

Information, Education, Discussion

# BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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## Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

**BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism, No. 40, April 1987**

Closing date March 5, 1987

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

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Back issues are \$3.00 each.

## ISRAELI POLICE RAID HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP Director of Alternative Information Center Still in Jail

by Stuart Brown

On February 16, in an unprecedented move, Israeli police invaded the offices of the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem, ordered it closed for six months, arrested the center's director Michel Warshawsky along with other staff members, and confiscated printing equipment and other supplies. Though two of the staff were released quickly and three others—including two Palestinian women—48 hours later, Warshawsky remains in an Israeli prison. He was held in solitary confinement for two weeks and denied access to all reading and writing material.

Raids similar to the one on the AIC have been commonly carried out against Palestinian organizations in the occupied territories, but this is the first time that emergency laws have been used against Jewish critics of the Israeli government. For this reason, it has caused a considerable stir within Israel itself and protests have come from prominent groups and individuals. For example, the daily newspaper of the Mapam labor federation, *Al-Hamish mar*, called the action "a crime against democracy," and the raid was denounced by the Association of Journalists of Jerusalem. An international defense campaign has also been launched (see box on this page).

The AIC's activities consisted primarily of providing factual information about Israeli government abuses of human rights or other attacks against Palestinians—through its publication, *News from Within*, daily bulletins, news conferences, press releases, etc. The center also made its printing facilities available on a commercial basis to other groups. Those who utilized them include Peace Now, Yeshgeval (an organization of Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in Lebanon), the Jewish Student Organization, Citizens Against Racism, the Organization of Impoverished Neighbors, and the Black Panthers (a group of Oriental Jews).

To justify their raid, police asserted that the AIC was "rendering services" to a "Palestinian terrorist organization," specifically the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Warshawsky and the AIC, however, have emphatically denied this charge.

Warshawsky himself is a leader of the Israeli section of the Fourth International and is a well-known figure on the left in that country. Born in France, he emigrated to Israel as part of an Hasidic

sect, but radicalized after discovering how the Israeli government treated Palestinians. On March 2 an Israeli court formally charged him on several counts, including "service to an illegal organization," "identification with an illegal organization," and "possession of publications of an illegal organization." In a ruling the following day, the judge denied bail. However, he also ruled that Warshawsky should not be held in solitary confinement and should have access to books and writing material. He also ruled that *News from Within* could resume publication, though the AIC is still prohibited from continuing its other activities.

A vigorous public campaign is necessary to force the Israeli government to drop all charges against Warshawsky and allow the AIC to fully resume operations. Funds are also needed to help the AIC replace equipment destroyed or confiscated by the police. ■

### PROTESTS URGENTLY NEEDED

*Protests against the raid on the AIC and the continued imprisonment of Michel Warshawsky should be sent to:*

Ministry of Justice  
29 Salah-Al-Din  
Jerusalem, 91010  
Israel

*Copies should go to:*

Ambassador Meir Rosenne  
Embassy of Israel  
3514 International Drive, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

*and:*

Berta Langston  
Topping Lane  
Norwalk, CT 06854

## JERUSALEM POGROM

### Report from the Muslim Quarter of the Old City (Wednesday, December 3, 1986)

Three weeks have passed since yeshiva student Eliahu Amedi was killed, but the Shuvu Bonim yeshiva students and their supporters continue to run amok in the Aqbat al-Khaldiyeh Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. Although there are few homes in the quarter that have not been subject to attack—whether by stones, Molotovs, or kerosene—the police and the security forces remain apathetic to the plight of the Palestinian residents of the neighborhood and continue to turn a blind eye to violence perpetrated by the settlers.

Today, the Old City looks like a military camp. Soldiers and police are very much in evidence in the area. As one approaches the Aqbat al-Khaldiyeh Quarter, policemen and soldiers become even more prominent, local residents—less so. About half a dozen soldiers, their weapons at the ready, stand at the entrance to the quarter, keeping a check on everybody who enters. Upon seeing the soldiers, a local resident who was with me said, "Closed," and started walking away. One of the soldiers called out to say that the neighborhood was open. We approached and went in.

Although officially the quarter isn't under curfew, that is pretty much the situation. The atmosphere in the neighborhood is tense; people are scared to leave their homes and walk about in the street. Beside the Shuvu Bonim yeshiva there's a memorial plaque for Amedi, directly across the road from the store belonging to Badr Abu Assab, whom the yeshiva students and the residents of Shmuel Hanavi accuse of aiding Amedi's killers. The yeshiva students have directed most of their attacks against the owner of the store and his family.

The neighbors believe that the settlers are out to take control of the quarter, linking it up with the Jewish Quarter and then taking over the entire Old City. At first, the two yeshivas operating in the quarter tried to entice Muslim residents to sell them their homes by offering them large sums of money. When they found this method didn't work, they employed other tactics.

"They're always throwing stones and dumping garbage and sewage on the homes beside the yeshiva, trying to gain control through threats. The neighborhood residents have prevented them from doing so—but they have had to pay for it with arrests," says Bassem Da'as, a resident of the quarter whose home was recently occupied by settlers.

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*This article appeared in the December 12, 1986, issue of the Israeli publication, News from Within, published by the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem until it was closed down in a police raid on February 16, 1987.*

After the killing of Eliahu Amedi, the settlers' provocations took a new form. The security forces, the government, and various public figures have justified their actions arguing that they were "a result of anger." They thus gave the settlers and their supporters a green light to continue in their attempt to gain control of the Muslim Quarter. The latest round of provocations began the same day Amedi was killed. At 12:30 p.m. the yeshiva students tried to torch the store belonging to Abdel Majid Abu Mieleh and break into the store belonging to Badr Abu Assab. The residents of the quarter tried to prevent them from doing so; the security forces and the police remained passive.

Um Badr gave the following account: "At 1:30 p.m. we heard screams from the direction of the home of the Arif Abu Sbieh and Zein Abu Rajab families near the yeshiva. The neighbors ran to help the families but were prevented from approaching their homes by police and borderguards. At seven in the morning policemen came around to the homes which had been attacked and six other homes and told the residents that they would have to leave because the police couldn't protect them. Their job, they said, was to protect the yeshiva students. Half an hour after the families had evacuated their homes the yeshiva students entered and started burning furniture and throwing belongings out of the window, in front of the police and the residents of the quarter."

The week after this incident, the Committee Confronting the Iron Fist held a press conference in the market where the families had taken shelter. The members of the committee wanted to go up and visit the homes to assess the damage but the police prevented them from doing so, prohibiting the residents from returning to their own homes in the process.

Bassem Da'as: "At the end of the seven day mourning period for Eliahu Amedi, a procession marched through here under the protection of the police and the borderguards. Aside from chanting 'Death to the Arabs,' the demonstrators tried to smash down shop doors all along the route. When they arrived at the murder site, just outside Badr Abu Assab's shop, they tried to break in. . . .

"The following day, Abu Assab, the owner of the store, was summoned to the Kishle Police Station. He was threatened with arrest and the police told him that the young people of the neighborhood were prohibited from gathering at his home or at his store. They said that they would hold him responsible for everything that happened in the neighborhood.

"Badr immediately decided to close down his store. Following this, he was summoned to the

police a second time and ordered to open his store. Likewise, he was promised that the security forces would protect him. He returned to his store and opened it. A short time later, two women and a man turned up. The two women claimed that they were Eliahu Amedi's mother and sister. The women began to screech beside the memorial plaque opposite the store and Amedi's 'mother' broke into the shop and attacked Badr's father. Badr's mother tried to protect him and received a blow to the head with a stone from one of the women. Then the

police intervened on the side of the settlers and one of them started to beat Badr's wife with a police club until she almost fainted. The soldiers then handed out clubs to the crowd that had accompanied the two women. One Arab policeman, Mustafa Abu Laban, who was on the scene, approached the attacked family to give them his help. The crowd then began attacking him as well. Badr's brother, Mazen, who tried to intervene, came up against a row of about 15 soldiers who caught hold of him and started beating him."

From the *New York Times*, February 22, 1987:

## Israel: Defender of Democracy?

# Gaza Carpenters Defy the Israelis: A Union Votes

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

Special to The New York Times

GAZA, Feb. 21 — A soldier at the door waved his rifle menacingly and tried to say that the Palestinians were terrorists. But the young carpenters scoffed at the accusation and abruptly pushed past into the dilapidated union hall today to do something unheard of for 20 years among the Palestinian refugees: they cast votes in a labor-union election.

In the process, they defied an Israeli Government ban, dating to 1967, on any new union activity in the Gaza Strip, and their action appeared to lend cheer to Palestinians up and down the strip.

Residents in the chockablock neighborhoods of Gaza were calling it a moment of history for a people whose frustrations include a hunger for the processes of self-determination.

The men said they had been trying to organize the vote for months, were stopped twice by the authorities and then decided to go ahead after their preliminary organizing had shown 400 men were interested in membership.

"Khashou!" the young carpenters shouted in Arabic to their colleagues: "Come on, push through!" As they did, Israeli soldiers, taken by surprise, stepped aside until reinforcements could be summoned.

The voting began quickly, however, and by the time reinforcements finally arrived, 71 would-be union men had entered the hall and cast their first votes as unionists. Indeed, many of the carpenters said, it was their first vote ever for anything in Gaza.

They said they had come here finally to insist on economic rights, not more controversial political rights. The fourth-floor hall where they voted, isolated as the Israeli reinforcements arrived outside, resounded with a mix of verve and bravado.

"I am supposed to be married this morning, but I told the maiden she must wait until I voted!" shouted

Khalid Abu Zbadeh, a smiling, curly-haired 21-year-old, a fresh recruit in the long dormant Gaza Trade Union of Carpenters and Building Workers.

The ingredients seemed right for another of the nasty confrontations in which more than a dozen Palestinians have been shot in the Gaza Strip in recent weeks by Israeli soldiers reacting to crowds throwing rocks.

But the carpenters of Gaza were having none of that. "If the soldiers come in and threaten, we will leave," said one of the new union officials, Aysh Ibrahim Obeid. "We want no trouble."

A few sympathetic Israelis — human-rights advocates and left-wing labor unionists — had journeyed south through the military checkpoint, doubting that the carpenters could succeed.

"This is so silly to try and stop something so natural," said Dr. Algaz Jo-

seph, an Egyptian-born Jew who teaches at Tel Aviv University and represents the Israel League for Human and Civil Rights. He contended that the Israeli authorities were concerned that if their ban on union organizing in Gaza were breached, Palestinians would gather courage for much larger expressions of political grievance.

The voting was in clear violation of the Israelis' ban, which froze Gaza's six labor unions at their 1967 state. In the West Bank, which is administered under rules that differ in some ways from the rules here, Palestinian workers are permitted to conduct new union activities.

The defiant voting here was such a big step, participants said, that it would ease the chafing of the nightly curfew and low wages endured by the tens of thousands of Gaza laborers who jour-

ney out each day before dawn to jobs in Israel. Many take cabs that consume at least half of their wages, which workers say might be \$15 on a good day.

"It is very hard for my people to accept the occupation," said Eshkolem Majdal, a worker with five children. "But we are against violence and want to survive."

It was in that spirit that the 71 men voted in a new seven-member union board in the upper room, then left peacefully.

Even before the union men journeyed forth to tell proudly of having voted for something in Gaza, word of the event was racing along its sandy roads and settlements.

"See? No trouble," said an Israeli soldier, who agreed they did not seem like terrorists.

Abu Mazen: "They hit me brutally and when I managed to escape, they chased me, caught me, and started beating me once again with their rifle butts until I started to vomit. Then they left me."

According to the residents of the neighborhood, two women came by every few days—although they are not always the same two women—accompanied by a crowd of people who harass and attack the residents of the quarter. The soldiers and policemen on the scene don't intervene. In the meantime, the yeshiva students continue to harass the neighbors.

Um Tawfiq: "I live in the house across the lane. I'm a neighbor to Badr Abu Assab. I see the yeshiva students standing all through the night on the roofs of the homes, preparing to attack my neighbor's house and I yell at her in order to warn her.

"One night I saw them setting fire to towels and sheets and throwing them at the Abu Assab family's home. One time they threw three Molotov

cocktails that exploded and started a fire. Two days ago, late at night, they threw a few more Molotovs at the home of Abu Saqer al-Awas. The neighborhood people were alerted and found three more Molotovs on the road. Ever since the incident, the settlers have been roaming around the neighborhood, their pockets bulging with stones and other things."

The yeshiva students haven't confined themselves to the Aqbat al-Khaldiyeh Quarter and have extended their activities to nearby neighborhoods. A week ago, they attacked the al-Salaymeh family's home on Bab al-Salsela Street late at night.

Azieh al-Salaymeh: "At four in the morning, I was sleeping beside my little daughter in the bedroom which fronts on the Jewish Quarter. All of a sudden, I heard a loud bang on the door and immediately the house caught on fire. I was in shock. I started to scream and my neighbors ran over to put out the fire. The soldiers that came to the scene stood there looking at us and laughing." ■

Hind

## PALESTINIANS RELEASED FROM PRISON IN LOS ANGELES

by Walter Lippmann

Efforts by the Reagan administration to divert attention from the Conragate scandal and to prevent public discussion of U.S. Middle East policy were dealt an important setback when seven Palestinians and a Kenyan were released from Federal Prison in Los Angeles February 17.

All eight, held without bail since January 28, were released on their own recognizance or on low bail by Judge Roy Daniels. When Judge Daniels asked the Immigration and Naturalization Service why the eight should continue to be held without bail, the INS prosecutor claimed she could only present evidence in chambers (that is, in secret).

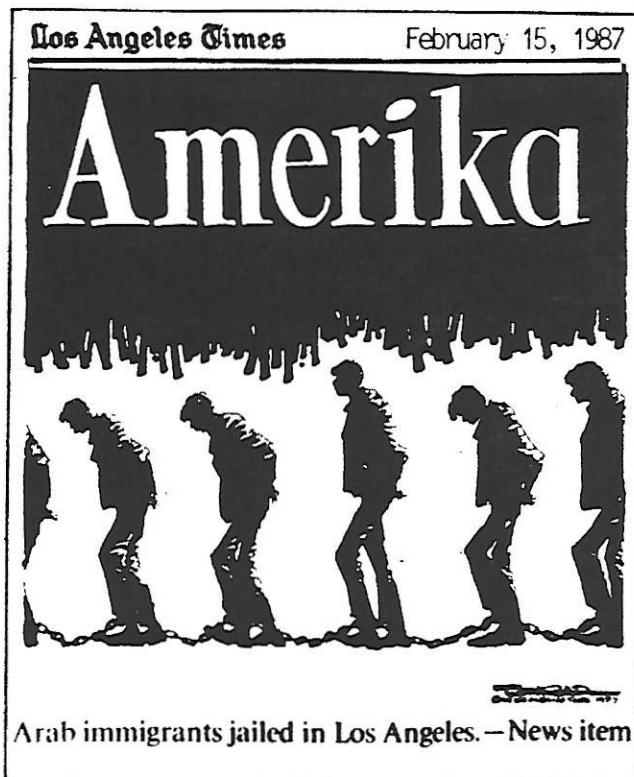
Broad public support helped secure the release of those arrested. Demonstrations, community meetings, and petition campaigns took place around the country. Three hundred rallied outside the Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles on February 17.

The eight continue to face the threat of deportation under the "anti-subversive" provisions of the McCarran-Walter immigration act of 1952. The deportation hearing is now scheduled for April 28.

Support by civil libertarians, the political left, and others who have experienced U.S. government attacks in the past has been significant. The *Los Angeles Times* has printed two favorable editorials.

A fuller report will be published in the next issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. Readers can participate in this struggle in two ways: 1) by sending messages demanding that all charges be dropped to INS Commissioner Alan Nelson, Jus-

tice Department, Washington D.C. 20536; and 2) by sending statements of support and money to the Committee for Justice, 2440 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026, tel: 213-250-1060 or 250-9118. ■



# THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION MARKS TIME

by Charlie van Gelderen

With the latest clampdown on freedom of the press in South Africa—which gives the commissioner of police the right to prohibit the publication of *anything* which he considers "undesirable," the apartheid state can definitely be classified as a police state. The recourse to the courts which have hitherto blocked a total censorship has now been stemmed. It is the South African police, dominated by supporters of the government—and by elements of the far right—who have now absolute control over what people can read, see on TV, or hear on the radio.

This blanket of darkness makes it difficult to assess with precision the true state of affairs of what is happening. Intelligent guesswork has to substitute for empirical research. What follows is based on conversations with friends from South Africa and from information received directly from the country.

## Ruling Class in Disarray

The State of Emergency had two objectives. Firstly to cripple the liberation movement. Secondly to try and heal the disarray in the ruling class. Botha thought that his limited program of reforms would soften the criticism from the "liberal" wing of South African and international capital, and that his self-imposed limits—the retention of segregation in education and through the Group Area Act and the continued disenfranchisement of the Black (African) majority—would be sufficient to slow down the growth of right-wing Afrikaner politics. He has failed in both objectives.

The ruling class remains divided about the right way to tackle the growing insurgency of the South African masses. Sections of local capitalism, headed by the giant Anglo-American, and, with some exceptions, international capital, with huge investments in South Africa, are looking fearfully at a post-apartheid South Africa. They are anxious to see a structural change which will do away with the racism of apartheid while safeguarding what they euphemistically call "free enterprise."

We have recently seen both the British Foreign Office and the U.S. secretary of state meeting leaders of the African National Congress. This could be said to reflect the legitimacy of the ANC's claim to be *the* representative of the South African liberation movement. On the other hand, it could be that the wiser elements in the imperial-

ist ministries believe that only the ANC could be relied upon to safeguard at least some of their interests in post-apartheid South Africa.

It is in an attempt to resolve these contradictions that Botha decided to call a general election two years before it was due in order to get a fresh mandate from the white electorate. The immediate effect of this was further splits from the ruling National Party, emphasizing the disunity which is wracking the ruling class. These elections, of course, have no validity for the Black masses. Knowing this, Botha has wisely decided that the two nonwhite houses of parliament would not be dissolved. The derisory vote which they would receive at the polls would only bring home once more their complete isolation from the ongoing struggles in the townships.

## The Emergency and the Liberation Movement

There can be no doubt that the emergency has dealt the liberation forces a severe blow. Thousands of national and local leaders have been arrested or detained without charges. The security forces are in the townships in massive strength. The mood of euphoria which expected a quick victory and which gave rise to such slogans as "No education without liberation" has largely given way to a realization that the state is still powerful; that the struggle is going to be prolonged and that there will be setbacks as well as advances before the final victory.

These past two years have been years of militant struggle in the townships, in the schools, in the mines and factories, and in the countryside. They have also been the years in which the ANC recovered and consolidated its position of pre-eminence in the national liberation movement. Even if the ANC, as such, did not initiate all the activities in the schools and townships, there can be no doubt that the majority of the "comrades" conceived of themselves as supporters of the ANC. This is reinforced by government propaganda which credits the ANC with every act of violence and insurgency. Although the South African Communist Party is in close alliance with the ANC and exerts great influence at exile leadership level, there is little evidence that it shares the mass support which the ANC enjoys.

## The ANC

In the "Statement of the NEC of the ANC on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the ANC" (January 8, 1987), presented by President Oliver

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*Charlie van Gelderen is a British Fourth Internationalist, a member of the International Group in England, who has long been active in support of the movement against apartheid in South Africa.*

Tambo, and the accompanying "What Is To Be Done!" the successes and failures are frankly assessed.

In 1986 Tambo set his movement the task of further activating the underground army, *Unkhontwe Sizwe*, and of "drawing in millions of our people into combat." Now he concedes that "in this regard we must say that we have not progressed as far as we can."

One of the failures that Tambo highlights is the failure to link up the cells of trained guerrillas sent into the country and the large number of discontented Black youths. In short, the call for a "People's War" could not be translated from propaganda into reality.

It should also be added that while the ANC (and other liberation organizations) have supported the building of alternative forms of popular government in the localities, the overwhelming armed power of the state has prevented the linking up of these local committees nationally into a genuine form of dual power. The slogan "Power to the People" remains exactly that—a slogan.

### The Working Class

While the emergency has dealt serious blows to the political wing of the liberation movement—United Democratic Front, National Forum—by the prohibition of meetings, rallies, and even mass attendance at funerals, plus the arrests of its leadership and the severe censorship (although it should be emphasized that there has been a marked increase in guerrilla activities), the trade union movement has shown a remarkable resilience. The main factor for this is the thoroughly democratic structure of the main trade unions as opposed to the highly centralized and bureaucratic leadership of the UDF. The position is put very clearly in the November/December issue of *SASPU National*, the organ of the South African Students Press Union:

Workers have drastically changed the balance of power in the workplace and in society as a whole. Trade unions have grown and COSATU'S [Congress of South African Trade Unions] formation allows for more coordinated action on political and economic fronts.

Commemorating COSATU's first year, its general secretary, Jay Naidoo, stressed the increasing importance of the working class, which has not confined its struggles around the issue of wages and working conditions but played a leading role in national politics:

Debates in COSATU have placed socialism very firmly on the agenda; the growth of working class politics is clear. It is reflected in the methods and content of struggles being waged by democratic structures from village committees to street committees, from shop steward councils to SRCs.

More and more, these democratic structures are drawing the link between the oppression they are fighting and the overall methods of political control of the working class in our society. They are drawing this link not only in theory but in action, in the tactics and targets. This is heightening the crisis of control for the ruling class.

These organs of people's power are important for advancing mass struggle now; but they are also important to ensure that we really govern ourselves after change. We believe workers experience of democracy in the unions is contributing to building working class leadership more broadly.

In the 7,000 words of the anniversary statement, Tambo devotes only 150 to the role of the working class, and in the tasks for 1987 there is no attempt to coordinate the workers' struggle to that of the general struggle for people's power. While the ANC makes the usual genuflection to the "leading role of the workers" it gives no content to this leading role. Almost the same importance is given to the call to the white people to join the struggle against apartheid.

How different is the position of Naidoo:

Workers are more directly confronting the issues of the redistribution of wealth; tactics like sit-ins have also put the issue of control of the means of production on the agenda.

COSATU's vice president Chris Dlamini also spelled out how the "leading role of the working class" must be given a succinct political program if it is to have any meaning:

The unholy alliance of apartheid and capitalism has become obvious and concrete. One cannot expect to eradicate it simply by removing apartheid, nor can economic transformation come about merely by organizing workers into unions and demanding a living wage and good living conditions.

What we are talking about is the total change of the present system in its entirety. This change can never be brought about as the result of a change of heart from big business or a softening of attitudes by the regime or when Thatcher discards her attitude. It will only come through the struggles waged by all progressive forces of our people. . . . I am convinced that the links with all progressive organizations of our people need to be concretized now.

### Worker-Management United Front?

In strong contrast to the ANC's scant reference to the role of the working class, as a class,





in the liberation struggle, the South African white capitalists are becoming only too aware of the growing strength and effectiveness of organized labor as leader and organizer of the struggle against apartheid. Many of the "enlightened" leaders of big business are becoming convinced that capitalism will not survive in South Africa if it does not distance itself from apartheid.

The Federated Chambers of Industry (FCI) actually proposed that workers and management should form a united front (sic) against the State of Emergency. COSATU gave them a dusty answer.

We would not consider a united front with the employers because capitalism is protected by apartheid, often at gunpoint.

How can workers who are fighting tooth-and-nail battles with the bosses in their factories be expected to see them as allies on any level? We believe we would weaken the growth of the working class movement by entering a united front with monopoly capitalism.

The COSATU statement goes on to say that while the FCI proposed a united front, many FCI affiliates have been reluctant to guarantee job and income security to detained workers. COSATU unions are fighting ongoing battles on this front. There speaks the authentic voice of a working class prepared to play its historic role and place

itself at the head of the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation.

### Conclusion

All available information shows that despite the severity of the repression, the struggle in South Africa continues, though perhaps at a slower tempo. Although handicapped by the denial of bases in neighboring states, there has been, as stated above, an increase in guerrilla activities within the country.

The state has responded to this, not only by direct military and police assaults, but by organizing squads of counterrevolutionary vigilantes, the so-called "*Wit Doeke*," so that the media can portray the struggle as Black against Black.

The Afrikaner dominated state machinery now has no other option than a military solution. Despite the increased use of armed guerrillas, the liberation movement is not in a position for an all-out military confrontation with the state. This would indicate the need for the greater utilization of the industrial muscle of the organized workers than appears implicit in the ANC's strategy for 1987. While the ANC has rightly refused to renounce violence at the behest of U.S. secretary of state Shultz, it has always been careful to cultivate the alternative—pressure from international capitalism and the "liberal" bourgeoisie in South Africa to bring the government to the conference table. ■

## A RECORD OF THE MASS RALLY AT THE SHANGHAI PEOPLE'S SQUARE TO DISCUSS DEMOCRACY

by Yuan Xiumin

The December 19 demonstration of university students in Shanghai for democracy, freedom, and human rights has temporarily subsided on the threat of the authorities. However, the enthusiasm of the students still ran high. They felt that the question of democracy was not to be discussed only in the campus but should be brought to society. They should awaken the workers and the public to understanding and fighting for democracy. As vanguards, the students did not slacken after the demonstrations. Starting from December 20, every evening at about 6 o'clock, rallies of students, workers, and citizens to discuss democracy were held at the Shanghai People's Square.

At 6 o'clock, darkness had already descended over the People's Square. The only building in the square, the office of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai People's Congress, stood solitarily in the chill. It was the time off from work. Bicycles thrust on and pedestrians walked with haste under the fragile street light. The people seemed insignificant in the vast square. Some pedestrians, wearing gauze masks and scarfs, huddled in their overcoat, walked with a quick pace and a serious expression. They headed towards one side of the square. Indeed, they were going to attend rallies to discuss democracy.

It was dim in the square. Crowds gathering in circles were dispersed here and there, some numbering 40 or 50, and some one or two hundred. In the center of the circles, there were ordinary workers discussing the student demonstrations, youths debating the question of democracy, and even old workers at the municipal government saying their thoughts and showing their support for the student action. The majority of the participants were young workers.

The biggest crowd was gathered on a piece of muddy ground in the square. In the beginning, about one or two hundred people gathered in a circle. About a hundred people sat on the ground in the inner rings, and the rest stood in the outer rings. In the center, a young man aged about 30, apparently a worker, was speaking his ideas on democracy, freedom, and human rights. He said: There are two kinds of democracy—bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy, but socialist democracy is the genuine people's democracy; re-

grettably, the Communist Party of China has always swindled the people with fake socialism and fake Marxism-Leninism. The audience applauded and shouted bravo. He continued to say: Freedom must be exercised on the prerequisite of not interfering with the freedom of others; human rights are basic rights due to every person and must not be violated. After he spoke, a young man aged about 25 stood up to speak. He wore glasses, his hair was disheveled, his eyelids seemed very heavy, his voice was husky. Still, when he spoke, his face showed a shining delight.

When this student stood up to speak, a stir was aroused. About six or seven hundred people had gathered. The student first described the cause of the student democratic movement and the course of the march, and then he gave a lively account of the negotiation between the students and the municipal government. It was a way of explaining the student movement to the public, and a most direct way.

While he talked, about a thousand people had gathered. Young men and women, apparently workers, made up the majority. There were also middle-aged workers. Though the crowd was big, they listened to the students in a very orderly and attentive manner. Their serious expression and look of expectation showed that they were not there for fun. When the student made criticism of the government policies, they nodded and smiled. When they agreed with some ideas of the student, they applauded. When the student made a brilliant remark, they shouted bravo, and occasionally they requested or encouraged the student to go on.

When this student finished his speech, six young men went into the center. They were also students. They sat down in the middle, and one stood up to narrate again the reason and course of the student demonstration. Then he spoke his views on democracy, freedom, the Communist Party, the multiparty system, Marxism-Leninism, the socialist perspective, and the law. Before he began on a topic, he lit a cigarette and inhaled deep, went into a moment's deep thought, and slowly exhaled the smoke. This young man just over 20 showed naivete in his maturity, and attracted the audience.

It was then known that these students had not slept for three whole days, and had not taken a regular meal. Fatigue and hunger tore at them, but they persisted. When they uttered with their husky voice "we want democracy rather than bread," the audience was moved.

Over a thousand people had gathered by this time, encircling the students in heavy rings. Al-

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*This article appeared in Chinese in the December 1986 issue of October Review, a revolutionary Marxist journal published in Hong Kong. Their English translation, of which this is a slightly abridged advance copy, will appear in the March 1987 issue.*

though security agents were widely dispersed in the square to monitor on them, the citizens and students seemed not to care, but threw themselves into this open free discussion.

The next student that spoke introduced himself as a student of music. He held in his hand a leaflet "Letter to compatriots" signed by "Tongji University Students." In a rhythmic but husky voice, he read out the whole leaflet. When he finished the last three lines that read:

"Let more people throw themselves into the dynamic movement for democracy and freedom! Victory surely belongs to us!! Viva the December 19 Movement!!!" the audience repeated the last line in unison, raised their fist, and then there were warm applause and shouts. The enthusiasm of the masses reached a boiling point. The expression of fatigue and hunger on the students was covered by delight and excitement.

The discussion rally was carried out in this harmonious, open, free atmosphere. The people followed good order—they first raised their hand before they asked a question or made a speech. During the whole rally, there were frequent interventions from the masses, and many penetrating ideas were expressed. The students mentioned their idea of socialism. They considered that Marx is correct in his analysis of social development, and socialism can appear only after the development of feudalism to capitalism to the imperialist stage; China has not gone through the advanced development of capitalism and so there are abuses of feudalism, bureaucracy, and privileges. At this time, a young worker in the crowd raised his hand to speak, and asked if this meant China should reverse to the capitalist stage. The student answered: No, a new road for China can be created only by genuine socialism, and for genuine socialism to be realized, the people must be master of the country, and democracy and freedom must be practiced.

The students also talked about democracy. They considered that they were fighting for socialist democracy, i.e., democracy that expressed the interests of the majority. They considered that the people's congresses today did not represent the spirit of the people as master of the country. They demanded direct election of the people's deputies by the masses.

At this time, a middle-aged man in the crowd spoke his ideas about the Communist Party of China. He considered that there were good party members devoted to reforming the country. However, there were also many capable and enthusiastic people among the masses that wanted to reform the country. These people should be allowed to join the party freely and work together with the good party members.

A young student at once raised the question of the multiparty system. He considered that the era of one-party dictatorship should end. A multi-

party system should be practiced, and with competition, there will be progress.

Some students mentioned their views on Deng Xiaoping's open door policy. Basically, they supported it but they thought that it was too radical in the course of implementation. China had not been able to adapt to it, and many ordinary people did not understand the content of the reform. Yet, the open door policy brought social problems, including the upsurge of prices and the lowering of the living standard. The livelihood of the public was much worse than before, and this demonstrated that a reform without democratic participation could only be disadvantageous to the citizens.

A student talked of his idea of the law: The law is an instrument maintaining social order, and protecting the life and property of the people; however, the law in China protects the superstructure and protects the interests of the privileged; only by the people drawing up the law collectively can the interests of the general people be protected.

Some citizens expressed disagreement with the student demonstration for causing traffic disorder. A young man at once excitedly came to the center to speak, and said: The student demonstration is a reaction to the social contradictions; the action of the students is righteous; the demonstration will inevitably cause inconvenience to some people, but can we therefore give up our action fighting for democracy and freedom? He gave an example: If one gets a fishbone stuck in one's throat while taking rice, will he never again take rice? This received applause from the crowd which urged the young man to speak on.

Another student raised the question: Can democratic reform be effected just by sitting down to discuss and negotiate with the authorities? He pointed out that the action of the students alone was not enough. A social movement could be victorious only by joining forces with the workers. His speech also won heated applause from the crowd.

Hence, the rally on democracy went on in heated discussion. The participation of the citizens showed their concern for the student action and their concern for the future of the country. The Shanghai citizens, always under repression in word or action, expressed their thoughts at this rally. A person even said: "Even if what I say now will cause the security men to come and arrest me, I must still do so." Their indignation has been long pent up, but their attitude is like the slogan on a banner during the demonstration: "We will not keep silent." The rally ended at about 10 o'clock.

When the crowd had left late in the night, cold and solitude descended again on the square. The only building, the office of the Shanghai people's congress, stood solitarily in the square, looking particularly solitary in the chill and dim street light. If only the discussion rallies could continue! ■

December 25, 1986, from Shanghai.

# ON DEMOCRATIC DECISION MAKING IN THE U.S. ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

by Samuel Adams

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education."

—Thomas Jefferson, 1821

As the anti-intervention movement gears up for the April 25 demonstrations, issues of profound importance regarding how key decisions are made and who makes them have come to the fore. The paramount question is this: With broad labor and religious forces calling the spring actions and participating in organizing them, can the right of other sectors of the movement, as well as of rank-and-file activists, to have a genuine voice in decision making be assured? And why is this important?

## The CARD Conference

Concerns about democratic procedures emerged in the early days of the movement. One example of this was the conference held in Detroit in February 1981, called by the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD). Twelve hundred people, most of them from the major peace groups and radical political parties, attended. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) mobilized for the conference and it was the SWP that was among the most vocal in raising the issue of democratic decision making.

A major controversy arose at the conference involving plans for a demonstration to protest U.S. intervention in Central America, especially El Salvador. Reagan had just been inaugurated and he was beating the war drums against "communism" in the Western Hemisphere. He pledged to carry out more aggressively Carter's policy of hostility toward the Sandinistas and support for the repressive Salvadoran regime.

In those early days of the movement, there was no national anti-intervention coalition in place with the authority to call an action to which all sections of the movement would respond. The CARD conference was viewed as a possible vehicle for calling such a national action.

But there was a major complication. The People's Anti-War Mobilization (PAM), in which the Workers World Party plays a leading role, had already called for a demonstration in D.C. on May 3, 1981. By the time of the CARD conference, PAM had collected a vast number of endorsements for

May 3 and was well into the work of organizing the action. The SWP and others contended that PAM had acted unilaterally and without the agreement of the rest of the movement. They saw no semblance of democracy or legitimacy in the calling of May 3, since the initiation and control of the action was solely in PAM's hands. What was needed, they argued, was a broad formation, in which everyone in the movement had input, to call a national action. Therefore, they concluded, the CARD conference should set a different date for the action. This position prevailed and the conference voted to call a demonstration for May 9.

Whatever factional considerations were at play to prevent uniting on a common date, the fact remains that the SWP and the other forces at the conference that agreed with it were invoking the best of the traditions of the Vietnam antiwar movement. Open conferences attended by as many as 1500 people with free discussion and democratic decision making—that was how the largest demonstrations were decided upon by antiwar forces during the Vietnam period.

Of course, as it turned out, May 9th never got off the ground. It was one thing for the conference to call an action and set a date. It was another matter to establish an effective structure that could organize the action and see it through. It was this latter that was lacking in the aftermath of the CARD conference. In the meanwhile, the PAM forces held to May 3 and organized a turnout of 100,000.

## The 1981-1984 Period

It would be more than three and one-half years before another national conference of the movement was convened. In the meanwhile U.S. intervention in Central America steadily escalated. Protest actions on a local level were frequently called around the country, especially by the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador (CISPES).

In June 1982, disarmament groups organized the largest peace demonstration in history in New York City with an outpouring of a million people. The anti-intervention groups were asked to support the action but had no real voice in its planning.

In 1983, two national anti-intervention actions were called in Washington, D.C., one in July by PAM and the other in November by CISPES. PAM repeated its 1981 procedure: it called the action, made all the major decisions itself, and then asked the rest of the movement for endorsement and support. About 50,000 people turned out.

The CISPES demonstration drew 35,000 people. This was a significant number but the CISPES leadership didn't see it that way. They had banked on a crowd three times that size. They had spent months organizing the action and had expended considerable resources. When the U.S. invaded Grenada in October 1983, they thought this would help galvanize a huge outpouring of at least 100,000 people. Yet the actual turnout fell far short of that number and even of the July action. As one veteran anti-intervention observer remarked, "The November demonstration took the starch out of CISPES. They were never the same after that."

After November, CISPES turned away from mass actions and their priorities became lobbying/electoral activity, material aid campaigns, and community organizing. But this shift of emphasis was decided upon by the leadership, not by the membership. CISPES during this period did not hold national conferences or conventions where its line could be discussed and debated by all of its affiliates and branches.

The November 1983 demonstration was a watershed for the anti-intervention movement. It marked a decline in the idea of a single organization or current calling national anti-intervention actions on its own and it opened the door for joint and united actions by the entire movement.

### The Cleveland Conference

In April 1984, the CIA mined Nicaragua's harbors on both coasts. Further U.S. moves against Nicaragua appeared imminent.

This situation sent shock waves throughout the anti-intervention movement. Many activists were convinced that a direct U.S. invasion was at hand. Others saw such an invasion as a real danger that could best be averted by coordinating mass actions called by a united movement.

Still reacting to its November 1983 experience and its changed priorities, CISPES did not respond to the crisis. Nor did the other solidarity networks. The National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, labor's principal anti-intervention arm, was steering clear of demonstrations. The traditional peace and justice groups were primarily concerned with defeating Reagan in November, though they were giving some thought to national multi-issue actions in the spring of 1985.

With this vacuum and lack of leadership by major anti-intervention groups staring them in the face, a group of activists, based primarily in Cleveland, Ohio, after consultation with trade unionists and others around the country, decided to organize an "Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean." A committee was established to organize the conference and anyone interested in participating could join it with voice and vote. The conference took place in September 1984, and was attended by over 600 people.

The conference was a model of democracy from beginning to end. Any individual or group could submit a proposal. All questions of substance and procedure were decided by majority vote after discussion and debate.

The conference concluded by urging the anti-intervention movement to mount national demonstrations on April 20, 1985, in Washington, D.C., and on the West Coast. But the conference avoided the mistake of the 1981 CARD conference of taking responsibility by itself for organizing such demonstrations. Despite the sizable turnout and breadth of the conference, the organizers were keenly aware of its limitations. Significant constituencies of the movement were not present and the forces at the conference lacked the authority to bring the entire movement together, which was its objective. For this purpose, a broader coalition was needed and one was at hand.

### The April Actions Coalition

Prior to the September conference, representatives of its organizing committee met with representatives of the peace and justice groups in New York to work out a common and unified approach for spring actions. In the course of the discussions on structure, it became clear that the two groups had widely differing ideas.

The peace and justice groups—led by the Mobilization for Survival—wanted a national steering committee with representatives from selected national groups. But those representing the Cleveland conference insisted on an open structure with a representative of *every* national group wishing to participate and *with local coalitions having representation on the national steering committee*. This disagreement was not to be resolved for six months.

The differences over organizational questions reflected fundamentally different political perspectives. The Cleveland conference delegation had as its objective the building of a united mass movement focused on anti-intervention demands that would be totally independent of the Democratic and Republican parties. The peace and justice representatives, for the most part, were deeply steeped in capitalist politics. They had campaigned for Jesse Jackson and they were then campaigning for Walter Mondale. Their priority concern was defeating Reagan. Issue-wise, they focused primarily on disarmament, but this in no way inhibited them from adopting programs with numerous other demands. They had strong reservations about the power of mass demonstrations in the streets.

In September 1984, the April Actions coalition had its initial meeting. The question of how decisions would be made and by whom was very much a part of its agenda then and in succeeding meetings.

A major controversy soon erupted over whether PAM would have a representative on the national steering committee. The coalition's Administrative Committee, made up of representatives of such groups

as the Mobilization for Survival, SANE, U.S. Peace Council, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, recommended that PAM not have a representative because "it doesn't work well in coalitions." Representatives of the Cleveland conference's continuations committee and other groups disagreed and PAM ultimately was given a seat. The fight for a nonexclusionary national committee, at least insofar as national organizations were concerned, was thereby basically won.

The question of giving local coalitions a vote proved to be far more controversial since *their admission to the steering committee would jeopardize the control of the established peace groups*. It was not until February 1985, when organizing for the April 20 demonstrations was in a state of crisis—thanks to the default and inaction of the coalition's leadership—that the local coalitions were made part of the steering committee. *It was through their intervention that the action took off*. On April 20, 1985, 125,000 people took to the streets in D.C., San Francisco, and other cities.

There was a valuable lesson to be learned from this struggle to democratize the April Actions coalition. The local coalitions—made up of rank-and-file activists working at the grass roots—were the leading forces for mobilizing masses of people for April 20. Denying them their elementary and basic voting rights—turning the decision making over to selected national organizations and "leaders"—undercut building the action. Granting them voting rights was not only consistent with democratic principles, *it also was essential for generating the largest possible turnout*.

#### The Local Coalitions and April 20

With the movement united for the spring 1985 actions, local coalitions began forming all over the country. Each had to decide what its procedures would be for making decisions. Most coalitions opted for a system whereby coalition meetings would be open to anyone interested in attending, with each person having the right to vote and with issues decided by majority rule. In between coalition meetings, an elected steering committee, usually made up of representatives of the major groups in the coalition, would make the necessary decisions. But the body with the ultimate decision-making authority would be the periodic coalition meeting.

The April Actions Administrative Committee had some different ideas. They wanted the branches and affiliates of those organizations represented on the Administrative Committee to be empowered to convene and run the local coalitions. This is basically what happened in Boston, where decision making was effectively restricted to a handful of groups.

In New York City, it was a different story. A proposal to base decision making on organizations, with some of the traditional peace and justice groups having the decisive say, was summarily rejected. Instead the coalition overwhelmingly approved a one-person, one-vote system.

The New York experience was instructive. Give rank-and-file activists in the movement the choice of whether they want to delegate decision making to "leaders" or exercise it themselves and they'll not only choose themselves but accept responsibility for implementing the decision.

The leadership of the April Actions coalition moved more cautiously when it came to organizing a coalition in Washington, D.C. They decided to work primarily through Walter Fauntroy, Democratic Party delegate to Congress. "When Fauntroy is ready to move, then maybe we'll call a meeting of activists. Until then, the proper course is to wait." That was their approach.

So precious months went by and nothing happened. Fauntroy was not heard from. Activists aching to build the spring action were discouraged from doing anything. The movement was immobilized. This sad state of affairs gave rise to grave doubts in the minds of the national leadership of the coalition that anything substantial could happen in Washington on April 20. So they urged in January and again in February that the demonstration be called off.

Had there been at the outset a well publicized meeting of all area activists and their organizations to consider whether to begin work immediately to build the demonstration, or to wait for Fauntroy, there is no doubt that the meeting would have voted to get going without delay.

The above illustrates how essential it is for the movement to have the opportunity to debate thoroughly the issues before it if it is to choose the correct course. While democratic decision making offers no guarantee of infallibility, it is an infinitely better system for deciding questions than having individuals or groups—seeking to substitute themselves for the movement as a whole—make the decisions instead.

Where decisions are made by majority vote, responsibility for implementation, learning lessons from mistakes and correcting errors can follow, rather than recriminations for missed opportunities or failed plans.

Eventually meetings were held in Washington and there was an impressive turnout for April 20 from the area. However, if the organizing for the action had commenced earlier—and been directed by a broad and democratically functioning coalition—local participation may well have been substantially greater.

#### The San Francisco Coalition

Some of the most controversial issues regarding democratic decision making erupted in the San Francisco coalition. Because this coalition was by far the broadest in the country, involving several area AFL-CIO labor councils among others, its experience is of particular importance to the anti-intervention movement as a whole.

At the outset, the Bay Area movement was confronted with a situation in which two groups,

one led primarily by union leaders and the other by Gus Newport, then mayor of Berkeley, sought to establish separate coalitions to build April 20. This incipient split was overcome and a united slate for a steering committee was proposed to and approved by an open meeting of hundreds of local activists.

But the coalition faced sharp political differences. One involved whether the anti-intervention demand should be confined to Central America or whether the Mideast should be added. The original agreement was to limit it to Central America. Sections of the movement, joined by Newport, were not reconciled to this and when the national call issued by the April Actions coalition included the Mideast, they insisted that it be added to the demands for San Francisco's April 20 demonstration as well.

At one coalition meeting, it was decided to invite a representative from the FMLN-FDR to speak at the April 20 rally. Some trade unionists, not present at the meeting, bolted at the idea and threatened to pull out of the coalition if the invitation were extended. An arrangement was then worked out by coalition leaders for a Salvadoran speaker to be introduced as an exiled trade unionist but with no mention of his FMLN-FDR affiliation.

The dispute raised a serious question for the movement in San Francisco: Is there a contradiction between attempting to build a broadly based anti-intervention movement in support of the right of self-determination while at the same time inviting spokespersons from the liberation movements in the subject countries to speak at rallies in the U.S.? Some of the trade unionists thought there was. But they were agreeable to having the Salvadoran speak so long as "FMLN-FDR" was not mentioned in introducing him.

The question then became how the issue was to be resolved. Leading forces in the coalition felt it had been resolved by what had been worked out, and there was no need for further consideration of the problem by the coalition as a whole.

If there had been a meeting open to all engaged in building the April 20 demonstration and if the matter had been fully aired, there could have been any of a number of results. The trade unionists might have been convinced, as they were months later when the San Francisco coalition held a conference to which representatives of the Nicaraguan government were invited speakers, that their concerns were groundless, and that the decision made at the coalition meeting to invite an FMLN-FDR speaker was agreeable; or the arrangement worked out with the Salvadoran speaker might have been approved on the grounds that this was necessary in order to maintain the support of the trade unionists for the coalition and for April 20; or the meeting might have reaffirmed the earlier decision to invite an FMLN-FDR speaker over the objection of those trade unionists who disagreed with it, with the result being their withdrawal from the coalition.

But there was no open meeting. Key leaders of the coalition were unwilling to take the risk of having the differences settled there. Nor did they feel they should have to. Their overriding concern was to preserve the breadth of the coalition, especially its trade union component. So why should they permit a meeting of activists, with the ultralefts capable of mustering a significant presence, to possibly jeopardize what had been achieved in bringing broad labor and religious forces together?

Thus the practice took root of the coalition's steering committee assuming authority for directing the life of the coalition and making final decisions. Organizations not represented on the steering committee and rank-and-file activists were effectively excluded from the decision-making process. But this system did not go unchallenged. It was attended by bitter criticism and recrimination.

It is true that despite this, the coalition hung together and organized a successful demonstration of 50,000 people on April 20. But the divisions in the coalition were too deep for it to survive, at least in the state in which it found itself. So it dissolved, distributed all of its assets, and re-formed under a new name and with a more clearly defined program which did not include the Mideast. The new coalition, the San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, maintained the practice of decision making by representatives of selected organizations.

### The CISPES Convention

Democracy was put to the test twice in the aftermath of April 20. One experience was as positive as the other was negative.

In May 1985, CISPES held a national convention in Washington, D.C. Five hundred people attended with the delegates representing affiliates from many parts of the country.

The convention was a good example of genuine movement democracy. It brought to a head differences over CISPES's perspective that had developed among national leaders and been taken to CISPES's ranks. The basic issue was whether CISPES should continue to focus its attention on El Salvador and Central America, or whether it should become a peace and justice formation with anti-intervention being only one of its concerns.

Position papers advocating both views were disseminated in advance of the convention. Opposing slates of candidates basing themselves squarely on the differing programs contended for CISPES's top offices.

The convention was distinguished by free discussion and lively debate. When the vote came, those who sought to keep CISPES's focus as it had been prevailed.

From the point of view of democratic decision making, this was an important advance for CISPES. But it was not a definitive one, as subsequent events would show.

## End of the April Actions Coalition

The other noteworthy episode began with the meetings of the April Actions coalition held after the April 20 demonstrations. The coalition's steering committee met in May 1985, and voted by a narrow majority to call national actions for the fall. But because the vote was so close and attendance at the meeting only narrowly representative, it was decided to reconsider the matter at a meeting set for June 29.

By the time that meeting convened, the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC) had been formed. At the June 29th meeting, the ENC advocated fall actions and its proposal was counterposed to one submitted by the Administrative Committee, which opposed such actions. Instead, the Administrative Committee urged the coalition to endorse actions already called by other groups, use the fall to broaden the coalition, meet again in September, and begin work at that point for organizing a national action for April 1986.

Discussion was quite open in the ensuing debate. But the outcome was never in doubt. The SWP and other forces had shifted their position from the May meeting and now opposed coordinated actions for the fall. "We've got to keep this coalition together," they argued. "We can afford to give up fall actions now because at least we have agreement on unified actions for the spring. That's the important thing."

But it was not to be. The September steering committee meeting was never called. And in November, the Administrative Committee, acting on its own, canceled the April 1986 demonstrations. The April Actions coalition then faded into oblivion.

What was so striking about this development was that it was so flagrantly undemocratic. The April Actions coalition had formally adopted rules *in writing* which specified that *the steering committee, not the Administrative Committee, made the substantive decisions.*

But apart from the ENC, there was not a murmur of protest anywhere in the movement when the spring actions were canceled. No movement paper took note that the April Actions coalition's procedures had been flouted.

With the disappearance of the April Actions coalition, with no new coalition to take its place, and with no program agreed to on a national basis to mobilize opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America, the movement faced a bleak six months in the concluding half of 1985.

## The Fight Against Contra Aid

Reagan's announcement in late January 1986 that he was seeking \$100 million aid to the contras triggered renewed street activity by the anti-intervention movement. In short order, coalitions formed in cities all across the country. Activists joined together to plan hundreds of demonstrations. As many as three or four were held in a single city in the first half of the year.

Nearly all of these local coalitions had a completely democratic internal life. Impelled by the urgency of the threat of a *de facto* U.S. declaration of war against Nicaragua, there was a reaching out to everyone who could be moved to come to meetings, participate, speak their piece, have a vote, get active. An outstanding example of this was in Washington, D.C., where a Coalition to Stop the U.S. War on Nicaragua had been formed. The coalition developed a practice of encouraging new people who showed up at demonstrations to sign interest cards. There was then follow-up to integrate these new forces into the coalition.

*This illustrates another advantage that an open, democratically run coalition has over a closed and controlled one: the greater ability to win new activists to its ranks by giving them a voice in the decision-making process.*

Even where there was a deviation from the openness and democracy that generally characterized the anti-intervention movement in the spring of 1986, it was likely to be short-lived. Thus in Los Angeles, in the early part of the fight to defeat contra aid, a few of the most prominent anti-intervention groups held secret, closed meetings where they finalized and then announced to the rest of the movement plans for actions. But the more responsible of the forces involved realized that such a practice undercut the building of demonstrations and it was abandoned. Instead a wide-open coalition was established in which all could participate.

Labor participation in the spring actions, outside of San Francisco, was negligible. The National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador still shunned demonstrations. Its entire preoccupation was in a lobbying campaign. But beyond that, there was a pulling back by a number of union forces on the question of Central America. As the national debate on contra aid heated up, and the frenzied baiting of the Sandinistas by all sections of the ruling class and the media escalated, a number of anti-intervention union officials stood silent or redirected their attention to the anti-apartheid movement as alternative activity.

But official labor bodies in the Bay Area maintained their active stand against contra aid and their participation in the San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. On April 19, the coalition brought 25,000 people out in the streets. While only half the size of the previous year's demonstration, it was still by far the largest spring action in the country.

In the aftermath of the April demonstration, the San Francisco coalition was deactivated for a period of over six months. This was the decision of key labor leaders, who wanted to spend their time campaigning for the Democrats in the summer and fall. The coalition's structure was such that there was no opportunity for the hundreds of activists who had built the spring action to discuss, debate, and decide whether this switch to electoral activity was the most effective way to build the



anti-intervention movement. Or, more specifically, whether because the labor leadership had electoral priorities, the activities of the coalition as a whole had to come to a halt. As Carl Finamore, a leader of Socialist Action and a member of the coalition's coordinating committee, was later to explain, "The major component of our coalition is labor and labor was heavily involved in the elections. . . . [T]he coalition is not going to initiate any action apart from the broader forces." (*Guardian*, November 26, 1986) And that was that.

But if the antiwar movement had waited for broader labor forces to initiate action against U.S. intervention in Vietnam, the movement that stopped that war would never have been built. Important as official labor support is, neither labor nor any other sector can be permitted to veto ongoing activity.

### June 14 Anti-Apartheid Demonstration

The labor officialdom's proclivity for supporting Democratic politicians at the expense of building the mass movement and its preference for a top-down system of decision making was not peculiar to San Francisco. This was poignantly demonstrated by developments at the other end of the country in connection with a successful New York anti-apartheid demonstration.

Months in the organizing, the mobilization which took place on June 14, 1986, was an historic one. One hundred thousand people took to the streets in the largest anti-apartheid demonstration the country had ever seen. And to guarantee that it would have the greatest impact, the demands of the action were clearly focused on ending U.S. support for the South African dictatorship.

The New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council organized the action. The leadership came from District 65 of the United Auto Workers and it was able to get the endorsement and support of the area's labor movement. Tens of thousands of workers marched under union banners on June 14.

Yet planning for the demonstration was basically confined to a small number of labor leaders. Students, a powerful force in the anti-apartheid struggle, were urged to march, not vote at council meetings. Fortunately, the resentment that this bureaucratic procedure spurred did not materially interfere with an all-out building of the action.

The New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council emerged from June 14 with enormous prestige. The postdemonstration period would have been a propitious one for the council to convene a meeting of all the forces joined in that action to plan the council's future. Calling a national march on Washington was certainly a proposition that could have been entertained at a meeting of this sort.

But no such meeting was called. Those union leaders who controlled the council—like their counterparts in San Francisco—had other ideas. The November elections were coming up and that is where their activity was to be directed. Further

activities of the council were effectively shelved, at least until after November, and no opportunity was provided for any argument to the contrary.

The greatest barrier to building the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements in the U.S. is the persistent and insidious influence of capitalist politics. So long as movement forces look to their "friends" in the Democratic Party to effect needed change, to that extent the building of the mass movement is impeded and delayed. *Democracy in the movement is indispensable in order to overcome this barrier. Free discussion and debate are necessary to combat reliance on ruling class representatives and to convince activists that it is through building an independent mass movement that the anti-intervention movement can most effectively win its objectives.*

### The Philadelphia Conference

As the contra aid issue moved to a showdown vote in Congress, deep differences over strategy hobbled the anti-intervention movement's ability to influence the result. The movement badly needed a forum where these differences could be discussed and, if possible, resolved.

A "Mid-Atlantic Central American Conference" sponsored by five solidarity groups, the Mid-Atlantic Pledge of Resistance, and the East Coast Central America Health Rights Network provided one such forum. Held in Philadelphia on April 12, 1986, the conference drew 200 activists.

The call to the conference stated that it was "open to anyone who opposed our government's policies in Central America. Local committees are urged to send the largest possible delegations. . . . [T]he emphasis at this conference is on discussion between people and groups who have been active for some time, and have ideas, perspectives and concerns based on practical experience." Exactly what the movement needed!

An ENC delegation of about ten people attended the conference and submitted an action proposal laying out a mass action perspective. This proposal was counterposed to the national CISPES line of lobbying and electoral action, advocated by one of its national coordinators.

As debate proceeded, both in the plenary session and workshops, it became clear that a large number of those present had been won to the mass action strategy. This was a situation that key conference organizers had not anticipated. To deal with it they announced that *no formal votes would be taken. CISPES would be holding a closed meeting the following day at which time decisions would be made.* There had been no forenotice of such a procedure; certainly not in the call to the conference. By using organizational means to avert a political defeat, CISPES took a step back from the democratic spirit that permeated its May 1985 convention.

But at least the discussion helped raise consciousness in CISPES. In the months ahead

CISPES joined with others in calling for mass actions in the spring to beat back escalating U.S. war actions in Central America.

### The Fall Actions

Final approval by Congress of contra aid drew only a meager response from the anti-intervention movement. The movement had spent itself in the hundreds of demonstrations organized over the previous months. It needed to regroup and to rethink its future.

Objectively, what was needed was a broad, democratic, and nonexclusionary national coalition focused on Central America and uniting anti-intervention and anti-apartheid demands. Such a coalition would be in the best position to call urgently needed nationally coordinated demonstrations. That at least was the view of the ENC. But the realization of such a coalition remained for the future.

In the fall of 1986, the anti-intervention movement was unusually active—considering that it was an election year. And democracy in the movement flourished on a number of fronts.

The movement's most significant experience occurred on November 1 in Los Angeles, when an outpouring of 10,000 people was organized to denounce the U.S. war against Nicaragua and to demand an end to U.S. intervention in Central America. This was Los Angeles's largest anti-intervention demonstration to date and it was made possible by the unprecedented unity that developed for the event among the area's Central America forces. The coalition they formed took up the questions of demands, date, speakers, and character of the action and made its decisions on the basis of one person, one vote of those who attended coalition meetings. There were a number of labor endorsements for the action and more trade unionists marched on November 1 than in the April 20, 1985, action.

Also noteworthy was a September 28 march on Washington of 3,000 people sponsored by sanctuary and religious groups. There had been other visible actions by this sector of the movement but these had largely been of a symbolic nature. September 28 marked the first time the religious/sanctuary groups had reached out to labor and other constituencies for a united action in the streets of Washington.

The sponsoring groups developed their own form of consultation and democratic decision making, and movement activists who supported the action accepted this. September 28 was not a united demonstration of the entire movement, nor was it ever projected to be. It was an important breakthrough, however, in strengthening links between religious and labor groups. In that sense, it contributed significantly toward their later coalescing around April 25, 1987.

On October 25, 1986, about 4,000 people demonstrated in D.C. in an action called by a mid-Atlantic anti-intervention coalition consisting of

the Washington-based Coalition to Stop the U.S. War on Nicaragua and other area groups. This coalition conducted itself in a completely democratic fashion. Its decisions were the product primarily of a conference held in late July that was open to anyone interested in attending. Action proposals were freely debated and then voted upon, with the 70 activists attending having voice and vote.

There were a number of other actions that took place on October 25 and November 1 called by the National Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice coalition. These actions were intended to help elect "peace Democrats," as the literature publicizing the events made clear. For example, a letter issued by the New York office of Peace, Jobs and Justice urging a big turnout for October 25 stated, "With your involvement we can all move closer to ensuring the election of a peace majority in Congress."

The anti-intervention movement was only minimally involved in the National Actions coalition. The solidarity groups lent their names to the call and to leaflets, as endorsers, but that was about it. The movement was far more focused in its priorities now and it would not easily be subsumed into a coalition whose demands became legion. (The action in New York had 13 demands. In San Francisco, 14 demands. And in Seattle, literally dozens of demands.)

National Actions was neither the broad nor the democratic nor the nonexclusionary coalition that the anti-intervention movement vitally needed to fight the U.S. imperialist wars in Central America. It had virtually no labor participation; indeed, of the many endorsers listed on the call for October 25, not a single trade unionist name can be found.

National Actions decisions were made behind closed doors, which means that its policy of attempting to tie the movement to the Democratic Party was never openly debated. It announced demonstrations in 14 cities without having first consulted movement forces in many of those cities or involving local coalitions from those cities on the decision-making body. The turnout for the National Actions demonstrations was less than 15,000 nationwide. They proceeded to add on Los Angeles's 10,000—though the Los Angeles action was planned totally independently of National Actions—and declared the actions a success.

There was one more action that took place in the fall that warrants mention. An October 10-11 anti-apartheid conference in Cleveland sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Anti-Apartheid Committee (NOAC) drew 250 people including members from 34 unions. NOAC had developed into a broad coalition with substantial labor affiliations along with civil rights, peace, anti-intervention, women's rights, religious, student, and youth groups. As in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., its meetings were open and democratic, based on one person, one vote.

The October conference in Cleveland centered on the anti-apartheid struggle. But several con-

ference speakers also urged participants to oppose U.S. policies in Central America. This reflected a growing consciousness in both the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements of the nexus between the two causes. Increasing contacts between activists of both movements and mutual support of each other's demonstrations was now ready to ripen into joint action.

### The April 25, 1987, Coalition

As this is written, the anti-intervention movement is preparing for the April 25 actions. The sponsoring coalition was quietly put together during the fall of 1986 and in early 1987, largely as a result of an initiative by some leading figures in the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. The union and religious forces involved in the coalition give it a breadth without precedent in any prior antiwar action. The possibilities of reaching and mobilizing new sectors of the population to demand an end to the U.S. wars against Nicaragua and the other peoples of Central America, and an end to U.S. support for apartheid are very real.

The anti-intervention movement is united in support of April 25. At last the movement has a national demonstration to build focused on the primary area of its concern, in combination with anti-apartheid demands. The potential now exists for the movement to emerge from April 25 far stronger than it has been.

Yet from the point of view of democratic decision making, there are reasons for deep concern. One is the question of exclusion of the left, which has arisen and which was very much an issue during the Vietnam antiwar movement. That movement decided upon a policy of nonexclusion (just as the labor movement did in its historic CIO organizing days) based on the understanding that denying left-wing organizations voice and vote was a wrongful concession to divisive red-baiting. It was also based on the knowledge that left-wing groups often work the hardest in building demonstrations and can and should contribute to the decision-making process.

Another serious problem is that the national coalition that has been formed is made up of representatives of *selected* national organizations. For example, the solidarity networks have been chosen to represent the *entire* anti-intervention movement. A 3/5 voting majority for labor and religious groups has been built into the structure. The national coalition's orientation is for the local coalitions, which have no vote in the national coalition, to have the same 3/5 system—though this has not been carried out in practice in most localities.

The overriding concern, given the magnitude of the U.S. threat to Nicaragua, is that organizational questions not divert attention or energy from the central task of building the largest possible demonstration. Still, and especially on

the local level, *there should be no compromise whatever in ensuring the fullest measure of democracy for all movement groups and activists who are joining together to build the April 25 actions!*

### The Case for Democracy

The essence of democracy in the anti-intervention movement, as in the workers' movement, is this: *everyone* involved has the right to a voice in deciding the movement's policies. *Authority resides in the movement's ranks.* Leadership is accountable to those ranks. Leadership should be elected, not selected. It has no more right to be self-appointed or self-perpetuating in the anti-intervention movement than it has in a union.

The contention is sometimes made that there is nothing undemocratic about a number of organizations forming a coalition and establishing a steering committee with decision-making authority based on one organization, one vote. Such a system may indeed be democratic. The test is whether the coalition purports to speak only for its affiliated groups. However, the situation we are discussing here is fundamentally different. *Selected* groups are invited to join a coalition, such as the one sponsoring the April 25 action, and *that coalition in effect claims to represent the movement as a whole.* But where does such a coalition derive its authority or mandate to play such a role? What right do its leaders have to pick and choose who shall have a voice—and who shall be denied a voice—in settling questions of vital concern to the *entire* movement?

Democracy in the anti-intervention movement must be indivisible. All would agree that bourgeois elections lack even the pretense of democracy when left-wing political parties are denied ballot status, even though supporters of the "major parties" may freely exercise their right to vote. Yet some within the anti-intervention movement divide it into "major groups" and "minor groups," give the vote to the former but not to the latter, and claim that constitutes democracy. In fact, it is a mockery of democracy.

To be sure, there is a need for steering committees, executive committees, coordinators, etc., in the movement's structure. No one disputes this. But this does not mean that the elected bodies then have final authority to make decisions. *Their job is to carry out the decisions made by the movement as a whole.* They make decisions themselves only on an emergency or interim basis.

Democracy is not an abstract principle—though it is a principle—for the anti-intervention movement. As the account above of the movement's growth and development proves, democracy is essential to building the strongest and most effective kind of movement. Democracy inspires activists to work hard to build an action because they consider themselves part of the action.

Democracy helps the movement adopt correct policies by utilizing the collective thinking and

judgment and creativity of as many activists as possible, instead of just a few.

Democracy helps attract and integrate new forces by enabling them to be part of the decision-making process, rather than spectators who watch others make the decisions.

Democracy ensures a forum where any proposal to tie the movement to capitalist politics can be challenged.

Democracy offers the best hope for continuity of the movement. It does not prevent those who want to drop out to campaign for Democratic or other politicians from doing so, but it does allow the rest of the movement to continue with the independent mass struggle, regardless of election campaigns.

Democracy allows the movement to choose as leaders those who enjoy and have earned the confidence of the movement's ranks.

This is the case for democracy. But is there also a case for jettisoning or limiting it in order to attract "broader forces," especially from the labor movement? In light of the experience of the April 25 coalition, the New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council, and the San Francisco coalition, all of which have substantial labor participation, is it a corollary of such participation that sections of the movement and independent rank-and-file activists must be deprived of a voice in decision making? And is this something that those who are excluded ought to accept on the grounds that it is the only way to get labor to participate?

### Labor and Democracy

Democracy is a burning question for the labor movement, as it is for other social movements. Some international unions, such as the United Mine Workers of years ago and the Teamsters today, have been convulsed in struggles by their memberships to rid themselves of an oppressive bureaucracy.

The question of rank-and-file control of the union has arisen most prominently in the recent period in the experience of Local P-9. The leaders of that local, Jim Guyette and his co-workers, have tirelessly stated that *the rank and file make the decisions, the leaders carry them out*. It is that philosophy which enabled the local to wage its courageous struggle and get as far as it did against the government, the company, and its own international union leadership.

Can anyone imagine union leaders of the quality of Guyette being active in the anti-intervention movement and embracing a scheme which disenfranchises *any* of the movement's rank-and-file workers?

Contrary to the assertions of some of the ultralefts and sectarians, union leaders can be key forces and play an invaluable role in the anti-intervention movement. They are, after all, the elected leaders, sometimes of thousands of workers, and they are in the best position to mobilize those workers and get them out in the

streets. They also have access to resources needed to organize massive actions.

The question is what attitude these union leaders bring with them when they get active in the anti-intervention movement. Some may be new to social movements. They join hesitantly and with many legitimate concerns. The movement's challenge is to welcome them with open arms, to listen carefully to them, to give weight to their opinions, and to encourage them to assume positions of leadership and responsibility.

But there ought to be one ironclad principle associated with this process: *The democratic rights of other movement activists must never be compromised or abrogated to accommodate union leaders*. With that as the starting point, other ways of dealing with these union leaders' concerns can be addressed.

### A Response to the Exclusionists

"Democracy, in theory, is fine. But if it is going to be practiced in the anti-intervention movement, forget about involving trade union leaders and religious forces. They are not going to put up with the ultralefts and the spaced-out radicals. The broad forces will take a walk and that will be the end of them. The movement will end up far narrower and weaker as a result." That is the rationale used to justify an exclusionary system of decision making.

Of course, within their unions, labor leaders "put up with" all kinds of elements. It is not within the power of these leaders—or at least it should not be—to deprive any such elements of voice or vote. Why should it be different in the anti-intervention movement? And what about those local anti-intervention coalitions that have won union support *without* resorting to undemocratic methods?

It is, to say the least, presumptuous to ask any activist to give up her or his right to participate in the councils of the anti-intervention movement. Some activists have spent many years of their lives attending meetings, leafletting, writing and disseminating materials, contributing money, marching, and otherwise working to end U.S. intervention in Central America. What right does any individual or group have to come into the movement and deny such activists a voice in shaping the movement's decisions on the grounds that "they are not important enough" or that "they don't represent anything." Such elitist thinking is absolutely anathema to principles of working class democracy.

Within the context of protecting the democratic rights of all activists, there are procedures that the anti-intervention movement can and should consider to meet the concerns of unions and other broad forces. These include:

1. *Adopt a clear program and stick to it.* For example, form a coalition around specific demands (as the April 25 coalition has done). All who agree with those demands should be able to par-

ticipate fully. Incessant discussions about adding more and more demands should be ruled out of order.

2. *Have disciplined meetings.* For example, time limits for speaking should be democratically set and then adhered to for everyone.

3. *Build coalition meetings.* Union and religious leaders, and other broad forces, should be strongly urged to turn people out for meetings that are open to the entire coalition. Too often the practice of a union is to assign a single person to handle social issues. That's all right for a steering committee meeting, but it won't do for a general meeting where a certain amount of mobilizing is required. Union leaders know how to mobilize when the issue before the union is deemed of sufficient importance. They must be convinced that meetings of the anti-intervention movement warrant energetic building as well.

4. *Develop consensus within the coalition.* Every effort should be made within a coalition—consistent with the movement's program and principles—to secure agreement of all on actions and on other questions of vital concern. Conversely, actions should be avoided that would tend to alienate and drive away unions and other broad forces. Some organizational safeguards may be useful to assure this, such as establishing a minimum for a quorum and requiring more than a majority vote—perhaps 3/5 or even 2/3—before certain measures may be adopted. These kinds of measures would give unions greater confidence that a coalition with which they affiliate will not go off half-cocked.

The proposals that the labor and religious constituencies be given a "weighted" vote—whether 3/5 or any other—ought to be categorically rejected. It is wrong in principle and divisive because it relegates other sectors of the movement to second-class status. It is also impractical. Imagine a coalition meeting of 60 people, five of whom represent unions and five of whom represent religious organizations. The other 50 represent students, Black, Hispanic, and women's groups. If an issue comes up, shall the ten people from the two favored groups caucus and then announce what

they have decided the coalition shall do? It might be a different matter if these individuals were casting votes based on a mandate given them by their memberships following a full debate on an issue with all sides freely heard. But that is not the case. So why should the vote of a labor or religious leader be weighted in such a way that the votes of others at coalition meetings are in effect rendered meaningless?

#### All Out April 25

As 1986 drew to a close, there was another extremely serious escalation of the U.S. war against Nicaragua. On December 7, U.S.-supplied planes, piloted by the puppet Honduran air force, bombed Nicaragua. More bombings were threatened as U.S. military helicopters ferried Honduran troops to fight the Sandinistas.

1987 promises to be a fateful year for the popular liberation movements in Central America and for revolutionary Nicaragua. The Reagan administration, in disarray as a result of the Iranian scandal and with its contra aid policy under increasing challenge, remains determined to take further aggressive actions in pursuit of its dirty war. "Nicaraguan War: Sharp Upturn Is Expected Soon" reads a headline in the January 4 *New York Times*.

But Reagan now faces an adversary more capable than previously of affecting the course of events: a united anti-intervention movement. The willingness of top union and religious leaders to sign a call for the April 25 demonstrations is a development of immense significance, for it provides a broad umbrella for the anti-intervention movement under which the most massive array of forces can be joined.

New problems regarding democracy in the anti-intervention movement have arisen as a result of the movement's expansion and growth. The struggle for decision making must go forward in this positive context. ■

ALL OUT APRIL 25!

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# THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

by Evelyn Sell

One way to chart the progress of democratic struggles in this country is to note the dates of various amendments to the U.S. Constitution which was drafted two hundred years ago this summer. It took a "revolution within the revolution," waged primarily by small farmers, to win the guarantees of civil liberties included in the first ten amendments. (See "The U.S. Constitution and the Fight for Democratic Rights," *Bulletin IDOM* No. 39.) A second revolution was needed seventy years later to reaffirm those rights, and to formally extend them to the Black population through the adoption of three new amendments to the Constitution.

The Revolution of 1776 and the Civil War of 1860 constitute two distinguishable but interconnected stages of the bourgeois democratic revolution in this country. The first stage successfully established the colonists' independence from foreign domination, created a unified nation, and destroyed precapitalist forms of property and labor in the North. However, it failed to concentrate power completely in the hands of the industrial bourgeoisie, and it failed to wipe out precapitalist forms of property and labor in the South. The slave system was a continuing and growing hindrance to the further development of the capitalist system as well as a roadblock to the exercise and enlargement of democratic rights.

## Attacks on Democratic Rights

In their efforts to preserve their political power in the U.S. government and to expand their slave system westward, the Southern ruling class found it necessary to attack already established rights such as freedom of speech and press, academic freedom, and due process of law. In denying democratic rights to Blacks, the slaveholders were compelled to deny democratic rights to whites as well, thus helping to create allies for the abolitionists.

For example, fear of antislavery propaganda led the South to deny freedom of the mails. In 1835 a group of Charleston citizens forced open the U.S. post office, seized packages of antislavery publications, and publicly burned them. This was followed by a law empowering a committee

of leading citizens to inspect the mails in cooperation with the postmaster and to burn objectionable materials. When Congress reaffirmed the right to freedom of the mails in 1836—after great protest from its Southern members—legislatures in the South enacted state laws to inspect and destroy mail. Even Southerners who were in favor of slavery did not like the idea of their neighbors opening and reading their private mail!

Academic freedom was another target of the slaveholders who felt that a slave who could read was dangerous. A Georgia law levied a 500-dollar fine and imprisonment for any white man who taught a free Black to read and write. The same fine plus a whipping was the punishment for a Black teaching another Black.

White teachers, white students, and white school administrations were kept under tight control through censoring texts, screening teachers, withholding funds, and various community reprisals against any liberal ideas being expressed in the schools. Southern colleges became storm centers of battles for academic freedom, and many abolitionist societies were formed by students.

Northern schools did not escape infringements on academic freedom. Faculty and administrations in Northern colleges attempted to prevent discussions about slavery—fearing reprisals from the South. Financial supporters of Northern schools were just as conservative in their political beliefs as their Southern counterparts.

Freedom of the press was another special target. Abolitionist newspapers were destroyed. Abolitionist editors were attacked, even killed as in the case of Elijah Lovejoy. When a group in Boston tried to rent a hall to protest Lovejoy's murder, the city authorities refused for fear of stirring up too much excitement over the issue. Freedom of assembly was going down the drain in the North as well as the South.

Fugitive slave laws attacked basic rights such as freedom of travel and trial by jury. One week after passage of the fugitive slave law of 1850 a free Black in New York was seized and sent South. The whole procedure ran counter to the basic principle of law that a person was innocent until proven guilty. Here the opposite was affirmed: a person was guilty until proven innocent—and such proof was almost impossible to obtain, especially since Blacks were not allowed to testify in their own behalf. Another aspect of the law deeply disturbed Northerners: all citizens were required to help the authorities. As one Ohio newspaper put it, "Now we are all slave-catchers."

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*This is the second in a series of articles by Evelyn Sell on the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. The next article will take up current struggles for democratic demands and how they are taking place within the framework of socialist revolution.*

## North vs. South

The concern over civil liberties grew in all sections of the country—adding an explosive element to the compelling political and economic needs of major class forces. Northern farmers wanted access to western lands. Northern workers feared the competition from slave labor. Northern capitalists needed to take political power away from the Southern planters and needed to secure the West for capitalist expansion.

Despite their needs, the Northern bourgeoisie was reluctant to lead an all-out fight against the power and plans of the Southern slaveholders. The destruction of the slave system meant carrying out a profound agrarian and political revolution—encompassing an attack on basic property rights and giving a political weapon to Blacks who held the numerical majority in the South. Most Northern capitalists feared that assaulting the planters' property rights in land and slaves could unleash a popular movement against their own bourgeois property rights. They feared that extension of democratic rights to Blacks would set off a tidal wave of democratization throughout society. But as the "irrepressible conflict" heated up, the Northern ruling class had no choice. They had to act more and more vigorously against the South.

The slaves themselves played the key role in precipitating repeated clashes between the North and South, in undermining the foundations of the Southern economic and political structure, and in deciding the military outcome of the Civil War. The slaves' efforts to achieve democratic rights "by any means necessary" are an example of the crucial importance of such struggles in pushing the revolutionary process forward.

### Slave Rebellions

Slaves engaged in work slowdowns. They held strikes. They mutilated themselves so they wouldn't be fit for work. They were "careless" on purpose—resulting in lost tools and sabotaged production. They destroyed the slaveholders' property by committing suicide. In Charleston, for example, there was a mass suicide in 1807. Slaves performed individual acts of terror ranging from arson to poisoning their masters' food. They sent petitions. A wide variety of methods were used to hamper the system and to gain support for their struggles to be free.

The slave revolts and the act of running away were the two most significant methods used by Blacks to rock the slave system, to blow up all the compromises between the Northern and Southern rulers, and to win the war.

The history of American slavery is marked by at least 250 documented Black conspiracies and revolts. The fear of such revolts was an ever-present one in the South, and this fear lay behind many of the measures taken by the Southern aristocracy against Blacks. The revolts ranged from spontaneous actions involving a small group to

organized outbreaks involving hundreds of slaves. The primary object of these actions was not to burn plantations or kill masters—though that happened—but to escape, to become free.

The most successful weapon in the arsenal of the slaves was running away. Between 1830 and 1860 more than 60,000 slaves fled the South. There were individual, unorganized escapes. There was the carefully organized, highly efficient group effort of the Underground Railroad which could get a slave from bondage to freedom in 26 hours.

By running away, slaves struck decisive blows against the South. They undermined the economy by removing their labor from the productive process. They weakened the planters' political power in the federal government by reducing the 3/5 of the slave population counted to determine Congressional representation. During the Civil War itself, they paralyzed a good part of the Southern military resources by forcing troops to remain at home fighting guerrilla groups of fugitive slaves instead of confronting the Union Army on the battlefield.

By running away, slaves deeply affected the political and military situation in the North. Runaways went on public speaking tours—mobilizing abolitionist sentiments. Spectacular attempts to rescue fugitives from slave-catchers received wide publicity—winning new allies to the antislavery cause. With the outbreak of the Civil War, fugitives insisted on participating in the Union Army. Although President Abraham Lincoln issued strict instructions against Black enlistment, no one could stop it. When the Union troops marched down the road, Blacks would come out of the woods and fields, fall in, follow, become part of the camp. By the time official approval was finally given in 1863, tens of thousands of ex-slaves were already fighting and dying in the Union Army. Lincoln admitted that, without them, the North could not have won the war.

### Reconstruction and Class Conflict

After the military victory over the South, Blacks played a leading role in the Reconstruction governments that were set up throughout the defeated states. They were instrumental in establishing the only democratic regime the South has ever had. They took over plantations and divided the land. Then they defended their property, arms in hand, when the former owners showed up to claim their old possessions. The Blacks were the vanguard of the democratic agrarian revolution in the South.

This was more than the North wanted—or could accept. The capitalists had to resort to counter-revolutionary measures ranging from armed groups of racist terrorists to political deals with elements from the old Southern ruling class. The 1876 presidential election marked the formal end of this second stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution when leadership shifted from the radi-

[Continued on page 34]

# NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

## 6. Husbands and Wives in the Komsomol

Maryusa was still in the Privokzal district when Rafa and I had totally shifted to working on the newspaper. She had organized a collective of struggle for a new way of living, KBZNB, as we referred to it in its abbreviated form. Whether she had thought it up herself or read about it somewhere I don't remember. In truth, it never occurred to us that physical fitness, for example, was also an element of some importance in a new life. In fact, at that time we were not at all interested in physical fitness.

In Privokzal, the KBZNB focused primarily on comradely relations between boys and girls, a direct but slightly renovated version of the previous "You are not looking at me like a comrade." What was new here was to view her as a comrade but also as a woman, with her inherent intolerance for rudeness, caddishness and—to carry the thought to completion—for disloyalty and betrayal. In general, as I approach old age, I'd say women are more truthful and also, of course, better than men.

Through Maryusa's KBZNB, people were made swiftly accountable for swearing, and crude treatment of girls got a particularly severe response. In those days, however, the boys rarely swore, even at work.

I more or less understand today's relations between young men and women. Not fearing the charge of senile bias toward the past, I must say: in those days relationships seemed simpler, and were surely more strict. Not only in the Komsomol but also among the youth in general. But I am not like many old men, attributing today's morality to the influence of fads, the West, dances, prosperity, and so on. There are quite different reasons. Under Stalin there were no fads, no Western influences, no dances, no prosperity; but hooliganism had developed to such a degree that soon after his death the strictest laws had to be promulgated.

During all my years in Odessa, I never heard of a single incident linked to hooliganism. And yet there were far fewer police and less education and the literature didn't yet feature the modern-day pundits. Can you imagine! Our evenings ended late but the girls walked peacefully either alone or with a girlfriend to the most remote alley at the end of Dalnitsky Street and no one ever bothered them.

But I say all of this not to teach the grandsons how to treat girls but only to teach them to think about their surroundings. I courted my beloved in a rather strange way: I did not walk along the streets with her or take her to the

*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.*

movies or make dates to meet by monuments. I just went to the cell meetings of the Central Uniform Factory more often than I had to. There you do not exchange any more words than business requires—but on the other hand you do get a chance to cast admiring looks.

Only once, when she moved for a short time into the girls' dormitory in our Home for Worker Youth, did I drop by her room late one evening. Three girls lived there. The wooden trestle beds had been pushed together and the girls were ready to go to sleep. I sat on a chair next to her bed and we began to talk in a whisper so as not to disturb her friends. I buried my face in her hair that was tossed on the pillow and dared to put my palm under her head, timidly touching her bare shoulder. She did not get angry.

But I didn't go to the dorm again—either I had no time or she had no time. We worked for the public good! And afterward she went to school and the rest you know: a six-mile trip to see her and then we broke up.

With respect to age, the Komsomol at that time was rather homogeneous. By the age of seventeen or eighteen we were already mature enough (or perhaps only considered ourselves mature enough) to elect to our committees kids who were not too old. We elected Misha Yugov to the Central Committee of the Komsomol of Ukraine when he was nineteen. There were very few twenty-year-olds among



us. Rafa and Maryusa turned out to be almost the oldest in the Privokzal district and in the entire district they were the only ones who were married. But there were many couples who were in love.

No matter whom I meet from among the old Komsomol members of Privokzal, the first ones we are sure to remember are Shura Kholokholyenko and Zina. Shura came from a family of railroad workers and was a metal worker who had adopted his father's profession. The kids from the Yanver Railroad workshop would let no one have their Shura. And the entire district loved him even though he never pushed himself forward—rarely even engaged in oratory; and all of us loved to try our hand at oratory.

His romance with Zina Zabudkina, like all our romances of those years, lasted a long time. I cannot imagine the club on Stepov Street without Shura and Zina showing up at the door together and leaving together, almost the last to go. Shura sat until late at the District Committee meetings and Zina waited for him, studying in one of the club's circles and singing in the chorus room. Late at night, having reconsidered all problems, the lovers went to walk the streets.

The very innocence of our romances, this Komsomol chivalry—strange given our directness and accentuated coarseness—generated in the surrounding milieu an atmosphere of friendly protectiveness. And the boys instinctively tried to be like Shura and the girls like Zina.

Maryusa, who began domestic life before we did, evidently felt like a kind of godmother to Yeva and me and to Shura and Zina. The girls entrusted their secrets of the heart more often than not to her—the one in soldier's pants. Maryusa never made fun of people in love; although no one ever in her whole life heard her say fine words about love. She never even said the very word love—except when she was reading the poetry of Pushkin aloud to me confidentially (she read poetry exceptionally well; Pushkin was her favorite poet). It was considered bad manners to say the word love in public. And I, when I was young, almost never uttered the word either seriously or in our local Komsomol oral paper, "The Dig." And as regards love for a leader or a party, this feeling (the feeling as well as the word) suffered a total devaluation under Stalin.

Love, by this time, it seems to me, was withering from my day-to-day vocabulary. Even such words as wedlock, family, to get married, my husband, my wife—we were a little embarrassed to use these expressions and we avoided them. It seemed to us that they were offensive to girls, as somehow alluding to the old enslavement of women in the family. But if one said, "We got together," this was not insulting: We both took the same step but I did not "make her (make her!) my wife." That this was not simply a Komsomol eccentricity or passing trend peculiar only to the Odessa Home for Worker Youth is evident from a universal custom in those years: No Communist or Young Communist woman changed her name for a man's. And there were no weddings, not even civil ones. And in Zagodka,

far from everyone went to get registered. Of course, official registration of a marriage is required. But toward what end? So that in case of separation it is possible to exact support money for the children. But why must it be exacted? Because they evade it. This simple chain of reasoning shows that nonregistration of marriage is a sign of confidence; its requirement was a symptom of the decline, and not of the new, higher level in morality. The law props up morality like a crutch and you hang on the crutch a bridal veil, flowers, an evening party and cases of vodka.

But we were rigid on this question. For many years I did not hear even one of our girls speak about her husband as "my husband." Only by the last name, as if speaking about a stranger, and very rarely by the first name but without a possessive "my." Borya, Rafa, but not my Borya or my Rafa. If Yeva ever used the word husband, she always added an emphatically sarcastic drawl and without fail added: "The pear tree was sweet for my husband to eat."

And we never spoke of our wives as "my wife." It sounded to all of us like a kind of bourgeois property, subject to abolition or derision. Moreover, Young Communist women could not stand fickleness. They found it offensive. Maryusa simply could not bear those who too freely switched their affections. A fellow like Vitya Gorelov, who was respected by all, did not enjoy her favor and all because he quickly left one wife in favor of another. And me? Something similar also happened to me. But Maryusa understood me very well. I kept no secrets from her, and she granted me—a sinner—her supreme pardon. However, Maryusa did not like the girl who had caused me to grow cool toward Yeva. And she was not alone. My sister worked at the Dzhutov textile factory at this time and knew this girl and, it seems, was a friend of hers. She said to me:

"After you broke up with her, I happened to be talking to Bela, do you remember her? She was a great activist! To tell the truth, I was surprised that you broke up with such an attractive girl. And that Yeva—don't be offended—is quite homely. And I was saying this to Bela, and she answered, "Little do you know! That girl was petty bourgeois and Yeva is not. Which is better?"

Apart from a few deviations, like mine, our romances were distinguished by the utmost seriousness. The fact that we all lived on our own and were not supported by our parents played an important role in this. Times were hard; everyone worked, becoming independent people at a very early age. The romances of boys and girls relying only on themselves become serious automatically. While becoming adults prematurely because of our independent labor and active political interests, we retained a childlike innocence in many ways. And this also made its mark on our manner of falling in love, caring, arguing and making up.

For all these reasons, we almost never had the dramatic situations that arise in young people's families as atonement for frivolity.

## 7. A Little About the Language of the Times

The words of an epoch reflect its spirit more eloquently than long lectures. Instead of saying "I got a husband," which no Komsomol woman of the 1920s could have said, we used, as I mentioned, "We got together." Sometimes we said, "We married each other." Again, it was a mutual undertaking. In these words one hears the sentiment for women's dignity, showing the equality of the sexes and a deliberate defiance of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois morality. We got together, we did not get registered; we lived together, but without the right to one another's possessions. We were not the same as you are today.

Even though we had only "gotten together," we did not separate after six months and we did not separate after two years or even after twenty years.

But during those twenty years, much can change.

Expressions born in a certain time can outlive it and then harden in their shell, only in appearance calling to mind the time that engendered them, the content having become quite different, new, often the opposite of what it was originally.

The uniformity of our general opinions, even the most correct ones, led us to a condition in which our wisdom began to grow stale from the insufficient exchange of ideas. Such a state is but one step from thinking in stereotypes, even more so when the firmness of our convictions was far greater than the depth of our knowledge. Already our "rotten intellectual" was close to a stereotype; without even noticing it we began to use it to explain any phenomenon that we had neither the strength nor the willingness to look at more closely.

The very conciseness and expressiveness of ready formulas we take for precision, and we are enticed by this. And we are then ready to use the formulas where they apply, but also where they don't. It is easier to think with whole intellectual blocks than to form arguments one brick at a time. Human thought constantly functions on the basis of concepts which contain the ready-made logical blocks. But in Stalin's time, thinking was centralized and became as much a state business as the printing of money.

The factory of thinking blocks which was constantly turning out its product began with time to turn out not blocks but huge thought panels; they were invented in our country well before the concrete panels from which our homes are now constructed. A reinforced concrete thought panel strongly increased the productivity of the intellectual labor of Stalin's theoreticians: They put up dozens of reinforced panels and one theoretical story was ready.

Each huge thought panel which had been erected on the basis of the assimilation of stereotypes by the broad masses naturally tended to need an ever wider foundation, replacing the entire sphere of knowledge with ready-made, fully cast formulas.

Thus were words and formulas printed and circulated: subkulak, wrecking, skepticism, ideological-political level, cosmopolitans, glimmering heights, wage-leveling, and many others. Usually they were put together from one or two words into which was introduced, however, a whole complexity of concepts—introduced more often than not by force.

And the result was brilliant: Everyone went on thinking, but they thought in an identical way. But identical was really too blunt a word, so to disguise it, another fully cast formula was prepared: moral-political unity. Ideological panels have all the qualities of universal standards: reliability, simplicity, and durability. Some are downright indestructible.

Here is a durable panel: wrecking. A whole generation was raised with the belief that the Colorado beetle, bacteria, poisonous chemicals, and other horrors were being released in peacetime from airplanes or by paid agents of American imperialism. Last year, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the October revolution, I heard a story widely circulated in the Northern Caucasus that a helicopter dropped a secret suitcase off near the city of Ordzhonikidze, filled half with money and half with vials of poisonous substances. Some tractor driver found the suitcase, and then suddenly on the scene appeared a doctor (others said a professor!) who killed the tractor driver. Of course, he was discovered and arrested.

Who circulated this story, which smelled strongly of Stalin's Kremlin doctors' plot?<sup>1</sup> I asked the person who told me the story where he had heard it, since it was not reported in the newspapers. He answered, "Don't be so skeptical. It's all true. I heard it from someone who works for the security branch. And he wouldn't lie." I was reassured: of course, he wouldn't lie!

Another formula that is no longer around but has left a lasting mark: wage-leveling. For decades they instilled in workers that the gap between the wages of a minister and those of a weaver fully corresponded to the tenet of socialism: "According to one's work." And if this gap lessened, it would be wage-leveling. But although this term is no longer used, having totally fulfilled its function, no one ever raises this issue in the press. And yet, it is one of the most fundamental problems for building a more just society on this earth and it has to do with the degree of its justness. In an article by *Pravda's* London correspondent, I read one day (Nov. 30, 1966) the lines from an appeal of the Midlands Committee of the British Communist Party. The appeal said:

"Ministers receiving 5,000 pounds sterling a year, bankers, owners of enterprises and economists are calling in the newspapers for workers to make sacrifices." I converted the salary of the English bourgeois minister into its Soviet equivalent. One pound sterling according to the official

exchange rate is two rubles fifty kopeks. That comes out to more than one thousand rubles per month. Such a ministerial salary can surprise only the most naive English citizen. We cannot compare the salary of our ministers with that of our floor scrubbers for the simple reason that in our country such figures are not published as they are in England. But I propose that if the gap in England were greater than it is here, our newspapers would have made quite a big deal over this.

In order to get a real feeling for how important this well-ignored matter is for a worker, one has to work in production and not only during one's younger years as did many of those who love to explain to workers the economics of socialism, but later in life when you do not have parents to support you and always ready to feed you; but when you have small children whom you yourself must feed. Workers with families (particularly women workers) sense perfectly well all the hypocrisy of the arguments which issue from the arbitrarily construed formula "according to one's work." What proves that the work of an official in some department outweighs the work of a weaver or a doctor? Only the fact that the equalization of their wages would be wage-leveling—and this is a terrible term.

Along with the terrible words, lofty words were also being used. Both had a common purpose: to be hammered into our brains. Tending in youth toward the exalted, and even more so after the revolution, we began with dramatic expressions: the hydra-headed counterrevolution, ardent greetings, to nibble with young teeth at the granite of science. We came to the terrible words a little later; and it turned out that they could flow directly from the others, and that by skilfully mixing them in the proper proportions, the poisoners of human souls receive a virulent educational potion.

\* \* \*

Almost thirty years had passed since my days of youth and then, in 1950, I find myself in a camp where forty of us are in a round barracks measuring about forty square meters. We call it the nomad's tent, or yurt. In the center of the yurt hangs a loudspeaker, educating us all in the spirit of love for our leader.

The morning begins with a report to him: Some collective farm or enterprise has reported its achievements, and is taking on a higher quota based on newly found reserves. Afterward, the whole day is filled with declensions of the name they never tire of hearing in all its grammatical cases, and with all the favorable adjectives: great, wise, brilliant, luminous, beloved, fervently loved. The list of peculiarly characteristic words of Stalin's time was no richer than the well-known lexicon of Ellochki-Lyudoedka of Ilf and Petrov, which consisted of thirty words.

The majority of the imprisoned inhabitants of the yurt had gotten used to this. But I could not. Fortunately, we were not able to give a good

report about anything so they transferred us to Butyrka prison. There they didn't even give out newspapers and for a long time we were deprived of the pleasure of reading the "Flow of Greetings." That was the title of a regular column in *Pravda*—an endless list of organizations sending greetings to Stalin commemorating his seventieth birthday. Full of stereotypes of Marxist thought (since so many of them considered themselves Marxists on the basis of having learned all of Stalin's verbiage), this newspaper feature occupied two columns and was printed day in and day out for more than three years. "Sow wisely, well, and eternally!"

The person doing layout asks the supervisor:

"How many lines are we assigning to the 'Flow of Greetings' today?"

And the production manager, looking at a list drawn up beforehand, says: "260." ("Sow wisely!")

Speaking about the "Flow," neither would dare to smile. That could be considered agitation. For that you could get five years in the camps. ("Sow well!")

The layout person adroitly removes lines of typeset from the tray. ("Sow eternally!")

We intended to "sow eternally" when making up the issues of *Molodaya Gvardia*. We had neither a modern rotary press nor prepared typeset with greetings. We printed our first issue on a hand-operated flat-bed printing press. The editor, his three assistants, and the person on layout took turns at the handle. We sowed wisely by hand.

We intended to expose all the evil in the world. In the first issue of our paper, we exposed a NEPman contractor who hired children to clean steamship boilers.<sup>2</sup> It was easier for the children to crawl into the furnace, and he made them crawl in without waiting for it to cool.

Defending young workers from such speculators was an important matter during the NEP period and the economic-legal section of the Komsomol Provincial Committee did just that. Vitya Gorelov headed it. He initiated legal action against the NEPmen exploiters.

The NKVD and MGB interrogators persistently asked me about Vitya Gorelov.<sup>3</sup> They were not interested, however, in his important role in the underground against Denikin or how he fought in the Red Army.<sup>4</sup> It happened that he was captured by the Makhno forces and brought before the execution squad with other Red Army soldiers. But he was not killed. His strong body endured an enormous loss of blood, and he regained consciousness, crawled from under a pile of corpses and reached the nearest house. A peasant woman found him and he survived. He had received eleven wounds. I heard this story of his execution from others; he did not like to talk about himself.

In honor of the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Communist Party in 1923, the Odessa Komsomol presented as a gift to the party fifty boys and girls. In an exception to the rules for admission, we were immediately taken in as full members without going through probation. The only requirement was two recommendations: one from the Komso-

mol Provincial Committee and the other from an old party member. Vitya signed my application; he was a Communist with a long record of underground service. Thirty years passed—a fatal number. On the anniversary of the day when I was given to the party, I was arrested for being too close to Vitya, Maryusa, and Misha Yugov. Meanwhile, if I

have a right to be proud of anything, it is, above all, my friendship with them.

Where did they bury you after your second execution, Vitya Gorelov? ■

[This concludes Notebook I of Baitalsky's memoirs. Next month we will have the first chapter of Notebook II: "How It Was and How It Became"]

## NOTES

1. In 1952 a group of nine doctors, seven of them Jewish, were arrested for allegedly plotting to murder Stalin. After Stalin's death, however, the charges were dropped.

2. NEPmen were merchants, manufacturers, and speculators who enriched themselves as a result of the New Economic Policy, or NEP, introduced by the Soviet government in 1921.

3. NKVD and MGB were names for the Soviet political police organization.

4. Anton Denikin (1872-1934) was a leader of the counterrevolution in Southern Russia during the civil war. Nestor Makhno (1884-1934) led small partisan bands of peasants who fought German occupation forces and Ukrainian reactionaries during the Russian civil war. He refused to integrate his forces into the Red Army and came into conflict with it. His forces were finally dispersed by the Soviet government in 1921.

## F.I.T. Announces Plans for National Educational Conference

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency will be holding a national educational conference in Minnesota next September 4-6 (the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the Labor Day weekend). In addition to members of the F.I.T., U.S. Fourth Internationalists who belong to other organizations—the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, and Solidarity—have also been invited to attend. The conference will be open to others active in the struggle for social change in this country; anyone who is interested should get in touch with one of the F.I.T.'s local organizing committees (see directory on inside of back cover) or with the national organization through the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009.

Six sessions are planned for the conference, beginning Friday evening. These will cover the U.S. economy today, building a revolutionary international (a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International will be in attendance), party-building perspectives in the U.S.A., a report on the U.S. class struggle, a panel on problems confronting activists in the U.S. labor movement, and a talk on the dialectics of the transitional program. All of the speakers and panels will be followed by ample time for discussion and questions.

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## THE LIBERATING INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (Part 7)

by George Breitman

I did not expect to find much in the 1938 documents about the Black struggle, nor did I find much. There is a short section in the declaration of principles adopted by our founding convention, entitled "Negroes and Other Oppressed Racial Groups." Everything said in this section—about the origins of racial antagonisms, the need to combat chauvinism among white workers, the need for common struggle, and so on—is correct and necessary. But it's not complete. Not complete merely by our present standards, but by the standards our party was to adopt a year later, at our next convention, when we first really began to think about the Black struggle and try to intervene in it. This turn in 1939, one of the crucial ones in our history, was, as is known by readers of the pamphlet *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, stimulated and encouraged by the results of another visit to Mexico by a delegation from the United States, this time including C.L.R. James, which went to talk with Trotsky in April 1939 about the Black struggle among other things.

I didn't know it in 1939, because the records about our history weren't as accessible to the members then as they are now, but that was the second time Trotsky had held discussions with U.S. visitors on the Marxist approach to the Black struggle. The first time was in 1933 when Trotsky, then in Turkey, had told Arne Swabeck that he thought the Stalinist position on self-determination at that time was more correct than the Communist League of America's position. That was certainly unusual—that the Stalinists were more correct on anything than we!—but I never heard a word about that in the 1939 discussion, or for many years after, until I inherited an old internal discussion bulletin.

I mention this, although it is a little off the track, because I discovered something else that everybody had forgotten only a few weeks ago, when I was delving into the old *Militants* about the evolution of our position on the labor party. And that is that the 1939 convention, which I thought was our first to discuss the Black struggle thoroughly, including its aspect as a national struggle, was actually the second where this question was discussed and debated.

The story, briefly, is this: In February 1929, a few months after the CP's expulsion of Cannon, Shachtman and Abern, they published in the *Militant* a long document

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*This concludes our presentation of three talks given by Breitman at an SWP educational conference in 1974. The series began in the October 1986 Bulletin IDOM, No. 34, and appeared in the succeeding issues.*

### COMING

#### A Book in Tribute to George Breitman

*The Fourth Internationalist Tendency has announced that work is in progress on publication of a George Breitman memorial volume. The book will contain a complete collection of all of the talks made at the memorial meeting for Breitman held on June 7 last year, along with the messages received from around the country and around the world—many of which could not be read at the meeting itself.*

*Publication is projected for this fall.*

*April 19, 1987, marks the first anniversary of George Breitman's death.*

entitled "The Platform of the Opposition." This included a section entitled "Work Among Negroes," which said in one place:

"The Negro question is also a national question, and the Party must raise the slogan of the right of self-determination for the Negroes. The effectiveness of this slogan is enhanced by the fact that there are scores of contiguous counties in the South where the Negro population is in the majority, and it is there that they suffer the most violent persecution and discrimination. . . . The Party must at the same time decisively reject the false slogan of a 'Negro Soviet Republic in the South' at this time. . . . This theory is still being propagated in the Party press and in official Party literature despite its rejection even at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern."

The Platform of the Opposition, including this section, served as our program until the founding convention of the CLA in Chicago in May 1929, and the platform served as the major document both in the preconvention discussion and at the May convention. Two parts of the platform were the subject of considerable dispute at the convention—the one on the labor party, the other on the slogan of the right of self-determination.

Cannon's report on the convention in the *Militant* says that "Following a discussion of the disputed section of the Platform on the Slogan of the Right of Self Determination for the Negroes it was decided to defer final action until more exhaustive material on the subject can be assembled

and made available for discussion. . . . In view of the profound importance of this question and the manifest insufficiency of informative material and discussion pertaining to it, this decision to defer final action was undoubtedly correct."

Final action was to be deferred ten years, until the 1939 convention, and a deep grasp of the question was not to be reached until the Black radicalization in the early 1960s helped us understand it more concretely and better. Our progress in this field, theoretically and practically, has been tremendous. Its full extent can be measured only by closer acquaintance with where we stood in 1938 and '39, and, as it now turns out, ten years before then.

A few remarks about the role of women in the party. At the 1938 convention the credentials committee was occupied mainly with contests in some branches by competing candidates for delegate seats, and it gave little data about the delegates as a whole. But one rollcall vote was taken, over the resolutions on the Soviet Union, and the minutes give the names of all the delegates and how they voted. Out of seventy-seven voting, three were women. The number of alternates and their sex is unknown. It was a little better at the next convention, in July 1939. Out of seventy-eight delegates, six were women; out of thirty-eight alternates, nine. So, at the 1938 convention around 4 percent of the delegates were women; at the 1939 convention, around 8 percent. The percentage of women in the membership was of course higher than that.

Anybody who has attended recent party conventions and conferences, national or local, knows that the change in this area has been as big as it is progressive. At our convention last year, 39% of the delegates and 35% of the alternates were women. I don't think there has been any change in our party in these three-and-a-half decades bigger or more important than this one. And I don't think the younger members can fully appreciate its magnitude.

There has been as a result literally an explosion of revolutionary energy and talent previously untapped or underutilized throughout the party, from the highest committee to the lowest. Organizers, public representatives, candidates, campaign managers, department heads, teachers of classes, writers, editors, translators, coordinators, fraction heads, delegates abroad, and Jamie Higginses—wherever you look, you find the women of the party well represented making serious contributions to its work. In fact, if they weren't there, it simply wouldn't be recognizable to anybody as the SWP. No section of the radical movement in this country even comes close to us in this respect, and I don't think most of the sections of the Fourth International do either.

This release of revolutionary energy, this liberation of revolutionary energy, has transformed our party and made it a better instrument for its great historic tasks. I am not interested in allocating credit for this change. In great part, of course, it was brought about by the radicalization of the last decade and a half, especially of women, with results that penetrate every nook and cranny of this society. But in part it was also made possible by our responsiveness to this radicalization, our capacity to see what was happening and to meet it constructively, both in our public work and our internal relations and practices.

How much credit we deserve for the change is not what interests me here. What I am after is to try if possible to make you more conscious of its magnitude.

In this connection I want to say a couple of things about Mary-Alice Waters's pamphlet, *Feminism and the Marxist Movement*, based on a talk here two years ago. I consider it an excellent piece of work, a real contribution to the literature of our movement. I fully approved of what I took to be its main aims which were to refute slanderous and ignorant misrepresentations by anti-Marxists about the record of Marxism in the women's struggles and to prod backward and sluggish elements in the Fourth International who were dragging their feet instead of meeting their revolutionary responsibilities toward the new women's liberation movement.

I happen to disagree with her conclusion that the two traditions on the women's struggle in the Marxist movement coincided generally with the main division in the movement between revolutionaries on one side and reformists on the other. I think that it was more complex than this, and that the evidence shows there were two traditions among the revolutionaries too, some understanding and championing the women's struggle, and others rejecting it or paying it only lip service. Our line of continuity is with the former and we have no reason whatever to minimize or ignore the shortcomings of the latter, merely because on other questions they were on the right side.

Comrade Waters's pamphlet has a section called "The Fourth International," but it doesn't have much to say about the Fourth International's theory and practice on the women's movement, and the reason for that is that it didn't do much in this area until recently. Comrade Waters warns us against ahistorical thinking—against "project[ing] backward in time our current level of consciousness or stage of development instead of judging the past by what was known and what was possible then." I endorse that warning wholeheartedly. To it I would add a corollary: avoiding ahistorical thinking does not mean and does not require shutting our eyes to the shortcomings or mistakes of the past, whether by our predecessors or ourselves.

The truth is that in recent years a big leap has been made in the SWP and parts of the Fourth International in both the theory and practice of the women's struggle. The SWP has added something important to our arsenal here. How much and how important this addition is can be measured accurately only by those who have a clear-eyed, historical view of what the situation was before the addition.

So, in summary: There has been much change and considerable progress since the founding of the SWP. Much of this we owe to the pioneers, without whom we couldn't have done half of what we did. But we would have perished if we hadn't gone beyond the pioneers, and we have gone beyond them, learning how to sharpen the ideas and improve the practice that they initiated or developed. And this is good because the time is coming closer when we shall have to storm revolutionary heights that the conditions of their time prevented them from reaching.

The last thing I want to take up is not a comparison, but an estimate, of the party in the late '30s. In a discussion I had with two comrades a couple of weeks ago, after I had related some of the things that happened in the Political Committee and the National Committee in 1938, one asked me about the composition of the Political Committee at that time. It consisted of seven people, I said, making a pedagogic point that in those days a Political Committee of seven was not considered inadequate, and I named the seven, noting that within two years six of the seven had left the SWP.

There were Cannon, Shachtman, Abern, Burnham, McKinney, Widick, and Gould, representing the youth. All but Cannon left the SWP in the 1940 split by the petty-bourgeois faction that set up the Workers party. Burnham quit the Workers party at its birth and became a reactionary Republican in the course of time. Abern died in the Workers party. McKinney left it before its members went into the SP, and today he is with the Shankerite A. Philip Randolph Institute. Widick became a professor and commentator on the labor movement, and Gould quit early for refuge in some Jewish organization. "Only one out of seven remained, and that was Cannon himself," said the comrade. "That confirms my feeling that we didn't have a real Trotskyist leadership until the 1940 split."

I've thought about it since this conversation, and I don't agree with his conclusion. To say that we didn't have a real Trotskyist leadership until the 1940 split would be like saying we didn't have a real Trotskyist organization until then. And that's just not a tenable conclusion. The SWP was superior to all other groups in the International at that time; if it wasn't really Trotskyist, then they weren't either, and neither was the International. Trotskyism then must have been some kind of ideal that did not come into real existence until 1940, or later.

Exactly when, I cannot say. Because if you apply this criterion—of how long the central leadership lasted in the movement—to determine whether it was a real Trotskyist leadership, you would get some baffling results. Take for example the Political Committee that was elected October 1, 1939, the first elected Political Committee after the seven-member Political Committee, 1938-1939. The war had begun, and so had the faction fight, and the PC was being reorganized to reflect the fact that the National Committee had decisively voted for the majority view on the Soviet Union. The Political Committee was enlarged to eleven, the minority being given three posts (Shachtman, Abern, Burnham), the majority taking eight, and of course choosing them itself. The eight were Cannon, Morrow, Weber, Clarke, Cochran, Gordon, M. Stein and Murry Weiss.

This was the Political Committee at the time of the split in 1940, its main additions at that time being Dobbs and Goldman. Well, what happened to these eight? Morrow and

Weber succumbed to Stalinophobia during the war and were out soon after. Clarke and Cochran lasted longer, until the Korean war. That is, four of the eight defected in a dozen years. Three of the remainder dropped out individually for various reasons: Gordon, Stein and Weiss. So that out of the PC majority of eight, only one survived to old age in the movement, again Cannon.

The same thing occurs when you examine the IEC elected by the 1938 founding conference of the Fourth International. Out of fifteen, three were murdered, Trotsky and Ta Thu Thau by the Stalinists, Leon Lesoil by the Nazis. Of the remaining twelve, ten defected by the end of the war, leaving only a possible two who still stood with the Fourth International seven years after its foundation. The certain one of this possible two was, again, Cannon.

So it's better to see the SWP and its leadership as development in process, starting in 1928 and continuing through today into the future. When Cannon, Shachtman and Abern began in 1928, they had less knowledge of some aspects of what is called "Trotskyism" than many people in this room today. But they all made big contributions, including Shachtman and Abern, despite the fact that they defected after a dozen years, and the party was a product of their collective work. The weak and negative sides of Shachtman and Abern came to the fore later, but that shouldn't blind us to their contributions in their best days any more than Plekhanov's ultimate betrayal of the revolution can detract from the progressive role he played in his earlier years in preparing the way for Lenin's party.

Under their collective leadership, or if you wish, under a bloc of Cannon with Shachtman and Abern, the SWP *never* made the kind of serious mistakes that the Bolsheviks made in March 1917 before Lenin's return to Russia. Under their leadership the SWP went through some serious tests in the '30s.

One of these was the French turn, that is, our entry into the SP. That was not any easy thing to carry out without losses or demoralization; it required an organization solidly based in principle and led by people who were tactically very flexible. The French turn was carried out in this country much more effectively than in France, where the Molinier-Pierre Frank split occurred right after the expulsion from the SP and paralyzed the party until World War II; the fact that such crises were averted here says something for the quality of our leadership and movement, and what it says is highly favorable.

Then there was the test of the Transitional Program, and I've told how that was met. And, soon after, there was the test of World War II, which we also met with success. So it was, on the whole, a pretty good party before 1940, a party developing in the right direction. In my own way, that is what I have been trying to show in these talks, among other things. ■

## A TROTSKY BIOGRAPHY IN PICTURES

*Trotsky*—a photographic biography by David King with commentary by James Ryan, introduction by Tamara Deutscher. Oxford and New York, Basil Blackwell, 1986, 336 pp. Cloth (8 1/2 x 12 format), \$29.95.

Reviewed by Frank Lovell

By fortuitous coincidence this new photographic biography of Leon Trotsky appears simultaneously with wide publicity of renewed factional struggles inside the Soviet bureaucracy. Trotsky was the popular organizer of the 1917 October uprising in Petrograd which destroyed forever the old czarist empire. During the months prior to the seizure of power he and Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik party, became the closest collaborators. In the first months after their victory in Russia, Trotsky negotiated peace terms with the invading German armies; and then he went on to organize the Soviet army that defended the borders of the new workers' state and destroyed the armed forces of counterrevolution within the Soviet republics. By 1922 he and Lenin were fully aware of the new internal threat that was then penetrating the government. Together they began the struggle against bureaucratic encrustation of the first firmly established working class government in history. Lenin was ill at the time, totally incapacitated for most of 1923. He died in the evening of January 21, 1924, leaving Trotsky to continue the struggle against the rising bureaucracy.

Today the entrenched bureaucracy has wielded state power for 60 years, having defeated the Bolshevik-Leninist opposition in 1927 and exiled Trotsky from the Soviet Union. Unbridled bureaucratic control of the government apparatus during these six decades has betrayed the socialist goals of the revolution, destroyed the Bolshevik party, established a monstrous police state, paralyzed the liberating initiative of the working class, and introduced such sloth and inefficiency in the economy that some sectors of the bureaucracy now seek to eliminate the worst abuses of the secret police, introduce efficiency in the production and distribution of goods, and reform the machinery of government.

These are among the decisive issues that Trotsky analyzed and explained in his voluminous writings and vigorous revolutionary activity during the 16 years of struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy that remained to him after the death of Lenin. Trotsky was assassinated by an agent of the Soviet bureaucracy in Mexico, August 21, 1940.

Those who are bewildered by the latest revelations from Moscow will find in this beautiful pictorial presentation of the life of Trotsky some keys to a clear understanding of the factional struggle in the Kremlin. David King's collection of more than 400 photographs is arranged with the

artistry of a motion picture director, and the accompanying commentary by James Ryan reads like the voice of the conscientious historian. At the start the viewer/reader is treated to an introduction by the well-known Marxist writer Tamara Deutscher, widow of Trotsky's biographer Isaac Deutscher who died in 1967.

### Freedom Struggle

She explains for the benefit of the unacquainted and the misinformed that the struggle against bureaucratic degeneration in the Soviet Union, commonly trivialized as "the Stalin-Trotsky feud," was of a higher order. In her words it is elevated to the realm of ideas where it becomes meaningful. "The momentous feud, reminiscent of Greek tragedies, between the Georgian cobbler's son—the master of all the Russians—and Trotsky, the hero of the greatest revolution of our century, lasted for decades. The future may transcend the bloody conflict between the victorious Stalin and the defeated Trotsky, but the principles, theories and hopes which Trotsky advanced, to which he gave such an artistic and consummate form, have forever enriched the history of ideas."

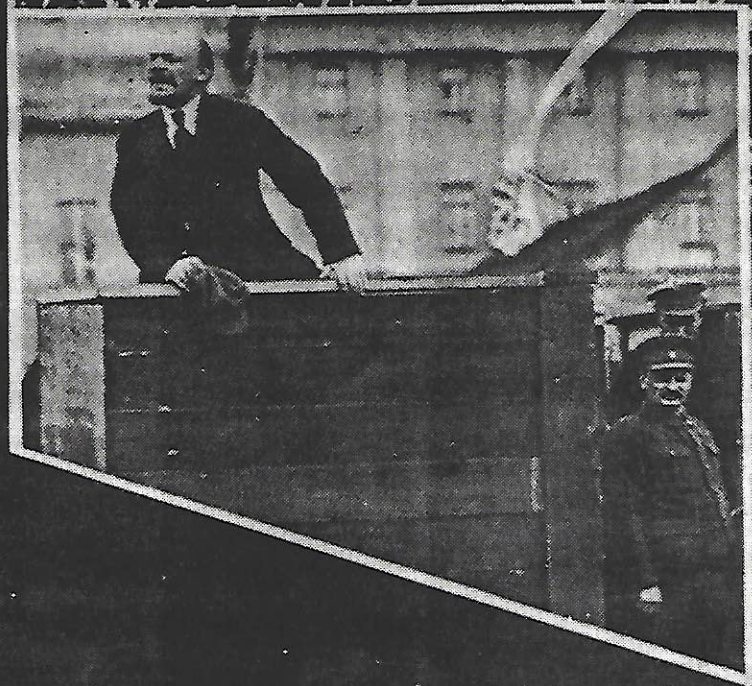
She traces in quick succession how the young Trotsky first came upon the theoretical works of Marx and Engels, was arrested by the czar's police and deported to Siberia, advanced his education while in exile, escaped to join Lenin in London as a member of the editorial board of the revolutionary journal *Iskra*, and was soon thrust into the heated debate within the Russian Social Democratic Party over Lenin's proposal for a centralized and disciplined party led by professional revolutionaries.

Deutscher says he was soon "at odds with most of the emigre groups, and although as a speaker and lecturer he was in great demand and although a substantial flow of articles, essays and pamphlets was coming from his pen, he became as fretful in his comfortable West European exile as he had been in the wilderness of Siberia only a few short years before."

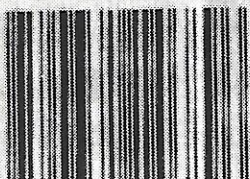
### 1905 Uprising

Thus was Trotsky prepared by experience and temperament to return to Russia in 1905 when the workers' uprising in Petrograd began, where at age 26 he was elected president of the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee. The Soviet endured only 50 days before being dispersed by the czar's police, its officers arrested. In the trial that followed Trotsky was the chief defendant. While nearly a year in jail awaiting trial, he drew the lessons of the 1905 revolution, published in 1906 in Petrograd as a pamphlet titled *Results and Prospects*. In this work he applied and developed his now famous theory of permanent revolution.





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En route to his second exile in Siberia Trotsky again escaped, this time making his way to Vienna. With the outbreak of World War I he moved to Switzerland and then to Paris. In 1915 he was one of the central figures at the Zimmerwald Conference in Switzerland, called to issue a declaration against the imperialist slaughter. Soon thereafter Trotsky was deported from France and eventually arrived in New York from where he returned, finally, to Petrograd in May 1917.

### 1917 Revolution

After listing details of Trotsky's personal and political journey between revolutions, Tamara Deutscher notes the close relationship that developed between Lenin and Trotsky. "Lenin had returned to Petrograd a month earlier," she says. "Both had, during the long separation, somewhat revised their views—indeed some Bolsheviks reproached Lenin with having abandoned Bolshevism for Trotskyism." She describes how the October revolution was prepared under the joint leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, how peace was negotiated with the German generals at Brest-Litovsk, how the Red Army was organized under Trotsky's command, Trotsky's role at the founding congress of the Third International, the war-weariness and famine in Soviet Russia during the "dreadful winter" of 1920-21, the anarchist revolt of the Kronstadt sailors, the retreat from central economic planning to the New Economic Policy, the rise of the bureaucracy and the emergence of Stalin as its chief representative and protector of its privileges, and the death of Lenin.

The eventual defeat and exile of Trotsky in 1927 was followed by the monstrous Moscow trials of the 1930s and the mass purges during which millions were killed. Trotsky was first among the accused in all the show trials of those years, denounced as a fascist agent of Hitler. Tried in absentia, he was sentenced to death. He escaped the political intrigues of old Europe as war clouds gathered. His second trip across the Atlantic took him from house imprisonment in Norway to refuge in Mexico. The commission of inquiry into the Moscow trials, headed by famed philosophy professor John Dewey, exonerated Trotsky and his son Sedov. By the time the full report of these findings was published (*Not Guilty*, 1938) the signals for World War II already were visible. In August 1939 the Stalin-Hitler pact was signed. World War II was declared in September. Trotsky was busy explaining the causes of war, and denouncing Stalin's collaboration with Hitler. Under these circumstances Stalin issued urgent orders to all his agents. Trotsky was assassinated in his study before another year had passed.

### Source Material

All this history covering the 60-year life span of Trotsky is carefully and lucidly set down in only 12 pages, an impressive accomplishment.

Tamara Deutscher begins her essay with a quotation from Trotsky's autobiography, *My Life* (completed in 1929), in which he says he wrote of his own childhood as if it were divided from his adult life "not only in time and space by decades and by far countries, but by the mountain chain of great events." She concludes with a footnote: "This narrative of Trotsky's life is based entirely on Isaac Deutscher's three-volume biography 'The Prophet Armed,' 'The Prophet Unarmed' and 'The Prophet Outcast,' published by Oxford University Press." In this way she alerts the reader to the further elaboration of Trotsky's life story by the two most authoritative sources, Trotsky and Deutscher.

Her own evaluation of Trotsky's life and work relates to the Fourth International, and her appreciation of it. "The Fourth International, which he set up in 1938, has not proved effective as an instrument of revolution, but it has played a considerable role as a stimulus to world-wide debate on the basic tenets of Trotskyism and to the creation of numerous groups searching for a correct revolutionary strategy for our time," she says.

### Fourth International

In his lifetime Trotsky considered the organization of the Fourth International his crowning achievement. From 1933 on, all his efforts centered upon the formation of the new international, the continuation of the international Marxist movement which took organizational form in 1864 through the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) inaugurated in London by Karl Marx. In 1938, as Trotsky prepared the inauguration of the Fourth International, the purpose remained unchanged. Trotsky quoted Marx (from the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848): "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." Ninety years later Trotsky added: "The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both 'civilized' and 'uncivilized,' that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character." He continued, in reference to the counterrevolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy, "The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country." We can add today that the present crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy confirms Trotsky's analysis.

The first three internationals failed. Trotsky's last words, spoken on his deathbed in English, recorded his confidence that the fourth would not fail: "I am sure . . . of the victory . . . of the Fourth International. . . . Go forward."

It is true, as Tamara Deutscher observes, the Fourth International has not provided leadership for revolutions in the post-World War II years. But these revolutions remain incomplete, as does

the Russian revolution. The Fourth International has not failed. It remains alive, the essential part of the unfolding revolutionary process throughout the world.

### Artistry

The powerful effect of this book on the viewer is attributable mainly to the technical excellence of restoration and reproduction of the pictures, and to the artistry of arrangement. This is all presented with the drama of a documentary film: a small snapshot of Lenin speaking to workers on the opening page, then turn to a double-page spread in red and black showing the hammer and sickle on a cropped red star, the name Trotsky in bold white type to the left and on the right side in the same white type the producers and publisher. The book is dedicated to the memory of George L. Weissman (1916-1985), Trotsky's literary executor in the United States, an editor of the *Militant*, and for all his adult life a member of the Trotskyist movement and of the Socialist Workers Party until his expulsion in 1984. At the time of his death he was a member of the editorial board of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. His name is inscribed on a single page in white type over a black bar against red background.

### Periods of Trotsky's Life

The early years of Trotsky's life are illustrated with pictures of him as child and youth, of his family, and of his comrades in the Russian revolutionary movement at the close of the nineteenth century, including his first wife, Alexandra Sokolovskaya, their two daughters, and her brother. For anyone who may be curious about who were the prominent representatives of Russian Social Democracy at the turn of the century and what they looked like, this book is the place to meet them.

The first section, "From Yanovka to the Finland Station" (1879-1917), shows the principal people and main events in Trotsky's life up to his return to Russia in 1917. These include pictures of his second wife, Natalya Sedova; a 1905 demonstration in Moscow; Trotsky in jail in the Peter-Paul Fortress in Petrograd; defendants at the trial after the defeat of the 1905 revolution; Stalin in 1913; a picture of Trotsky on the French passport which he used to travel to Zimmerwald in 1915; another photograph which appeared on the front page of the Yiddish-language newspaper *Vorwarts* when he arrived in New York in 1917; a shot outside the offices of *Novy Mir* (New World) at 177 St. Marks Place in New York, site of the newspaper which Trotsky helped edit briefly; and finally a view of Trotsky's arrival at the Finland station.

The next section, "Revolution—Russia 1917-1921," opens with facing pictures of Lenin and Trotsky, symbols of the victorious workers' revolution. These pictures show the heroic days of the revolution, many group photographs, panoramic shots

of mass demonstrations, photos of all the leading personalities.

The editors have placed the beginning of bureaucratic degeneration in 1921 and show the period of decline in the section titled "The Conspiracy of the Epigones—Soviet Union 1921-1929." Here the degeneration of the Soviet state is traced step-by-step as the bureaucracy silences all voices of opposition.

The last third of the book shows Trotsky in exile, his third. This consists of three sections: "The Planet Without a Visa," "The Struggle for the Future," and "Assassination." These sections are dramatically arranged. The first opens with front-view pictures on facing pages of Stalin and Trotsky, one symbolizing the oppressive state apparatus and the other the defiant opposition. The viewer will be reminded of a similar juxtaposition, in the preceding section, of pictures of Lenin and Trotsky symbolizing the victorious revolution.

Trotskyists throughout the world were relieved when news came that the Mexican government had opened its doors to Trotsky. He and Natalia got out of Norway and away from Europe on the tanker *Ruth*, December 19, 1936, bound for Tampico. A special train took them to Mexico City and they were soon settled in the home of the famous Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Trotsky was then 57.

The pictures of this final period of his eventful and productive life show the moments of happiness and victory, and the tragic losses and defeats that befell him during these last three years that remained. One of his greatest triumphs was his testimony before the Dewey Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials. A double-page spread shows Trotsky and Natalia preparing evidence for the commission, conferring with his U.S. defense attorney Albert Goldman and others. Many more pictures give flashes of world events at the time, and show Trotsky's responses.

Trotsky's greatest political triumph was the founding congress of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. He considered this his greatest achievement, the organizational expression of the permanent revolution. A reproduction of the front cover (with picture of Trotsky) of the programmatic document, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Working Class*, adopted at the founding congress, marks the occasion. This document, commonly known as the "Transitional Program," was drafted by Trotsky for consideration by the delegates to the congress. It was adopted and forwarded to all sections of the International throughout the world, and quickly published in many languages. The showing here is that produced by the British section.

Along with his triumphs Trotsky suffered some of his most crushing personal and political blows at this time. His son Leon Sedov died under strange circumstances, implicating the GPU, in February 1938 in Paris. Sedov was Trotsky's closest collaborator in the organizational work of the Fourth International. His loss was not only a

terrible personal blow but a serious political blow as well. Here a double-page closeup of Sedov is shown with reproductions of covers in English and Chinese of Trotsky's tribute to his fallen son and comrade-in-arms.

### Useful Commentary

The indispensable part of a photographic book such as this is the accompanying commentary. Without this the vast array of pictures, even with identifying captions, would lack meaning. In this book the accompanying commentary by James Ryan, given the severe space limitations imposed by the format, succeeds remarkably well not only in telling the story of Trotsky's political life but manages to highlight it with revealing anecdotes.

The exact means of factional struggle through which Trotsky was defeated have also occupied his attention. Here is how Ryan summarizes a crucial point in the struggle: "In January and February (1923), struggling with his deteriorating health, Lenin dictated five articles on the subject of bureaucracy. Astonishingly, Stalin and his supporters contemplated printing a special issue of *Pravda*, consisting of one copy . . . and giving that to the old man—but Trotsky foiled the plan." Early in March a secret commission reported to Lenin on the brutal bureaucratic suppression of the Georgian nation. On March 5 he wrote two letters, one pledging support to the oppressed people and the other asking Trotsky "to undertake the defense of the Georgian affair at the Central Committee of the party," adding that under no circumstances should Trotsky accept a "rotten compromise" from Stalin. In retrospect, some historians contend that this was the turning point in the struggle against Stalin and the new bureaucratic social caste. Ryan records that on March 7 Lenin suffered another stroke, "and on the 10th was again paralyzed and lost the power of speech. He never recovered. He remained a silent witness to the developing power struggle until he died eleven months later, on 21 January 1924." Ryan faults Trotsky (as have others) for failing to heed Lenin's warning.

Throughout the remaining 12 years of his life Trotsky continued the struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy and against capitalist oppression which he understood to be connected. These were to be the most productive years, his analysis and explanation of the character and composition of the bureaucratic caste in a transitional society from capitalism to socialism. He was always and forever the champion of the downtrodden and oppressed, the only class in modern society that can transform the world.

The final commentary in this pictorial biography on Trotsky's life and work contains a quotation from the report of Joseph Hansen, one of his U.S. secretaries and lifelong disciple: "A guard of honour, composed of Mexican workers and members of Trotsky's household, stood at attention twenty-four hours a day beside the casket. There was a constant flow of those who wished to pay their last respects to Trotsky. By August 27 an estimated 300,000 people had passed his casket. They were composed almost entirely of the poorest people, burdened with toil, many of them ragged, barefoot. They filed in silently, heads bowed."

This production is the successor to an earlier David King documentary, containing many of the same photographs. He was art editor of the *London Sunday Times Magazine* from 1965 to 1975. In 1972 he brought out his first presentation of his Trotsky collection, published in paperback by Penguin books in 8 1/2 x 12 format. At that time the *Sunday Times Magazine* (September 19, 1971) reproduced some of these photographs with an introduction by Tamara Deutscher, very similar to her updated introduction to this latest, more ambitious work by King. His earlier book had a useful index and this one, regrettably, does not. The price, unfortunately, is more than most workers can afford. It is, however, a book that workers ought to look at and read because they will appreciate the pictures and learn from the commentary. More important, many will be encouraged to learn more about Trotsky's teachings and the Trotskyist movement. Public libraries and some union offices may make this book available to workers who otherwise would not see it. ■

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### CONSTITUTION [Continued from page 21]

cal wing of the Republican Party to the conservative Democratic Party, and white supremacy was restored in the South.

Although this was a setback, a profound change had been accomplished. This was reflected in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Chattel slavery was abolished. Basic civil liberties were guaranteed

to all citizens regardless of race. The right to vote was extended to adult Black males.

Major elements of these provisions were, of course, largely suppressed by Jim Crow laws in the South for decades. But their importance should not be discounted on that account. In the 1950s they provided the basis for renewed struggles which swept away Jim Crow when the civil rights movement exploded onto the U.S. political scene. ■

Tom Gustafsson (1947-1987)

## "A strong link has been broken"

A FRIEND and comrade is dead. A strong link has been broken. For the first time in his life Tom Gustafsson had to give up — a malignant disease finally conquered his strong physique and his big appetite for life. He died just a couple of weeks before we were to celebrate his fortieth birthday.

GOTE KILDEN

Our movement doesn't glorify its leaders. The worship of icons does not foster emancipated human beings. But we recognize greatness where we see it.

The key to Tom's greatness was that he always lived in accordance with his thinking. He didn't "sacrifice himself for the party". His attitude towards politics was scientific, moral and full of joy.

In the mid 1960s, Tom started to study at the university of Lund in the south of Sweden. Here he soon found himself in the middle of the political turmoil and social revolt that shook the university cities all over the world. The Tet-offensive in Vietnam 1968, the May revolt in France and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the same year marked, each in its way a turning point in world political development. In Sweden the idyllic decade was over and the big miners' strike in Lapland in 1969-70 exposed the state of bureaucracy and degeneration within the traditional labour movement.

Tom was raised in a liberal home, and for a few months he tested the Young Liberals. But they could not explain the social and political convulsions that shook up the world. In an epoch when the decay of the market system and the growth of the mass movements for social liberation cannot be concealed, liberalism is a reactionary political force. Tom saw it and rejected it. Very soon he was to join the left-wing student organization, Clarte, and it became his real university.

Twenty years ago, in 1966-67, Tom started to be active in the solidarity movement for the Vietnamese revolution. That was one of his longest and most passionate engagements that also became decisive for his own political development.

He soon became one of the leading figures in building the Swedish NLF movement, and therefore his demand for honesty, a scientific method and a clear political program quickly collided with the Maoists who tried to monopolize the young solidarity movement.

The first years of struggle against the neutralism of the Swedish Communist Party on the war in Vietnam was now succeeded by a ten-year-long resistance against the miseducation by the Maoists of a whole generation of young activists. In hundreds of articles and speeches Tom underlined, time after time, that the war in Indochina was not only a war for national liberation. It was also a social civil war. And our solidarity was solidarity with revolutionists who were leading the poor masses of Indochina in a socialist revolution. But he also warned against the consequences of the underdevelopment in the region, of the mass destruction, and also against the political shortcomings of the revolutionists themselves. Thereby it was possible to combine the fight for the most broad and whole-hearted solidarity with a critical mind.

Tom's work with developing these standpoints was to have great consequences for his whole political life. The years of 1967 to 1971 saw Tom throw himself into what we sometimes used to call "the battle of history", that is the total showdown with the traditions of Swedish and international reformism and the Stalinist movements. The Russian revolution, the victory of nazism in Germany, the Spanish civil war, the Second World War and the Hungarian uprising were only some of the experiences of the international workers' movement he now studied. The mistakes in Indochina were not unique but universal, they were not exceptions but the rule and the logical consequences of reformism and Stalinism.

### Tom was always in the front

Tom, like so many others from his generation, was there, at the barricades in Paris and sang "Einheitsfrontlied" together with tens of thousands of internationalists in the mass demonstrations of the German SDS. He was a child of May '68, and like so many others of these children he was raised with internationalism. "Create two, three, many Vietnams", the watchword of Che Guevara, spread like wildfire throughout the world.

The experiences from Saigon, Paris, Prague and the Swedish minefields — together with the balance sheet of the history of Stalinism — converged for Tom in a single conclusion: the absolute necessity of breaking with the traditional leadership of the labour movement and joining the Fourth International. That also meant a gigantic challenge — to build new mass parties all over the world.

Tom's political clearheadedness, his great capacity for work and the confidence his friends and comrades had in him led to the fact that he got responsibilities and assignments in all areas of work. He has contributed to nearly every issue of the newspapers and magazines we published through the years. He often acted as the secretary of the Verkställande Utskottet (the executive committee of the party), and was a candidate in local and national elections and carried heavy loads in the election campaigns. But also he led the "Norlandssatsningen" [a campaign to root the party in the working class of the northern part of Sweden], and laboured in the Stockholm branch.

And despite everything, he was a child of May '68 and internationalism was the red thread of his life. As passionately engaged as he was twenty years ago on behalf of the Vietnamese revolution he was, until only a couple of weeks ago, engaged in the defence of the revolution in Nicaragua.

For us he was the most important link to the Fourth International. Here in Sweden he always tried to create an understanding for both the everyday problems of the Fourth International and its important political discussions.

But Tom was not only a link to the Fourth International. During the last six years he was also a part of its executive leadership, the United Secretariat (Usec). During 1981-83 he was also a part of its daily leadership, the Bureau of the Usec. There he first of all succeeded in overcoming language and cultural barriers to create a real authority and play a leading role.

In the same way as in Sweden he became an organizational motor, but also played a prominent role in directing the sections of the Fourth International towards a bigger concentration on activities in the trade unions, and in the hard struggle during the most recent years to defend the programmatic continuity of the International, in defence of Permanent Revolution, the theory which he had used so well to analyse the Vietnamese revolution in his youth. ■

*International Viewpoint 23 February 1987*

**Strong Feelings About *Platoon***

Now we have *Platoon*! I refuse to see it—even if it is a "true, lifelike" re-creation of Vietnam.

I am an honorably discharged Vietnam era vet, but during that time I was a medic and "cleaned up" after the fun and games of war. Therefore, until audiences are required to view such movies in physical misery, and smell rotting flesh (which gags most living creatures but scavengers), and smell burning and burned flesh; smell infections and excrement mixed with stale urine . . . then, until they also must work in amputee wards—and do that on the graveyard shift while listening to sobbing and screams after the lights are out and long after the excitement of combat is over—listen to pleas for dope to ease the reality of missing arms, legs, eyes, testicles, and fucked-up possibilities for life and love—and do all this while they are too exhausted to breathe . . . until then, I don't want to hear no war stories!!

You won't find me at any war memorials on November 11 either.

How stupid can we be?

The TV ads for *Platoon* have managed to screw Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* for me too. Those greedy bastards have no shame. It was bad enough that *Born in the U.S.A.* was turned completely around for the Vietnam memorial fracas.

Jack Bresee  
Miami

**Sandra Day O'Connor and Affirmative Action**

On February 25 the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action in a case regarding Blacks and the Alabama State Police. The court ruled, 5 to 4, that racial quotas may be imposed as a means of redressing past discrimination in promotion as well as in hiring. This was a defeat for the Reagan administration which is firmly opposed to affirmative action in any form, and constitutes a victory for Blacks, women, and others who have long suffered from job discrimination.

In an interesting twist, however, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, whose appointment to the Supreme Court was hailed by liberal feminists as a major advance for the women's movement, voted with the minority in this case. She asserted that the courts should not have imposed a racial quota "without first considering the effectiveness of alternatives." Of course, everyone with any experience knows full well how effective the "alternatives" to affirmative action have proven to be.

O'Connor's opinion illustrates, once again, the futility of the tokenist approach to the fight for women's equality—which has been generally followed by the National Organization for Women and similar groups. NOW was among those who lobbied hard for the appointment of a woman to the Supreme Court and for O'Connor's ratification after she was nominated by President Reagan. NOW supports the promotion of women in bourgeois poli-

tics; but the endorsement by women of the bourgeoisie's political philosophy means that their election to office (or appointment to the Supreme Court) can do little to advance the cause of women's true emancipation.

It's about time for NOW, and for the women's movement as a whole, to raise its voice loudly urging a new kind of politics. Such a call from the women's movement could be a significant impetus to labor in this country, which needs to launch a political party of its own. An alternative to women's liberation Sandra Day O'Connor style is an absolute necessity.

A Reader  
New York City

**Hedda Garza**

In your review of *Leon Trotsky* by Hedda Garza you describe the book as "the best of its kind" (correct) "in part because it was written by a veteran socialist activist . . . a fighter for social justice" (also correct). Can this be the same Hedda Garza whom the SWP (and the majority of your editorial board, which has yet to criticize its conduct) undemocratically expelled and mendaciously pilloried as a government agent more than a decade ago? Curious.

James D. Cockcroft  
Chestertown, N.Y.

*In reply: Hedda Garza was a member of the SWP beginning in the 1950s, a prominent opponent of the Vietnam war, and today works in opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America. This is the basis for the statement in the review that she is "a veteran socialist activist . . . a fighter for social justice."*

*Garza was expelled from the SWP in 1974 along with other members of the Internationalist Tendency. The charges against them had to do with disloyal conduct and no accusation was raised that Garza or anyone else was a government agent.*

*In 1981 Garza was interviewed by the FBI and subpoenaed to testify as a government witness in the lawsuit initiated by the SWP (SWP vs. Attorney General of the U.S.). An article published in the Militant at that time accused her of purposefully collaborating with the government.*

*It is incorrect to state that any members of the editorial board of the Bulletin IDOM endorsed these allegations. For two years following the 1981 SWP National Convention most of us were pre-occupied with the debate in the party that began to revolve around the validity of the theory of permanent revolution and derivative issues. The "Hedda Garza case" was not among these pressing matters.*

*Whatever our political disagreements with Hedda Garza—past or present—we do not consider them to be the proper axis for a critical judgment of her book, which must stand or fall on its own merits.*

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