giving support to the capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties. ■

The Myth of Iran's 'Anti-Imperialist' Government

The arms scandal should end once and for all any illusion of "anti-imperialism" on the part of the Iranian government or any progressive content to Iran's present continuation of its war with Iraq.

In the December 10, 1986, *Guardian* Shahzad Azad writes, "It is difficult to imagine the staunchly anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist Islamic regime engaged in secret deals with Israel and the U.S.," and further, "The Iranian revolution was populist and anti-imperialist in nature, a *social* revolution." Ernest Harsch, in an article, "Washington not 'neutral' in Iran-Iraq war" in the December 26 issue of the *Militant* makes some similar comments. He asserts that the fundamental goal of Washington is to "bury the legacy of the Iranian revolution."

In fact, however, whatever progressive legacy resulted from the 1979 Iranian revolution was buried long ago by the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The installation of the Khomeini gov-

ernment was *not* a social revolution; the same class which ruled before that event continued to do so after it—the Iranian bourgeoisie—though the specific wing of that bourgeoisie which controlled the state apparatus shifted. Many elements of Iran's ruling classes would, of course, rather not have their interests defended by turbaned relics of a bygone era. But the fact remains that the Islamic Republic is a bourgeois state which has, furthermore, carried out a vicious repression against Iranian workers and poor peasants. (Harsch acknowledges this fierce counter-revolutionary repression rather mildly: "Although the Iranian workers and peasants initially made a number of important gains through the revolution, many of these have since been eroded, as a result of the policies of the Iranian regime itself.")

Flowing from its class nature, the Iranian government is *not* "staunchly anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist." Khomeini and

the Iranian bourgeoisie are interested in making profits in the imperialist-dominated world market, not in overthrowing imperialism. The refusal of his government "to tailor its foreign policies to suit Washington," its "speaking out publicly in support of various anti-imperialist struggles," which Harsch cites in his *Militant* article as part of the "legacy" of the revolution, are simply efforts by Khomeini to improve his country's bargaining position vis-a-vis the imperialist powers. They are by no means fundamental, and Reagan's efforts to "improve relations" with the Iranians through the secret arms deals, negotiations over return of Iranian assets held in the U.S., etc., show that the U.S. ruling class is well aware of this.

Khomeini's purchase of arms from the "great Satan" is completely consistent with the overall interests both of his own government and of U.S. imperialism. ■

—T.B.

WASHINGTON'S POLITICAL CRISIS

by Frank Lovell

The scandal over illegal arms sales which in the opening stages attaches to the Reagan administration is essentially a crisis of confidence within the ruling class. Little has gone well for U.S. foreign policy since Nixon was forced to withdraw invasion troops and abandon the adventure in Vietnam in 1975. For more than a decade, one after another, brilliantly conceived moves by the State Department, carefully plotted by the CIA, have fallen short of the goal or failed miserably.

Efforts to rehabilitate the Shah in the wake of the Iranian revolution culminated in the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Teheran and the "hostage crisis." The ill-advised and poorly prepared covert effort to "rescue" the so-called hostages ended with the crash of U.S. helicopters somewhere in the desert, the death of U.S. troops assigned to the mission, and embarrassment for the Carter administration.

Reagan campaigned in 1980 against the failure in Washington to deal properly with the "communist menace" represented by the Soviet Union and Cuba, to halt the spread of communism in Africa and Southeast Asia, to stem the "red tide" in Central America and the Caribbean, and to restore respect in the capitals of Europe for "American leadership."

After six years in office the "leadership" provided by the Reagan administration is being severely questioned. For all the bluster about the "evil empire," counterposed to the bright vision of "star wars," there is little to show and much to hide. Reagan boasted briefly of his 1983 invasion of the tiny island of Grenada, which he promised would mark the beginning of economic assistance to all the impoverished "democracies" of the Caribbean. The boasts proved hollow, the economic assistance never materialized, expectations turned sour, poverty is more widespread than ever before, and "popular good will" toward Washington is nonexistent.

What about the rest of the Reagan foreign policy? It has turned out to be no policy at all, only posture and bluff, combined with covert CIA operations and under-the-table deals on the international black market in arms. The economic and diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union remains unchanged. Similarly there has been no change in the relationship with Cuba. Neither Cuba nor the USSR have suffered from Reagan's bombast. Reagan's intervention against the government of Angola and his efforts to smooth the ruffled feathers of the apartheid regime in South Africa have not decisively affected the course of

events on the African continent. The scheme to overthrow the only popular government in Central America, the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, has backfired and discredited the Reagan administration.

Working Class Viewpoint

The only thing the people of this country have gained from these reckless foreign policy adventures is an astronomical debt for military hardware. This undoubtedly has disturbed some sectors of the ruling class who try to understand its effects on the economy.

The working class is more immediately and directly affected by factory closings and the loss of jobs. And farmers are suffering from low prices for their crops, mortgage foreclosures, and the loss of their homes. They connect the worsening conditions of working people with the huge amounts of money the government is spending on fantastic weapons of all kinds. They are asking why some of this money can't be spent to make jobs on public works projects for the unemployed, and to shore up farm prices. And they are in a mood to believe that a lot of this money is going into some deep pockets in Washington which they have every reason to believe is infested with crooks.

It is inconceivable that nothing was known about the duplicity of the Reagan administration for six years until an obscure announcement in Iran late last year revealed that a high U.S. official (McFarlane) had visited that country with the credentials of a munitions merchant, seeking help from the government in Teheran for the release of kidnapped U.S. citizens in Beirut. Many besides a few gophers in the White House basement must have known. But the Iran announcement is what seemed to touch off a series of investigations as 1986 drew to a close. Two of Reagan's trusted appointees were sacrificed in an effort by the administration to quash the scandal.

Congressional Investigation

When the new Congress, controlled in both houses by the Democratic Party as a result of the 1986 general election, convenes on January 6 this year, two special select committees chosen by the leaders of the Senate and the House begin a new round of hearings. In addition, a special U.S. prosecutor with broad investigative power was appointed to probe U.S. support to the contras in their war on Nicaragua, and to track down any

money from the sale of arms to Iran that may have been siphoned to other "freedom fighters" such as those in Afghanistan and Angola.

It is too early to know what these Congressional committees will do and where the investigations of special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh (a retired U.S. judge and member of the Republican Party) will lead. There are reasons to believe that the entire procedure will result in a whitewash. In the Congress leading representatives of both parties have urged a quick resolution of the whole nasty business so as to get on with the more important matters at hand, such as the budget deficit and the unfavorable balance in foreign trade. Wide-ranging investigations such as those now under way have their own logic, however, and are not so easily controlled as the politicians in both capitalist parties apparently wish for. A minor part of this problem is the rivalry between Democrats and Republicans. The perception of the great majority of the people in this country that there is skulduggery in Washington is more decisive. A successful whitewash must have some convincing aspects; without uncovering some of the dirt and finding some scapegoats this is impossible.

Little Room for Maneuver

It is easier to hush up and pass off a scandal, even one involving such vast sums of tainted money as this one, when the U.S. and world economy is expanding and the system seems to be working for the majority of people. The Teapot Dome scandal in the 1920s resulted in some of Harding's cabinet ministers going to jail, as 50 years later some of Nixon's gang served token jail sentences. But in both instances the crooks in control seemed to be the real culprits and faith in neither the political nor the economic system was shaken. In the present situation this may not be the case.

Confidence in the system must be shared by both the employing class and the working class for it to function smoothly and efficiently. And so long as it does function smoothly and efficiently it commands confidence and popular support. But when the system begins to break down, that confidence becomes shaky.

The ruling class, for its part, is not united in the opinion that the parliamentary system of government as presently constituted is sufficient for the modern needs of the capitalist system, especially in time of economic crisis. This is why in recent years there has been a drift toward what the capitalist politicians call a "strong presidency." Reagan was said to be a strong president because the majority in both houses of Congress supported policies that were initiated by the executive branch of government. There was a general consensus within the ruling class that these

policies—armaments buildup abroad and belt-tightening at home—ought to be tried to see how well they work.

The scandalous results may indicate to some that these policies don't work very well and ought to be reviewed, but the vast majority among the ruling rich are convinced that there is nothing wrong with the policies. They blame the Reagan gang for ineptness, and for getting caught. This indicates a rather extensive investigation, avoiding the sensational if possible.

There is another side to the confidence question. The side of the working class. Workers and the poor generally, including working farmers, need some signs that the economic and political system will somehow satisfy their needs. They don't know much about any other system that will work better. But when the prospects for improvement in their conditions of life are bleak and there is nothing to sustain their hopes, then they begin to look for some means of self-help. This is what happened in the 1930s, giving rise to the CIO movement which in its formative years was a very popular mass movement for social change. Such a development today would constitute a big new threat to the U.S. rulers.

The growing scandal in Washington presents the ruling class and their political agents with a difficult dilemma: a thoroughgoing investigation will appear as a sign that the system is beginning to grapple with some of the problems of society and provide new hope for some decisive sectors of the working class. But if the investigations are too deep and begin to reveal the rotten core of the system, then these same sectors of the working class (including some powerful unions) will lose confidence in the political system and demand a reshuffle.

The initial stage of the investigations certainly produced a wave of popular indignation and this promises to find expression in the antiwar demonstrations planned for this spring. Beyond this, a greater disillusionment with the two-party political system, the formation of new unemployed organizations and the growth of the existing ones to fight for benefits that have been taken away by the Reagan administration, a shakeup in the structure of some unions and the resurgence of the union movement (especially as the complicity of many top union officials in Reagan's schemes is exposed) are among the possibilities.

What the outcome of the present scandal will be depends upon how the struggle against corruption is conducted by those who have no voice in government. It could even lead to the formation of a network for a labor party based on the union movement before the political crisis in Washington is resolved. ■

December 30, 1986

FRENCH STUDENTS FORCE GOVERNMENT RETREAT

by Rafael Sabatini

The huge student demonstrations that shook France in late November and early December scored a stunning victory—forcing the Chirac government to withdraw reactionary legislation aimed at "reforming" the country's educational system. These were the largest student demonstrations since May 1968, and the largest street actions of any kind in France since 1984. Inspired at least in part by the breadth and success of the French student movement, students in Mexico and Spain also took to the streets in early and mid-December to protest proposed legislation designed to restrict access to higher education in their countries.

The events in France were the first large-scale, sustained resistance to the policies of the right-wing Chirac government since it took office following the parliamentary elections last March 16. Shortly after the student victory, French rail workers struck the state-owned railway to protest plans to "rationalize" operations by abolishing the seniority system. This strike, which hadn't ended as of January 1, is the largest of its kind in years. It coincides with strikes by dock workers and others. Among the most significant aspects of the strike is that it has taken on definite political overtones and originated as a result of rank-and-file action without initial authorization from the union bureaucracy.

No to the American System

The French student mobilizations took place in response to a government plan to enact the education bill of Alain Devaquet, an official in the Ministry of Education. This bill was proposed in a context of increasingly bleak employment opportunities for young people in France. It would have raised university tuition, abolished the practice by which all students passing the baccalaureate (roughly equivalent to a degree between a U.S. high-school and university diploma) are guaranteed admission to the university of their choice, and sanctioned individual universities to award their own diplomas rather than the standard degree now issued by the national university system. Many students negatively compared these proposed elitist changes to American education by carrying banners reading: "No to the Devaquet bill, No to the American system."

On Sunday, November 23, 200,000 students, parents, and teachers responded to a call by the teachers' union, the FEN (National Education Federation), to demonstrate in Paris against the Deva-

quet bill. After that action, the initiative was clearly taken by the students themselves.

One of the most striking features of the movement was its remarkably high degree of organization and democracy. In a matter of weeks, students from hundreds of high schools and virtually all of the country's 72 state-run universities organized themselves into democratic and independent strike committees and a delegated general assembly. On Saturday, November 22, the general assembly and the UNEF-ID (National Union of French Students Independent and Democratic) voted overwhelmingly to call for a student general strike under the slogan of "Unity of the students against Devaquet! General strike in the Universities!". They also called for nationwide demonstrations on Thursday, November 27.

In announcing the proposal to the general assembly Christophe, a student delegate, was quoted in *Rouge* (weekly newspaper of the LCR—Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International) as declaring that "the strike will not be a strike of this or that organization but a strike of all the students. The representatives at Tolbiac [a Paris campus where the assembly met] will not be the representatives of an organization but those of the general assembly and of all the students." By Monday night many universities and high schools throughout the country were reporting 100 percent participation in the strike. The demonstrations on Thursday, November 27, were even larger than those of the previous Sunday, with an estimated one million marching in Paris and in dozens of smaller cities throughout the country.

After another round of large demonstrations on December 4, the government attempted to derail the momentum of the movement by postponing debate on the bill. The students showed considerable political savvy by refusing to let up until the legislation was completely withdrawn. *Rouge* interviewed Rebecca, an 18-year-old member of the JCR (Revolutionary Communist Youth, a group in solidarity with the LCR), on the prospects of the movement. "After Chirac's maneuver" she said, "nobody thought that we had won. The students said to themselves 'they must take us for fools, it's a move to undercut the movement.'"

Other moves by the right proved equally ineffective. The week before the postponement of debate, *Le Monde* reported that Chirac's political party, the RPR (Rally for the Republic), had its youth group distribute 100,000 leaflets at the universities claiming that "Thanks to this real-

istic and reasonable project, university and high-school students have regained confidence in the modern university." On December 6, helmeted right-wing students and police physically attacked a demonstration. One student, Malik Ousseki, later died as a result of being beaten by police.

On December 8, the government finally backed down and agreed to withdraw the Devaquet bill. Though official union support came only toward the end of the mobilizations there were reports of widespread rank-and-file support among workers. A railway worker told *Rouge*, "When students from Censier (a Paris campus) came to the Austerlitz train station to distribute leaflets they were given a warm welcome by not only the workers but the public at large." Another worker at the Renault auto factory said, "It was necessary to go above the heads of the union officials to build a real unified [solidarity] movement."

'Touche Pas a Mon Pote'

Though the demonstrators tactically limited their demands to the withdrawal of the Devaquet bill, and many feared that establishment political parties might co-opt their movement or criticize the students as "apolitical," other social and political issues were raised in the course of the actions. For example: women's right to abortion, currently threatened by the Chirac government; social security, also under attack; and racist legislation aimed at immigrant workers and their families were discussed by students in the course of building their activities around the proposed education "reform."

It was this latter question of racism in France that was particularly significant—for despite their youth, many of those involved in the student demonstrations had previous political experience in "*SOS racism*," the antiracist organization founded three years ago by French high-school students. *SOS racism*, whose hand-shaped symbol reading "*Touche pas a mon pote*" or "Hands off my buddy" has achieved international fame, is responsible for organizing demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people, primarily youth, on several occasions since 1983.

Challenge to Chirac Government

The striking success of the movement against the Devaquet bill gains in importance since it was the first sustained challenge by any layer of the

French population to the Chirac government and the peculiar political arrangement known as "cohabitation" which emerged out of the French parliamentary elections. "Cohabitation" refers to the situation by which a right-wing coalition holding a narrow majority formed a government around Prime Minister Jacques Chirac while Francois Mitterrand of the Socialist Party remained as president. (See May 1986 issue of the *Bulletin IDOM* for an analysis of the French elections.) Since March 16 the SP has succeeded only in slowing the pace at which Chirac is implementing his policies; in no case has it attempted to reverse them.

The SP, after some initial hesitation, supported the students and will no doubt benefit from their victory. However, the advantages which the party will gain over the right will be qualified by two factors: First, the support they gave to the students was muted because of the origins of the Devaquet bill, which is directly traceable to tentative educational plans outlined by the SP when it held a majority in parliament before the last elections. A too rigorous attempt to capitalize on the victory of the students would risk calling attention to their own involvement with the plan. Secondly, the policies of the SP, while distinguishable somewhat from those of the right, are still not qualitatively different from the governmental program of the bourgeois parties. Thus, a generalization of the movement to include other key aspects of Chirac's plans may have gone beyond the limits advocated by the SP.

The French Communist Party (CP) was largely isolated from the latest round of actions by the student movement. In recent elections the CP has been credited with approximately 3-4 percent of the student vote.

It is still too early to tell what effect the student victory on this key aspect of the government's austerity drive will have on Chirac's entire program. That will depend to a large extent on the degree to which the current stirrings in the unions are broadened and generalized. This is complicated by the fact that the two principal union federations, the CGT and the CFDT, are tightly controlled by the CP and the SP. In any event the student demonstrations stand as a powerful example of the effectiveness of mass-based, independent, democratically organized social and political movements which will certainly inspire emulation by others. ■

January 2, 1987

GUERRILLA WARFARE AND MASS INSURRECTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Military Cease-fire, Political Instability

by Steve Bloom

On December 10 the 60-day cease-fire between the New People's Army (NPA)—the guerrilla forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)—and the Aquino government took effect. Both Aquino and the CPP had desired the accord, though it was almost blocked by the efforts of the Filipino right wing, inspired by ex-defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile. In the days before Enrile's ouster, the right wing in the Philippines had begun to go as far as kidnapping and murder in its effort to attack the workers' movement, destabilize the Aquino government, and set the stage for a "war on communism."

For Aquino, the cease-fire gives her more time to attempt to put together a stable ruling-class alliance. Up until the moment when she won a firm commitment from armed forces chief of staff Fidel V. Ramos and began the cabinet shakeup that included the ousting of Enrile, Aquino had been hanging on without the support—or even the acquiescence—of those elements in the country's ruling classes who had broken with Marcos after the dictator's ouster, but not with Marcosism. So far, however, with Ramos's backing, she has been able to neutralize the elements in the military who were openly planning a coup, and convince them to *at least* go along with her in the effort to

negotiate an end to the insurgency—even if they still don't agree with that approach.

The leaders of the NPA, the CPP, and the National Democratic Front (NDF)—a coalition of forces which supports the goals of the NPA—have taken full advantage of the cease-fire to launch a political offensive of their own, speaking on television and radio and engaging in demonstrations to show the considerable depth of support they enjoy in the countryside. In addition, the expectation is that both the NPA and the government's armed forces will be using the respite from hostilities in order to regroup and resupply themselves.

Up to now, at least, the cease-fire appears to be holding, despite accusations of violations on both sides.

Roots of Guerrilla Struggle

The CPP emerged in the late 1960s from the old-line pro-USSR Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) in reaction to its completely reformist policies. The CPP's decision to launch the guerrilla struggle marked a clear and sharp break with the reformist past and constitutes an important contribution toward the struggle of the Filipino masses.

The spectacular growth of the NPA as a serious force in the Philippines occurred during the last years of the Marcos dictatorship. The inability to effectively combat the insurgency was one of the prime factors which destabilized Marcos's government. The question of how to deal with it remains the one problem which the ruling classes of the Philippines find the most divisive.

In general, guerrilla movements are created and grow under circumstances of extreme repression and poverty. When the masses are destitute and see little or no hope for their situation, when no political alternatives can be openly or legally posed which provide a way out, the perspective of a prolonged guerrilla struggle becomes a reasonable alternative for significant numbers. In every case where such struggles have led to victory, this kind of social reality has prevailed.

Certainly the Marcos years in the Philippines created ripe conditions which laid the basis for the growth of the NPA. It has been Aquino's hope to undercut this problem through creating a bourgeois-democratic alternative which could appear attractive to individual NPA members or potential recruits—and perhaps even to the CPP or other forces in the NDF. In fact, the growth of the NPA

Correction:

In *Bulletin IDOM* No. 37 on page 2, the article "New Stage of the Philippine Revolution" quoted a statement made by a spokesperson for the organization Bayan and incorrectly identified it as "the left-wing nationalist party of which [Rolando] Olalia was chairman before his death." Olalia was chairman of the Partido ng Bayan. Bayan, which issued the quoted statement, is a coalition of left groups in the Philippines.

On page 4, the same article referred to: "the strategic perspective of 'critical participation' in the Aquino government projected by the leaders of the KMU and Bayan." Although the term "critical participation" has been used by some left forces in the Philippines to describe their attitude toward the Aquino government, this is not true of Bayan or the KMU. The formulation in the article should have read: "the strategic perspective of seeing the Aquino wing of the bourgeoisie as an ally, or potential ally, of the masses in the struggle against the right projected by the leaders of the KMU and Bayan."

did slow dramatically after the February revolution which installed Aquino. At present there is the rather unusual situation of a strong guerrilla movement in a country where the predominant (at least for now) wing of the ruling class is trying hard to solidify a bourgeois-democratic form of rule.

But Aquino has been at least partially thwarted in her effort to undercut the insurgency with an olive branch by the right-wing elements in the ruling classes. Her visible turn to the right since the beginning of her cabinet shakeup—made necessary in order to consolidate an alliance with more conservative bourgeois elements—now makes it less likely that she will succeed in her main objective through the cease-fire: the disarming of the NPA. On December 22 her spokesperson, Teodoro Benigno, rejected out of hand some of the NPA's key demands—a removal of U.S. bases and a coalition government which would include forces from the NDF, for example. If negotiations, which are supposed to begin to address the essential issues involved in the guerrilla struggle, hold out little hope for substantive progress—and it is difficult to see how Aquino can make any significant concessions under the present circumstances—the possibilities for the cease-fire holding would appear to be dim.

Still, as long as Aquino is able to maintain the bourgeois-democratic option in the country and the support (or even the passivity) of a significant layer of the Filipino masses, it will be much more difficult for the NPA to expand its influence. It is even conceivable that the support it has already won will begin to erode.

Rise of the Urban Workers' Movement

What makes life even more complicated for Aquino, what adds to the tensions within the Filipino ruling class, is another feature which has dramatically inserted itself into the political life of the Philippines since—and as a direct result of—the February revolution. The mass mobilization of working people in Manila in response to Marcos's election fraud was probably the single most significant factor in bringing about the ouster of the dictatorship. That movement constituted an immediate threat to bourgeois rule itself in the Philippines. If it had been able to grow, both in size and consciousness, the workers and poor peasants of the Philippines could conceivably have imposed their own government for the country—bypassing Aquino entirely. It was to head off this danger that Washington decided to dump Marcos, and some previously pro-Marcos elements in the armed forces threw their weight behind Aquino.

Since the February revolution, the militancy and combativity of the Filipino masses has been maintained, and this, in turn, continues to objectively pose the question of the socialist revolution in that country as an alternative to the programs of both the Aquino wing of the bourgeoisie and of the right. In fact, only the prole-

tarian alternative can offer a real solution to the economic and political crisis which continues to grip the country.

Urban proletarian insurrection—an event in which the masses of working people inject themselves into the political process in a decisive way—is a far more efficient, far less costly, form of revolutionary struggle than a prolonged guerrilla war. When its possibility is posed, it is without doubt the method of choice for revolutionists.

A massive strike wave and mobilization of the population against the government and against an economic system of exploitation can completely paralyze the ability of the bourgeoisie to rule. This demoralizes the ruling classes for a time, creating deep fissures within it and indecisiveness in its actions. These things, in turn, have a demoralizing effect on the old bourgeois army and other repressive state institutions. Significant portions of the army can then be won to the side of the workers and poor peasants, as can middle layers of the population who will be willing to support the proletariat in its effort to reconstruct society. Under such conditions, the old order can be overturned with *relative* ease (although, as in Russia after the October revolution of 1917, a long battle may be necessary to maintain and defend the new state power).

The one prerequisite to such a development, given the objective possibility for its occurrence, is the existence of a political leadership for the working class which has the understanding and audacity necessary to pose the independent program and mobilization of the workers and poor peasants as a solution to the crisis; a leadership which can develop democratic and transitional slogans to raise the consciousness of broad masses to the point where a workers' government supported by the poor peasantry becomes a reasonable short-term alternative to continued bourgeois rule. Such a leadership can then take the necessary steps at the decisive moment to bring that government into existence.

These are the kinds of tasks which have been posed by the situation in the Philippines since February, and which remain on the agenda today. Even though Aquino has made some progress in stabilizing the situation within the bourgeois classes, the combativity of the masses remains high and no solution has been found to the economic problems which underlie the country's instability. A renewed acute crisis could break out at any time.

Some of the mass organizations of the Filipino left and workers' movement have reacted to Aquino's right turn by beginning to go into active opposition to her government. The KMU (May First Movement), presently the largest trade union federation in the country, at a national congress on December 21 unanimously adopted a resolution rejecting the new constitution drafted by Aquino's hand-picked commission, and pledging the organization to a campaign against it. The KMU was severe-

ly repressed under Marcos but has enjoyed a strong resurgence since his overthrow and has been instrumental in leading a series of militant struggles on a trade union level. It is completely possible for the leadership of the KMU to offer a serious and credible proletarian political alternative to the Aquino wing of the bourgeoisie, and that would be a major step forward. Similar possibilities exist for other organizations in the Filipino workers' movement.

Combined Struggle

A significant feature of the present Philippine situation is the chance to combine a mass urban insurrection with the military power already accumulated by the NPA. It is a characteristic feature of victories which have been won by guerrilla forces that they develop, in their final stages, an urban insurrectionary movement which serves as an adjunct to the guerrilla struggle itself and helps to deal a final blow to the old order. We saw developments of this kind in both Cuba and Nicaragua, for example.

In the Philippines, however, the possibility exists at the present time for the urban workers

to play the leading role with the NPA serving as its ally. The power of that kind of linkup—not only for the insurrection against the present bourgeois state but also for the defense of the new workers' and peasants' government against domestic or external counterrevolution, and the growth of new democratic mass political forms to support the revolutionary government—is considerable.

It is possible, of course, that the present situation in the Philippines will pass without the workers and poor peasants finding a way to displace the bourgeoisie, that Aquino will succeed in either consolidating a liberal bourgeois state, or (more likely) the right-wing bourgeoisie will force increasing concessions from her or even overthrow her. In that case, the continued strength of the NPA and a prolonged "people's war" type strategy may be the only alternative, at least for a period. If that occurs, however, it would seem that a historic opportunity to advance the proletarian revolution in the wake of the mass upsurge of Filipino workers and peasants in 1986 will have been lost. ■

December 30, 1986

PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

Paul Le Blanc is an historian and activist in the Central American solidarity movement. His book is not only a scholarly and well argued defense of the applicability of revolutionary Marxism to events in the world today, but is also a full and inspiring account of the "mobilization of an entire people."

"Here is a first-rate study of the Nicaraguan revolution. It satisfies the need to know the essential facts about the revolutionary movement that succeeded in overthrowing the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship in 1979. At the same time it analyzes the dynamics of the revolutionary process that made that victory possible. And on top of all that it examines Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution in the light of the Nicaraguan experience up to September 1983."

— From the preface by George Breitman.

Who can fail to acknowledge the importance of the Nicaraguan revolution in world politics today? Every thoughtful reader will find something of interest in *Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua*. Clear and well-written, this book offers much to think about.

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua is available by mail for \$3.00 per copy or \$1.80 each for orders of three or more. Write to FIT, P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009

REAL JUSTICE NEEDED IN GRENADA

by Stuart Brown

In 1983 Grenadian soldiers shot and killed Maurice Bishop and other leaders of the New Jewel Movement loyal to Bishop and to the original goals of the Grenadian revolution. In doing so they were carrying out the orders of Bernard Coard—who had seized control of the government of the island nation in a coup against the pro-Bishop wing of the New Jewel Movement, the ruling government party. Coard's actions were a shock to the people of Grenada, who had not even been informed that any dispute was taking place within the New Jewel leadership, and the resulting mass demoralization and demobilization laid the basis for the invasion of the island by U.S. troops—using the flimsy pretext of "protecting U.S. students" but with the real goal of installing a new, pro-U.S., puppet regime.

Since the U.S. invasion, that new government has systematically overturned all of the institutional gains made by the Grenadian people after the revolution of 1979. It can truly be said that Bernard Coard assassinated not only Maurice Bishop but also, as a consequence, the entire Grenadian revolution. Certainly a crime of such magnitude deserves to be severely punished.

It would seem, then, that the people of Grenada and working people around the world would have reason to cheer the verdict of a Grenadian court which found Coard and 16 others guilty of murder. (Fourteen, including Coard, were sentenced on December 4 to death by hanging. The three others received up to 45-year jail terms.) But there is no reason to be gratified. Justice has not been done in this case; and it can only be done if a free Grenadian people themselves are able to try Bernard Coard for his crimes and pass sentence upon him. That did not take place. The trial was carried out by those who benefited from Coard's assassination of Bishop and his supporters, which means that it could only be a wretched charade.

In fact, from the point of view of the Grenadian government and its court, the trial and conviction of Coard and his co-defendants is an obvious and gross miscarriage of justice. Justice would dictate that the servants of U.S. imperial-

ism, who were installed as a result of the Marine Corp's invasion of the island, give Coard and his cronies a large vote of thanks. But of course bourgeois justice is not as blind, or as honest, as that. They can get more mileage by shedding crocodile tears over the fate of Bishop, who was justly revered by the Grenadian people. Coard, on the other hand, is justly reviled. By the cynical maneuver of bringing him to "justice" themselves, in their own way, the present rulers of the country hope to win some sympathy from the Grenadian workers and poor farmers—who were the base of the Bishop government and of the 1979 revolution.

They get some additional propaganda mileage in addition. Coard, they say (and he says as well), is a Marxist. This assertion enables Grenada's present rulers to play the old imperialist ideological game of distorting Marxism, acceding its mantle to those who claim to speak in its name but in fact betray it. Through this trick they contribute to the confusion of working people in Grenada and throughout the world.

And Bernard Coard was a product of the New Jewel Movement itself, was he not? "Do not listen to those who claim to be speaking for the NJM or the old movement of Bishop," the present government is able to explain to the Grenadian people. "If they take power again it will simply lead to another betrayal like the one of which Coard was guilty. Their ideas are utopian nonsense. Better to do the best you can in the real, practical world which exists under the domination of the U.S.A." Such ideological confusion helps to keep the Grenadian people passive, and that is the main prerequisite to their continued exploitation by international imperialist interests.

Those who would see genuine justice done in Grenada must work to counteract this tissue of lies and cynicism. No genuine working class fighter should be fooled for a moment by the Grenadian government's pretensions in sentencing Coard and his gang. Until the workers and farmers of Grenada again rule their country, as they did under Bishop's leadership from 1979 to 1983, there will be, there can be, no justice in Grenada. ■

The Zionist bomb

from International Viewpoint, November 10, 1986

MORDECHAI VANUNU, the Israeli engineer who provided the information for a feature in the September 5 issue of the British *Sunday Times* on the Zionist state's nuclear arsenal, has been missing since September 30. A friend of his, the Australian pastor John Macknight, has alleged from Jerusalem that Vanunu was kidnapped by Mossad, the notorious Israeli secret service, and is being held in that city. He has reported that a Jerusalem judge handed down a two-week detention order against the dissident engineer.

The US magazine *News Week* has also reported that Vanunu was kidnapped in Britain by the Mossad and taken back to Israel. The following article on Vanunu's revelations is taken from the October 8 issue of *News from Within*, a weekly bulletin in English published by human rights activists in Israel.

So it was that the *Sunday Times* report on the Dimona station created such a sensation. Based on information from a nuclear technician, the report puts Israel as the world's sixth most powerful nuclear power.

Mordechai Vanunu, who began working at the Dimona station nine years ago, appears to have lost his security clearance after becoming involved with left-wing groups at the Beersheba University. Dismissed from his job at the station, unable to find another place of employment, Vanunu left the country.

According to the *Sunday Times* report, while working at the plant Vanunu secretly drew plans, took photographs and familiarized himself

with the bomb production process. Vanunu told the *Times* that Israel has been building weapons at Dimona for the past twenty years, "hiding its plutonium extraction process from sky satellites and independent inspectors during the 1960s by burying it beneath an innocuous, little-used building at the site."

The Dimona station was built by France between 1957 and 1964. France has always insisted that it didn't supply Israel with the plutonium separation technology necessary for the production of atomic weapons. Most intelligence reports (including those of the CIA and the UN) put Israel's nuclear stockpile at between 10-20 primitive atomic bombs, similar

to those the United States dropped on Japan in 1945.

This estimate is based on the maximum amount of plutonium that can be extracted using primitive methods. However, according to Vanunu's testimony, the station has the technology for annually producing 40 kilograms of plutonium, enough to build 10 bombs a year.

Nuclear experts who checked Vanunu's testimony said that they had been convinced by this evidence and calculated that Israel has stockpiled at least 100 nuclear bombs.

Vanunu alleges that when the French began constructing the Dimona Nuclear Research Station in 1957, they dug out a 25-metre-deep crater in which they buried a six-level bunker, known as "Machon 2." It was then covered by a two-storey, innocent-looking, above ground structure.

The *Sunday Times* report carries a detailed description of the plutonium extraction process carried out at the station, concluding that "the sophistication and scale of Israel's nuclear weapons-making capabilities revealed by Insight [the team which debriefed Vanunu and examined his testimony] makes it clear that Israel is now a major nuclear power. Its survival in the face of a conventional defeat would seem assured, for no Arab nation could match its nuclear muscle. China has approximately 300 warheads, France 500 and Britain as many as 700. Both America and the USSR are in a class of their own with about 27,000 each. Israel's projected nuclear arsenal of 100-200 weapons may be dwarfed by comparison but it is enough to make it the sixth most powerful nation on earth.

"Ten days ago the outgoing prime minister Shimon Peres, attended a regular briefing of Israeli newspaper editors. On the agenda was the upcoming *Sunday Times* Insight investigation. Though no editor will publicly reveal details of the conversation, it is believed that Peres, having told the editors of the forthcoming report, warned them of their obligations under the Official Secrets Act. He admitted that Insight had gained access to an inside source"

Six days before the *Sunday Times* published Vanunu's testimony, both *HaAretz* and *Al Hamishmar* ran editorials on a *Daily Mirror* report which carried some of the information later released in the *Sunday Times*. Both editorials were completely censored. □

UPDATE

Vanunu, who is 31-years old, has pleaded not guilty to charges of aggravated espionage, disclosing state secrets, and helping an enemy in wartime. He faces life imprisonment on the first two of these, while the third could result in a death sentence.

According to an article in the January 4 *New York Times*, he has now been deprived of his right to reading material and a radio. These were taken away by the chief warden of the jail where Vanunu is being held after he wrote a message on his palm—stating that he had been kidnapped from Italy by Israeli authorities—and flashed it to reporters on his way to court one morning.

HORMEL STRIKERS: AFTER THE TRUSTEE

Interview with Jim Guyette and Ray Rogers

Question: Where does P-9 stand right now in its struggle with the Hormel Company?

Guyette: Well, the struggle involves not only the Hormel Company, but the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), which is doing the bidding of the company at this point. The company and the International officials are both saying that the boycott of Hormel products has to stop, which tells us that the boycott is having an effect on the company. We know the company is laying off people in other plants. We know the company has sharply reduced its production in the Austin plant and other plants.

The company refuses to put anybody back to work. And it's the International union which has now admitted in a letter that they did not negotiate anybody's job back and don't anticipate anybody getting back to work, as well. The International union has taken over the union hall. They have destroyed a mural dedicated to Nelson Mandela. I think that our International union has been in bed with the company far too long. The situation now can be best characterized as the first ever union-sponsored lockout. We have an International union that is going to the courts to circumvent our democratic local and destroy the strike itself; that is taking donations sent to us by other unions; and which pays people \$40 to \$50 a week to cross picket lines.

Rogers: The UFCW has put P-9 into receivership. We want to get that reversed; get our building back, and get the democratic process going again. There's no question that the only thing that has allowed this company to hold out so long is the multimillion-dollar smear campaign that has been orchestrated by the leadership of the UFCW and supported by the top leadership of the AFL-CIO. There is no question that if this were just a struggle between the workers in Austin and the

company, this strike would have been won by us a long time ago.

Q: You say that the heads of the AFL-CIO have given their support to the International union. How do you assess that and how do you plan to cope with it?

Rogers: Well, in terms of assessing it, certainly the leadership of UFCW and the AFL-CIO feel much more comfortable sitting down with the corporate executives than they do sitting down with the rank and file. Their interests are not the interests of the rank-and-file worker. If they were, they could never be involved in this betrayal of our union. How to deal with it? A strong message has been going out to the rank-and-file workers that they have to take away the power of the big banks which have stolen their economic wealth and used it to clobber the workers over the head, and the workers have to take back their unions from the leaders who have betrayed them. The rank-and-file workers must stop allowing five or ten people to come into a union meeting and control the union.

Q: So part of your fight is to educate the rank and file of any union that has a similar bureaucracy to fight back and bring back democracy within the trade union movement?

Rogers: I think one of the big things that has come out of the P-9 struggle is that we've really torn away the facade that the top leadership of the unions has put up. You know, reporters have been going to these AFL-CIO conventions down in Bal Harbour, Florida, and they come out and say, "What a waste of time. We have to cover it. But nothing ever comes out of it." It would really be good if the rank-and-file members who pay their union dues could see what goes on at these conventions. They would see that their so-called leaders have no solutions for their problems.

Q: So what we need are more organizations like P-9 to further this struggle?

Guyette: The P-9 struggle didn't start out this way. It started out as a simple labor dispute and it turned into a much bigger thing because a lot of facades have been torn away. The only argument that the International can use against us is the argument of dual unionism, that somehow we are not marching in step with union solidarity. I would like to make the analogy of the responsible parent as one who does not simply bring forth a child but

*This interview with Jim Guyette and Ray Rogers about the current situation faced by Hormel strikers in Austin, Minnesota, was conducted on November 20, 1986, by Ben Stone, author of the book *Memoirs of a Radical Rank & Filer* (see review on page 32). Guyette is the suspended president of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (currently under the control of a trustee). Rogers is the director of Corporate Campaign Incorporated, and was a consultant to P-9 in its strike. Stone has made this interview available to a number of left publications in the U.S.*

who cares for the child and is responsible for its upbringing. The irresponsible parent may even abandon the child. Now, that goes against our grain. Yet people are reluctant to call this International union an irresponsible union for its abandonment of our local union. Not only have they abandoned us but they are doing everything in their power to starve us out.

I think it's time we started calling things the way they are. If there are illegitimate, irresponsible union officials who are more interested in rings on their fingers than they are about representing their rank and file, then let's say that and let's do something about it. Let's clean up our own union movement.

Q: What are some of the things that can be done to clean up the union movement?

Guyette: Well, we come up with two paths that can be taken, one of which is to work from within. Some are doing that. The other way is to create a legitimate labor organization which the workers see as an alternative. That was the seed for the development of the CIO in this country. That is what we are doing in Austin. The people in Austin decided to set up the North American Meatpackers Union (NAMPU) because they want a democratic union representing the rank and file and to break up the prostitute relationship that exists between the Hormel Company and the International union. Then you will have real collective bargaining taking place. We must also deal with the problem of the cops and the courts and the Republican and Democratic parties, who claim to represent the people. But P-9 is in a situation where it is dependent on people's ability to help them in this struggle through financial contributions, through boycotting of Hormel products, and through their solidarity and support. Right now the key focus has to be on the two main enemies we are confronted with, the Hormel Company and the International union. We are determined not to become another PATCO.

Q: Where does NAMPU stand right now in its quest for certification?

Guyette: There is going to be an election within the plant for the people to vote on who they want to represent them. At this point there are between 800 and 900 people in Austin who are victims of the agreement between the Hormel Company and the UFCW. The only way these people will ever get their jobs back is if NAMPU prevails in an election. People inside the plant who scabbed signed a petition to vote for a new union. The UFCW is delaying the vote because they have made an assessment of those in the plant and know that, if a vote were held today, they would lose the vote.

Q: In the plant?

Guyette: In the plant. Because people have seen what kind of an organization the UFCW is and

people don't want any part of it. And the Austin plant typifies what's happening in the meatpacking industry. The UFCW leadership has been unable to organize in the meatpacking industry because people do not want to join a union in order to give concessions. That's why there is so much ferment being generated in other plants and other companies in the meatpacking industry.

Q: So if NAMPU should prevail there should be a tremendous increase in the union membership in meatpacking?

Guyette: I think that if NAMPU prevails in the election in Austin, you're going to see a landslide occur in the meatpacking industry.

Q: What are the prospects and perspectives of NAMPU?

Guyette: NAMPU can get as big as it wants to get, because NAMPU represents democracy in the union. Democracy is a funny thing. When people understand democracy, when they see how it works, everybody wants it.

Q: Isn't part of the problem overcoming the apathy of the rank and file within the other locals, within the other unions?

Guyette: We think this can be overcome very easily, if there is a will to do it. It was overcome in Austin. Union meetings used to be attended by 40 to 50 people. All of a sudden there were big meetings attended by hundreds. There can be many Austins.

Rogers: There are some locals that have only one meeting a year. But even in those cases where they may hold more meetings the rank and file is never given an opportunity to get up and say anything. There's never a presentation about the kind of a program that people can believe in, no kind of vision. So that's the situation you have from the International structure on down. And that's because if the rank and file starts taking some interest and wants to do something, it might decide to vote the people at the top the heck out and have a real union, like P-9, where the members decide everything. I believe that rank-and-file workers across the country, everywhere, whether they're meatpackers, or steelworkers, machinists, clerical workers, airline workers, I believe the potential is inherent in all of them to be a P-9.

Q: Jim, did you ever anticipate that you would face this kind of a struggle when you first started?

Guyette: When I first started I just wanted to do the best job I could. I saw it as my duty to lay out all the facts before the rank and file and let them make the decisions. We had rank-and-file meeting after rank-and-file meeting. Arguments were heard on both sides of every issue. I personally

didn't agree with everything that was said and done but everyone had the opportunity to be heard and to vote on the decisions. And it was through this democratic process that decisions were made. If more time was needed, more time was given. And that is why everyone got so involved. We even brought in some other decision-makers, the spouses, because this was a family thing, and the spouses had a tremendous amount of input. I don't think there's any question that I couldn't have done half of the things that I've done without the help of my wife, who has been very supportive and understanding.

Q: Did you anticipate the kind of problems that did arise in the course of the struggle with the cops and the National Guard and the UFCW?

Guyette: Well, I knew the International union had made deals in the past and at least was very suspicious of that. I knew they were capable of the harassing phone calls to our homes. They tried to threaten and intimidate us, told us we would never come home alive if we went to certain meetings; they pretended to be other people on the phone in order to trap us into making certain statements. They did many underhanded things. But I didn't anticipate the bigness of it.

Q: Has the support that the P-9 struggle generated throughout the country been able to tip the scales against the Hormel Company, do you think?

Rogers: We generated support from between 3,000 and 4,000 unions from every state in this country as well as support from organizations abroad. We also gained the support of organizations like the National Organization for Women and many private individuals. I think the tremendous support we have generated has tipped the scales against the company. In fact, if it weren't for the multimillion-dollar smear campaign waged against us by the top officials of UFCW and supported by the heads of the AFL-CIO, I really doubt that we would have needed a strike at all. It is because of that widespread support and solidarity for us expressed throughout the labor movement that we have been able to survive and strike back as effectively as we have. And we are growing stronger, not weaker.

Q: So it doesn't look like the word defeat is in your vocabulary?

Rogers: No. Not at all.

Q: And you still look forward to victory?

Rogers: Absolutely. We have two battles we are going to win. One against the Hormel Company and one against—well I hate to call them the union leadership—the bureaucratic misleadership that has been undermining our whole struggle.

Guyette: You're only ignored if you're ineffective. We have certainly not been ignored by the cops,

the courts, the National Guard, the company, or the International union. We must be doing something right.

Q: The question is, will you prevail against all those odds?

Guyette: A lot of unions, civic and religious organizations, many thousands of prominent and ordinary people are part of our support group, which only keeps getting bigger. The company and the International leaders have been trying every trick in the book to starve us out, freeze us out. It hasn't worked and it will not work.

Rogers: We have a situation where the local was put in trusteeship. Then suddenly a contract settlement is announced. Word is sent out all over the country that the strike is settled. But people everywhere keep saying: We haven't heard from the P-9 leadership that the strike is over. And nobody believes it's over. We will not allow the company, the International union, or the *New York Times* to decide when this struggle is over. Only the rank-and-file membership will decide that.

Another promising development is the tough resistance of the rank and file in unions around the country to those of their top leadership who want to rally around their fellow bureaucrats in the UFCW. For example, William Winpisinger [head of the International Association of Machinists], who is supposed to be such a liberal, progressive labor leader. He really did all he could to put P-9 under. He was put in his place by his own local leadership and his rank and file. Likewise Vincent Sombratto, head of the letter carriers, who came out very strongly in favor of P-9. But in the beginning, down at Bal Harbour, Sombratto really bad-mouthed P-9, but the rank and file of the letter carriers told us, "We put Mr. Sombratto in his place very quickly and he changed his tune." And this was a beautiful thing that happened all over the country. I could cite many more examples of this kind.

Guyette: In fact what the workers said to their leaders was, "It doesn't make much difference what you say about the policy of the AFL-CIO. A lot of our people support that P-9 struggle and we are not going to tell them to do otherwise."

Rogers: I must relate this experience which took place at the Postal Workers convention in San Francisco. Lane Kirkland was a featured speaker. The next person to come up on the stage happened to be the 260-pound, 60-year-old, meatpacking P-9 member, Buck Heegard. Before stepping up on the stage, Buck stopped, shook hands with Lane Kirkland, stepped up to the mike and said, "Mr. Kirkland, you just said that the AFL-CIO is drawing the line at USX. Well, I want you to know that we drew the line over a year ago at P-9 and ever since that time you've tried to cut the legs right out from underneath us."

Q: Do you think that the charge of dual unionism has had any effect on anyone in the labor movement?

Rogers: The detractors who are trying to blacklist everybody involved in supporting P-9 claim that we are weakening and undermining the labor movement because we are trying to set up an alternative to the bureaucracy of the UFCW. As Jim has said, the NAMPU situation is not a decertification, it's a recertification. NAMPU consists of working people who want to have a legitimate, democratic union to represent them and engages in real collective bargaining to get the best wage and working conditions they can get.

Q: Does this charge of dual unionism bother you?

Rogers: It bothers me that some people are misled by this charge of dual unionism. What was the history of the AFL and CIO? Was that dual unionism? If it was, thank goodness.

Guyette: I don't think the charge of dual unionism has any credence whatsoever. They have made all kinds of charges against us. The more desperate they get the more desperate the charges. When I first got elected, the officers who got displaced, along with the company, promoted the idea that I was a John Bircher and Ray was a communist. Anybody with any sense could figure out that two such complete opposites could never work together. Then they attacked me in the local press, which is controlled by the company, as being a socialist, and from a socialist I went to a communist. Now the latest is that I'm a Lyndon LaRoucheite. So I've come full circle. This is the mark of their desperation.

Q: You have remarked that the Democratic governor of Minnesota, Rudy Perpich, sent in the National Guard against P-9 and no Democratic politician stood up for P-9. Does this mean that most strikers have become disillusioned with the Democratic as well as the Republican party?

Rogers: I can tell you one thing, from talking to the rank and file in Austin, I have a hard time believing that anyone cast a ballot for Rudy Perpich.

Q: Is it true that there were some candidates who ran on an independent ticket in Austin?

Rogers: Yes. There was "Skinny" Weis (sheriff of Mowar County), Floyd Lenesch (alderman-at-large), Randy Emilusen (alderman-at-large), and Tom Keough (state senate).

Guyette: There were some people who ran, but I think that Austin, Minnesota, has to be viewed in the context of the American public itself. Ronald Reagan was elected by only 32 percent of the people in this country; 23 percent voted for Mondale; 45 percent didn't vote at all. That means that there

are a tremendous number of people who are frustrated and disillusioned in the two-party system. Look who came to Austin. Jesse Jackson. The idea of Reverend Jackson coming to Austin would have been a foreign idea just three years ago. But it's not so foreign anymore. In fact, it happened.

Q: Jesse Jackson has given no indication that he is ready to split from the Democratic Party. Would it not be better to have an independent political party based on the labor movement, that is, a labor party?

Rogers: Certainly, I would like to see a political party that really represents the interests of the working people.

Guyette: I definitely think there is a need for a party to represent the working people, a party to represent the farmers, who are working people. It seems to me that there's something wrong in this country when farmers go broke and working people lose their jobs. We have grain inventories stockpiled and yet the lines of the hungry and the displaced seem to grow and grow. There is a need for change and that need is growing day by day.

Q: Is there any kind of publication that P-9 puts out to keep the public informed as to the developments taking place in P-9?

Guyette: Before the trusteeship, we had a publication called *The Unionist* that came out every week. The UFCW has taken that over, which they claim they have a right to do. They have reduced it to a comic book, making caricatures of Ray and myself. Our support group in Austin is putting out a newsletter which is distributed on Fridays, together with groceries.

Q: What is it called?

Guyette: The *Support Report*. You can get it by writing to the United Support Group, P.O. Box 396, Austin, MN 55912. NAMPU is in the process of putting out its own paper and they've asked me to help out, which I will be able to do in a limited way. The need is certainly there for that kind of a paper but the primary need at the moment is to feed people so they don't starve and to keep utilities going so they don't freeze.

Q: Has NAMPU been able to draw up any kind of a specific program outlining your perspectives?

Guyette: I believe that is taking place right now. A program is being drawn up by the Charter Committee of NAMPU. I am not on that committee. I did not sign the petition for NAMPU, because I am involved in a lawsuit against the International union, in the course of which I will demonstrate the collusion between the Hormel Company and the UFCW, and it will be brought out in testimony.

Rogers: We look for a good quality of life for every worker. In order to achieve that we have to realize that there is a real financial power behind every corporation and every politician. And certainly we need a political party that is not going to permit poverty in the midst of plenty and is going to eliminate wars of destruction on this earth.

Q: How have your personal lives been affected since the strike first began in August 1985?

Rogers: A key element of my life revolves around the objectives of Corporate Campaign, to help the unions in their struggles with the corporations. We were hoping to buy a building so we would not have to pay these outrageous New York rents and we could put more resources into the campaign. But

because of the long, drawn-out struggle, we have turned into a very poor organization, financially. I have basically lived in Austin for over a year and a half. We put everything on the line down there, including our lives. I have a few more gray hairs. But this kind of a struggle makes you feel stronger and more inspired.

Guyette: We cannot talk in terms of what price has been paid in this struggle. How can you measure price in terms of the friends, supporters, and the tremendous solidarity we have garnered in all parts of the country and abroad. Nobody should have to go through what we have had to go through in Austin. Eventually the whole labor movement will benefit from our struggle. ■

YEAR OF DECISION FOR U.S. LABOR The Hormel Strike and Beyond

by Dave Riehle and Frank Lovell

\$2.50

This reprint of articles from past issues of the *Bulletin IDOM* covers a momentous year in the development of the U.S. labor movement: the year of the strike by United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota, against the giant meat-processing firm of Geo. A. Hormel Inc. It tells some of the story of that strike and draws its lessons, as well as presenting a class-struggle viewpoint on the broader issues facing working people in the U.S. fighting to defend their standard of living today.

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

THE RETURN OF THE OLD MAID

by Mary Scully

The opponents of equal rights for women have always had a tough time coming up with persuasive arguments. It's hard these days to be on the medieval side of a question. So they resort to sentimental odes to the endangered American family, malice, and scare tactics. They erect scarecrows.

In the heyday of the modern women's movement, the late 1960s and '70s, the scarecrow they reared to discredit the movement was the lesbian. Feminists were described as disgruntled man-haters too ugly to get a man. These were some tough babes—not just burning their bras in contemptuous and public display but, with all their ERA crap, challenging the very sanctuary of the ladies room.

The message was clear: feminism equaled "dykeism" and women like you and me wouldn't want to associate with the likes of "them." Any female revealing the slightest sympathy with feminist ideas was suspect and ridiculed as "one of them" or at least soured on men by an unrequited love.

We like to think all this banality originated with fundamentalist outfits of the Jerry Falwell type or the hard-core right wing like Phyllis Schafley. But let us not rewrite history. This was the nonsense dished out daily in respectable newspapers and on the evening news.

Soon enough, despite the scarecrows, all hell broke loose. Women's liberation became a national terrorist movement and it ran roughshod over all the pieties and banalities and knocked down the ugly scarecrows in its march. That fighting force of students and housewives, working women and, yes, lesbians, gave hope, opened opportunities, and forged a future for millions of women who previously had none.

All this has made things tougher, but for opponents of women's liberation the war still goes on. Times have changed but not their methods. In place of the hard-nosed "Dyke" they've simply invented a new scarecrow—the pitiable Old Maid.

Those too young to remember might think that "Old Maid" is just a card game named after someone's wart-nosed "maiden aunt"; or they might think Old Maids are the unpopped kernels in the bottom of the popcorn bowl. In fact the Old Maid is a part of our American past. She emerged on the national scene during the feminist uprising of the late 19th century and didn't disappear until somewhere around 1970.

An indomitable sort, she popped up again on Valentine's Day in 1986. The frightening reappearance of legions of Old Maids has dominated every media report concerning women since then. We have

heard about it in every major newspaper, on radio and TV. When Phil Donohue, who is simply the last word in patronizing women, did a show on it, we knew it was true.

The Statistical Evidence

Stated baldly, the facts are that 22 percent of college-educated women between 25 and 29 years old will not marry; only 5 percent of single women over 35 will marry; for 40-year-olds it's 2.6 percent; and for Black women, 40 percent are destined for spinsterhood.

According to the media reports this news sent single women into a spin. Future surveys will likely show a titanic increase in applications to Together Dating Service about this time, probably a growth in the suicide rate among single women, and many may attribute this news with saving their marriages. For those men cowed by today's more assertive woman or for the guy just looking for a fling, the news of an oversupply of horny, desperate women could only be welcome.

But hysteria and scarecrows are always a dead giveaway in the media. This time there is no mistake about it. Jerry Falwell can't take the rap. It came from the media themselves and they all swear they got it from some authoritative Harvard-Yale study. Now, statistics coming from the Ivy League, even when reeking with hysteria and false pity, are not to be taken lightly.

Any nosy or suspicious person who does bother to investigate the damning study, however, will soon discover that no part of the media employed the research skills ordinarily considered *de rigueur* to the honest seventh grader. Misrepresentation of the survey is rampant.

The Real Story

The real story is that a couple of guys—David Bloom of Harvard, Neil Bennett of Yale—have been trying for a few years to figure out why the marriage rate is declining so noticeably going on 20 years now.

Research is a thankless job and things get dull. When some reporter called up the Yale professor to get some newsy data for a Valentine's Day love article he told her (thank god somebody cared!) that, as a matter of fact, things don't look so good for love in America. So he spied off the nasty sounding statistics on spinsters, she reported them in a local newspaper, and a day later the wire services and major networks picked

up the news and spread it continentally. The rest is hystoria!

According to Bennett, the onslaught of articles and reports that followed were based only on telephone interviews; according to Bloom, an earlier, abridged version of the study was actually circulated to interested parties (including this writer); according to both, the notorious final study consists of unpublished working papers which no one has had access to.

It would require the services of at least an Ivy League statistician to decipher—let alone determine the validity of—the mathematical equations dooming millions of women to spinsterhood. But when the described data base for a study of single women is almost exclusively married women, the researchers have a lot of heavy-duty explaining to do.

Contrary to the full-scale social scenario drawn by the media, the study itself makes no attempt at all to examine the *reasons* for the decline in first marriages. No attempt is made to examine the psychology or motives behind the figures, nor does it look at the social context. What it does say—no more, no less—is that female college graduates and Black female high-school dropouts show the lowest incidence of first marriage. Interesting data; also ambiguous.

What About Men?

The Harvard-Yale study can't tell us very much about the declining marriage rate because it doesn't say a word about the marriage patterns of men. The researchers claim they were discouraged by the U.S. Census Bureau from examining the data on men because it was considered unreliable. Why is the data considered faulty? According to the *New York Times* report (February 22, 1986), the Harvard researcher claimed that it appears divorced men often claim they've never been married. When the Harvard professor spoke with this writer he said the census bureau doubted the data because when census takers made their rounds they interviewed primarily women who were certain of their own marital status but confused concerning the men in the household. Does either of those explanations make sense to anyone? Is it men who are confused, or women? Or is it the researchers, or even the census bureau?

Additionally, no class or employment breakdown is provided in the study. Yet in the media the new spinster became a career professional. Is this assumed solely on the basis of her college degree? We wouldn't want to appear impressionistic; we want to be scientific. But how many history graduates do you know waiting tables? (And let's not mention those 40 percent of Black high-school dropouts here!)

If the study tells us so little and nothing more, how come Drs. Bennett and Bloom are telling the *New York Times* that by the time women go to college and pursue a career the marriage market has "evaporated"? Why is Dr. Bennett saying things

like "by deferring marriage women are finding fewer available and desirable men, and that furthermore, men prefer women who are younger, less educated, and less successful"?

Seizing on the themes of this unsettling interview with the *New York Times*, the rest of the media simply went hog wild. An ABC three-hour special called "After the Sexual Revolution" devoted close to one-third to this study, and had middle-aged spinsters crying on national television because they couldn't find boyfriends.

Ebony and *Newsweek*

More popular publications like *Newsweek* and *Ebony* completely lost their heads. It's *Newsweek*, after all, that added the curious data that 40-year-olds "are more likely to be killed by a terrorist" than to marry.

Newsweek's article is so full of cliches and nonsense that it approaches parody. According to them, the new spinsters are "Yuppie" (speaking of media inventions!) to the core. Single factory girls and hotel clerks can relax. We're talking bankers, doctors, lawyers.

Dripping with class snobbery, *Newsweek* claims that these "Yuppie" single women are the "cream of the crop," not only better educated but more intelligent than their married sisters, the "best and brightest" of their generation. An astonishing judgment, combining at once flattery and insult!

In addition, *Newsweek* tells us, men may intellectually favor equality for women but they still prefer the homebody who'll have dinner on the table when they come home from work. They don't want wives schooled in Spinoza but in the "Joy of Cooking." We would do well to keep in mind that the education of women has always been a sore spot with opponents of women's equality.

To add insult to injury, this superior breed of women has brought it on themselves. The time-worn stigma imposed on single men and women (especially women) in our culture is simply updated. Women have set "impossibly high standards"; they're too fussy about mates, too intolerant, unable to make a commitment. One woman quoted in *Newsweek* won't marry anyone who won't eat sushi. In short, we are told: "Women don't really appreciate nice guys."

Ebony magazine found the same sad situation. A woman they cited is ashamed of her boyfriend because he has bad table manners ("he doesn't even know what fork to use"), and a Black female bank executive is embarrassed with her bus driver beau.

Soon enough these magazines lead us to the heart of the problem: *Newsweek* found a guy, a single "good-looking 40-year-old computer consultant" (in other words, a "good catch") who blames the women's movement for "making women have a critical attitude toward men: 'Men are too macho. Men aren't emotional enough.' It's not fun having a woman always tell you what's wrong with you."

One authority consulted by *Ebony* advises Black women to stop blaming men and society for

their problems. They should, instead, examine their own negative attitudes toward men, and above all, avoid debating feminist issues with prospective beaux. "Some believe," the article states, "that the women's movement has simply provided a way by which powerful men can have access to more women." This stupefying sarcasm is simply dropped into the middle of a discussion about possible solutions for Black spinsters. The solutions offered include celibacy, polygamy, dating married men, and something called "mate-sharing."

Ebony's article is among the most shameless in its deceptions. Although it purports to base its article on the Harvard-Yale study, it also manages to ignore the Black high-school dropouts comprising the overwhelming number of women affected and focuses on professional Black women.

The 'Man Shortage'

Incredibly, all of the media reports get great mileage from the man shortage panic and this scarcity is worth investigating—especially since the U.S. Census Bureau recently released figures showing that the number of single men and women in their late 20s and 30s had doubled in the past 15 years, and that there are 4.2 million single women compared to 6.1 million single men. To make certain spinsters weren't reassured by this news, *Newsweek* reports that single men over 30 (like our petulant computer consultant?) are the "bottom of the barrel." Unlike the women, however, this is not a class designation, only a psychological one. Single men are misfits, losers, unable to commit. *People* magazine tells us "all the good ones are married."

If any significant part of 6 million men are losers, we're talking a real blight on the land. God knows, that added to the known number of rapists, dope pushers, and molesters, we've got a big problem on our hands.

And the problems have only just begun! In examining other census data, we find that until the age of 25 males outnumber females by a long shot. Between 25 and 44 years there are .8 million more females; between 45 and 64, 2.1 million more females; and over 65 years, 4.9 million more women.

How we reconcile the contradictory census data showing a surplus of single men over women in their 20s and 30s remains a mystery. But even more compelling problems are revealed by this data.

Firstly, we can safely assume that the majority of single older women are widowed or divorced. This might indicate that marriage is not a guarantee for women, economically or emotionally.

Secondly, given the staggering attrition in men, would we not be better advised to stop worrying about single women finding mates and instead find a way to keep our young and old men alive?

We know that the majority of young men are killed in alcohol- or drug-related accidents. Should we not determine the social pressures driving them to premature death and then allocate the necessary social resources to alter these conditions?

Social Crisis in the U.S.A.

The truth is that when the media isolates and overdramatizes the figure on single women, they choose to ignore a whole set of factors ordinarily considered relevant because they affect marriage.

The larger number of men and women cohabiting is ignored, as is the 50 percent divorce rate (showing a flight from "wedded bliss"), along with the alarming data on rape, incest, family violence against women and children, prostitution, pornography, sexual harassment. Do these figures mean nothing? Do they not attest rather poignantly to a profound breakdown and crisis in family and social relations?

In fact the figures on single women only mean something within the context of a much greater phenomenon and that is the disintegration and crisis of the traditional family. That disintegration process is in full swing and scapegoating single women will not reverse the trend.

Some people say the media jazzes up the news to sell papers. Cynics say it's to sell advertising. This writer says it's to sell a point of view.

What we have here is not simply lurid and irresponsible journalism but an underhanded attempt to manipulate women and discourage them from any notions of equality, using one of the greatest of human threats—loneliness.

Statistics and false pity are used as a cynical cover for opposition to feminism and are part of the immense pressure to blame women's liberation rather than criminal social policies for the problems of women.

Despite the media's attempt to prey on the fears of single women, despite their attempts to make single women objects of pity and scorn, feminism has changed something and there is no turning back.

The increased independence of women today has created opportunities and it has generated new problems. To twist the inevitable conflicts into a vengeance against single women is not only intellectually dishonest, it is political malice. It is just another scarecrow. ■

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

4. Standards of Human Behavior

I still remember my young mama. She used to come from the small town to the provincial city of Ananév to visit me, a secondary school student in the fifth class; and we would walk along the street. Everyone turned around to look at us. She wore no adornments, no necklace or even a ring. She never wore ornaments, nor did her daughters.

In the little town of Chernovo, there were, as usual, the local rich. Their wives loved to strut around one behind the other with their gold chains and huge bracelets. The husbands thought that expenditures on gold paid for themselves, that these were expenses for exhibition.

There is exhibition of a totally different variety. The simplicity of Lenin's apartment in the Kremlin exhibits something to the whole world, being asserted in a language very close to the working person: Such is a proletarian revolutionary. And people think about it and understand. The issue is not the poverty of Russia at that time, but a state leader who voluntarily restricted his standard of living to the level of an ordinary worker's. The luxury of the "Komsomol" subway station, the shooting lodges in Georgia (and not only in Georgia!), and some of the palaces of our day do not in any way exhibit the high standard of material well-being of the broad masses, but rather the degree of separation from the masses of those who call themselves their representatives. Maryusa Yelko never wore adornments. Maybe she simply did not like them, like my mother, who was not otherwise motivated by the same principles as Maryusa. Maryusa never worried about material goods—were they deserved or not deserved. Such standards were alien to us in those years. Even the words themselves were alien. We were too intensely interested in the future to measure ourselves by the past. And one's just desserts—this can only refer to the past.

In our home for young workers lived Maryusa's three sisters. Their father was no longer living. All the sisters were sweet girls, cheerful, direct, open; they resembled Maryusa by their humorous inventiveness. Their mother worked at the provincial committee of the Komsomol as a cleaning woman, and with her twig broom she imparted to the offices a kind of domestic, habitable look as if it were in her own apartment that Maryusa's comrades gathered to discuss their youthful concerns. They would argue, get excited, wave their arms. Of course, Vitya Gorelov in a fit of temper brushed against the inkwell with his sleeve.

In 1977, a manuscript totaling hundreds of pages arrived in this country from the Soviet Union—the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, who was in his middle 70s at the time and living in Moscow. His work consists of a series of nine "notebooks" which describe his life as a Ukrainian Jewish revolutionary militant. He narrates how, as a teenager inspired by the October revolution, he joined the Communist Youth, tells about his participation in the Red Army during the Civil War years that followed 1917, his disenchantment with the developing bureaucracy under Stalin, and his subsequent experiences in Stalin's prison camps.

To the very end of his life Baitalsky remained devoted to the ideals of the October revolution. He says that he is writing "for the grandchildren" so that they can know the truth of the revolution's early years.

The first installment and an introduction by the translator, Marilyn Vogt-Downey, appeared in *Bulletin IDOM* No. 36, December 1986.

"Oh, damn! Really, this was an accident, Mamasha. Excuse me!"

Mamasha smiles. She knows Vitya is a passionate lad. She quickly removes the newspaper soaked with ink from the table, lays down another, places the inkwell farther away from Vitya, and goes away.

Thus it was. The whole provincial committee and all the districts considered themselves one big, noisy, restive family. One of the most restive youths in our family was Sema Lipenzon, a jaunty, typical Peresyp lad. But it was not only Sema's jauntiness that distinguished him. He had the talent to be a leader and many other talents; and he taught himself everything. Still quite young, having completed no school of any kind, he successfully carried out large-scale economic work. And later, he died from a bullet. In the Vorkuta tundra, there is not even a mound marking his body.

I never felt such a total confidence in comrades as I did in the Komsomol of those years. In the underground organization, it was another matter. There, confidence was deepest but limited to an extremely narrow circle. But when underground work ended and the Komsomol began to broaden, would not a measure of distrust have been acceptable?

"Steel is tempered in fire" is an imprecise statement. Steel, when heated in a fire hotter

than its critical temperature (which is not the same, we will note, for different steels) is tempered if it is abruptly plunged into a coolant.

For many years you have not seen your friends from youth. You went your separate ways. And suddenly you discover that the planet is very small. Waking up somewhere on the edge of the world, you find on the plank bed alongside you one of your friends whom you never expected to meet. I did not know Misha Yugov well enough from youth to relate how this fifteen-year-old boy went from the school bench to the revolution; how he worked in the underground; how he fought in the ranks of the Red Guard and later of the Red Army. But I saw him when that rare talent began to get stronger within him which in one instant elevates a youth at the podium above the entire hall and rivets the hearts of the listeners to him. Misha Yugov promised to become a great man.

In our day, when reports are broadcast over the radio by radio announcers, spontaneous, extemporaneous speech loses its importance. Television cannot bring back the art of oratory; they seldom improvise in the studio. Just as art is strong for its truth, so the strength of oratory is in its sincerity. Oral speech is much more convincing than reading from a prepared text.

Hearing someone improvise, people willy-nilly feel what the orator feels. They understand that this speech was not composed by anyone, it has not been corrected, but is that person's own thoughts. He is saying things that became part of his thinking over a long period of time. Such a person can speak only the truth. Acting does not save demagoguery and lies. It can deceive only those who want to be deceived.

The talent for oratory emerged unexpectedly when the revolution unfettered the human tongue, and everyone received the right to say what they thought. But in any event, the orator, no less than the writer, needs courage—not in the sense of not becoming flustered before an audience, but in the sense of saying everything that one thinks. Their strength is in having the courage of their convictions.

During the party purge of 1921, it happened that exceedingly prominent workers were expelled, quite often precisely because they had become conceited, imagining themselves irremovable and unexpellable. In Odessa, for example, they expelled the head of the department of organization instructors of the Provincial Committee of the party. In order to call for the expulsion of some high-ranking worker at a meeting, several people have to speak out. But someone has to make the first, and most difficult, speech. What supports that person who speaks first against this prominent worker? Confidence in the strength of spirit and conscience of those who are listening.

I am speaking about a purge *from below* and not about purges *from above* which were conducted under Stalin, first through a so-called verification of party documents and later by means of executions.

The less a purge from below is realizable, the more it becomes necessary. This must be clear to anyone who is able to think: The worse the evil, the more necessary it is to struggle against it. If the idea of a purge from below is unrealistic, then so much the worse for reality.

. . . But to return to the story of a genuine Communist, as Misha Yugov was to us. From childhood, he showed exceptional talent. But primarily, he was pure of soul and fearless before scoundrels. That's how he was when I got to know him.

From the Komsomol underground, Misha went to the party underground. He joined the party when it was not a ruling party but a persecuted party; when for being a member you could be imprisoned or shot. He was seventeen. In the Odessa party organization, only twenty years old, he already had a reputation as an educated Marxist. He read an incredible amount but was not inclined to try to stun you with quotations.

We loved Mishka for his mind and for his talent, but most of all for his simplicity and modesty. He was wholly ours. He was not Mikhail Yugov but Misha Yugov. He would hardly set foot in our club—and a Provincial Committee secretary considered it a duty to visit one of the districts every evening—and a crowd of boys and girls would immediately converge on him.

"Misha, Hello! Hi, Misha!"

"Misha, are you giving a report today?"

I do not know when and how he prepared himself, but it seemed that he was always prepared. He never explained in a condescending way but just said aloud what he thought.

Once, in 1923, during the inner-party discussion on Trotsky's "New Course" and the so-called "Statement of the Forty-six,"¹ at a citywide party meeting, the speakers were as follows: with a report—a party Provincial Committee secretary Khatayevich; and with a supplementary report—Misha Yugov.

Khatayevich spoke with emotion and persuasion, waving his crippled arm. He hacked the air with it as if emphasizing every word. But next Misha ran up to the podium. He always ran up to the podium abruptly and quickly. A half a century has passed and I cannot remember a word of his speech. But it is impossible to forget the effect it had. Misha gathered all his internal strength together and put it into his speech. It was astonishing for its passion, for its brilliance and force. If one were to weigh on a scale the development of attitudes in the hall, it would have been obvious: each word fell like a weight into the pan of the scale. The last word fell; Misha, red and flushed, leaves the podium.

The last inner-party discussion in Lenin's lifetime was taking place, but Lenin himself did not take part in it. He was ill.

According to the custom that existed in the party until the 1920s, a group of Communists, having a particular opinion on a question, if it could put forward a certain number of delegates at a lower-level (say, district) conference, had the

right to present a supplementary report in order to lay out a point of view. This right to a supplementary report was retained for many years (during Lenin's lifetime and after his death), despite the well-known resolution of the Tenth Congress on party unity.² That means that it was not considered contradictory to it.

I have before me the mandate of a delegate of the Eleventh District Party Conference of the Proletarian District of Moscow which took place in December of 1930. The mandate says: "Time Limits: 1. A speaker shall be granted one hour for a report and twenty minutes for concluding remarks. 2. A supplementary report shall be granted upon a request of not fewer than ten full delegates. 3. A supplementary report shall be granted 30 minutes and 15 minutes for concluding remarks."

Khatayevich, who made the official report at the meetings in 1923, could never have imagined that the subsequent development of events would prescribe the same death sentence for him as for the person who gave the opposing report. Is it possible to speak about a mistake Misha may have made but to remain silent about his selfless devotion to the revolution or about his close links with the masses in any post he held, or about his modesty and incorruptibility?

The last time I saw Misha was New Year's Eve, 1929. We met him in Kharkov, in a close circle of former Odessa Komsomol members. We drank little; drinking was not what made us merry. Misha's young wife, a beautiful woman with deep black eyes, was sad that evening. Was she not tormented by a sense of what was to come? Death had already selected Misha.

It is wrong to think that we were all exceptional people for our time—brave, truthful, uncringing, wanting no rewards. In us was fully reflected the opening epoch of the revolution; and we were not the exception, but the rule—the ordinary people of our time.

In 1920, Chaim Polisar, a Cheka agent,³ astonished and strongly angered the old men of Chernovo. He confiscated his own father's hardware shop for the needs of the revolution. But this move did not surprise us, Komsomol members.

Twenty years later, some of our wives repudiated us and agreed to divorce. But in our youth, they endured famine and deprivation, and Svetloye wrote about them:

Our girls, with a small thong
Cinching their overcoats tighter,
Went to death with a song;
They burned in tall bonfires.

Every era has its own standards of human behavior. In 1937, one after another Communist men and women were summoned to the bureau of the Voroshilov District Committee of the party in Odessa. The bureau also met, it happened, at night; they were in a hurry to expel those who had already been arrested. From the Communist wives they tried to find out: "Why didn't you tell us about your husband before? He is an enemy!"

"I really did notice something strange about him," the wives answered. "But I didn't understand what was the matter. Yes, I'm guilty."

I had known these women for a long time; our girls, cinching their overcoats. They were expelled. (The ones who were able to provide "material" about their husbands' friends received only a reprimand.) It was not the informer who was condemned, but the one who refused to be an informer.

What of it? People were behaving naturally for that time. But there was one woman, Oksana Lazareva. Her husband, Isaev, had already been arrested. They asked her the same question: Why didn't you tell us? She answered:

"My husband is a herdsman, and I'm a naimichka," she said in Ukrainian. A "naimichka" is a farm laborer. "I don't believe," Oksana said, "that my husband can be an enemy of the people. I know that the truth will come out. And as a sign of my confidence in this, I'm leaving my party card with you. The day will come when you'll call me in here and return it to me. (This day did come; eighteen years later she was rehabilitated. But those who expelled her could not call her in to the bureau office. They had been shot very soon after they themselves had approved the arrest and execution of her husband.)

She gave up her party card. No one among those present approved of her. They were outraged at her: How could she dare?

The standards of human behavior had now changed. ■

[Next month: "Primary and Secondary Feelings"]

NOTES

1. On October 15, 1923, 46 prominent party members issued a statement in support of Trotsky's criticisms of economic policy and political bureaucratism and calling for a conference of Central Committee members and party activists.

The party leadership refused to allow "The Platform of the Forty-six" to be published or distributed to the party. Instead they opened a campaign against the Opposition, which stimulated interest in Opposition ideas. Under pressure, they opened a public discussion in the pages of *Pravda* in November 1923. Trotsky contributed a series of articles in December 1923, later published as a pamphlet under the title *The New Course*. "The Platform of the Forty-six" and "The New Course" are in *The*

Challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25), Pathfinder Press, 1975, pp. 397-403, and pp. 63-144.

2. The Tenth Party Congress in March 1921 reacted to a deterioration in military security of the Soviet republic and banned factions in the party for the first time in the party's history. At the same time, the "resolution on party unity" drafted by Lenin for the congress guaranteed critics of official party policy the right to have their criticism heard by the entire party through a special discussion bulletin and through the holding of special meetings.

3. The Cheka was one of the names of the Soviet political police, later called GPU, NKVD, KGB.

THE LIBERATING INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (Part 5)

by George Breitman

At that time I thought that our principled position had always been against advocating a labor party, and in the course of that discussion, both written and oral, nobody, absolutely nobody, ever said we had previously had any other position. If they had done so, it would surely have shaken me and the other 40 percent of the membership that voted against the new position and might have persuaded us we were wrong. But nobody ever mentioned our having had any other position, or even said when we had adopted the one we had up to 1938. You may think that odd, but in those days—before offset printing made possible relatively inexpensive production of the old bound volumes of the *Militant*, and at a time when the resources of our party did not make available the old internal bulletins and documents of our movement—the general membership was not as well informed about the history of our own movement in the form of accessible documents, as it is today. Anyhow in the course of that discussion, which I followed closely and anxiously because for the first time my confidence in the leadership was shaken, *nobody* every asked or said when we had adopted our pre-1938 position or if we had a different position before that.

And so it wasn't until a few weeks ago, in preparing this talk, that I learned our pre-1938 position had been first adopted in 1931, and that we had indeed had a different position before then—a contradictory one, in fact.

A few months after our expulsion from the CP in 1928, the *Militant* printed a long document by Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern, "The Platform of the Opposition," filling most of the paper's eight tabloid pages. One section was called "The Perspective of a Labor Party." I will read a few passages from it.

"The perspective of coming mass struggles involves the question of developing these struggles in a political direction and unifying them in a centralized form. The movement for a Labor Party is today at low ebb as a result primarily of the passivity of the workers and the decline in movements of struggle in the past period. The coming period of developing economic struggles will very probably be reflected in tendencies toward the revival of the Labor Party movement.

"It is not reasonable to expect that the masses of the American workers, who are still tied ideologically and politically to the bourgeois parties, will come over to the Communist Party politically in one step in a period-not

immediately revolutionary. All past experience, and particularly the recent experiences in the mining, textile and needle trades industries, where the workers who supported Communist leadership in strikes did not vote for the Communist ticket, do not sustain such expectations. The perspective of a Labor Party, as a primary step in the political development of the American workers, adopted by the Party in 1922 after a sharp struggle in the Party and at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, holds good today, although the forms and methods of its realization will be somewhat different than those indicated at that time.

"It is therefore necessary to keep the perspective of a Labor Party before the eyes of the Party and the working class. We speak here not for the immediate formation of such a Party and surely not for the adventurism and opportunism that has characterized this work in the past, particularly in the organization of fake Labor Parties that had no genuine mass basis. The Labor Party must have a mass basis and must arise out of struggle and be formed in the process of struggle. To this end, the propaganda slogan must be really revived, and as soon as it has found roots in the masses and their experience in the struggle, it must become an agitational, and finally an action, slogan."

The rest of this part of the 1929 platform discusses what a labor party of the kind we would propagandize for cannot be—it cannot be a two-class party, or an enlarged shadow of the CP, and so on, so I won't read those parts.

That was February 1929. We then decided to hold the founding convention of the CLA in May, and the platform containing this position on the labor party was introduced as the leadership's main document for the convention, serving as the basis for discussion first in the branches and then at the convention. There, according to a report on the convention by Cannon in the *Militant*, the labor party question was one of the two sharply debated on the convention floor. After describing minority viewpoints, including some who wanted nothing to do with any labor party even after it was formed, and some who were against advocacy but would work inside a labor party, Cannon wrote:

"It was the opinion of the majority that, although it certainly is not a pressing question of the moment, the labor party question has a great importance for the future when the radicalization of the workers will begin to seek political expression. Therefore it is imperative to have a clear and definite stand on it. A misjudgment of the probable line of development of the American workers or a sectarian doctrine which would prevent us from approaching and influencing new upward movements, might have the most serious consequences later on. The formulation of

This concludes Breitman's talk on the labor party, one of three he gave in 1974 at an SWP educational conference. His third talk, titled "The SWP, Then and Now" will be published in our next issue.

the Platform on the Perspective of a Labor Party was adopted by a majority after a thorough discussion.”

I wish that I had known in 1938 about this stage of our thinking on the labor party nine years earlier. I think it might have helped me avoid a serious error. Because, in my opinion, our 1929 position was substantially correct. It did not make a principle out of what was actually a tactical question. It did not reject taking a clear and definite stand merely because there was no labor party movement of significance in existence. It distinguished between the labor party as a subject for propaganda, and the labor party as a subject for agitation or action. And it had what proved to be a realistic perspective on the relative future growth of the revolutionary party and the mass movement.

That was the position at our first convention, in mid 1929, before the start of the big depression and at a time when all factions of the Communist party, right, center and left, were in favor of advocating a labor party, although their motivations and reasoning varied greatly. This position was changed, and even criticized, at our second convention in mid-1931, when the depression was over a year old and when the CP, now deep into its third-period madness, also was opposed to any pro-labor party development.

I don't mean to suggest that the CP's opposition to labor party advocacy was the same as ours. To the CP anybody who advocated a labor party was a social fascist. We condemned their position, first of all because the whole theory of social fascism was false and suicidal from start to end, and secondly because if that was all their opposition to a labor party rested on, it was insufficient, because it meant that when they ultimately gave up social fascism they might or would return to advocacy of a labor party. (Which, incidentally, they did, in 1935.)

The political resolution adopted at our second convention, in 1931, was a long document, and the section called “Social Reformism and the Perspectives of the Revolutionary Movement,” was also long. Contrary to the CP, we warned that the basis for social reformism, far from being “narrowed down,” was being extended in the form of a growth of a leftist bureaucracy in the unions and a revival of the Social Democracy. Most of the section is devoted to a discussion of how to fight the reformists—how the CP should fight them, through the united front correctly understood and applied and so on, in a period when it must not be assumed that the United States was fated to be the last capitalist country to enter the revolutionary crisis.

The labor party question was presented in this context. The resolution saw the AFL bureaucracy, “their socialist assistants and the ‘Left wing’ progressive toadies of the Muste school” working consciously to erect barriers to the growth of the revolutionary movement in every area. “On the political field most of these elements seek to erect a barrier in the form of a ‘Labor’ or ‘Farmer-Labor’ party, that is, a bourgeois workers’ party in the image of the British Labor Party.”

The 1931 resolution then criticizes the many false formulations of the labor party question held in the American CP from 1923 to 1928, saying none was based on a Marxian conception of the role of the labor party or of the nature of our epoch. Of course many of these formulations and policies had been adventurist or opportunist, or a combination of both. Now, said the resolution, “all these conceptions and practices must be thrown overboard because they were originally wrong. . . . The American Communists cannot undertake to organize a petty bourgeois workers’ party ‘standing between’ the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

“Abstractly considered, to be sure, were there a mass movement which would organize a labor party, the Communists would have to take up the question of working within it as a revolutionary nucleus. But this is a different matter entirely. Moreover, it is a matter which has less of a timely significance today—even abstractly—than in past years, since there is no substantial movement at all for a labor party in the 1932 elections.”

“It is the reformists of all shades, the Thomases and the Mustes, who seek to set up this petty bourgeois party as a wall against the workers’ progress towards Communism; in this work, they are only fulfilling their mission and role of prolonging as much as possible the ‘reformist period’ in the development of the American working class. It is no accident that the Right wing liquidators of the Lovestone group have as the central point in their program the idea that the Labor party’s formation is an essential and imperative step for the American workers, which the Right wing is ready to initiate, to form and build up. It is this perspective which it recommends to the Communist movement as a whole to adopt. The Left Opposition, at its formative stage, leaned in the direction of this reformist perspective which constituted to a certain extent an uncritical carry-over of the preceding group struggles in the party, prior to the time when the Left wing took shape and was established as a political grouping distinct from all the others in the movement. The firmer establishment of its Marxian position dictates a break with this early standpoint and the adoption of the one outlined here. The adoption of this revised point of view, the result of clarification in its own ranks, marks a step forward that will enable the Opposition to bring greater clarity on this vital problem into the revolutionary and labor movements as a whole.”

That was 1931. A year later Trotsky had talks in Turkey with Albert Weisbord, the leader of a small group that was making an approach to the Left Opposition although it shared many of the ideas of the Right Opposition, including its labor party position. After their discussion, Trotsky wrote a letter to Weisbord and a statement on the labor party, both printed in *Writings 1932*. In the letter he praised the position taken by the CLA at our second convention “because in the theses not only was a correct position taken on the essence of the question but also an open and courageous criticism of its own past was made. Only in this way can a revolutionary tendency seriously assure itself against backsliding.”

In the labor party article he said he found the CLA convention position on the labor party “excellent in every

part, and I subscribe to it with both hands." It is an article very worth while reading, especially for those who may think that we should have been or should be in favor of the formation of a labor party under all circumstances. But I leave all that out to quote two passages.

"3. A long period of confusion in the Comintern led many people to forget a very simple but absolutely irrevocable principle: that a Marxist, a proletarian revolutionist, cannot present himself before the working class with two banners. He cannot say at a workers' meeting: 'I have a ticket for a first-class party and another, cheaper ticket for the backward workers.' If I am a Communist, I must fight for the Communist party."

And a little later, after mentioning how the Comintern's policy toward the Kuomintang and the British Labour Party in the 1920s produced an opportunistic adaptation to the will of the Comintern's allies and, through them, to that of the class enemy, he said:

"We must educate our cadres to believe in the invincibility of the Communist idea and the future of the Communist party. The parallel struggle for another party inevitably produces in their minds a duality and turns them onto the road of opportunism."

It should be noted that there had been no explicit reference to a principle about the labor party in the 1931 convention's resolution, but Trotsky's use of such a term was not inconsistent with that resolution; it merely spelled out what was implicit in the whole approach of the resolution.

By now it must be plain that there was a principle involved in the thinking behind the position we held between 1931 and 1938. And it was a most fundamental principle—the principle of the need and primacy of the revolutionary party, whose construction is indispensable for everything else. Those who depart from this principle, or subordinate it, or compromise it, like the social democrats or the Lovestoneites, cannot possibly have the right position on the labor party.

But it does not follow that everybody who advocates a labor party is necessarily subordinating or compromising the principle that the building of the revolutionary party comes foremost for Marxists. It does not follow that advocating a labor party is contradictory to building the revolutionary party; in fact, advocating a labor party is not only consistent with building the revolutionary party in certain conditions but it is also a means toward building the revolutionary party, if the revolutionaries know what they are doing and how to do it right.

So on the labor party there was a confusion between principle and the tactics that were presumed to flow from the principle, which, as I showed yesterday, is the same thing as happened with the Ludlow amendment. The difference is that the Ludlow amendment mistake was of relatively short duration, a few months, while the labor party mistake lasted for seven years, and therefore was harder for many of us to correct. The Transitional Program, or more exactly the transitional method which it taught us, enabled us not only to understand this mistake, some of us sooner than others, but also to better grasp the dynamics of unfolding class struggles and how to relate to

them in a way that was positive and creative rather than purely propagandist, abstentionist or dogmatic.

It showed us that advocating a labor party does not necessarily make us responsible for everything that happens in connection with a labor party that is formed under the leadership of other forces, any more than advocating a strike makes us responsible for everything that happens during a strike under the leadership of other forces. The nature of our responsibility depends on the nature of our program and the way we present it. We are responsible only for what we advocate, not for the victory of opponents over what we advocate.

It showed us that advocating a labor party does not necessarily mean that you are advocating the formation of a reformist party. It depends on how you advocate it, on what content you give your advocacy, on what program you advance for the labor party. The posing of the question—can a labor party be revolutionary?—which seemed unreasonable to us before 1938, was very useful educationally. Trotsky did not give the question an absolute or direct yes answer. We will try to make it as revolutionary as we can, he said, and he might have added, just as we do with the unions.

It showed us that advocating a labor party does not inevitably produce in the minds of the revolutionary cadre a duality regarding the primacy of the revolutionary party or turn the cadre onto the road of opportunism. It can do these things, but it need not, if the cadre is firm in principle in the first place and if the leadership is always alert to maintain the cadre's educational-political level and consciousness. Advocating a labor party can result in these retrogressive things, but it does not follow that it must, and therefore it does not follow that the mere possibility must compel us to abstain from what can be a fruitful tactic for the building of the revolutionary party.

Of course it is true that a party that is weak on the principle of the revolutionary party will get into trouble with a labor party tactic. But the SWP was not weak on that principle, so that general truth was irrelevant in this case.

In 1931, when we replaced the 1929 position, we said that it had been wrong, for which Trotsky praised us. In 1938, when we replaced the 1931 position, we did not make any such explicit judgment. We said only that the 1931 position was abstract and that conditions had changed sufficiently to make the abstract formulas of the past obsolete. These were valid criticisms, and it is to the credit of the party and its leadership that, with help from Trotsky and the Transitional Program, we were able to arrive at a correct position, in a relatively short time, without the loss of cadres and without serious damage to morale. Perhaps this was the most that could have been achieved under those conditions.

I did not think so at that time. I resented what I took to be the leadership's refusal to make a judgment about the 1931 position, so much that my resentment prevented me from understanding what was correct and progressive in its 1938 position. In addition, I was basically wrong because I thought the 1931 position was correct. Later I saw and now I see that the 1931 position was not just abstract but wrong, not just rendered obsolete by new

conditions, but wrong before the coming of new conditions—not in every word, but on the whole. I think that the public opinion of the party will reach this conclusion too, actually although not officially, when in the not-too-distant future we will make these old documents more available for study by the membership.

The personal lesson that I learned, rather painfully, was the need to be more objective in the analysis of political problems. It was hard for me to admit to myself that we had been mistaken, that I had been mistaken, so hard that I wanted to cling to the error. And I justified clinging to it by the less than perfect arguments used by the leadership to motivate the correction. That's not a good way to reach a decision. A position may be correct even though its proponents do not defend it in the best way possible. We have the obligation to recognize a correct position independently, so to speak, of the arguments of others who find it correct. It took me almost three years after the end of the 1938 discussion before I was able to do that with the labor party question. Fortunately, the party was not so slow.

Although the subject of these talks played a decisive part in my political life, that is not the main reason why I have gone to the trouble of telling you about them.

Building the revolutionary party is a difficult and arduous process. Recently I read the translation of a 1933 article by Trotsky about how hard it is to achieve a healthy society even after the workers have come to power, written for an American bourgeois periodical but not published at that time.

"To achieve harmony in the state," he wrote, "—even on the basis of collective ownership and planned management encompassing all facets of the economy—is only possible as the result of an indefinitely prolonged period of efforts, experiments, errors, crises, reforms and reorganization." That description struck me as appropriate also for the task of building a party capable of leading the revolutionary workers to power—a prolonged "period of efforts, experiments, errors, crises, reforms and reorganization."

We have reason to be proud of the achievements of the SWP. It is qualitatively superior to any of its opponents in this country, and, thanks to the continuity of its leadership, which enabled it to avoid repeating the same errors over and over, it enjoys several advantages over other sympathizing groups or sections of the Fourth International. This did not come about by accident or sheer good luck; it is the result of struggle and consciousness. A correct appraisal of the SWP and its achievements, which is necessary for further progress, is furthered by an awareness of the difficulties it has encountered and the way it overcame them, rather than by an ignoring of those difficulties or a depreciation of their magnitude.

The other reason I think such discussions as this are justified is that they contribute to party consciousness-raising about the abundance of weapons in our political and theoretical arsenal. The metaphor most commonly used to call our attention to the debt we owe our predecessors is that we are "standing on their shoulders," which explains why we can see some things that they couldn't. I think I prefer a less athletic figure of speech, that of the arsenal. It was built by the pioneers of the

Marxist movement, and expanded by their successors. It is bigger, and its contents are more varied and useful than anything they had at their disposal. Available to us now are not only the actual weapons—the ideas, theories, programs, principles, strategies, tactics, and so on—but the history of their development, refinement, and improvement, which includes trial and error and experiments that failed as well as those that succeeded. We don't have to start from scratch, with the bow and arrow, and we are not doomed to repeat errors merely because we don't know their history. We can learn from the past, both what to continue and perfect and what to avoid.

No other movement has such a rich arsenal; the others would like to forget the past; the Stalinists, for example, would never dream of reprinting the books they published in the early 1930s, during the period of social-fascism; we, on the other hand, are using precious resources to print material from the '30s by Trotsky and others, that we were too poor to print in permanent book form then and that we are determined to add to our arsenal for the benefit of the youth of today and tomorrow.

This arsenal is big, but it's going to have to be bigger before humanity turns it into a museum. You are going to have to build new weapons to hasten that day, but before you can do that you have to master the ones in our present stockpile. These talks are intended as a contribution to that process. ■

International VIEWPOINT

International Viewpoint, the official English-language publication of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, is a review of news and Marxist analysis. It comes to you twice a month directly from Paris by air mail.

International Viewpoint has published material by noted Marxist economist Ernest Mandel, Irish liberation fighter Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, former Grenadian attorney general Kenrick Radix, and leaders of Poland's Solidarnosc underground.

1 year: \$42

6 months: \$22

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send to: *International Viewpoint*,
Box 1824 New York, N.Y. 10009

Make checks payable to International Viewpoint.

ENC NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE PLEDGES SUPPORT TO APRIL 25

by David Williams

In Cleveland, Ohio, on December 6, the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC) held a National Steering Committee meeting which registered important gains for the organization. It was attended by around 40 people, many of whom were attending a national gathering of the ENC for the first time.

The main discussion centered around the ENC's participation in building activities for the projected April 25 march and rally in Washington D.C. and San Francisco—an action which is projected to focus on the twin themes of opposition to U.S. foreign policy in Central America and South Africa. Jerry Gordon, national coordinator of the ENC, gave a report which stressed the complete support of the ENC to the efforts by national organizers of the April 25 action to put together a broad coalition effort and to focus on the two demands which are most important for anti-intervention activists in the United States today.

Although the effort is not without its problems—in particular with regard to involving all of the broad forces which have pledged themselves to help build the march in the actual decision-making process on a national level—these problems are secondary. The perspective of the ENC is to

help resolve whatever difficulties arise in the context of a collaborative effort to build the action.

One immediate obstacle to beginning full-scale local efforts is that the actual call for April 25 has been delayed. It is now expected that the call will be issued around the middle of January. In the meantime, according to comments which were made by representatives from many local areas to the ENC Steering Committee, preparatory work continues to go well.

The ENC Steering Committee also heard a number of other reports: on the fall anti-intervention and anti-apartheid actions around the country; on an important initiative in New York City to organize a campus teach-in and a citywide student coalition; and on ENC literature distribution, including the new pamphlet *Why Mass Action?* which tells the story of U.S. intervention in Central America and discusses the importance of a mass-mobilization strategy to oppose it. It was noted that the ENC continues to win new members all across the country.

An educational discussion on "Low Intensity Conflict" was introduced by Mary Scully of Boston. The next meeting of the ENC National Steering Committee will take place in Pittsburgh in June. ■

F.I.T. NATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETS

by Steve Bloom

On December 6 and 7 a meeting of the National Organizing Committee of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency was held which took up four substantive agenda items: 1) the anti-intervention work of the F.I.T. and of the other three political groups which are part of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States—the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, and the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity; 2) plans to hold a national F.I.T. educational conference in the summer of 1987; 3) an organizational report; and 4) a point on the Philippine revolution, in particular its impact on the discussion taking place today within the Fourth International.

The report approved under the anti-intervention point noted the success of the just completed National Steering Committee meeting of the ENC, reaffirming the F.I.T.'s perspective of working to build the ENC as the most conscious, mass-action oriented organization in this country with a clear objective of building a united front around the primary goal of ending U.S. involvement in Central America and the Caribbean. The objective of the

F.I.T. is to also work as closely as possible with other Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. to build the April 25 national demonstration—even though the other currents do not agree at the present time with the F.I.T.'s support to the ENC.

Members of the NOC reported a great deal of excitement about the proposal for a national weekend educational conference next summer. It will be held in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The precise date has yet to be determined, and depends to a large extent on the availability of speakers for the planned international panel. Other panels or presentations will be held on the state of the U.S. economy today, problems of the labor movement, party-building tasks for Fourth Internationalists in this country, and at least one other topic of general theoretical or historical interest to revolutionists in the U.S. today. F.I.T. Local Organizing Committees will be inviting individuals whom they work with in the mass movements and others who might be interested in discussing these problems with us in a serious way to attend as well. As soon as plans are more

firmly set, a formal invitation will be sent to all members of the SWP, Socialist Action, and Solidarity to attend the conference.

Under the organizational point the NOC assessed the results of the two drives which were launched at its last meeting in June: for new subscribers to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* and for new members of the F.I.T.—which were to come to their conclusion at the end of December. Though it was obvious at the time of the meeting that the subscription goal would be surpassed, the conclusion of the NOC was that Local Organizing Committees had not really organized themselves in the best way, that more needed to be done to broaden the circulation base of the F.I.T.'s major publication. On the other hand, though the recruitment drive would apparently fall slightly short of its objective, NOC members felt it had

been effective in helping to increase the organization's consciousness about recruiting new members to the F.I.T., and had thus served its primary purpose.

The final discussion, on the Philippines, noted some of the differences in coverage of events in that country between articles which have appeared in the *Bulletin IDOM* and in *International Viewpoint*, the news magazine published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Though no formal vote was taken under this point, the general view of NOC members who participated in the discussion was that it is not clear to what extent the articles in *IV* reflect the considered opinions of the majority leadership of the Fourth International. It was stressed that we are at the beginning of a discussion in our world movement on this matter. ■

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FROM THE F.I.T.

The Trenton Siege by the Army of Unoccupation
by George Breitman **\$1.75**

Don't Strangle the Party
by James P. Cannon **\$1.25**

*Permanent Revolution, Combined Revolution,
and Black Liberation in the U.S.*
by Larry Stewart **\$1.25**

*George Lavan Weissman's Last Three
Articles* **85¢**

*Leon Trotsky and the Organizational Principles
of the Revolutionary Party*
by Paul Le Blanc, Dianne Feeley,
and Tom Twiss **\$5.00**

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua
by Paul Le Blanc **\$3.00**

*Platform of the Fourth Internationalist
Tendency* **75¢**

*The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current and
the Fourth International*
by the International Executive
Committee, FI **75¢**

*Why We Oppose the SWP's New Line on
Castroism*
by Steve Bloom **75¢**

*The Iranian Revolution and the Dangers
That Threaten It*
by Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell **\$1.00**

*Poland, the Fourth International, and the
Socialist Workers Party*
by Steve Bloom **75¢**

*Theses on the Workers' and Farmers'
Government*
by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus
and

*The Workers' and Farmers' Government and the
Socialist Revolution*
by Steve Bloom **\$2.00**

*Crisis in the Socialist Workers Party:
An Answer to Jack Barnes*
by Cliff Conner **60¢**

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

A NEW MARXIST CLASSIC

The Place of Marxism in History, by Ernest Mandel. Montreuil, France: Notebooks for Study and Research, 1986. 40 pages (8 1/2 by 11 format). \$3.50.

Over the years there have appeared many brief presentations of Marxism. The appearance of Ernest Mandel's *The Place of Marxism in History* is an event of considerable importance, however, because in many ways it surpasses all such works that have appeared in recent decades. It invites comparison with the best educational works by Engels, Mehring, Plekhanov, Riazanov, Luxemburg, Lenin, and Trotsky.

In some presentations of Marxism, we are treated to a rigid set of ideas, abstract and lifeless, which are presented as if they were self-evident truths. This may be adequate as the official ideology of a one-party state or of a sectarian grouplet—but it doesn't seem to correspond to Marx's and Engels's own notion of their approach as being "scientific socialism." Faced with such ideologists' self-assured dogmatizing, one is reminded of Engels's lament that Marx's materialist conception of history has a lot of "dangerous friends . . . to whom it serves as an excuse for *not* studying history"—or other aspects of reality, for that matter. Why worry over facts if one has the Truth?

On the other hand, among many left-leaning academics of our time, it has been fashionable to identify with the Marxist tradition while "critiquing" Marxism to pieces and then developing one or another new synthesis which Marx might well not have recognized and which ordinary mortals may have difficulty understanding. Faced with this chaos of sophistication, one is reminded of Trotsky's comment: The essence of Marx and Engels' activity was that they theoretically anticipated and prepared the way for the age of proletarian revolution. If this is set aside, we end up with nothing but academic Marxism, that is, the most repulsive caricature." (It should be noted that some of these "academic Marxists" have tired of the old label and, through even more destructive critiques, have claimed a terrain labeled "post-Marxist.")

What Ernest Mandel brings to the task is something better. For years he has been engaged in developing creative and widely respected works of Marxist scholarship. Yet he has also been engaged in years of revolutionary socialist activity—in the effort to utilize Marxism for the purpose of helping to educate and mobilize workers, students, and others so that they might change the world. The result of this dual engagement is an approach to Marxism which is superior to that which is commonly found, one which is truer to the spirit,

the method, and the ideas of scientific socialism's founders.

This is not Mandel's first effort to provide a general introduction to Marxism. In the 1970s, for example, he produced *From Class Society to Communism* (later retitled *An Introduction to Marxism*) which drew high praise from various reviewers. In the pages of the *Militant*, George Breitman commented: "Here in seventeen short chapters . . . is precisely what the author promises: 'the basic element of the theory of historical materialism, of Marxist economic theory, of the history of the workers movement and the problems of tactics and strategy for the workers movement in our times.'" The present work is at the same time less and more ambitious than the earlier effort. It doesn't attempt to cover as much ground, but it also offers a deeper look at the subject. It may be harder for some to grasp all that Mandel is attempting to convey in this new work, and yet his prose seems more stimulating, his discussion more challenging, his points more substantial.

The Science of Marxism

"To understand Marxism," he writes, "we must first set it in its historical context. We must understand when it was born and how it arose. We must explain its emergence and development by the interaction of social forces: their economic nature, their material interests, their ideology, the people who formulated their aspirations. In other words, we must apply the materialist conception of history to Marxism itself: not to consider its appearance as a matter of course, but to understand that it requires an explanation, and try to enable us to outline more precisely its content and historical importance."

In the first section of this study, Mandel offers a masterful sketch of the general historical context out of which Marxism emerged, spanning the period when class society first arose down to the epoch of capitalism's industrial revolution, which also saw the ferment of democratic and working class struggles and the flourishing of scientific and radical social thought. The efforts of Marx and Engels within this context, we are told in the second section on fundamental characteristics of Marxism, resulted in "a quadruple synthesis: a synthesis of the main social sciences; a synthesis between these social sciences and the project of emancipating humanity; a synthesis between the project of human emancipation and the real self-organization and self-emancipation movement of the modern proletariat; and a synthesis between the real workers movement and revolutionary political organization and action."

The third and longest section deals with Marxism's transformation of the social sciences. Describing Marx's transformation of German classical philosophy, Mandel offers one of the best (most clear and genuinely dialectical) brief discussions of dialectical materialism one can find. Discussing the transformation of French sociological historiography, he provides an insightful description of historical materialism. Perhaps the most difficult (and least successful) part of this section—which attempts to outline a number of complicated concepts—deals with the transformation of English political economy that resulted in Marx's analysis of capitalism's economic dynamics. In each case, Mandel indicates first the advances and insights of thinkers who preceded Marx, then points to problems, contradictions, and limitations which cropped up in their analyses, and finally focuses on the breakthroughs achieved by Marx and Engels in each realm. This method highlights the continuities of the two revolutionaries with previous social scientists, both dispelling the illusion that they were intellectual "supermen" and illuminating their actual accomplishments. The reader is consequently provided with an understanding of the genuinely *scientific* character of their thought.

Revolutionary Interpretation

Mandel employs this fruitful methodology in the next two sections on the supersession of utopian socialism and on the proletarian transformation of revolutionary activity and organization. This is followed by an important section entitled, "The fusion of the real workers movement and scientific socialism," which gives a sense of the labor movement during the time of Marx and Engels, again indicating strengths, then weaknesses. Mandel writes: "Marx and Engels undertook a gigantic effort, for over half a century, to overcome these weaknesses. In the end, they were basically successful, at least in a large number of countries (all the industrialized countries of the 19th century except the United States). Their efforts can be described as a gradual, progressive fusion of the real movement of the proletariat towards independent action and organization, with the main achievements of scientific socialism accessible to the broad masses (not with all aspects of the Marxist doctrine)." This summary version of Marxism, he notes in a later section, "boiled down to a few central ideas: the class struggle; the socialist goal of that struggle, through collective ownership of the major means of production and exchange; the conquest of political power to achieve that goal; international solidarity of the workers." Even such simplified Marxism represented a substantial advance for the labor movement, Mandel points out, yet it also contained serious limitations which—where not overcome—contributed to the disorientation of the working class by the early 20th century.

In a section on the lives of Marx and Engels, however, it is clear that, despite various errors and shortcomings of a secondary nature, the overall orientation, methodology, and analyses of the two revolutionaries themselves have been, in Mandel's opinion, fully adequate to provide guidance for the revolutionary socialist and labor movements down to our own time. Such "orthodoxy" may inspire snickers among the sophisticates of academic Marxism and "post-Marxism," but it is consistent with the tradition of Luxemburg, Lenin, and Trotsky with which Mandel identifies. "If . . . today we detect a stagnation in our movement as far as these theoretical matters are concerned," Rosa Luxemburg argued, "this is not because the Marxist theory upon which we are nourished is incapable of development or has become out-of-date. On the contrary, it is because we have not yet learned how to make adequate use of the most important mental weapons." Trotsky similarly noted that one could "discover under introductory sentences or notes lateral galleries of conclusions," and described Lenin as one who had "mastered Marxism as the summation of the previous development of human thought; from this highest level yet attained, he did not wish to descend to a lower one; . . . and he mistrusted in advance the attempts of self-satisfied ignoramuses and well-read mediocrities to replace Marxism with some other, more portable theory."

Not surprisingly, in his final section on the worldwide spread of Marxism after the deaths of Marx and Engels, Mandel specifically identifies Luxemburg, Lenin, and Trotsky as those who—fully grounded in the revolutionary doctrines and method of scientific socialism—provided the breakthroughs capable of overcoming the crisis of simplified "official Marxism." In fact, the *revolutionary Marxist* orientation represented by these three figures shapes Mandel's interpretation throughout *The Place of Marxism in History*. Thus one comes away with a heightened sense of the continuity between the specific perspectives of Marx and Engels and the later Leninist-Trotskyist understanding of the world we live in and how it is to be transformed. While this may be disconcerting for those who don't subscribe to that understanding, Mandel's interpretations are both vivid and persuasive.

Other Strengths

There are other strengths in this study. One is a greater attention by Mandel than previously to the influence of revolutionary feminist thought on the outlook of Marx and Engels. Another is an unambiguous internationalism which is reflected in his references to developments, struggles, and intellectual currents in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He also deals with the common charge that Marxism is simply a European or "Euro-centrist" ideology, in a passage worth quoting at length:

Marxism is, of course, a product of the maturation of the contradictions of

bourgeois society which undeniably appeared first in Europe. In this sense, it could not be developed in Asia, the Americas or Africa which experienced only a rudimentary form of capitalist development during most of the 19th century.

But although Marxism was born in Europe, it had from the outset an international, and even worldwide, dimension which made it dependent on everything that happened on other continents. The violent, disruptive, destructive and inhuman impact of capitalism on pre-capitalist societies in the Americas, Asia and Africa was far worse than its impact on pre-capitalist society in Western, Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. Marx and Engels were too rigorous scientists and too passionate humanists not to notice this, to be indignant about it and to revolt against these abominable crimes.

As a result, the perception of the "Third World", of its degradation and inevitable revolt, was quickly integrated into their writings, after occupying only a small place in the writings of their youth. It is enough to recall their resolute support for the Indian Sepoys and the Chinese Tai-pings, and for the emancipation of the American slaves, to reject the accusation of Euro-centrism. In the same vein, they branded the joint French, Spanish and British expedition against Mexico as "one of the most monstrous undertakings in the

annals of international history" (23/11/1861, *MEW*, Vol. 15, p. 366). Their steadily more advanced investigation of the "Asian mode of production", of ethnology, of the particularities of non-European civilizations and societies, of the Russian village community (*mir*), occupied a growing place in the intellectual work of Marx and Engels in the last two decades of their life, and left a more and more marked imprint on their writings—including *Capital*.

The study also includes useful chronological tables, a valuable glossary, and an interesting reading list. *The Place of Marxism in History* (perhaps along with the three-volume Marx and Engels *Selected Works* and David Riazanov's dual biography *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*) can help provide a solid grounding in the method and doctrines of scientific socialism for serious-minded revolutionaries. It deserves widespread distribution and use.

It should be noted that this study is the first in a series entitled, "Notebooks for Study and Research," published by the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam. Copies can be ordered from CER/NSR, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France (make checks—for \$3.50, plus 20 percent for air mail—payable to Pierre Rousset). Hopefully, future publications of the institute will be of similar quality. ■

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY WELL WORTH READING

Memoirs of a Radical Rank & Filer, by Ben Stone. Prometheus Press, 1986, New York, N.Y. 189 pages, \$7.95 in paperback.

Ben Stone's *Memoirs of a Radical Rank & Filer* is an unpretentious, easy-to-read autobiography of a twentieth-century American socialist worker.

The straightforward, firsthand account of his personal and political experiences from the 1920s to the 1980s is an interesting human mix of nostalgia and critical thought. It is an uneven but important contribution to the growing body of literature on working class and social history of that period.

What distinguishes this book from most of the recently published memoirs and commentaries on that era is that it is written by a radicalized worker with political traditions and perspectives

Jean Y. Tussey was an active member of the Socialist Party from 1939 to 1941; an active member of the Socialist Workers Party from 1942 to 1984; and an active member of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency from 1984 to the present.

different from those of Communist and Socialist party contemporaries.

In 1945, at age 33, after reading *The Third International After Lenin*, by Leon Trotsky, Ben Stone joined the Socialist Workers Party. He was "an active, dedicated rank-and-file member" for twenty-one years, until his resignation in 1966. He remains a sympathizer and supporter.

In his foreword, the author modestly notes that the story of his life deals with familiar themes: "The immigrant parents, the East Side slums, the Great Depression, unemployment, WPA." But he proudly cites the feature which he feels makes his story different from others that deal with many of the same themes: "I still march to the drumbeat of my youth. And the drum does not grow fainter as I grow older; to the contrary, it grows louder and louder so that I feel myself once again in harmony with the ideals of my youth."

Stone expresses his appreciation to some leading members and some former members of the SWP "who contributed to one degree or another to this book." Among them are: Jack Barnes, for reviewing the chapter on "Heroes of the American Revolu-

tionary Movement"; Larry Seigle, who reviewed the chapter on "The Government on Trial"; Rob Cahalane, for helping with research, xeroxing, and arranging photographs; Bruce Levine and Alan Wald, "who made some valuable suggestions"; Cliff Conner, "who did an extensive, last minute proof-reading and editing"; "and of course, George Novack, the Marxist scholar, who acted as general editor, advisor and consultant."

Personal Account

The first six chapters of the book follow the plan Ben Stone considers appropriate for a "rank-and-filer"; they accentuate the personal. He vividly recalls the traumas of a boy growing up in the poverty and brutality of New York City's East Side slums during the mythical prosperity years of the "Roaring Twenties"; the "scrounge for survival" and his radicalization during the long depression; his experiences as a worker at different kinds of jobs, as a trade unionist, and as a party activist.

Chapter 5, "The Revolutionary Marxist Party," is the heart of this political autobiography. In it Stone tells why he joined the Socialist Workers Party, how he functioned in it for twenty-one years, and, most poignantly, why he resigned in 1966 at the age of 54.

"I found the SWP to be unlike any other organization I had ever known. . . . It was unique not only in teaching but in practicing principled politics."

For him, life "in the revolutionary Marxist party is one of total commitment. The cause of socialism takes precedence over everything else. It comes before family, friends and relatives. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a life outside the Party."

But in 1960, when he returned from working several years on the West Coast and resumed activity in the New York branch of the SWP and the Painters Union, things began to change. He was 48 years old, "getting up there. . . . Now the rank-and-file member was much younger, a generation removed. . . . For the first time I began to feel like an old man in the Party, almost a stranger in my own house."

"My age problem was compounded by the fact that I had always remained a rank-and-filer and prided myself in being one of the best campaigners in the Party. . . . Then suddenly I found that I couldn't compete with the kids anymore. Climbing all those stairs selling subs to the *Militant* was getting harder and harder. . . ."

"I continued as a Party activist until the year 1966. At the age of 54, I finally gave up and resigned from the Party."

In a farewell speech to the branch, he explained, "I can't run the way I used to," and "I have always felt that the SWP was an activist party."

Ben continued to work as a painter to support himself and his family and remained close to the

party as a sympathizer. But in another year painting also became too difficult. Heavy work was affecting his health. "I had reached another crossroads where I would have to start a new chapter in my life. At 55 I was too young to retire and moreover I had nothing to retire on. . . . My savings were . . . zero."

But there is no self-pity; the past is viewed "in general political context, of which the personal is a part." Stone concludes his personal narrative by relating how he and his wife Pearl have been able to cope with their family, economic, and physical problems as an aging couple in capitalist America.

'Agitation for Socialism'

The last four chapters are not the best part of the book. They do not deal with people or events with which Stone had personal experience. It is difficult, at times, to know whether they express the views of Ben Stone or his political advisers. The reason for their inclusion is indicated in the last chapter, "The Socialist Future," where he writes: "Am I guilty of agitating for socialism? Of course. That's what this book is all about."

The chapter on "Heroes of the American Revolutionary Movement" contains "popular" biographical sketches of James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, Tom Kerry, Joe Hansen, and George Novack. All of them, except Novack, are dead. They were active leaders of the Socialist Workers Party who, as those who know them can testify, would most vehemently reject any suggestion of hero worship if they were alive.

Ben explains at the outset that he considers them "my leaders and my teachers, as well as my heroes and I draw these portraits of them simply because they were an important part of the most important part of my life."

But he confesses that while it "was my privilege to have known these heroes of the American revolutionary movement . . . I was always a rank-and-filer and hardly ever intimately involved with the leadership."

Nevertheless, two brief episodes are cited—one involving discussions with Hansen, Kerry, and Novack, and the other with Dobbs and Kerry—"to illuminate the relationship of the leadership with the rank-and-file and to demonstrate how, all through the years of the Cannon-Dobbs-Kerry regimes, the leadership earned our confidence and respect."

The comment on the "women heroes"—Rose Karsner, Marvel Scholl, Karolyn Kerry, Reba Hansen, and Evelyn Reed—is even more awkward. A politically sophisticated explanation of the fact that in the 1950s "the spouses of the central leadership, women of equally heroic stature, were never in the central leadership" of the party is inserted before Ben's observation: "While I knew all of the women heroes personally as well as politically, I do not feel I knew them well enough to

draw any intimate portraits of them. But I do feel that I knew them sufficiently to know that they sustained and supported their spouses in a way that was indispensable and irreplaceable."

The chapter on "The Government on Trial" deals with the 1973 suit against FBI and other government harassment which the SWP recently won. Two pages of this chapter deal with Ben Stone's personal experience in securing his FBI dossier in 1984. It verified the fact that he lost his office job at Columbia University in 1953 as a result of the intervention of the FBI.

Leon Trotsky

Since the author acknowledged that Jack Barnes and Larry Seigle, currently central leaders of the SWP, contributed to the chapters on "Heroes" and "The Government on Trial," it is not clear whose political assessments are being discussed. The chapter on "Leon Trotsky," on the other hand, clearly does not reflect revised positions by the Barnes regime in recent years on the theories, the program, and the significance of this historic figure. On the contrary, regardless of who contributed to this chapter, it reasserts the validity of the traditional "Trotskyism" that recruited Ben Stone—and his "leaders and teachers"—to the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors:

"... Trotskyism (the Marxism-Leninism of our time) is the ideology that the world needs to lead it out of its perpetual crises."

"James P. Cannon said, 'I have noticed a general tendency both of the ultraleftists . . . and the pseudoleftists . . . to contrast Lenin to Trotsky and to refer to Lenin as the primary authority. This is nonsensical; Trotsky is Lenin, plus sixteen years of further experience and further development of Marxist thought.'"

"If any one thing can be considered to incarnate the spirit of Leon Trotsky, it is *internationalism*. The founding of the Fourth International was perhaps the crowning achievement of his extraordinary life. . . . It was Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution as counterposed to Stalin's theory of Socialism In One Country that formed the essence of Trotsky's struggle against Stalin. It was one of Trotsky's main theoretical contributions enriching Marxism."

Memoirs of a Radical Rank & Filer is well worth reading despite its unevenness. The best part is Ben Stone's autobiography. His account of his life and his times is a concrete addition to the historic record of how American workers become radicalized, how they begin to think of causes of, and cures for, the problems of their class.

His description of the limits of his life as an activist in the Socialist Workers Party and his ability to contribute to building a vanguard party of the working class is also instructive. It underscores the fallacies that combining theory and practice can be postponed; that tasks of programmatic clarification and development belong to

"heroic leaders" while organizational implementation of program is the priority for energetic rank-and-file activists—and spouses; and it points to the need for a revolutionary Marxist party in which class conscious workers like Ben Stone can live, and learn, and work, and teach how to build an effective vehicle for social change in America. ■

Reviewed by Jean Y. Tussey

Campaign launched to rehabilitate Stalin's victims

PLANS for an international campaign to exonerate the victims of the 1930s Moscow Trials were discussed at a meeting held in the House of Commons on 3 December under the auspices of Eric Heffer MP.

By Eileen Gersch



Trotsky, Lenin and Kamenev

About 30 people were present. Others, such as Tamara Deutscher and Lord Brockway, sent apologies. Many of those who attended were already active politically at the time of Stalin's witch hunt.

Next year, 1987, will be the centenary of the birth of Bukharin, one of those tried and condemned to death, whose reputation has been partially restored. This fact, and the complete or partial rehabilitation of a few of the other victims, make it a propitious time for such a campaign.

The perspective of the meeting was to reach out, through public meetings and the media, and to take resolutions from labour movement groups through the Russian embassy to the Soviet government, asking that the records of the Trials be reopened. This rehabilitation would include Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky, as well as Bukharin, the generals who were executed in 1937 including Tukhachevsky, and others. An ad hoc committee was formed to broaden participation before launching the campaign.

from *British Socialist Action*, Dec. 19, 1986

South Africa

I recently attended the educational weekend/conference sponsored by the SWP and YSA in New York City. As part of the weekend James Winfield, a national leader of the YSA, gave a two-part class on "The Coming Revolution in South Africa." In it he put forward the position that the revolution in South Africa cannot be a socialist revolution because there is no real proletariat as Marxists understand the term. That the strictures of the apartheid state make it impossible for Black "workers" to freely sell their labor power, and that in order to develop a traditional proletariat it will be necessary to first dismantle the apartheid structure. He also explained that part of this process included the necessity of opening up the land to all who wish to farm it (abolition of the Bantustans) as the task of the new revolutionary government, and that many Blacks who are currently employed in the urban areas will prefer to return to the land and will be part of the peasant class rather than the proletariat.

In the discussion period a participant in the classes stated that the newly formed union federation COSATU had taken a position in favor of a workers' revolution and asked how this could fit in with the SWP's position that the revolution would be bourgeois-democratic. James Winfield responded that he was unaware of any such position by COSATU, and that if COSATU had adopted such a position it would be wrong since the role of a union is to unite as many workers as possible to defend their interests (including, in this case, against the apartheid state), rather than to lead the political struggle which is the role of a political party or movement (and is being ably carried out by the ANC with the program of the Freedom Charter).

When I first began coming around the YSA in 1978-79, the SWP held a different position on South Africa. As I recall, South Africa was seen as key to socialist revolution in Africa due to the extensive development of industry and consequently of a relatively large proletariat which would be in the forefront of the revolution. The capitalist system as it had developed in South Africa was so intertwined with apartheid that any revolutionary struggle against apartheid would become an anticapitalist one as well. This position differentiated revolutionaries from those who opposed apartheid on moral grounds but did not oppose the establishment of "non-racial" capitalism.

Could you please print in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* a comparison of the SWP's current position with its previous one? It would also be helpful if you could list where the SWP's position in the 1970s was explained (pamphlets, articles in *Intercontinental Press*, published resolutions?) so that it can be studied in conjunction with Jack Barnes's report printed in the Fall 1985 *New Internationalist* which explains how the SWP does not see the struggle in South Africa as anticapitalist.

I very much appreciated David Williams's article (January *Bulletin IDOM*) on "The SWP and the Struggle Against Imperialist War in the 1980s."

A Reader
New York

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism No. 27, February 1986, carries an article by Tom Barrett answering Jack Barnes's views on South Africa. His polemic, "Proletarian or Bourgeois Revolution? Jack Barnes's 'The Coming Revolution in South Africa,'" takes up a defense of the former SWP position on this important question.

Socialist Realism?

Regarding Steve Bloom's commentary on "X (The Life and Times of Malcolm X)," Bloom is certainly free with his assumptions regarding the politics of those who did and did not choose to support the premiere production of the Davis family's collaborative opus. In his tidy little world of political accuracies, it appears one can hardly avoid being damned, whatever they do or don't do.

Thank goodness political dogmatists don't often comment on art. It's no accident that religious dogmatists exhibit an equally narrow and dull regard for the arts.

If there's any art more boring than socialist realism, it's only that produced in the genre called contemporary christian.

Jackie T. Gabel
Portland, Oregon

In reply: I have received more than one comment to the effect that my review of "X (The Life and Times of Malcolm X)" should have done more to acknowledge the positive role played by those who contributed to its production, whatever their political motivations. I agree that this would have been a perfectly valid approach to the problem and is complementary to the side of the matter I chose to focus my attention on. It still seems to me, however, that the seemingly extreme contradiction of a prestigious ruling-class-supported institution like the New York City Opera putting on a production which is true to the spirit of a Black revolutionary like Malcolm X is the primary feature of interest here.

I do not understand Jackie Gabel's reference to "socialist realism." My review stated quite explicitly that "artistic works must stand on their own merits, and can't be judged fundamentally on the basis of how they present history or politics." This is the very opposite of "socialist realism" and I believe my discussion of the artistic merits of the opera was not at all along the lines of that anti-Marxist dogma. A discussion of the social context in which the opera was produced, however, is quite another matter. There is

no way that such a discussion, which is certainly a legitimate part of a review in a case like this, can avoid dealing with political matters.

Steve Bloom

Labor Party

George Breitman's speech on the Transitional Program (January 1987 *Bulletin IDOM*) is incomplete in content. Its discussion of the formation of a labor party is exclusively devoted to the internal party history on this question.

But even here, one may add, there was an unwarranted generalization by the Communist International owing to the betrayal of the British general strike in 1926 by the British Labor Party.

By characterizing it as an unprincipled formation, advocacy was proscribed. Trotsky grappled with the problem inconclusively in the early 1930s (see *Leon Trotsky on the Labor Party*) but to his credit, he sought empirical criteria enabling critical support. But a clearcut formulation did not appear until the emergence of the Transitional Program.

The Trotskyist movement paid dearly for its lack of understanding. It discredited itself at the height of the CIO upsurge by opposing a proposal by Walter Reuther that the UAW run a labor slate in the forthcoming city elections.

I should know because we were then in the Socialist Party and I was in Detroit, the first Trotskyist colonized there. As an activist in the

Hudson Local, I belonged to the SP auto fraction which at that time was led by Reuther, and had between 90 and 100 members, many of them leaders of locals.

With the characteristic brashness of an ultra-leftist sectarian, I condemned Reuther's proposal in the SP auto fraction as a betrayal and told him personally that "the workers will never forgive you for this betrayal." Reuther wanted to knock my block off, but restrained himself, inviting me to make the same remark to his lieutenant, George Edwards, who later became a judge. I wisely demurred.

The UAW *did* run a labor slate scoring over 300,000 votes in a first time short-run election. The Trotskyist fraction in the SP (George Clarke, Harold Robbins, and a few others), which had applauded my tirade against Reuther, soberly voted critical support. It was not until the Transitional Program emerged that I realized what a catastrophe had occurred.

We had developed many good relations in the SP which were undercut by our sectarianism on the labor party question. At the critical historical juncture, our lack of theoretical understanding destroyed the possibilities of our development.

There has never been a period since in which a labor party possibility emerged so concretely. Future developments will find us properly attuned, owing to Trotsky's Transitional Program.

Nat Simon
New York

50th Anniversary Reissue!

THE TRENTON SIEGE BY THE ARMY OF UNOCCUPATION

by George Breitman

Introduction by Frank Lovell

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

\$1.75

TWO PAMPHLETS

F.I.T. DIRECTORY

Bay Area:

P.O. Box 971
Berkeley, CA 94701

Boston:

George Saunders
RFD 1, 7 Liberty
Sandwich, MA 02563

Cleveland:

4510 Warrensville
Center Rd. #114B
Cleveland, OH 44128

Los Angeles:

P.O. Box 480410
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Twin Cities:

P.O. Box 14444
University Station
Minneapolis, MN 55414

New York:

P.O. Box 1947
New York, NY 10009

Philadelphia:

P.O. Box 28838
Philadelphia, PA 19151

Pacific Northwest:

P.O. Box 17512
Seattle, WA 98107-1212

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

by Larry Stewart

\$1.25

George Lavan Weissman's Last Three Articles

85¢

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

A FREE COPY

of a list of major articles in previous issues of
Bulletin in Defense of Marxism will be mailed to
those who ask for it. Write

BULLETIN IDOM,
P.O. BOX 1317, New York, NY 10009

Copies of BACK ISSUES are available
at \$3.00 per copy.

12 Issues: \$24 6 Issues: \$15

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

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

Make checks payable to *Bulletin IDOM*

Special offer to new readers:

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

**Memoirs of Left-Opposition supporter
Mikhail Baitalsky**

A new chapter in every issue of the
Bulletin in Defense of Marxism
(See page 21 of this issue.)

We will mail copies of the introduction to the series by Marilyn Vogt-Downey (translator) and all installments published to date to anyone who sends in a new subscription for six months or one year. This will allow new readers to follow the unfolding story of Baitalsky's life from its beginning.

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

12 Issues: \$24 6 Issues: \$15

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to: *Bulletin IDOM*
Mail to: P.O. Box 1317
New York, N.Y. 10009

Don't Delay — Subscribe Today!