

Information, Education, Discussion

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Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

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THE GREAT STOCK MARKET CRASH OF 1987

What Caused It and What It Means

by Steve Bloom

Until the beginning of September, Wall Street was a genuine miracle of the 1980s. The widely watched Dow Jones industrial average had risen approximately 170 percent since 1982, reaching the 2,700 level. Investors were making money hand over fist; there seemed to be no end in sight.

Then, in a few short weeks, it all came unglued. In one disastrous day for stockholders, Monday, October 19, the Dow lost a record 508 points, closing below 1,750. The former record, a loss of 108.35 points, had been set only the previous trading day. In the end, more than 35 percent of the market's value had been lost in a scant month and a half.

How did this happen? What does it mean for the U.S. economy and for working people? To understand the answers it's useful to take a look at the workings of the stock market and what it actually represents.

Stripping Away the Mystifications

The stock market seems to be a place controlled by strange and mysterious forces, where fortunes are made and disappear as if by magic. But if we strip away all of the mystification which has come to surround this capitalist institution, its real workings are not so difficult to understand. Most people know that a share of stock represents a partial ownership in a capitalist enterprise of some sort. Initially these shares are issued as a means of raising money which a corporation can turn into profit-making investments in plant and machinery, raw materials, labor power, etc.

New stocks are continually issued, as a means of capitalizing an emerging corporation, or further expanding an existing one. However, the shares of stock which are traded back and forth on the New York Stock Exchange represent primarily issues created years ago. These are bought and sold again and again. The Dow Jones industrial average measures the exchange value of the existing stock in 30 of the largest, best established, industrial corporations—a group generally representative of U.S. industry as a whole. It includes A.T.&T., Boeing, Coca Cola, Du Pont, Exxon, General Motors, I.B.M., Procter and Gamble, Sears Roebuck, USX, Westinghouse, and other well-known names.

When an investor purchases a share of stock she/he has the potential to make money in two ways. First, if the corporation makes a sufficient profit, dividends will be paid to stockholders. This is one of the factors which determines the value of the stock—the past record of the corporation in

issuing dividends and its perspective for continuing to do so in the future. This is a major reason why the exchange value of stocks is so closely linked to the profitability of the U.S. economy.

But if the exchange value of stocks were determined *simply* on the basis of the profitability of the corporation which it represents then predicting stock prices would be a relatively easy matter. It is the *second* potential method of making money from the ownership of stocks which creates the extreme volatility of the market. An individual who buys shares one day might be able to sell them the next at a higher price. This increased value of the stock is referred to as an increase in equity. The problem is that value in the form of equity, like money payments in the form of dividends, can decrease as well as increase. The price of stocks is determined purely and simply on the basis of an open market: the price is what someone will pay for it. And this depends much more on subjective factors—the expectations of individual investors and the investment community as a whole in the *future* profitability of stock ownership—than it does on any actual, measurable economic quantity.

Because of this, changes in economic expectations can drastically affect what people are willing to pay for a particular share of stock, and its price rarely achieves an actual correspondence with any objectively measured equity (if we could find a way to measure equity objectively) which the stock might be said to have. Since no one can accurately predict short-term, or even medium-term, economic trends and their effect on the mentality of investors (and since capitalist investors generally refuse to accept the long-term inevitability of crisis, making this a moot point when considering their mentality), the process of looking for profits in the form of an increase in stock equity is not much more than a sophisticated form of gambling.

Looking at Long-Term Trends

It's useful to step back for a moment and look at the long-term trends on the New York Stock Exchange over the last twenty years or so. If we do, some interesting insights about the last few years become apparent.

First, we will stop being quite so dazzled by the level reached by the Dow at its highest point—around 2,700. Back in 1965 the Dow reached a high of 990. If we adjust for inflation between 1965 and today, *the equity represented by those 990 points would be equaled only if the Dow reached the 3,600 mark in 1987!* That means that if you bought a share

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NY、最大の508ドル
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of stock in 1965 and held it to today, and if its price—that is, the equity it represents—behaved exactly as the Dow Jones average, you would have had 25 percent less equity (in terms of real dollars) even at the height of the market boom in late August than you did when you bought your stock.

In actuality, the average share behaved a bit better than the Dow. The NYSE composite index, which measures the value of an average share, was around 50 in 1965, and rose to almost 190 at the end of August this year. This means that the increase in equity represented by an average share of stock on the New York exchange during that period just about kept up with inflation.

The rise in stock prices from 1982 was dramatic, but that dramatic rise was only possible because of what had come before. From 1965 until 1982, the Dow average vacillated between 700 and 1,000. That's almost 20 years of sideways movement. Again, if we consider the role of monetary inflation during that time, *this constituted an actual decline of around 65 percent.* In 1982 the current upturn began, with the Dow increasing *in real terms* by 115 percent.

These long-term trends illustrate very well how subjective factors influence the market. It would be difficult to argue that the actual value of the corporations represented by the stocks which make up the Dow Jones industrial average decreased by 65 percent between 1965 and 1982, only to rebound by 115 percent in the next five years. Yet this is how their stocks performed in terms of the price which investors were willing to pay for them.

The consciousness of investors will always lag behind the objective economic reality. When consciousness catches up to reality it tends to have explosive results which still only reflect reality in an imperfect way. That is the reason for the cycle of boom and bust on Wall Street, which tends to be even more pronounced than the general economic cycles of boom and bust which affect the capitalist system.

Economic and Social Reality

It's not accidental that there are some important economic/political factors which mark the dates of our stock exchange turning points. These affected investor consciousness in a major way over the last twenty-five years, and contributed to the overall trends we have noted.

The beginning of the market's stall—its decline in real dollar terms—in 1965 marked the beginning of a period of increasing economic, social, and political instability in the U.S. and around the world. It was the time of the student radicalization, the civil rights struggle, Vietnam. In 1968 the workers and students of France brought the country to the brink of the socialist revolution. In the early 1970s the entire international economic system began to come apart, with a generalized crisis combining high unemployment throughout the capitalist world with high inflation accelerating during that decade.

Then, in 1982, a number of factors combined to restore confidence in the U.S. capitalist system. In 1981 Ronald Reagan succeeded in smashing the strike of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. This opened the gates for a series of union-busting efforts. Even before this, the economic problems of the 1970s had produced a wave of retreats and concessions by the U.S. union movement. A new conservative mood seemed well entrenched on the campuses and in society as a whole. The women's movement, the Black struggle, and other manifestations of the radicalization of the '60s and early '70s were clearly in retreat, if not in crisis.

All of this created a new optimism in the business community, a new wave of willingness to invest. That's because, as we have noted, the price of a share of stock represents, in the final analysis, the bourgeoisie's own estimate of the value of ownership in the capitalist system: i.e., the ability of a particular corporation to extract surplus value from its employees and return that value to its stockholders in the form of dividends. The overall stability of the system and the relationship of class forces, the ability of working people to fight back and limit corporate greed are major factors in this equation. The value of owning stock declines in a period of instability in the class struggle, and rises during more peaceful times.

Of course this must not be understood crudely. Stock prices will reflect these realities only partially and indirectly, but there can be no question that they will reflect them.

Factors That Contributed to the Crash

Nothing fundamental has changed in terms of the relationship of class forces in the U.S. or

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 2,6 per cento, superiore anche a quella storica dell'ottobre '29
Wall Street e trascina le Borse



The Kansas City
Stocks crash; Dow lo

internationally which could account for the October '87 crash. This time, the underlying problems of the U.S. and world economy were the key factor. Some of these have been obvious for some time: a massive balance of trade deficit by the U.S., which means that it is buying far more in other countries than it is selling abroad; increased interest rates and other signs that inflationary pressures are building; a seemingly insurmountable burden of debt at every level—government, corporate, consumer, and especially in the third world countries; a sharp decline in the dollar on international markets.

The decline of the dollar in particular, combined with a continued high balance of trade deficit, was particularly troublesome. Allowing the dollar to fall has been a conscious policy pursued by the Reagan administration in an effort to redress the balance of trade. In theory, if more dollars can be bought with the same amount of a given foreign currency, U.S. goods will become cheaper for customers in other countries and they should buy more. Conversely, imported goods should become more expensive for U.S. consumers, and they should turn more to domestic products. However, theory has not worked too well in practice, and these shifts have not taken place in any substantial way. The announcement during the week before the stock market crash of statistics on the balance of trade deficit, which showed that it had declined only slightly, was one of the factors that set the stage for the plunge. There were others as well. For example, on Friday, October 16, two major banks announced that they were once again raising their prime lending rate—the interest at which money is loaned to their best corporate customers.

But it is hard to cite any immediate, specific economic development as *the* cause for the crash. The items we can cite did not differ significantly from similar economic events and announcements which had been made over the previous months. It was simply the growing weight of such specific quantitative developments which led to a qualitative change in the mood and confidence of investors in the market. Stocks had risen dramatically in the 1980s based partially on the economic and social realities and partially on speculation and faith. Even as the economic reality was being undermined, speculation and faith continued to push things higher. Though there was an increasing sense, even amongst many bourgeois economists and Wall Street denizens, that a danger was lurking, the momentum

of the previous period continued to dominate the market. Under the surface, however, the increasing realization of economic problems was at work, undermining that momentum.

In early September the market began to stall, then to move down slowly. The stage was set for the rout of October 19. And many experts place the blame for triggering the event on precisely the same sorts of speculative behavior which had driven the market to such heights in the first place. Certain computerized programs were designed to automatically sell stocks when the market sagged to a certain point, and this had a domino effect. According to an article in the October 26 *New York Times*:

A frenzied selloff of takeover stocks by arbitrageurs the previous week which had reduced the Dow Jones average more than 250 points in just three days was the blast that cracked the market's foundations.

This initial retreat was caused partly by a little-noticed development, a new tax bill that included provisions removing tax benefits for takeovers that involved large amounts of borrowed money, the hottest part of the takeover business. The proposal played on the frayed nerves of arbitrageurs, who speculate on takeover stocks. The snowballing had begun.

What It All Means for Working People

We can see, then, that although the stock market is only an imperfect gauge of economic activity in the U.S., its fluctuations are not strictly arbitrary. Stock prices are determined by a broad social estimate, made by the investing community as a whole, which combines the profits to be made from dividends paid by corporations and speculation on increases in equity. Yet this collective estimate can only be realized through the chaos of individual investors buying and selling stocks on the "free market." The market therefore has a tendency to react in an erratic, and even explosive manner (which is why any individual investor can sometimes gain or lose a considerable fortune investing in stocks).

Because the price of stocks reflects economic reality only through this peculiar prism, it is not correct to assume that the stock market crash of

1987 marks some dramatic change in the U.S. economy. By itself, the crash will certainly not bring about a new depression, or even a recession. It is still a controversial question whether the 1929 Wall Street crash triggered the Great Depression, or was itself caused by the same economic factors. But even if we take a cause and effect relationship as given in that case, the U.S. capitalist class has put in a series of economic regulators and safeguards—particularly in its banking system—which make it less likely that the stock market *per se* can have the same ripple-down effect on the overall economy today as it did in 1929. Nevertheless, the present U.S. economic reality created the insecurity on the part of investors which was the decisive factor leading to the crash.

In that sense the crash *reflects* an economic reality, which is still eating away at the roots of the capitalist system, leading inexorably toward an explosive crisis. This truth is not changed by the fact that the market, in the context of considerable ups and downs, has regained a substantial portion of the October 19 loss. It won't be changed even if Wall Street were to regain its previous strength and reach new highs. The very syndrome of dramatic gains followed by even more dramatic losses, followed again by substantial gains, with record volumes of stocks trading hands, testifies to the volatility and insecurity of the U.S. economic scene which provides the market's backdrop.

And though the crash is unlikely, by itself, to trigger an economic downturn, it *is* true that a drastic decline in the value of stocks such as occurred on October 19 can be a *contributing* factor in an economic slowdown. The equity represented by stocks is one part of the equation considered by major banks in providing loans to corporations. New issues of stock are now likely to be approached with more caution. These and similar factors may mean less available capital for investments in new productive facilities, or upgrading and maintaining old ones. Businesses fearing economic hard times are also less likely to make such investments.

Working people who have no money in the stock market may feel a certain insecurity and tend to save more of their wages, making fewer purchases and thereby contributing modestly to the already existing crisis of capitalist overproduction. (There is even speculation that in New York City, the real losses suffered by Wall Street brokerage houses and their employees will lead to a depression of the real estate market—both for office and residential space. The importance of Wall Street in the New York City economy, and the fear of severely depleted revenues as a result of the crash, has caused Mayor Koch to declare a freeze on the hiring of new city employees.)

So the great crash of 1987 may well have an indirect impact on working people's prospects for employment, etc., through these kinds of effects on the investment decisions of the bourgeoisie. More significantly, as previously mentioned, it reflects the general economic insecurity which is inherent in the capitalist system today. Its primary lesson lies in underlining, once more, the chaotic workings of that system—which treats the labor of working people just as it treats its shares of stock, as commodities to be bought and sold for a profit, and has about as much regard for the human beings who perform that labor as it does for the pieces of paper on which its stock certificates are inscribed.

But working people can resolve the crisis of Wall Street in passing, as we resolve the crisis of capitalism as a whole. We can create a new system where society itself owns the productive wealth, instead of individual stockholders. Then we will have no need whatsoever for stockbrokers and similar parasites, and we can put them to work doing some useful labor for a change. Perhaps the floor of the New York exchange can become a museum, where schoolchildren will come to try to understand the strange habits and rituals observed by inhabitants of the United States during the 20th century. ■

November 1, 1987

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REAGAN THREATENS WAR IN THE PERSIAN GULF

by Tom Barrett

The Reagan administration has taken giant steps towards involving the United States directly in the Iran-Iraq war. So far it has had virtually complete support among politicians of both capitalist parties in overt acts of aggression against Iran. Even the so-called progressive, Jesse Jackson, has endorsed the bombing of an Iranian oil platform on October 19. The trade union bureaucracy has either been vocal in its support of Reagan or silent. Ironically, the loudest voice in criticism of Reagan's Arab-Persian Gulf policy has been multimillionaire developer Donald Trump, who only questioned the wisdom of committing U.S. military force to defend oil exports destined for the U.S.'s European and Japanese competitors.

The truth about this war and the U.S. part in it has to be gotten out so that a broad coalition of labor and its allies can be put together to oppose any more U.S. participation. Revolutionary socialists should favor victory by neither Iran nor Iraq, but on the question of U.S. involvement there can be no neutrality. The U.S. has no business in the Arab-Persian Gulf except to get out—immediately.

Reagan has based his war policies on a foundation of transparent lies. He claims that the U.S. has been attempting all along to stop the Iran-Iraq war. He claims that the acts of war which he has ordered are intended to insure "freedom of navigation" for oil tankers in the Arab-Persian Gulf. He claims that Iran is acting in collusion with the Soviet Union to hamper "free world" shipping. These are all lies.

In 1980 Iraq attacked Iran with the encouragement of the United States. Iran was still holding the U.S. hostages and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein thought that he would encounter little U.S. opposition to his attack. He was right. However, even though Hussein's action was initially supported by the United States and other imperialist powers, and though it was designed to weaken or overturn the Iranian revolution, there was more to it than just this. The border between Iraq and Iran has been a battlefield since the dawn of history, and recent decades have been no exception. During the reign of the last shah there was virtually uninterrupted warfare between Iran and Iraq—in which the shah was the aggressor with the open encouragement of presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter. A great deal of the territory presently in dispute was seized during that period. *The Iraqis have legitimate complaints against Iran, going back to the time of the last shah.* In addition, to speak of the "Iranian revolution" today would be a cruel joke. If the

Khomeini regime is in any way "revolutionary" then the imperialists are in no need of counterrevolution. The Islamic Republic thoroughly smashed the last remaining vestiges of the Iranian revolution, with a reign of terror rivaling the worst regimes in that country's history.

Washington has no great love for the petty-bourgeois nationalist regime in Baghdad, either. When the Arab Socialist (Ba'ath) Union originally came to power in 1958, President Eisenhower landed U.S. troops in Lebanon, ready to move into Iraq to restore the overthrown Hashemite monarchy. As already mentioned, the U.S. encouraged the shah of Iran's aggression against Iraq. Iraq, like many other Arab countries with nationalist governments, received weapons and economic aid from the Soviet Union. It should be remembered that from 1963 to 1978 Iraq gave asylum to Khomeini himself, and allowed him to broadcast his radio messages into Iran.

The U.S. policy, therefore, from the beginning of the 1980 war has been that "both sides should lose." Unlike revolutionary socialists, who would like to see the killing come to an end, Washington has worked to make sure that neither side is able to bring the war to a successful conclusion, and that the slaughter of young Iranians and Iraqis continues with no end in sight. In this policy, which to date has been successful, Britain, France, and Israel have worked closely with the United States.

The imperialist policy of endless war has had an unexpected byproduct, however. Iran and Iraq each have only one export commodity—oil. The only way they have been able to continue to buy weapons in the world market is by producing and selling oil in large amounts, and selling it at whatever prices necessary to maximize sales volume. The result has been a worldwide oversupply of crude oil and prices which have fallen through the floor. This has been good news to consumers in industrialized countries, who have had some relief from the exorbitant gasoline prices of the 1970s and early 1980s. But it has been a disaster to oil-producing countries. Among the oil-producing countries which has been hurt is *the United States itself.*

The sharp increase in oil prices which began with the rise of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1973 made it profitable not only to reopen the oilfields of the south-central U.S., but to develop new ones as well, such as the offshore fields in the Gulf of Mexico and the Prudhoe Bay oilfield in Alaska. Sixty percent of the oil used in the United States is domestical-

ly produced. It would be a higher percentage, except that most of the oil shipped out of Prudhoe Bay through the Alaska Pipeline is actually *exported*, almost entirely to Japan.

These new oil profits helped fuel the much-vaunted "Sunbelt" boom of a decade ago. Banks liberally lent out money to finance residential and office construction in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana with no thought that there would ever be a problem with those loans in the future. The same process was repeated in foreign oil-producing countries, such as Mexico. Today the "Sunbelt" is a memory. In Tulsa, Oklahoma's shiny new office buildings are standing half vacant, and the state government is running out of money to pay unemployment benefits. The money lent out—at high inter-

Iranian oil platform after U.S. attack



est—against future oil revenues cannot be paid back under the original terms. The problem with the loans made to less developed oil-producing countries is even more severe.

Even the money which flowed into the Middle East helped fuel prosperity for some sections of U.S. capital. U.S. oil companies which are partners in the Arab-American Oil Company (Aramco) have shared in the Saudi profits. These profits have been invested in U.S. banks as well. With crude oil prices at levels less than half what they were at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, far less oil money is being deposited at Chase, Manufacturers Hanover, and Citicorp. The chief beneficiary of lower oil prices has been the U.S. auto industry. However, that sector is now also faced with a crisis of overproduction, and it has had to offer financing as low as one percent in order to sell some of its models. The economic equilibrium produced by lower oil prices was short-lived; the balance has shifted too far the other way. From the capitalist point of view *oil prices are too low*.

Iran and Iraq, which depend on their oil revenues, have absolutely no interest in stopping the flow of oil from the Arab-Persian Gulf oilfields to the rest of the world. The United States and its client states among the Middle Eastern oil producers, however, *do* need to take steps so that oil prices can rise to a more profitable level. So far, they have been unsuccessful; OPEC has been unable to impose production quotas or price floors. Cut-throat competition has, at least for now, destroyed the cartel—which some economists thought would be a dominating factor in the world economy for the foreseeable future.

The Iran-Iraq war has been going on for eight years—two years longer than World War II—and the "free flow of oil" through the Arab-Persian Gulf has never in that entire period been inhibited. Why did it take eight years for Ronald Reagan to discover that the Iran-Iraq war represented a threat to shipping, especially when there had been no interference with it?

This is where Kuwait enters the picture. Kuwait is a small, oil-rich sheikhdom at the northern end of the gulf. It is tucked between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and is close to Iran as well. Politically and economically, it has been closely allied with the United States for decades, and it has also been a strong supporter of conservative political forces in the Arab world.

In the Iran-Iraq war Kuwait has sided with Iraq and has provided Iraq with money and weapons. It has also helped with the transportation of both oil and weapons. Except for a very small coastline at the head of the gulf, Iraq is landlocked, and the war has made shipping into those ports impossible. Kuwait has used its harbor facilities to ship Iraqi oil out and weapons for the Iraqi war effort in. Naturally, Iran regards Kuwait's actions as hostile, and wants to stop them.

Iran has acted to interdict arms shipments to Iraq—as any belligerent power would do—since the war started in 1980. However, little notice was

taken outside the region, and oil supplies for the industrial countries have never been in jeopardy. It was not until July 1987 that Reagan agreed to the Kuwaiti request for U.S. navy escorts of its tanker fleet. Legally that could not be done, unless the ships were American, so Kuwait asked that the ships be "reflagged" as U.S. vessels. (This is not such a falsification as it may seem; most U.S. tankers and freighters are legally registered in foreign countries for tax purposes.) When Washington hesitated, because of doubts within some sections of the ruling class about the wisdom of deeper involvement in the gulf war, Kuwait threatened to ask the Soviet Union to reflag and escort Kuwaiti ships. *There has never been any collusion between the Soviets and Iran. Even though Iran sometimes attempts to play the Soviets off against the U.S., its enmity towards the Soviet Union remains as strong as it has ever been.* The so-called Soviet threat was actually that the Soviets, not the U.S., would insure, not block, the "free flow of oil," and thus enhance their influence in that region.

In July the United States agreed to the reflagging scheme. Iran, considering this to be an act of aggression—correctly so—responded by laying mines in the gulf. Each act of aggression by the U.S., with its resultant retaliation, has deepened and extended the war and U.S. involvement in it. Lloyd's of London has reported that in the six months before the reflagging, 58 of the 400 merchant ships making the trip through the gulf were attacked. In the three months since the reflagging began 53 ships have been attacked, according to Lloyd's. The U.S.'s attempt to insure "safe passage" through the gulf has actually made the situation twice as bad!

U.S. policy at first glance has seemed thoroughly absurd. The Reagan administration urged arms-exporting countries to stop the flow of arms into Iran and Iraq, yet the same Reagan administration sent arms to Iran in the hopes of Iranian intervention for the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon. In early 1987 Washington sent the U.S.S. *Stark* into the Arab-Persian Gulf, a provocation to which Iran did not respond. It was *Iraqi* missiles which killed 37 American sailors. Yet Reagan continues to claim that it is Iran which threatens U.S. interests.

However tempted one is to attribute Reagan's actions to stupidity, that would be a mistake. Washington may, to some extent, be responding to pressures it cannot control. But the greatest imperialist power in the world is hardly going to allow a tiny sheikhdom like Kuwait to dictate policy. We can only speculate as to what the U.S.'s motivations are. It is obvious, however, that the likely result of their actions is an increase in oil prices. In 1979 when the shah fell there was never any inhibition of the flow of Middle Eastern oil. There was no organized boycott as in 1973, nor was there any interference with shipping. Yet there was a shortage of gasoline, exasperating lines at the pumps, and a dramatic increase in prices. (Even in 1973 motorists were waiting for hours for gasoline

as fully-loaded tankers were still on their way to U.S. ports.) An increase in political tensions—a fear that oil supplies *might* be cut short—is enough to give oil companies *an excuse* to withhold oil from the market, jacking up prices at the same time.

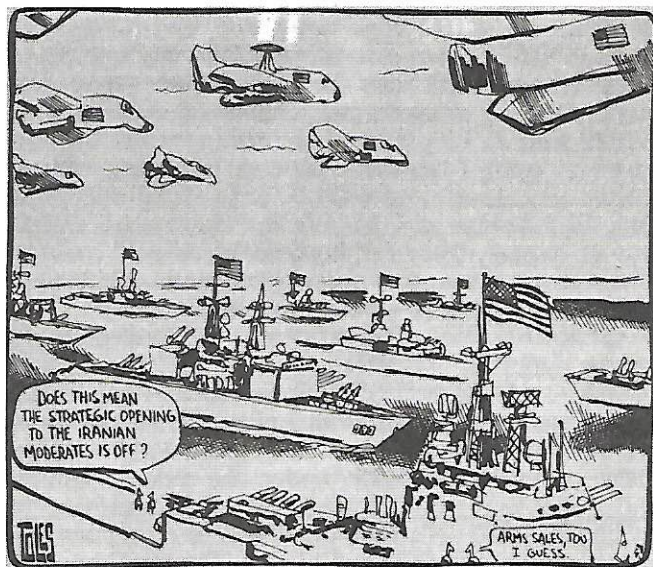
Furthermore, if there is anything which *will* jeopardize the gulf oil supplies, it is continued U.S. involvement in the war. One retaliation which has been suggested, for example, is an attack on the Kharg Island facility. Seventy percent of Iran's oil exports pass through Kharg Island. What would happen to the oil supplies on which Japan and West Germany depend if it were destroyed? The mining of shipping lanes is a response to the U.S. provocation. Mines were not a problem before the reflagging began. If the U.S. had not increased its involvement in the war, oil supplies would be less threatened than they are at the present time.

One thing is absolutely clear: Reagan's policies in no way benefit working people in the United States, Iran, or Iraq. All that will happen if the United States continues to deepen its involvement is that more American sailors will die, and the killing of Iranian and Iraqi soldiers and civilians will continue unabated.

An effective combination of education and mass action by the U.S. workers' movement is needed. Reagan can only win support for his policies by lying to the American working people. The truth is the best possible means of organizing broad opposition to U.S. involvement in the Iran-Iraq war.

U.S. out of the Arab-Persian Gulf!

October 29, 1987



FORD AND GM CONTRACTS

The Sorry Result of Union/Management Collaboration

by Bob Kutchko and Bill Onasch

For the first time in United Auto Workers union history, contract talks this year with General Motors and Ford went past the expiration of the old contract without a strike deadline being set. This was symptomatic of the cozy, collaborative relations between the auto employers and the UAW leadership. The new contracts with two of the "Big Three" (Chrysler comes up next year) have been ballyhooed as giving unprecedented job security. This is largely hype—hype paid for with the agreement of the union to cooperate in further erosion of job classifications, work rules, and other working conditions which actually threaten the little existing job security in the industry.

GENs and SELs

Much publicity surrounded the settlement at Ford heralding the "Guaranteed Employment Numbers" plan (GEN). This plan is advertised as providing job security to all Ford workers. A similar plan—called "Secure Employment Levels" (SEL) was agreed to by General Motors. How much security does GEN/SEL offer?

- The UAW surrendered, right off the bat, the jobs of workers in plants already scheduled for closing—Ford plants in Canton, Ohio, and Green Island, New York, and 19 GM plants employing 37,000.

- GEN/SEL does not apply to workers idled by cutbacks in production schedules because of slumping sales.

- GEN/SEL does not protect jobs in their present locations—work can be transferred across the country and if workers are unable or unwilling to transfer with it, they are out of luck.

- The auto companies have a monetary ceiling on their obligations under GEN/SEL—\$500 million at Ford, \$1.3 billion at GM. While these are enormous sums of money, these funds could be drained quickly when the numbers of workers protected—104,000 at Ford, 335,000 at GM—are considered.

GEN/SEL does offer a measure of protection to workers against layoffs due to technological changes, or "outsourcing" (subcontracting). A worker displaced for other than sales-related production declines goes into the GEN/SEL Pool—similar to the previous job bank under the prior contract.

Bob Kutchko is a laid-off UAW district committeeman at General Motors Fairfax, Kansas City. Bill Onasch is on the editorial board of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism. Bert Rubash, a skilled trades maintenance worker at Ford Twin Cities Assembly, St. Paul, also contributed to this article.

According to the official UAW Ford settlement summary, "A worker in a GEN Pool may be placed in a training program, used as a replacement to facilitate the training of another employee, given a job assignment which may be nontraditional within or outside the bargaining unit, or given another assignment, as has been done under PEP." (PEP was the job bank gimmick at Ford under the previous contract.) Workers in the GEN/SEL Pool receive the regular straight-time pay of the last classification that they worked in.

"Nontraditional work, inside or outside the bargaining unit" and "other assignments" could, at some point, open the door to "surplus" production workers displacing nonunion employees within the auto companies, or Japanese style "leasing out" of idle workers to other employers. In fact, some rail carriers with similar job protection schemes have already attempted to send rail workers off to clerical jobs, pumping gas at filling stations, security guard jobs, and other such "nontraditional" work with other companies.

While GEN/SEL supposedly protects the number of job slots now active at GM and Ford, the GEN/SEL numbers can be brought down through attrition. For every two job slots lost through death, resignation, or retirement, only one slot remains protected under GEN/SEL.

Economic Package

The new contracts provide for only one general wage increase of 3 percent and the "folding in" of 81 cents of COLA into the basic wage rate. (COLA is the Cost of Living Adjustment which can move up, or conceivably down, on a quarterly basis, based on the government's Cost of Living Index. COLA is considered a supplement to wages and is not figured in to wage-related benefits.) In the second and third years of the agreements, workers will receive "Performance Bonus Payments" amounting to 3 percent of their earnings for the previous year. These lump sum bonuses do not become a part of the general wage and are excluded from wage-related benefits.

The General Motors profit sharing formula was altered to match the one in place at Ford. Ford workers got substantial profit sharing checks last year, while GM workers got nothing. However, the Ford formula by no means guarantees substantial bonuses for GM employees. For one thing, there are over three times as many GM workers to divvy up any profits generated under the formula. Also, Ford has much more work "outsourced," at lower wage rates, than GM. Only GM's domestic auto profits are fac-

tored in—their enormous profits from foreign operations and nonauto subsidiaries are excluded.

According to UAW projections (based on an average annual inflation rate of 4.7 percent over the life of the contract), a Ford assembler's wages (including COLA "float") would increase from \$13.69 per hour to \$15.80 by the end of the contract. In addition, the two lump sum bonuses would total \$2,285. (This is assuming 2,080 hours of work per year, of which 250 would be at overtime rates. Obviously, the bonus would be greatly reduced for workers who have lost time through sales-related layoffs during the previous year.)

What Did the UAW Give Up?

While auto workers did not give back any direct economic concessions, and in fact made some modest economic gains, the agreement was another ominous step down the road of class collaboration. The national union agreed to support efforts at the local level, where basic working conditions are negotiated, to accelerate deep, fundamental changes in job classifications and work rules. A renewed commitment was made to schemes like "Quality of Work Life Circles" and "Team Concept."

Disguised as efforts to improve efficiency and quality by generating "worker input," such ploys actually aim at getting workers to come up with ideas for increasing work loads, eliminating jobs, and reassigning work to lower-paying classifications. With profit sharing and bonus gimmicks thrown in as well, the employers hope to get the workers to start policing themselves, using peer pressure to speed up production in the elusive chase for bonuses.

The UAW and the companies pledged to "work together to improve quality, operating efficiency, and work relationships." The contracts established a joint National Job Security and Operational Effectiveness Committee and similar local committees. Within six months, these committees will come up with action plans in such areas as:

- "Exploration of new forms of work organization."

- "A realignment in skilled trades classifications to a number of appropriate basic trades to support the needs of the operation/location."

- "Initiatives to reduce chronic absenteeism."

- "Implementation of skilled trades team concepts."

"Efforts of the local parties to improve operational effectiveness may require change or waiver of certain agreements or practices" disclaims the new UAW contracts. These committees are authorized to make changes in the contracts without any further consultation with the membership.

In the crazyquilt pattern of local negotiations, the auto bosses hope to isolate militant locals, play locals off against one another, encourage "whipsawing"—competition among locals to grant the company concessions in order to curry favor. Locals that refuse to budge on "restrictive"

working conditions may find their work shifted to more "reasonable" locals.

The Lost Heritage of the UAW-CIO

The agreements are a new yardstick with which to measure the degeneration of the UAW from its original goals and character. The UAW was on the cutting edge of the CIO upsurge of the 1930s. The CIO during this period was more than a fight for bread-and-butter issues; it was a broad social movement as well as a militant industrial union organization. The CIO inspired and organized millions of unskilled workers, including the most oppressed sectors—above all the Black workers. It enjoyed support far broader than its formal membership and benefited directly from organizations of unemployed workers and "women's auxiliaries."

The UAW began as an effort to create one union for all workers within the industry, seeking to impose uniform wages and working conditions throughout the industry. It militantly fought all forms of piecework and phony bonus and "incentive" plans. During its initial period the UAW practiced what would now be called "adversarial unionism." It was led mainly by radicals.

There was little talk of cooperation between workers and the company during the 1937 Flint sit-down strikes against General Motors or the 1941 River Rouge strike against Ford—key turning points in the organization of the industry. Class collaboration began to assert its grip under the guise of "patriotism" during the Second World War and consolidated its position during the Cold War under the leadership of the ex-socialist Walter Reuther.

Under the Reuther regime (1946-70) the UAW, along with the rest of the bureaucracy that came to dominate the CIO, began to retreat on social issues. The fight for adequate Social Security pensions and National Health Insurance was abandoned in favor of negotiating pensions and health insurance plans with individual corporations. This was a big step toward the kind of "job trust" mentality of the traditional craft unions, building a base for the bureaucracy among a layer of relatively privileged workers, cutting off the ties with broader sections of the unemployed and unorganized workers. (The CIO merged with the AF of L in 1955.)

After the UAW won COLA in 1948—an enormous step in protecting wages from the ravages of inflation during the life of a contract—Reuther was able to devise a wage formula that was to dominate for thirty years. By taking the single most important issue to workers—wages—out of contract fights, the Reuther bureaucracy further demobilized the militant fighting spirit of the UAW. Stability and increasing cooperation between union officials and the companies came to dominate auto collective bargaining for three decades.

This pattern was broken by the bosses in the late '70s. During the long postwar boom, which kept U.S. industry busy rebuilding war-torn Europe and Japan, and taking over the former colonial markets of the Europeans, U.S. bosses preferred to throw a

few crumbs to the workers in exchange for labor peace. By the late '70s that boom was over and European and Japanese competitors began to make serious inroads into the domain of U.S. imperialism—including the domestic auto market. The bosses demanded—and got—concessions from the UAW bureaucracy.

One of the historic gains established through struggle by the UAW was parity of wages and benefits throughout the major auto makers. This began to unravel with concessions to Chrysler—allegedly on the brink of bankruptcy—in 1979. When the UAW surrendered wages and holidays to Chrysler, the other car companies, and some local union bureaucrats at GM and Ford, demanded concessions as well, in order to be "competitive" with Chrysler and the Japanese companies. Massive plant closings, escalating "outsourcing," speedup, and automation have gone hand-in-hand with concessions in wages, paid time off, and working conditions over the past eight years. Tens of thousands of auto jobs have been eliminated. The productivity of those lucky enough to be working has shot up while wages have taken a beating. (See chart for a Ford worker's wage and productivity record over the past decade.)

National Chauvinism

Until 1985, Canadian auto workers were a part of the UAW and the union's slogan was "Buy North American." But there is a higher level of class consciousness and a greater tempo of class struggle north of the border. This is reflected by the fact that Canada's labor party, the New Democratic Party, is now leading in the polls. The combativity of Canadian auto workers led to increasing frictions between Solidarity House in Detroit and the Canadian bureaucracy, led by Bob White. White could not sell the kinds of concessions demanded by Detroit.

After heavy-handed attempts by the UAW bureaucracy to ram concessions down the throats of Cana-

dian auto workers in the 1984 contract negotiations, White led a split from the UAW, establishing the independent Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). This split has led to a weakening of auto worker bargaining power on both sides of the border.

The split has roused the UAW bureaucrats to mount a vindictive vendetta against their Canadian brothers and sisters. A wire service story in the November 5 *Kansas City Star* reports: "The contract requires General Motors to cut Canadian production, and lay off Canadian workers, in direct proportion to its U.S. cuts and layoffs."

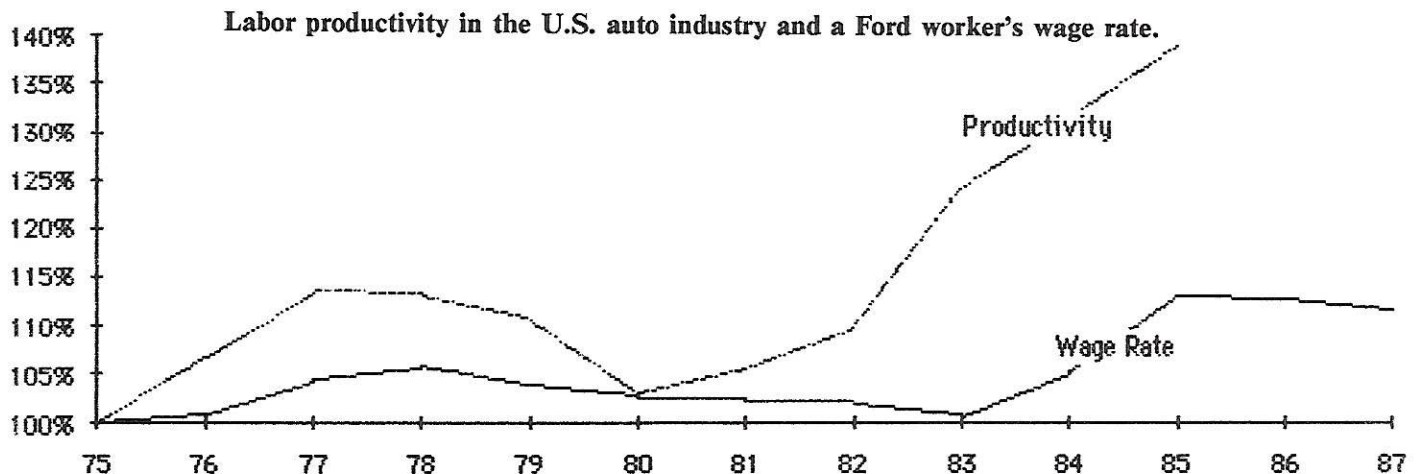
The Bureaucracy's Bargaining Strategy

The UAW has never sought to confront the entire auto industry at once. Historically the bureaucracy has always used a "one at a time" approach. Today the Big Three contracts are out of synch—Chrysler's contract doesn't expire until next year. There was much speculation this year about the union going after more profitable Ford first and then "imposing" a Ford settlement on General Motors.

Actually, many UAW and industry observers think that the UAW let Ford off cheaply by negotiating a Ford settlement that would be acceptable to the more recalcitrant GM. Indeed, GM settled quite promptly for essentially the same contract as Ford.

The "one at a time" strategy has always weakened the bargaining power of auto workers and imposed a pattern of what is acceptable to the toughest bargaining company—whether that company is the official "target" or not.

In fact, the UAW bureaucracy's strategic outlook has never much differed from former GM president "Engine Charlie" Wilson's famous proclamation, "What's good for General Motors is good for the USA." Hoping to coax some trickling down of benefits from bloated auto maker profits, the Solidari-



Both sets of numbers are adjusted for inflation and indexed at 100 percent for 1975.

The wage rate includes profit sharing and bonuses.

Productivity figures for '86 and '87 are not yet available.

ty House leaders have always sought to promote the economic health of their employers. This has included, at various times, helping to stick the knife to mass transit systems, supporting strong "national defense"—most especially those military projects contracted to the Big Three auto makers, and demanding curbs on the import of Japanese cars.

Former UAW president Doug Fraser was proud to receive an honorary seat on the Chrysler board of directors. The top UAW bureaucracy are partisans of "coparticipation"—a form of class collaboration popular with the Social Democracy in Europe. Under coparticipation, workers' representatives sit down with the bosses and share responsibility for decisions leading to layoffs, speedups, and rejection of wage increases.

UAW leaders have always been prominent in the various tripartite schemes, beginning in World War II, that purport to bring together representatives of labor, capital, and the "public" to promote grand plans for production, fiscal and monetary policies, trade quotas, and wage restrictions. Right now the bosses are not interested in such charades—they don't need them. But the UAW stands by, ready if called.

Needed: A Class Struggle Policy

Auto workers desperately need to rescue their union from the disastrous course being steered by the bureaucracy. A prerequisite for an effective union is a return to the recognition of the reality of the class struggle—the interests of the auto corporations and the auto workers, far from being complementary, are unalterably opposed. All forms of cooperation and coparticipation need to be replaced with militant defense of past gains and

aggressive pursuit of improvements in wages, hours, benefits, conditions, and genuine job security.

Also sorely needed is a return to the social perspectives that marked the stormy rise of the UAW-CIO. While collective bargaining is far from outmoded—effective measures such as reducing the workweek, limits on overtime, etc., can and should be fought for in auto contracts to protect and create jobs—auto workers, and all organized workers, need to reverse the estrangement and suspicion that has come to divide them from the unorganized and unemployed sectors of the working class.

The UAW, and all organized labor, has to develop a plan for creating and saving jobs not just for its own remaining dues-paying members but for all workers. Social legislation for a shorter workweek, with no reduction in pay; massive programs of useful public works—those are the kinds of slogans that must replace the union's current reactionary demands for banning imports. Such a perspective would once again rally the support of millions of workers as the CIO did during its formative period.

Of course, such a perspective would mean a political break with the bureaucrats' "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party. One of the negative lessons of the rise of the CIO was its political cooptation by the New Deal Democratic Party. The Democrats appropriated much social rhetoric but derailed most of the social programs supported by labor. Once again the need for a labor party, long an official objective of the UAW, proves relevant. (For a fuller exposition of the type of program needed by the labor movement see Frank Lovell's article "Labor's Answer to Today's Problems," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 45, October 1987.) ■

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

by Dave Riehle and Frank Lovell

\$2.50

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

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

LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS: OVER HALF A MILLION MARCH ON WASHINGTON

by Walter Lippmann

In an outpouring unprecedented in human history, over half a million lesbians and gay men marched on the nation's capital on October 11, 1987, to demand a redress of grievances from a hostile government, and to uncompromisingly affirm their humanity and the legitimacy of their sexual orientation.

As the final demonstrators entered the Capitol mall, five and a half hours after the first had arrived, organizers announced that 650,000 had marched. By contrast, the National Park Service, a federal agency, said that only 200,000 had protested. Their figure was repeated by most of the media.

In the wake of the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) crisis, a rising tide of fear, institutionalized bigotry, and violence has been added to "everyday" social prejudices against homosexuality in our culture. Responding to this, activists who had built the first national gay rights march in 1979 determined to build a countermobilization so massive and so powerful that no one in the nation could ignore it. They succeeded well beyond their fondest aspirations.

October 11 was over five times larger than the 1979 protest, which drew 100,000. In 1979, not one elected official in the country endorsed. This time scores of local, state, and federal officials added their names. Five city governments endorsed. The mayors of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., endorsed.

All commentators agreed this was the most massive protest in Washington since the Vietnam war era. March organization was excellent and not a single person was arrested.

Seven Demands

The protest was built around seven specific demands and unified around a central theme. The demands were: 1) legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships; 2) repeal of all laws that make sodomy between consenting adults a crime; 3) a presidential order banning discrimination by the federal government; 4) passage of a congressional lesbian and gay civil rights bill; 5) an end to discrimination against people with AIDS, ARC, HIV-positive status or those perceived to have AIDS; massive increases in funding for AIDS education, research, and patient care; money for AIDS, not for war; 6) reproductive freedom, the right to control our own bodies, and an end to sexist oppression; 7) an end to racism in this country and apartheid in South Africa.

The theme of the mobilization, which summarized concisely the spirit which animated the fourteen-month effort was, "for love and for life, we're not going back!"

The breadth of the action was striking. All fifty states were represented. Thirty thousand traveled to Washington from Los Angeles! All ages were present, though most were young, in their twenties and thirties. Most were new to political mobilizations, as their fresh and enthusiastic spirit indicated. Perhaps 60 percent were male and 40 percent female.

The most striking weakness in the composition of the protest was racial. It was predominantly white, with well under 10 percent being people of color. Considering the highly disproportionate rate at which the AIDS crisis has affected people of color, this weakness was even more unfortunate.

Overwhelmingly Gay

Participants were overwhelmingly lesbians and gay men—well over 95 percent. Given the seriousness of the threats from the disease on the one side and public ignorance and prejudice on the other side, this composition makes sense. It confirms the centrality of self-interest as the strongest basis for the mobilization of an oppressed group.

The *Washington Post* appreciated the significance of the fact that the protest was mainly gay in its front-page lead: "Yesterday's rally would have astounded Oscar Wilde, the 19th century author and playwright once jailed for engaging in what he called 'the love that dare not speak its name.'"

Organizing efforts were centered in lesbian and gay communities, those most immediately under threat, and those with the clearest understanding of the issues. Every single kind of lesbian and gay organization: social, political, cultural, religious, and professional came out to be counted.

People With AIDS (PWAs), living witnesses to the ravages of the disease, often bundled up in blankets and pushed in wheelchairs, constituted the lead contingent of the march. The most dramatic single component was the NAMES Project Quilt, a massive patchwork containing the names of 1,920 human beings who have died of AIDS. A team of 500 volunteers worked from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. the morning of the march to tie the individual sections together, using nearly 10,000 grommets. The quilt extended over two city blocks and weighed 7,000 pounds (three and a half tons).

The names on the quilt were read aloud in a moving ceremony. Individual panels ranged from the wildly colorful and dramatic to one fashioned simply from a plain white sheet. Its message, hand-printed in black, read simply, "I have decorated this banner to honor my brother. Our parents did not want his name used publicly. The omission of

his name represents the fear of oppression that AIDS victims and their families feel." An olive-drab panel contained the names of John Patrick Quinn, an actor and Central America solidarity activist. It was adorned with antiwar buttons, a "peace with Nicaragua" bumper sticker, and in bold red letters, the word "*Presente!*"

Response of Nongay Organizations

Organizations not predominantly gay, but which share common interests with lesbians and gays, responded unevenly to October 11. Though a policy of nonexclusion was maintained, a process of self-selection took place, reflecting political priorities and social attitudes within the groups.

The National Organization for Women (NOW), the largest feminist organization in the U.S., was an early endorser and financial contributor. Eleanor Smeal, NOW's immediate past president, spoke strongly and was well received. The National Women's Political Caucus, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and other feminist organizations supported the march. Also endorsing and participating were the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Psychological Association. Some local chapters of Black and Latino civil rights organizations endorsed, though national groups did not.

Among the antiwar and solidarity organizations which endorsed and built contingents in the march were: Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), Mobilization for Survival, November 29th Committee for Palestine, New Jewish Agenda, and the Committee for a New Korea Policy.

National AFL-CIO headquarters was the site of a reception for march supporters attended by over 400. Sponsored by the Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance, a four-year-old national group, it featured remarks by Massachusetts representative Barney Frank, one of two publicly gay members of Congress, John Sweeney, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and Bill Olwell, an international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) who is the highest-ranking openly gay union officer in the nation. Joslyn Williams, president of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, declared, "The labor movement owes you a great debt. Five years ago this wouldn't have been possible. Today, through your persistence, organized labor has finally come out of the closet." Food was provided free by the UFCW. AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland personally approved holding the event at headquarters, and no rent was charged.

The federation did not endorse or publicize the event. *AFL-CIO News* reported the funeral of long-time union and civil rights activist Bayard Rustin in its issue preceding the march. Omitted was any mention of Rustin's recent public affirmation of his homosexuality and his active support for the October 11 mobilization.

Two international unions endorsed, SEIU and the United Farm Workers. The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Coalition of Labor Union

Women endorsed. The San Francisco Central Labor Council and a number of union locals and officers endorsed the mobilization. District 65 organized the trade union contingent.

Two Speakers

Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers, made the most cogent and concise remarks of the day during the rally. He said, in part

Brothers and sisters, our movement has been supporting lesbian and gay rights for over twenty years. We were supporting lesbian and gay rights when ten people was a crowd. In 1965, in Delano, California, our union started a strike against grape growers. After a little while, the growers began to beat up our people. The police began to jail our people. We were not known and no one would come to our support. We were hungry and frightened, and in need of help, and lesbian and gay people came from San Francisco to help us then and we shall never forget that. That started a solidarity and cooperation between our two movements.

The officers and the members of our union endorse your list of demands. We want civil rights for lesbian and gay people as we want civil rights for farmworkers and all other people that need civil rights. . . .

We stand with you in asking for a presidential order to ban job discrimination in the government, in the military, and in the right to immigrate into this country. And we stand with you in all your other demands.

Chavez presented two demands as particularly interconnected: the need for a massive increase in funding for AIDS education, research, and patient care, and the Farm Workers union's call for a boycott of table grapes. He explained that the pesticides used by growers pollute the earth, the air, and the water. Pesticide residues can be found in newborn infants, mothers' milk, and in table grapes. So Chavez concluded, "We feel very strongly that pesticide residues in the food we eat contribute to the breakdown of the immune system and they're connected."

Reverend Jesse Jackson, the front-running candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, was warmly received. Jackson had initially declined to speak. Intense lobbying by some Jackson supporters forced him to change his mind. As the only candidate of the two dominant capitalist parties to support the demonstration, his remarks were listened to carefully.

Jackson called for a massive increase in efforts to fight against the AIDS epidemic. He declared lesbians and gays to be part of his vision of the fabric of U.S. life. And thus he spoke out against violent attacks on lesbians, gays, women,

and people of color. Especially well received was Jackson's eloquent advocacy of civil rights for all, declaring, "everybody must have equal protection under the law in the real America. There are those who would isolate differences, desecrate our humanity, then justify their inhumanity just like the Nazis did with yellow stars and pink triangles. It was not right in Nazi Germany and it is not right in America."

After his speech, Jackson demonstratively went down from the speakers' platform into the People With AIDS contingent, shaking hands and hugging many of those present. Considering the widespread fear, prejudice, and violence which has been directed against the victims of this disease, Jackson's gesture was received with immense enthusiasm.

A negative aspect of Jackson's speech should also be noted. This was not reported in any of some 30 print-media reports I saw on his speech, but its significance should not be missed. He said:

Pretty soon I'm going back to the Middle East, to the Persian Gulf. We have a strong military and weak policies; guided missiles, misguided leadership. We're divided over the policy in the Middle East. We should not be divided over supporting our service men and women who are there trying to fight against these odds. They are ours, they are Americans, they are young people who deserve a decent policy and a commander-in-chief who makes sense. The policy may be wrong, but our soldiers are sound people and they deserve to live.

A week later, Reverend Jackson, a long-time advocate of nonviolence in the civil rights movement, publicly endorsed Washington's bombing raid on an Iranian oil platform. Political gestures such as these, along with his affirmations "supporting our service men and women who are there" have a definite political meaning. They are a signal to the ruling class of this nation of Jackson's fundamental loyalty. He sharply criticizes specific policies of the administration. He presents a populist critique of the rampant social and economic injustice in society. But his aim is to reform and improve the existing social and economic structure of U.S. society, not to fundamentally alter or challenge it.

Aftermath of the March

The high levels of energy and enthusiasm felt by participants went well beyond the demonstration itself. The Washington, D.C., subway system changed its Sunday schedule to rush-hour levels, and that still was insufficient to handle the throngs. And as thousands entered the large, high-ceilinged subways after the march, spontaneous cheering broke out lasting long moments and into several different stations.

Washington, D.C., was packed with open lesbians

and gays for days before and after the march. Strangers chatted easily and became friends. Lovers embraced and kissed one another openly, something heterosexual couples take for granted but which lesbians and gays rarely can. For a moment, participants had a sense of what it would be like to feel safe outside the bounds of a ghetto.

October 11 was only the most massive of a week-long schedule of events extending before and after the march itself. Gay organizations of all sorts planned national gatherings to coincide with the mobilizations. Hundreds lobbied their congressional representatives. Thousands of long-term committed relationships were celebrated in a mass wedding. Eight hundred and forty were arrested in a nonviolent civil disobedience protest at the U.S. Supreme Court. Thousands spontaneously brought flowers to the grave of martyred San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk at the National Cemetery. A wreath-laying ceremony for lesbian and gay veterans was conducted by protesters at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Three hundred activists met the morning after the march to plan for the formation of a National Lesbian and Gay Rights Congress. It will continue the organizing momentum begun in the mobilization.

The timeliness of this meeting was confirmed two days later by the United States Senate. In a 94-2 vote, the Senate approved an amendment to an appropriations bill by North Carolina senator Jesse Helms. It would ban the use of federal funds for AIDS education projects which "promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual sexual activity." Senator Alan Cranston, Democratic majority whip, had been an endorser of the mobilization. Yet he also voted for the reactionary Helms amendment. Activists are already planning strong protests to force Cranston to reverse his course.

The Political Left

Finally, a note about the political left. With few exceptions (notably the Workers World Party and Line of March), groups on the political left did not build the march or actively encourage participation by their members. At best, they saw the mobilization as a place to sell their literature. As a result, they stood quite literally on the sidelines.

Socialists have always affirmed their belief that "an injury to one is an injury to all." The converse is also true: a success for one is a success for all. Today's social protest movements, those against U.S. intervention in Central America, for Black, women's, and workers' rights, as well as the socialist movement, can all gain a renewed sense of urgency and enthusiasm from the success of October 11. All these movements have both moral and practical reasons to stand together in self-defense and to advance common interests wherever possible.

We owe the organizers of October 11 a deep debt of gratitude for demonstrating, in the most compelling way, how to "do it right." I feel very proud to be able to say, "I was there." ■

Moves to rehabilitate the Moscow trials defendants

KONDRATIEV and Shayanov were important intellectual figures in post-October Russia. Both were non-communists and non-Marxists, and the quite legal work that they did testified to the high level of intellectual freedom that prevailed in the USSR before the consolidation of the Stalinist dictatorship.

Kondratiev has on some occasions been wrongly portrayed as the inventor of the theory of long cyclical waves.¹ He did in fact formulate the sophisticated academic version of this theory. He founded one of the first institutes for systematic study of international cycles, which had a considerable prestige. His theory continues to enjoy an authority in academic circles, although it was subjected to severe criticism by the Soviet Marxists, beginning with Leon Trotsky.

Aleksandr Shayanov was one of the main theoreticians of the "non-market peasant agriculture" that was inspired in Russia by the populists. Much less well-known internationally than Kondratiev, he made his mark above all as the author of a famous article on "The theory of non-capitalist economic systems," published in German in 1924; and a curious "peasant utopia" (*My brother Alexei's voyage to the land of peasant utopia*). He was a prominent activist in the Soviet cooperative movement after the October revolution.

The Stalin faction's real grievance against the defendants in the 1930 trial was the support they gave to Bukharin and Rykov against the policy of forced collectivization of agriculture and breakneck industrialization on which Stalin embarked in 1928-29. It should be stressed that Kondratiev and Shayanov, who were definitely not members of the CPSU, kept their distance from the Right Opposition, limiting themselves to offering facts, statistics, analyses and forecasts that helped Bukharin to underpin his arguments.

Many observers saw the legal rehabilitation of Kondratiev as a confirmation that Bukharin himself will soon be officially rehabilitated. Bukharin's widow and his son, Yuri Larin, started the official procedure for rehabilitation back in the Khrushchev era. After a long and tortuous procedure, the party

ON JULY 16, 1987, the Supreme Court of the USSR legally rehabilitated the great Russian economist Nikolai Kondratiev and his co-defendants in the 1930 trial at which they were sentenced to long years in prison. With his macabre sense of humor, Stalin called this the case of the "industry party." In reality, it was mainly a trial of agronomists working in the Rural Economics Institute in Moscow, as well as of some people working at the International Institute of Conjunctural Studies. The first institution was headed by Aleksandr Shayanov, the second by Kondratiev.

ERNEST MANDEL

Control Commission rejected this appeal in the summer of 1977.

Today, positive references to Bukharin as a person, and even to his political orientation, are multiplying in the Soviet press, as well as, by the way, in some Chinese publications. In its issue of July 22 this year, *Literaturnaya gazeta* published the text of a one-act play that presented two characters, one defending forced collectivization, the other upholding Bukharin's gradualist theses. For the first time, Bukharin was not only portrayed as a kind and sympathetic person, although an opponent of Lenin, but as someone defending a correct line. The author of the play was Fyodor Burlatsky, one of Gorbachev's main intellectual and media representatives.

In view of the rehabilitation of Kondratiev, Shayanov and their associates, a refusal to wipe out the penal charges against Bukharin would put the judicial authorities in the USSR in an awkward position. After all, Kondratiev was a minister in the Kerensky government. Bukharin was a leader of the October revolution, a member of the Bolshevik Politburo, called by Lenin in his Last

Testament "the favorite of the whole party." Is it possible to rehabilitate Kondratiev and not Bukharin?

What makes a rehabilitation of Bukharin quite likely is that the wiping out of the charges against Kondratiev and his companions in misfortune was by no means an isolated incident.² In 1985, one of the main defendants in the third Moscow Trial, former People's Commissar of Finance and former Soviet ambassador to Berlin, Nikolai Krestinsky, was also rehabilitated, along with five of his co-defendants.³ It is true that, unlike the rehabilitation of Marshal Tukhachevsky and the other leaders of the Red Army who were shot in 1937, Krestinsky's rehabilitation was carried out very much on the quiet. While the military chiefs rushed to include pictures of their comrades murdered by Stalin in the memoirs they were publishing and in history textbooks, Krestinsky's name is still barely mentioned in the USSR.⁴

Nonetheless, given the feeling for consistency that characterizes the writers of the "official" history of the

CPSU, Bukharin's rehabilitation could very well loom at the end of the process that started with Krestinsky's, even if the timing remains unclear.

After Bukharin, Trotsky? Alexandre Adler announced that a bit precipitously in the Paris daily *Libération* of September 10, 1987. For the moment, the only definite signs are the less hostile public references that are beginning to show up in the press and in plays and literary accounts. Two of the closest political friends of the founder of the Red Army — the Old Bolshevik and civil war hero Muralov and Ivan Smilga, who were sentenced in the second Moscow Trial — have, moreover, also been rehabilitated by the Supreme Court.

It does not follow from this, however, that the wiping out of the criminal charges against Leon Trotsky can already be taken for granted.⁵ There is no lack of contrary signs. At the Moscow Book Fair that opened in the latter half of September 1987, Orwell's book, *Animal Farm*, a famous satirical allegory centered around the Stalin-Trotsky conflict, was seized and banned. The same thing happened to Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin, despite the pro-

tests of representatives its English publishers who were present. (*The Times*, September 12, 1983).

Trotsky acknowledged as "excellent party activist"

Moreover, on September 10, Victor Shebrikov delivered a speech on the 110th anniversary of the birth of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, which contained a very hostile reference to Trotsky. (*The Independent*, September 12, 1987.) Afanasiev, the editor of *Pravda*, questioned the opportuneness of rehabilitating Trotsky. He argued that the revolutionary leader's "negative" features predominated over his "positive" ones, although he did not deny the latter.

The press is more and more taking up this controversial question. *Ogonyok* noted the generally positive assessment of Trotsky found in Lenin's Testament, and said that he was "an excellent activist of our party, forced [by Stalin] to set out on a path leading to isolation." The dailies *Trud* and *Sovietskaya Rossia* at the end of September devoted whole pages to a critical examination of Trotsky's role, denying that the time had come for rehabilitating him or that such a rehabilitation was underway. The TASS agency disseminated extensive summaries of these articles.

The least that can be said is that the reason for all this is unclear. Are the CPSU leaders deliberately blowing hot and cold? Are they divided on this question? Whatever answer you give to this question, the usefulness of, and the need for, pressure from the international workers' movement for rehabilitating all the defendants in the purge trials stands out quite clearly.

In order to understand the implications of wiping out the criminal charges against the defendants in the purge trials — against *all* the defendants and not just the main Bolshevik leaders who were murdered after these judicial travesties — it is necessary to distinguish three aspects of the Stalinist repression against the Old Bolsheviks:

- Gross falsification of history. This involves completely covering up their role in the Russian revolution and even in the Russian workers' movement before the revolution, as well as in building and leading the Soviet state and the CPSU from 1917 to 1928, or else mentioning them only under slanderous designations, such as imperialist spies, Gestapo agents, traitors, counter-revolutionaries, murderers, terrorists, saboteurs and so on.



Subtle falsification of history

- More subtle falsification of history. This consists of distorting certain aspects of their work and the ideas they defended, covering up part of their real work and attributing to them conceptions that they never held. Such was the standard operating procedure of the Stalin faction in its fight against the various oppositions between 1923 and 1928.⁶ Over the years from 1929 to 1934, this gradually slid into the base slanders of the first type.

- Formal sentencing for crimes that they never committed and execution subsequent to these verdicts. (Radek, Rakovsky and some others were exceptions. They were sentenced to long prison terms, and died either as a result of their privations or at the hands of their jailers — the truth may never be known.) These sentences involved the deprivation of all civil rights and meant that the writings of all these communist leaders and cadres remain banned to this day in the USSR.

In order to get off the hook at the least cost, the bureaucracy may only rectify a part of the consequences of these crimes of Stalin, for example on the seventieth anniversary of the October revolution. It may eliminate the

grossest and most slanderous falsifications of history, as has already been done in the new edition of the Soviet *Bolshaya Entsiklopediya*, without restoring the full historical truth about the victims of the trials or permitting re-publication and free circulation of their writings. It might even wipe out all the gross falsifications and a lot of the more subtle ones, and tolerate re-publication of some writings of the Old Bolsheviks, but not all. Still other variants are possible.

Need for a vigorous campaign

Once you see this range of choice, you can understand the decisive importance of total, non-discriminatory and public rehabilitation of all the defendants in the Moscow trials, and therefore the need for a vigorous campaign for this. Such rehabilitation necessarily involves the state acknowledging before the Soviet masses that Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Rakovsky, Pyatakov, Radek, Smirnov and other leaders of the party in Lenin's time and immediately after his death were not only not traitors, counter-revolutionaries, imperialist agents, fascists, assassins or terrorists. It would also mean recognizing that they were the main leaders of the state and party, members of the Politburo — in fact the only ones mentioned along with Stalin in Lenin's Testament — that they were revolutionists and dedicated and honest communists, and that therefore their writings deserve to be reprinted.

If they are to be criticized, this has to be done in an objective way, based on what their writings actually contain and not on the basis of "intentions" attributed to them or "a double meaning" that is generally falsely imputed. These writings cannot remain under wraps. Even a partial and selective reprinting is inadmissible. No debate, no reference to what happened in the USSR from 1917 to the murder of the Old Bolsheviks or even up to today will be possible any longer without finally taking account of these writings.

Of course, the question of legal rehabilitation of the defendants in the Moscow trials, including restoration of civil and political rights for them, their companions and their descendants, must not be mixed up with the question of political endorsement of all, or most, of the opinions they held in opposition to the "general line" of the majority in the Central Committee in the CPSU, that is the Stalin faction.

In the first place, such political endorsement would run up against the obvious problem that these defendants advocated very different ideas. Contrary to the myth invented by the repressive services and propagated by the Stalin-Molotov group in the USSR and in the Communist International, there was never a "bloc of Trotskyists and rightists" in the CPSU, neither before or after the expulsion of the oppositionists.

Left Opposition supported by Krupskaya

Likewise, Zinoviev and Kamenev were never Trotskyists. At the most, they were associated publicly and openly — not secretly through some unimaginable "plot" — with the Left Opposition in the United Opposition of 1926-27, which, moreover, was also supported by Lenin's widow, Krupskaya.

The defendants in the Moscow trials would have to be classified politically in at least five different categories: the "Trotskyists" properly speaking (even this term lends itself to misunderstanding — it would be better to call them supporters of the ideas of the Left Opposition); the Zinovievites; the partisans of the so-called Bukharin right opposition; those who were fully-fledged Stalinists in the years 1923-29, but broke with Stalin on some political points at the beginning of the 1930s; and some without very clear political convictions.

It is, therefore, impossible to say that all their political opinions were correct, since they were mutually exclusive.

Secondly, the objective of a rehabilitation of Stalin's victims cannot be acceptance or rejection of their political views. That would mean adopting Stalin's terms, accepting the "ideological" basis of the trials and the terrorist repression. The right to make political mistakes has to be reaffirmed. Without that, no democracy or even honest debate is possible.

If voicing an idea that may prove incorrect is more or less automatically condemned as criminal behavior and leads to repression, deportation or death, no one will any longer dare to express ideas different from those of the general secretary. And since history has abundantly demonstrated that no Central Committee and no general secretary are infallible, such quiescence engenders an incapacity to correct errors, even catastrophic ones, for long periods.

We remain convinced that essentially Trotsky and the Left Opposition had a

correct view of the issues in the great controversies that shook the CPSU between 1923 and 1933. But we will never ask that a resolution of the CPSU Central Committee, and still less a verdict of the Supreme Court of the USSR,

solemnly declare so. That verdict belongs to history. It belongs to revolutionary workers and intellectuals today and tomorrow. No "leading body" can substitute for history. But the authoritative bodies can, and must, take a position on whether or not the accusations of criminal acts against the Moscow trials defendants were well founded or slanderous. They must accept the evidence. These accusations were totally without foundation.

Rehabilitations imply judgement on Stalinism

The question of rehabilitating the victims of the Moscow trials is the object of an open and fierce political battle in the USSR itself. Only what has happened in the apparatus remains under the seal of secrecy, despite a *glasnost* that, while real, remains quite insufficient. The problem for the Soviet authorities is that a legal rehabilitation of the Moscow trials defendants implies at the same time a judgement on Stalin, Stalinism and the main turns in the "general line" between 1923 and 1938, or even 1953; on the scope of the "errors" of the Stalin era and their after-effects. It requires a materialist and not simply psychological, ideological or purely political explanation of these phenomena. Moreover, it involves a judgement on the limitations of "de-Stalinization" under Khrushchev, that is, a critical re-examination of the entire history of the USSR, the CPSU and the "international Communist movement" over more than a half century. No less evident are the implications such an examination would have about the origins and nature of the Gorbachev reforms.

The fact that factions in the apparatus are not cheerfully accepting such a re-examination is hardly surprising. It is true that the number of those personally implicated in the crimes of the great purges has become small, mainly for biological reasons. For this reason, there is less fear of "reprisals" and of the consequences, including penal prosecutions, of Stalin's henchmen than there was at the time of the Twentieth Congress. But it is still true that a whole layer of the *nomenklatura*, those over 60 years of age, have been, if not accomplices, at least passive and tolerant witnesses of these crimes. In particular they were witnesses to the

frantic efforts to curb de-Stalinization between 1953 and 1962 and correct it after 1965.

The maneuvers of this faction of the *nomenklatura*, which undoubtedly also includes younger elements drawn to it by material interests and political judgements, have gone very far, as attested to by the following report:

"The Soviet judicial archives from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s are being destroyed at a rate of 5,000 files a month, on the pretext that there is 'no room' to keep them,' the dissident bulletin *Glasnost*' wrote in its latest issue.

"According to this bulletin published by former political prisoners, including Mr. Sergei Grigoryants, documents concerning millions of Soviet victims of the terror have been stored in the archives of the Military Tribunal and Supreme Court of the USSR. 'Such files were "cleaned out" of the archives of the USSR prosecutor's office and Ministry of Defence in the 1960s and 1970s. As for those of the KGB, practically no one knows where they are kept.'

"For several years, according to *Glasnost*' two presiding judges of the Supreme Court, Mr. Gorkin and Mr. Smirnov, managed to 'rescue the archives from destruction.' But 'when the minister of justice, Vladimir Terebilov, became presiding judge of the Supreme Court, with Sergei Gusev as his chief deputy, the "weeding out" of the archives suddenly got underway.' This operation has been continued since these two officials took office in April 1984.

"At first, the archives were burned in the fireplace of the Supreme Court palace. But, *Glasnost*' pointed out, 'that makes a lot of smoke in the city. Now they are burning them outside Moscow.'" (*Le Monde*, August 23-24, 1987.)

Downplaying Stalin's crimes

Alongside the efforts made to make it formally difficult, if not impossible, to rehabilitate all the victims of the purges, there have been strenuous attempts to partially "rehabilitate" Stalin and Stalinism, to systematically downplay the after-effects of Stalin's crimes in the areas of human rights, in the Communist movement, and in the economic, military, ideological and cultural fields, and play up the "positive side" of the 1930s.⁸ The number two figure in the bureaucratic hierarchy, Ligachev, is an old hand at that. He comes back to this theme indefatigably in almost

all his speeches (especially his August 26, 1987, speech reported in *Pravda* on August 27).

Gorbachev speaks very carefully on this subject. But he has also felt it necessary to make statements of this sort on several occasions, in particular in his famous interview in the French Communist Party paper, *l'Humanité*, in February 1986, in which he said: "Stalinism is a notion invented by the enemies of communism and used widely to blacken the image of the Soviet Union and socialism as a whole." Does that not amount to repeating the substance of the slanders against all the oppositionist tendencies in the CPSU in Stalin's time, that is, the ideological starting point of the Moscow trials slanders?

The debate that is proceeding stealthily in the top spheres of the apparatus is unfolding more frankly in the public arena. For example, in the August 20 issue of *Moscow News* — which is generally considered the organ of the advanced wing of the Gorbachevite intellectuals, those who are in the forefront of *glasnost* — there is an article by the economist Boris Bolotin that justified the forced collectivization of agriculture and called for reprinting Stalin's theoretical works, in particular *The economic problems of socialism in the USSR*.

In its August 19 issue, *Literaturnaya gazeta* published a series of letters about Anatoly Rybakov's famous novel, *Arbat's Children*, which sharply condemns the Stalinist terror. Most of the letters supported the novelist. But the paper also published a series of letters that accused the book of being "harmful," and even called for sanctions against Rybakov.

This debate has already led to dramatic public confrontations. In its issue of July 13, 1987, the Austrian journal *Profil* reports on two public meetings recently held in Moscow. The first was announced discreetly by a hand-written poster stuck up on the gate of the History and Archives Institute. It attracted several thousand people at the end of March 1987. The lecture, entitled "Stalin, politician and man," was delivered by Professor Yuri Borisov. It was in general an apology for the dictator, although Borisov acknowledged that there had been errors and abuses.

The great majority of the crowd reacted indignantly. Questions and protests crackled. "How many victims were there?" "How many have been rehabilitated?" Many speakers mentioned explicitly that their fathers had perished in the camps and that their mothers had been sent into internal exile."⁹

In June 1987, the Communist youth organization, the Komsomol, organized a public discussion with Yuri Afanasiev, director of the History and Archives Institute and the main promoter of a sharp criticism of Stalin. The hall was packed. Hundreds of people could not get in. Written questions were passed to the speaker. One of them, the *Profil* reporter noted, was, "Are you in favor of publishing Trotsky's works?"

"Afanasiev replied: 'Yes, I am, so that our students can read and study all the literature of Soviet history, including Trotsky's works.' Behind me an old gentleman exclaimed indignantly, 'That's the last straw!' Immediately, some people turned toward him and said, 'Have you read his works? Do you know what he wrote?' 'Yes, I know what he wrote,' the man shot back defensively.

"This response prompted others to chime in: 'Well, it's obvious where you're coming from. You have read Trotsky, and you are sitting comfortably here. Do you know how many people have been sent to Siberia for nothing more than that?'

"More and more people joined in the discussion, a real little storm broke out before people addressed questions again to the platform. Memories poured out with an unexpected violence, feelings that must have been suppressed for decades. Looks of an explosive anger that frightens the reformers came over faces.

"Another episode at the same meeting indicated how deeply the need is felt for a final settling of accounts. A note from the audience asked that people stop talking about the 'cult of the personality,' errors and deviations. Stalin is guilty of crimes against humanity. A monument should be erected to his victims, and he should be condemned as a criminal.¹⁰

"Afanasiev read the note aloud in a pensive way. He supported the proposal for erecting a monument; he did not respond to the other proposal. The audience burst into long and rhythmic applause. I turned around and saw a sea of serious and determined faces, seeming to say, 'We have waited long enough. Now it's our turn!' Despite all my skepticism, at that moment, I felt the determination of these people not to let themselves be pushed back again, as happened in Brezhnev's time."

We cannot leave these courageous men and women in the USSR to fight an isolated battle. It is our duty, the duty of the entire international workers' movement, to support them with all our strength in their historic strug-

gle for truth and justice. This is why the campaign for full legal rehabilitation of all the Moscow trials defendants is indispensable today.

An elementary duty of solidarity

I say, "the entire international workers' movement," because this is not only an elementary duty of solidarity with all those who are fighting for this cause in the USSR itself. It has to be remembered that the defendants in the trials were nearly all international activists. Zinoviev and Bukharin chaired the Communist International (CI) in succession. Rakovsky and Trotsky were activists of the Second International before becoming leaders of the Third. Rakovsky was a leader in the Socialist parties of Bulgaria and Rumania.

Trotsky was author of the Zimmerwald Manifesto, of the call for the founding conference of the CI and of the manifestos of its first four congresses. Radek for years was secretary of the CI, after having been one of the leaders of the Polish and German social democratic parties. Piatakov was CI's representative to the German CP during the revolutionary weeks of 1923. And many others were full-time officials of the CI.

A great part of the international workers' movement failed in its task at the time of the Moscow trials. (An honorable exception was Friedrich Adler, who as secretary of the Socialist International, acted in 1936, 1937 and 1938 to defend the Old Bolsheviks against their murderers.) This sin of omission must not be repeated again today.

A critical re-examination of the CPSU's history

When he was named rector of the History and Archives Institute in Moscow in January 1987, Afanasiev launched an appeal for a critical re-examination of the CPSU history manuals. Extensive excerpts from his inaugural speech were published in the weekly *Moscow News* on January 11, 1987. He said, for instance, "Let's just take the way that Lenin's last letters and articles are presented in some of our manuals.

"There is a long commentary on his last letters and articles, while only a page or two are devoted to what Lenin actually said. The rest abounds in generalities on the epoch of the transition of humanity from capitalism to social-

ism, that is, things that Lenin never spoke of, except on rare occasions. Lenin's assessments in his last letters to the CC leaders are still more unfortunate!

"Detached from his scheme, they are transferred into the chapter about the Twelfth Congress of the CP (Bolshevik) of Russia. They are quoted in a one-sided way. All the positive assessments of future oppositionists have been taken out, and only the negative characteristics remain. The result is that the complex and intensive struggle of concrete ideas and people, the living drama of that age, are replaced either by detective-story plots or sterile schematism."

This stand provoked a virulent reaction from historians who were not only defending their writings and their livelihoods but also their patrons, that is, the interests of a whole wing of the bureaucracy. They were obliged to defend Stalin, and consequently Stalinism, by repeating the substance of the slanders against the oppositionists, beginning with Trotsky.

Moscow News published some excerpts from the flood of letters that they got on this question. Claiming to

represent the "unanimous" (sic) opinion of all his fellow professors in the department of the Institute of History where he works, as well as of the members of the Scholarship and Methodological Council of the Moscow region of the Znanie society, Anatoly Borisov wrote:

"The author [Yuri Afanasiev] has taken up questions on which he is hardly competent. Regardless of his intention, he is playing the game of the bourgeois historians...."

"The attempts to draw us into discussions of the past threaten to distract us from the tasks of restructuring posed by the party for the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the CPSU and to hold back everything that must be decided on and done today." (*Moscow News*, May 24, 1987.)

Still clearer is the letter signed by four chiefs of the CPSU history department, including the chief of the CPSU Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences, L. Shirikov:

"Y. Afanasiev refers only to Lenin's letters 'To the Congress' [Lenin's Testament], saying nothing about the sharp and continuing struggle that Lenin and the party waged before and

after October against Trotsky and the Trotskyists on the question of the driving forces and perspectives of the revolution in Russia, of the victory of socialism in our country...."

"Trotsky tried to overthrow Soviet government by force"

"After the victory of fascism in Germany in 1933...Trotsky persisted in his course of trying to overthrow the Soviet government by force and of using for his 'main objectives' the possibility of an 'inevitable' defeat of the Soviet Union in a future war against fascism...."

"The line of Trotskyism amounted to restoring capitalism in the USSR." (*Moscow News*, May 10, 1987.)

This is not an isolated case. A specialist in the "struggle against Trotskyism," Nikolai Vasetski, wrote a pamphlet called *Contemporary Trotskyism against peace and detente*, which was published in several languages in 1986 and very largely disseminated by the USSR's embassies, including, in a Spanish version, in Cuba. In it one can read for example: "The Trotskyists pinned their hopes on war for being able to settle accounts with the Soviet leadership....They hoped that the USSR would suffer defeat if there was a war. And to that end, they were not sparing of praise for fascist Germany. That is where they found their real ally in the fight against the USSR."

"In the directives he sent to his collaborators, Trotsky called on them to establish direct contact with the governments of fascist Germany and militarized Japan."¹¹ All this is "proved" by a letter Radek quoted in the second Moscow trial, which is nothing but a crude forgery.

In his answer published in the same issue of *Moscow News*, Afanasiev side-steps the question of Trotsky's real positions and the falsification of them, of the slanders that were the basis for the Moscow trials and the massive and monstrous purges, that is, for the massacre of the Old Bolsheviks and hundreds of thousands of communists.

All of Gorbachev's contradictions and dilemmas were revealed in this evasion. But at the same time, Afanasiev strongly countered the argument "let's stick to the tasks of the future and not discuss the problems of the past." The title of his answer itself struck back forcefully: "Let us talk about the past, but it is the future of socialism that is in question."

Afanasiev wrote that there is no possibility of socialist democracy when "the struggle of opinions, the search



for an authentic revolutionary road and the differences between party leaders are described as plots by an invisible enemy. After the event, the groupings established were labeled 'anti-party' and attributed counter-revolutionary motives. Political differences were replaced with fantastic charges drawn from the penal code."

The new holder of the CPSU history chair in the Academy of Humanities, Nikolai Maslov, discussed more concretely what should be the content of the CPSU history manual for secondary and higher education for which the Ministry of Higher Education in the USSR has just opened a competition. In this connection, he quoted Lenin's words, "Our strength lies in the truth." As an example, he held up an anthology of Leninism published in 1925, which contained articles by Martov, Trotsky, Bukharin, Shliapnikov and other revolutionists with whom Lenin had polemicized during his life.

In passing, it might be said that Maslov himself played fast and loose with historical truth, because in the list he gave of the works on the history of the Communist Party of Russia (B) published after the October revolution, he did not mention Zinoviev's history.

The stand taken by another leading "Gorbachevite," the writer Aleksandr Nezhniy was more peremptory. Under the title, "Cure by truth, Notes on reshaping consciousness," he wrote for example:

"Our moral education loses almost all its qualities if it is deprived of the vitamins of truth. The masters of the closed mouth, the magicians of demagoguery, the false guardians of the people's morality existed and they still do. It is in large measure thanks to their efforts that our best workers have been banished and quietly defamed, in select committees, without publicity.... They have invented a multitude of open and secret instructions, some of which almost automatically imposed a 'veto' on any information about the real state of the environment, or gave the workers in the state and party archives the right not only to check the notes made by researchers but also to suppress those that, according to them naturally, were harmful to the historian or the writer." (*Moscow News*, June 21, 1987.)

Perestroika of the memory

All of this argument has been summed up in lapidary and strikingly sensible formulas. Stalin "inflicted greater defeats on the revolutionary

movement in Russia than any of our adversaries," the Gorbachevian writer Mikhail Shatov proclaimed in the magazine *Ogonyok*. "You cannot have *perestroika* without a *perestroika* of the memory," the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko echoed. And *Literaturnaya gazeta* set the tone in its October 22, 1986, issue: "If we turn to the past, it is to get answers to the questions that are tormenting us."

In fact the two central questions posed by Gorbachev's reform current are how did we end up here in this quasi-stagnation after so many exertions and so many sacrifices by the toiling masses? And, how can we get out of this, without falling back into a rut and into crisis in a few years time?

The answer to these two questions is inextricably bound up with the entire history of the CPSU and the country. It leads back to the problems of Stalinism and the debates of the 1920s, notably to the question of the fate and contradictions of the NEP and the worldwide evolution of capitalism. It leads back inevitably also to the problems of "socialism in one country," to the problems of "Trotskyism." This involves both questions of content — what to discuss — and of form — how to discuss it. All this raises the question of socialist democracy and workers' power. That is what is frightening the whole bureaucracy and making Gorbachev hesitate. ★

1. The real "inventors" of the theory of long waves in the capitalist economy were two pre-1914 Marxist theoreticians, the Russian Parvus-Helphand and the Dutchman Fedder/Van Gelderen.

2. At the same time, the Moscow Agrarian Academy was liquidated, and its main members (Shayanov's teachers) were arrested. Kondratiev and Shayanov were executed in 1937.

3. At the beginning of the third Moscow trial, Krestinsky distinguished himself as the only defendant to plead not guilty and reject en bloc all the slanderous accusations lodged against him by the prosecutor, Vyshinsky. He went so far as to say that the confession he had made during the pre-trial investigation had been extracted from him by force. (*Prozessbericht*, the German version of the stenographic record of the trial, pp.56-59.) At a later session of the trial, however, he repeated his confession as a result of horrible torture inflicted after his retraction, according to reliable reports.

4. See notably the memoirs of the chief of the Soviet army General Staff, Marshal A. Vasilevksi, *La Cause de toute une Vie* (Cause of a Lifetime), Moscow, Editions du progrès, 1984. The Russian-language edition was published in 1975. It includes, after p.80, a group photo entitled, "The first marshals of the Soviet Union," showing M. Tukhachevsky, S. Voroshilov, A. Yegorov, S. Budyenny and V. Blücher in 1935. Stalin had three of these marshals shot in 1937.

5. Trotsky was found guilty personally in the verdict of the first Moscow trial (August 19-24 1936). This verdict ended with the following words: "Trotsky, Lev Davidovich, and his son, Sedov, Lev Davidovich, who are now living abroad, have been found guilty [*überführt* in German] — on the basis of the statements of the defendants Smimov, N.; Goltzman, E.S.; Dreitsler, V.; Olberg, Fritz David (I.I. Kruglyanski and Berman-Jurin), as well as by the evidence submitted to this trial — of directly preparing, as well as personally

leading, the organization of terrorist acts in the USSR against leaders of the CPSU (B) and the Soviet state. If they are found on the territory of the USSR, they are to be immediately arrested and handed over to the Tribunal of the Military College of the Supreme Court." (*Prozessbericht*, Moscow, 1936, p.185 of the German version of the stenographic record, my translation.)

6. Trotsky pointed out a great many more subtle falsifications of history in his book *The Stalin school of falsification*.

7. In his "secret report" to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev mentioned by name only the members of the Stalin faction who fell victim to the purges.

8. These efforts were not only continued under Brezhnev but have even been seen quite recently. When Gorbachev felt obliged to cite Stalin's name in his speech commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the USSR's victory over Nazi Germany, he was interrupted by frenetic applause from the section where the apparatchiks were sitting. Twice he tried to stop this outpouring, twice he failed.

9. Borisov, however, was seriously shaken when he gave the same lecture on April 13 before the writers at the Central House of Culture. On this occasion, speakers in the hall confronted him with precise and terrible facts. One historian working in the archives cited the file on the interrogation of the great theater director Meyerhold, one of the victims of the purges. Meyerhold was tortured, as was recognized by GPU Lieutenant-General Rodos who interrogated him. His right hand was broken. He was forced to drink his own urine. (Report in the Berlin left daily *TAZ*, July 27, 1987.)

10. With his exceptional political intuition, Trotsky ended his book *The crimes of Stalin* with these prophetic words: "History will not pardon one drop of blood sacrificed to the new Moloch of injustice and privilege. Ethical feeling finds a supreme satisfaction in the unshakable certainty that the verdict of history will fit the enormity of the crime. The revolution will open up all the secret cabinets, it will review the trials, acquit all those who have been slandered, it will erect monuments to the honor of the victims of injustice and will heap eternal obloquy on the names of their executioners."

11. Nikolai Wasetzki, *Hedendaags trotskisme tegen vrede en ontspanning*, Uitgeverij Persagentschap Novosti, Moscow, 1986, p.15.

THE RED ARMY IN LENIN'S TIME

by James P. Cannon

The Red Army is a new factor in the international situation, and a very important one. The diplomats cannot meet today to partition off the earth without asking, "What will the Red Army do?" The Red soldier is present at all the councils of the war-makers. He puts his fist on the table and says, "I am in on the war game in Europe from now on!"

The Red Army is something new under the sun, a proletarian army, made up exclusively of workers and peasants, with most of its officers drawn from the working class. It proved its mettle in the long and successful struggle against interventionist armies. It has a morale, spirit, and discipline unknown to the military history of Europe. There is not an army on the continent of Europe that, man for man, can stand up against it.

On Monday, November 2, Mikhail Gorbachev gave his long-anticipated speech commemorating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Despite the rampant rumors, Leon Trotsky was not rehabilitated, though other figures, whose views pose less of a threat to the present-day bureaucrats, were. The limits of Glasnost and Perestroika were clearly indicated also by the Soviet leader's announced plans to strengthen "peaceful coexistence" with the U.S. and other imperialist powers. The next issue of the Bulletin IDOM will carry a comprehensive analysis of Gorbachev's speech.

*The following excerpts from a talk by James P. Cannon on "The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution" demonstrate the attitude of Communists throughout the world toward the Soviet Union, the Red Army, and Leon Trotsky in the early years—an attitude fostered by the internationalism of the leaders of the October Revolution and the polar opposite of the one personified by Gorbachev today. When Cannon gave this talk in New York in February 1923, he had just returned from the Soviet Union. In May 1922, he went to Moscow as a delegate to the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International and remained there until the end of the year. He was then national chairman of the Workers Party of America (the legal form of the Communist Party at the time). His speech was published by the Workers Party as a pamphlet. When it was republished in 1944 by the Socialist Workers Party, the editors said, "It is one of the few authentic records of the Russian Revolution that have survived since Lenin's death." It is included in a collection of Cannon writings titled **Speeches for Socialism**, published in 1971 by Pathfinder Press.*

When I was in Russia, the size of the Red Army had been reduced to 800,000 men. Since I left, it has been still further reduced to 600,000. But that is not its full strength by any means. The standing army of 600,000 is only a skeleton around which five million men, already trained for service, can be quickly organized. The Red Army is a powerful military machine, but that is not all. It is a school, the greatest school on earth. The great bulk of its soldiers come from the peasantry; and 80 percent of the Russian peasants are illiterate. But in the Red Army they are all taught to read and write. Last May Day they celebrated the liquidation of illiteracy in the Red Army. Trotsky made the statement that on that day there was not a soldier in the army who was not able to read and write. The Russian Bolsheviks have taken an instrument of destruction and utilized it for a great constructive purpose.

I visited some Red Army camps and learned something about the spirit of the soldiers at first hand. I had read something about it and wished to check up on what I had read. I asked Trotsky about it and he said, "Go to the camps and see the soldiers themselves. Then you will understand it." I asked him why the Red soldier has a different attitude toward the government from that of the other soldiers of Europe, and he answered, "The attitude of the Red soldier toward the Soviet government is determined by the attitude of the Soviet government toward the Red soldier."

That is the secret of it. That is the reason for the intense loyalty of the Red soldier, which the old-school militarists cannot understand. The Red soldier is respected and honored in time of peace as well as in war. He is not made into a hero as he marches off to battle and then chased up a back alley when he comes home. He is not given a medal when he is needed and refused a job or a handout when the war is over. In the working class society of Russia, the Red soldier has a place of dignity and honor. In Russia, the soldiers and the workers are the real "people of importance."

I saw another phase of the educational work of the army in one of the camps. It was a moving-picture show attended by about two thousand soldiers. It was a moving picture of large-scale grain farming in Canada. Most of the soldiers in the audience were peasant lads. They had come from the villages and their idea of agriculture was founded on the primitive, individualistic methods they had always known. Most of them had never seen a farming implement larger than a one-horse plow. Here on the screen before them was flashed a picture of modern farming on a big scale, with tractors, gangplows,

and great threshing machines; a single working unit covering hundreds of acres at a time.

They drank in that picture very eagerly. As I watched them, I saw another picture. I saw those peasant lads going back home when their service in the army would be ended, with their newly acquired knowledge and their vision of the great world outside their little villages, telling their friends and their old folks of the great farming machinery that the city worker will manufacture for the peasants, which will be the means of developing large-scale communal farming instead of small-scale individual farming, and which will transform the individualist peasant of today into the communist peasant of tomorrow.

I found the Red soldiers pretty well informed as to what is going on in the world. They spoke of the prospects of revolution in Germany with the air of men who had read and talked much about it. That is part of their education. Trotsky keeps them fully informed about international developments, and there are special Communist detachments in all regiments who carry on a constant propaganda for internationalism.

It is not only the Red soldiers in Russia who are internationalists. Internationalism permeates the entire working class. When the Russian workers rose in revolt five years ago and struck the blow that destroyed Russian capitalism, they were confident that the workers throughout Europe would follow their example. They have been waiting five years for the international revolution, and they still believe it is coming. Nothing has been able to shake that faith. They believe in the workers of Europe as they believe in the sun.

Before we left Petrograd we made a pilgrimage to the Field of Mars, where in one great grave are

buried the victims of the November revolution. Five years before it was the scene of desperate battle. The air was torn by rifle fire and the cries of those Petrograd workers who had risen in revolt and staked their lives on the issue. On the seventh of November, five years before, the workers of Petrograd fought there the battle of the human race and of the future. Many of them fell, never to rise again.

Those Petrograd workers struck the blow that shattered the capitalist regime in Russia and put the working class in power. But they did more than that, because the Russian Revolution did not stop in Russia. It found its way over the borders. It broke through the blockade and spread all over the earth. The Russian Revolution was the beginning of the international revolution.

Wherever there is a group of militant workers anywhere in the world, there is the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution is in the heart of every rebel worker the world over. The Russian Revolution is in this room.

Comrade Trotsky told us, just before we left Moscow, that the best way we can help Soviet Russia is to build a bigger trade union movement and a stronger party of our own. Recognition by other governments will be of some temporary value; but the real recognition Soviet Russia wants is the recognition of the working class. When she gets that, she will not need the recognition of capitalist governments. Then she can refuse to recognize them! For, after all, Soviet Russia is not a "country." Soviet Russia is a part of the world labor movement. Soviet Russia is a strike—the greatest strike in all history. When the working class of Europe and America join that strike it will be the end of capitalism. ■

REVOLUTIONARY FORGIVENESS

by Grant M. Gallup

When I visited Nicaragua in August, to my good fortune, my tour group included Reverend Grant M. Gallup, vicar of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Chicago, Illinois. He has granted permission to the Bulletin IDOM to print "Revolutionary Forgiveness," the homily he delivered to his parishioners upon his return.

Grant spent five weeks studying liberation theology and Christian-Marxist dialogue with Maryknoll missionaries in July and August 1987. Prominent liberation theology figures in Central and South America are Maryknoll missionaries, including outstanding figures in the Nicaraguan revolution like Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto.

This was Grant's third visit to Nicaragua since the revolution. He is now helping to organize a February-March 1988 tour to El Salvador and Nicaragua sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago.

His homily provides a poignant portrayal of the tragic but profoundly inspiring Nicaragua we saw together.

Marilyn Vogt-Downey

I hugged and kissed a lot of people in Nicaragua—women and men, old and young. Mostly young, because Nicaragua is a country of about three million people, half of whom are not yet eighteen years old. At church on the first Sunday there—All Saints Episcopal Church, in the Barrio Bolonia, a better than average neighborhood near the Hotel Intercontinental—we met Ivan Bonilla, an 18-year-old Nicaraguan, who showed us wonderful hospitality in Managua. We got to travel about the city the way many Nicaraguans do—jammed standing onto the backs of pickup and flatbed trucks, or contorted into rickety minivans or overloaded buses. The cost is a couple of cents. Ivan took us to his own barrio, to his mother's house, for supper one evening. A wooden shack without glass in the windows, but with a fluorescent fixture in the ceiling, and a color television in the main room. Ivan explained that his mother, Marta, had received a large cash settlement from the government when an older brother fell as a *combatiente* last year, killed by the contra mercenaries, near the Honduran border. Thus they had the only television set in the neighborhood, and all the neighbors' children were gathered there. In one corner of the room, another brother, Bayardo, in his 20s, sat at a sewing machine, mending his olive drab fatigues. He was home on leave from the army, but would be leaving in the morning to return to the war zone in the north. The newspapers had only in the last few days told of

the contra mercenaries killing a Franciscan brother from El Salvador, and eleven young *combatientes*, their helicopter destroyed by a missile made in U.S.A. There is real fear about being in the army here—it's not advertised as a "career opportunity" as in the States. I took snapshots of Bayardo and Ivan and their mother Marta and all the family. All the neighbors' children, too, who shrieked with delight at the flash of the camera. Marta served each of us—guests only—a nice plump tamale of cornmeal and pork seasoned and wrapped in a leaf and steamed. They offered us rum, or cola, or black coffee. The family ate tortillas and rice and beans.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink. . . . Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.

The Nicaraguans have every right to curse us—from the Tur-Nica bus window one day, I saw one who did—but Ivan's family blessed us. Their blessing, their revolutionary blessing and forgiveness, seemed to me to have so much more power and reality than the blessing I gave to Bayardo when I left. I knew that in the morning he was going to face the hired guns of Rambo Reagan, the land mines and heat-seeking missiles, the dengue fever and malaria which it is rumored the CIA has reintroduced into the swamps and jungles. I touched Bayardo's forehead with my thumb and traced a cross there. I doubt that I shall ever see him again—I pray that his family will be able to.

At the Texas airport, a suspicious U.S. customs officer asked questions about the Nicaraguan cigars my nephew had in his luggage—and leafed through some of the books we bought there. "Did they give you any trouble?" he asked. "No, no trouble," nephew said. "What were you doing there?" asked the officer. "Visiting friends," nephew said. "Just visiting friends."

A woman in her 30s, Mayra Climaco, is a Monimbo Indian, from the west of Nicaragua. She is another of the friends we visited. She was our Tur-Nica guide for the time we were in her country, shepherding us about from one town to the next, visiting day-care centers, schools, a university, hospitals, a minimum security prison farm for Somocistas and other contra mercenaries, a brick-making co-op where twenty of us pitched in and bought five old women a cow so they could have milk and butter and sell perhaps a little sour cream and cheese.

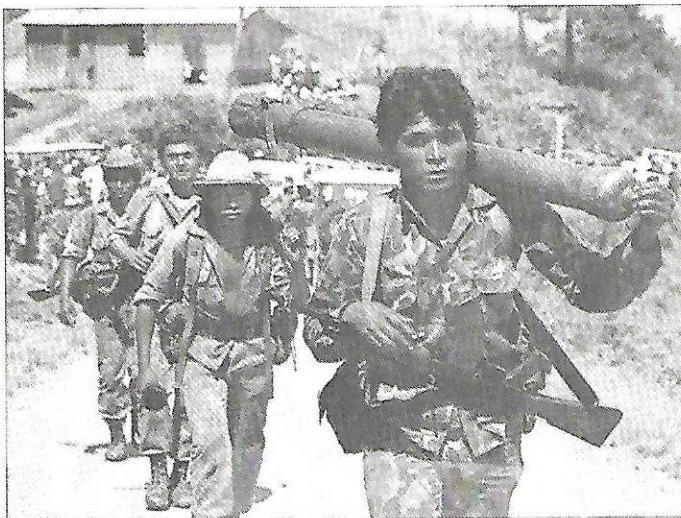
We visited churches and political party headquarters, a newspaper office, a farmers' union, the dedication of a women's module at an alcoholic treatment center, watched ballet practice and young

artists painting at the Nicaraguan cultural workers association. We talked with a Miskito commandante who has returned from Honduras to accept amnesty. We stood at the edge of a terrifying volcano and watched wild green birds swooping and shrieking in the mists. Cinders and rocks skittered away into the crevasse.

The word of the Lord came to me, "Speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the sentinel sees the sword coming and blows the trumpet, and warns the people, then if they do not take warning and the sword comes and takes them away, their blood shall be upon their own head."

We visited the grave of Ben Linder, the young American hydroelectric engineer who was assassinated by the contra mercenaries on April 28 in San Jose del Bocay. The stone is engraved with a unicycle, and dove of peace, juggling stars. Ben was a juggler and a clown; everywhere he worked, the children adored him. The president, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, came to his graveside with Ben's family. *La Luz que encendio brillara para siempre*, the stone says.

On the way back to Managua, we stopped in the Ciudad Dario, a village named for the great Nicaraguan poet, Ruben Dario, born there in 1867. Our bus bullied its way up an unpaved back road to a cemetery gate. Here we got out of the bus and waited while Mayra Climaco went up the hill into the cemetery, carrying a bouquet of fresh flowers she had brought for the grave of her own *companero*, a young soldier killed last year by the contra merce-



FSLN Soldiers

naries. Mayra's face was wet and severe when she went up the hill, dry and serene when she came back. She looks older than she is—her dark skin, her flashing bright eyes, her straight black hair braided once down her back—these confirm her Indianness, and her face has the Indianness of ages in it. Why does she look so ancient and so wise in her thirties? She told us that her parents were

both killed by Somoza, and now she is mourning her lover. Mayra said she does not forgive these things. If she came face to face with the ones who murdered them, they would die, she says. Her eyes flash, and she speaks in English so we will all understand. "It would be by a slow way they would die," she says.

If your brother or sister sins against you, go and tell them the fault. . . . If they listen, you have gained your sister or brother.

While Mayra was on the hill with her flowers and her grief, I took photos of the children in the street, and a peasant woman, a *campesina*, as they say in Central America, came out the door of her shack with her hands extended, lifted up toward us, holding a tortilla with a square of homemade cheese. Her smile was invitation, and she proudly offered this holy communion, a tortilla still warm from the fire, which a dozen of us shared, handing it around as forgiveness is shared.

Two years ago in Managua, our Witness for Peace delegation had a meeting with Tomas Borge, the only surviving member of the original founders of the Sandinista Front. During the time of the monster he had been tortured in prison, and after the triumph of the people his torturer was brought to face him. Borge looked him in the eye and said, "Can you guess what your punishment will be?" And then he pronounced sentence: "My punishment for you is that I forgive you."

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

One evening after supper Mayra told us how she had once confronted Borge about this attitude of his, and she smiled a bit as she told how she had dared to speak up to this most revered of Nicaraguans, whose Ministry of the Interior is emblazoned "Sentinel of the Joy of the People." She told him she was not ready to forgive her parents' killers, her lover's murderers. I do not want to take from Mayra the wrath that is hers, the anger that seethes in her like the terrifying Santiago volcano, and its shrieking green birds. But I believe she has forgiven us. I know she released me from my own participation in the murder of her family when I paid for the weapon with the check attached to my 1040 last April. When we left Managua, she saw us through the formalities of exiting the country, and after we had passed into the departure area at Sandino Airport, and were separated by a plate glass barrier, we pressed our lips to the glass from either side, and kissed, and gently waved goodbye.

Thirteen American women visited Nicaragua a few years ago, the Amanecida Collective, they call themselves. Their book is called *Revolutionary Forgiveness: Feminist Reflections on Nicaragua*. It was edited by Carter Heyward and Anne Gilson. In it Laura Phyllis Biddle writes:

I learned in Nicaragua that forgiveness is a revolutionary virtue. It is revo-
(Continued on page 34)

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'S CADRE SCHOOL

by Barry Weisleder

The eleventh session of the Fourth International's cadre school is now well under way, with participants from around the world. This is its sixth year of operation, with two sessions of three months each per year, alternating between English language and Spanish/French sessions.

This session's participants come from Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United States, Britain, Belgium, Brazil, West Germany, Sri Lanka, and for the first time, two National Committee members of the Alliance for Socialist Action in English Canada.

"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement," the Russian socialist leader V.I. Lenin once observed. It's a phrase that aptly describes one purpose of the school: to study and discuss Marxist theory and the history of the international workers' movement. But the school also affords us an opportunity to exchange experiences in the class struggle internationally, and to discuss socialist theory in the light of current problems and political practice in widely varying situations.

Such an internationalist framework deeply enriches all the discussions here, from an examination of historical materialism and past modes of production, to the study of proletarian revolutions, national liberation and antibureaucratic struggles, and the problems of revolutionary party-building today. Such a framework also constitutes a precondition for the development of a movement and leadership that can decisively advance the struggle for worldwide socialist transformation.

While the Fourth International, the international Trotskyist movement, claims no special mandate or monopoly in this regard, it has a unique contribution to make—which is implicitly recog-

nized in the fact that participants in this and past sessions of the school come also from non-FI affiliated revolutionary organizations. And from our standpoint they come to teach as well as to learn. The existence of the school itself says something about the progress the Trotskyist movement has been able to make in developing its limited capacity to intervene in and influence class struggles.

A mere twenty-five years ago, the FI had no centralized apparatus and few of its national sections had more than a hundred members.

Today, in addition to the international cadre school, it has a full-time bureau, international publications in several languages, leadership and educational meetings on a regional and continental basis, an annual international youth summer camp (attended by over 800 radical youth this past July), along with at least two national sections with over 2,000 members (Mexico and France) and a number with several hundred members each.

While this falls short of the spectacular growth anticipated by some, including many Fourth Internationalists, following the heady days of the May-June 1968 student-worker upsurge in France, it nonetheless represents an important consolidation of cadres and capable organizations (not to mention a preservation and creative elaboration of revolutionary program and principles) that few other political currents to the left of Stalinism and Social Democracy can point to. All the continents are littered with the corpses of New Left, Maoist, and centrist organizations that utterly disintegrated and disappeared in the 1970s and '80s, Canada being no exception (In Struggle, Workers Communist Party, Waffle-Movement for an Independent and Socialist Canada, Canadian Liberation Movement).

In a period of downturn of working class and popular struggles, particularly in the imperialist countries in the aforementioned period, survival itself can be a signal mark of political success. Fortunately, the Fourth International was able to do more than that.

And institutions like its international cadre school are helping the FI today to prepare for and positively influence the new political openings and struggles now appearing around the world. ■

September 28, 1987

Barry Weisleder, a member of the Alliance for Socialist Action in Canada and of the International Contributing Editorial Board of the Bulletin IDOM, sent this report to the ASA's newspaper, Socialist Challenge. Frequent contributor to the Bulletin IDOM and Fourth Internationalist Tendency leader Paul Le Blanc is also attending the school. We plan a more extensive report on the session from Barry and Paul after the conclusion of the school's present term in December.

F.I.T. Launches Subscription, Fund Drives

As part of our expanded activities, the National Organizing Committee of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency has voted to launch campaigns to increase the circulation of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* and *International Viewpoint*, the English language newsmagazine of the Fourth International. Also, because activities cost money, a fund drive is being projected.

New subscribers to the *Bulletin IDOM* can receive three issues, plus a copy of the new pamphlet, *Organizing for Socialism: The F.I.T., Who We Are, What We Stand For*, a ten dollar value, for only five dollars. New subscribers to *International Viewpoint* can get six months of this twice-monthly magazine, and a copy of the new book, *George Breitman: Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary*, a \$30 value, for only \$25.

As our regular readers know, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency was established in 1984 as the result of a mass purge in the Socialist Workers Party. One of the effects of that purge was that we were cut off from the impressive SWP apparatus that we had helped build. We had to start from scratch.

The earliest issues of the *Bulletin IDOM* were produced on a typewriter and, for the first two years, were reproduced by photocopying.

We think we've made considerable improvements in our magazine over the four years of its publication. We have also produced over a dozen pamphlets and a book. But to make further improvements, and to expand our publication projects, we need to upgrade our computer system.

We have also decided to enter the videotape age. We want to begin production of socialist educational videos. That means purchasing equipment that is not provided for in our present budget.

Because we are an internationalist organization, we have also had considerable expenses in sending representatives to international gatherings. In just the past year, we have sent observers to meetings in Europe, Mexico, and Canada.

We have no angels and no commercial advertisers. We depend upon the financial support of our members and those who sympathize with our work. Please help out with whatever you can afford.

* * * * *

____ Please begin my introductory subscription to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* and send me the pamphlet, *Organizing for Socialism: The F.I.T., Who We Are, What We Stand For*. Enclosed find \$5.00.

____ Please begin my subscription to *International Viewpoint* and send me the book, *George Breitman: Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary*. Enclosed find \$25.00.

____ I would like to contribute to the work of the F.I.T. and the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. Enclosed is my donation of \$ ____.

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NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

15. The View from Cell No. 9

In the *Kharkov Proletariat*, where I now worked, a whole page was set aside for letters from workers, as in *The Stoker*, and I was occupied with them. Opposite me at a table sat a person who at first sight had aroused in me an enmity that I was not ashamed to show. Her name was Elena Orlovskaya, the secretary of the Department of Workers' Letters.

The smell of perfume, absolutely unbearable to my Young Communist nose, antagonized me. In addition, Lena sometimes touched up her lips, which was a gross violation of all the rules known to me. And finally, as I learned with satisfaction, her father was a priest—true, he had been unfrocked for agitating against the tsarist autocracy, but all the same

And she acted as if she did not notice how much I detested her. I chastised our new comrades at work, Savva and Arkady, for visiting the home of this painted doll. Aren't you ashamed, guys? She is an alien element. She paints her lips! And you are Young Communists!

Arkady long tried to persuade me to go see how the priest's daughter lived. I arrived to a room, small and modest, but full of books. All evening I rummaged through them and took away Blok and Shershenevich.¹

But my life turned out in such a way that I was left more than usually alone with my memories. The place which Lena occupied in them I cannot allow to remain empty. I wrote this part of my memoirs when I thought that she had died somewhere in the camps. Later I learned that she was alive. But I will not correct this section. No!

During my last arrest, in 1950, I was held in Butyrka prison. By that time, part of the prison had been altered into an investigation center so as to avoid excessive trips hauling the arrested about Moscow in the black marias that were so noticeable to passersby. On both sides of the corridor, lit bright as day by the lamps (a rarity then), were investigation offices lined with a layer of felt. But the robust profanity penetrated this very thick layer of insulation: the investigators, not sparing their vocal chords, worked on the arrested.

"I worked all night on that one," I heard one say. "And the bastard doesn't want to cooperate with us" (i.e., betray people).

One side of the investigation center faced an interior courtyard where the prison church had stood at one time. They had converted it into a building for those who had been sentenced and were awaiting transfer. Here, in the vast common cell

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.

No. 9, I served several months after being sentenced by the invisible Court of Special Session.

It was a warm summer. Near the open but well-barred window, trees had grown. They served as the place of lodging for the night for a huge flock of sparrows. Further on, across the narrow courtyard, could be seen the windows of the investigation offices, also open and barred, but graced with thick curtains. During the day it was usually quiet in the offices. They worked nights.

In the evenings, we watched as the sparrows flew together. With delight and envy we observed the habits of free beings, knowing neither the anxiety of the prisoners nor the jailkeepers' concerns over them.

Having settled into the branches, the birds fell asleep. But the cell did not sleep. Each man turned over his thoughts. And a din of voices, yesterday having thundered at us, now reaches our ears from behind the bars of the investigative division.

Some woman was being interrogated for a whole month in the office directly opposite our window. We could not see either her or the investigator behind the thick curtain; we could only hear them. Evidently, she did not want to cooperate with the investigation and the investigator was employing a psychological attack. Never in my life, even among

the dregs of the criminal world, had I heard such vulgar filth as he used to insult this woman who had ended up in his hands. He called her this and that; there were no holds barred. What type of situation did he not devise for her?

I pictured her in my mind. She sits on a stool bolted to the floor in the very corner. (It has been bolted down so that the person being investigated, driven to despair, cannot hit the investigator with it.) Who is she? Surely, some criminal like myself. For the common criminals, for the thieves and murderers, they have other prisons and other investigators. They put you in Butyrka (and Lefortovo) only under Article 58.² But whoever it was, it was a woman. And she sits, according to instructions, with her hands folded on her knees. Facing her is an overfed, fat-faced scoundrel (that's how I imagined him on the basis of his gurgling shrieks) backed up by the entire apparatus of power. So enraptured is he with this power that he has forgotten who brought it into the world and nourished it. He steps across the soft carpet, beats his fist on the table—and not only on the table—and unloads in her face all the filth of his pathetic little soul.

He feels no limits because he is convinced that no one in the world except other jailers and prisoners like her will ever find out anything. He is convinced it will never be known. The jailers will praise him and the prisoners will be intimidated by fear. And with every hour, till daybreak, whether he is deliberately trying to build up in himself a feeling of justifiable anger and self-righteousness or whether he is really in fact growing more and more furious—he becomes ever more inventive. There is no longer a place on her body and in her soul that has not been heaped with scorn. He has long since grown hoarse. You can hear the tinkling of the water bottle. And she only rarely utters a word or two. It is not possible to make it out but it is clearly a denial. And again the thunder of profanity and a new bucket of slop.

It seemed to me that I could hear Lena's voice. And why not? Twenty years back, we were friends; after all, I was imprisoned for having been friends with Rafael a full thirty years ago. Since then, I had lost contact with her, and it is possible she had already served a term in the camps and now she could have been arrested for a second time, like me. But if it were not Lena, then it could have been my daughter, sister, or wife, or yours.

But the investigator continued to work! He worked on this woman every evening. Every evening at about ten, he would begin with a question, enunciated with a piercing voice, a psychological attack, and therefore an attack that begins at the threshold: "Now crack, you dirty scum, you piece of dirt, you whore!" None of the many inmates that I knew was ever addressed by an investigator in simple, human language. Even if they used the polite form of address (which one in a hundred deigned to do), they still insulted not directly but by innuendo, by using foul language in some way.

When I finally walked past the prison walls to freedom, I noticed that the profanity I had heard from the investigators, thieves, and murderers in prison had made it to the outside before I had. Our classic profanity is not just a corruption of the language. The children hear it. Refined in the camps and investigative offices, it maims the children's imagination, suggesting in them such foul things, the likes of which we had no conception of before Stalin's camps became one of the forms for the higher education of the workers.

Comics poison American children. But why isn't prison profanity a poison? How much energy needed for something better, how many draconian measures, how many new prison sentences (if one were to grant that prison-caused illnesses can be cured by prison itself) would be needed to purge the soil of this poisonous sediment that has been scattered about our country?

* * *

Among my friends, even those less tolerant of lipstick than Savva and Arkady, Lena did not arouse enmity. She could conduct herself in a natural way everywhere and with everyone. She somehow reminded me of Goncharov's Vera.³ But most of all she was uniquely herself, Lena Orlovskaya. She was a woman among women. She was a woman in every way, from head to heel, finished and perfect.

She was almost always the only woman in the company of young men, workers of the editorial staff, but company that in no way resembled a retinue. Very often we all set out from the editorial office in a group and headed for a dining hall in the neighborhood. No one ever dared to pay Lena's way because we knew she would get angry. But she did not get angry as some others do; she did not get offended, did not make spiteful remarks. She was in general incapable of that. She would frown slightly—that was enough for you to feel like a brute. Then, she would smile and say: "Now, then, don't worry about it, please; I didn't mean to offend you."

In our friendly company she treated each person evenhandedly and affably, by so doing forcing each to behave likewise toward her and not make advances. Her life was very hard, but she never complained. Coping as best she could, she only on occasion became pensive, shook her short, smooth, flaxen hair, and got back to work. She sent a significant portion of her money to her sister, an unlucky woman with a lot of children and an alcoholic husband.

Thus, in my twenty-fifth year, I made friends with a nonparty person. Since my youth, this had not happened. Even Yeva, with all her reserve and lack of sociability, could not resist Lena's charm. It would be an exaggeration to say she became friends with Lena, but she related to her very well. And Lena loved our child very much.

Comrades rarely visited us. We lived in a very tiny little room on the second floor. We entered it from outside by going up a wooden staircase precariously stuck to the wall. When our daughter was

born, there was scarcely room to move. We did not dream of mansions. Yeva worked till late at the factory; she worked in production, and at the same time she was secretary of the party organization. And I vanished into the editorial office.

Yefim Shapiro, a small fellow with a short red mustache, edited the newspaper. When he was considering whether to strike out some sharp word or leave it in, he would move his upper lip and his mustache would move, making him look like a rabbit, sniffing the air.

The leading Kharkov enterprise at that time was the KhEMZ, the Kharkov Electromechanic Factory. At the factory, rich with old cadre workers, we set up a large circle of worker correspondents. Not a day passed without correspondence from KhEMZ and not less than once a week the stubborn worker correspondent Petya Ryzhov would show up at our office. Staggering about the place, he would enter the editor's office. At the newspapers, the democratic spirit held out for a long time.

Petya was a pathetic old man. He had been one of the meritorious workers at KhEMZ. But he became an inveterate drunk. He was kept on out of respect for his past, as a veteran. He would work three or four days and then go on a drinking binge, end up selling his jacket off his back, and then show up at the editorial offices. He was known everywhere.

He would drop by Shapiro's office and silently take up a position by the doorway.

"What can I do for you, Petya?" Shapiro would finally ask.

They addressed Ryzhov by his first name and used the familiar form of "you," but not out of contempt; he himself always used everybody's first name and the familiar form.

"You know!" Petya would answer. "Give me fifty kopecks for my hangover."

Shapiro looked disturbed.

"You won't?" Petya exclaimed. "The owner of factories and plants has to ask a clerk for vodka, think about it. And to the clerk fifty kopecks is nothing!"

The clerk, wiggling his mustache, would feel around in his pocket.

It happened that Petya, half-drunk—I never saw him dead drunk, and when he was at his worst, he fully maintained his dignity—could get almost half the shop to gather around him at dinner break. People would laugh at him a little, but they loved him. His language was truly that of an old man. Since I was often at the KhEMZ I was among his listeners. His report was always the same: clerks are necessary, but don't let them eat the owners out of house and home.

"When you are honorable clerks," he would say, "I will feed you. I am the owner of the factories and plants. But fatten yourself and I'll never feed you. Never!"

He did not know it, but he was repeating a thought of Lenin's on how state workers should be paid. Yes, he was a dangerous propagandist. What if he had not finally become an inveterate drunk but instead had lived until 1937?

He continued to visit the editorial office until a certain firm hand cut everything short. Entering the office of the editor, Petya saw a new face behind the desk. The fat little fellow wrote with his left hand. His name was Grigory Yevgenevich Tsy-pin. He didn't choose to recognize Petya Ryzhov as the owner of the factories and plants, would not give him money for a drink, and forbade him to enter the office again.

The new editor came to us directly from the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, from the secretariat. Until then, he had worked as an assistant to Kaganovich and was a Kaganovich man. "A Zholdak man," "a Vysochinenko man,"—such strange words, sounding distinctly uncommunist in spirit, had succeeded by then in gaining a foothold in the Komsomol as well. Three years before the time being described, in 1925, a dispute took place inside the so-called All-Ukrainian Komsomol. In it, Zholdak and Vysochinenko were somebody's men, and they in turn had their own men in the provincial committees. Two of my friends, talented and observant kids, wrote in the heat of battle a clever and vicious poem about this called "The Disputiad." One of its stanzas was dedicated to the secretary of the Central Committee of the Leninist Young Communist League of Ukraine (TsKLLKSMU):

Moscow Central Committee events
Make his heart tremble with a thousand
laments,
The Sky has only to move his eyebrows angrily.
...
He is afraid to live and afraid to die.

What kind of Sky has eyebrows to move? Stalin, of course. Everyone understood the allusion. "The Disputiad" reflected the Moscow Central Committee events, and these in turn reflected the enormous work of selecting his men which Stalin began very, very long ago. Kaganovich, for example, he had handpicked as far back as the Tsaritsyn defense.⁴ At first, he selected people secretly, but as time went on it became more open. Is there any difference in principle between the way leading posts in Artemovsk were given to brothers-in-law and sons-in-law and the way Stalin selected his people? Relatives are usually more loyal, but you can also find strangers who are more devoted than a dog. Stalin was able to do that. His strength was in his selection of men.

The words of Lenin about the unlimited power of the general secretary cause one to think: Where did Stalin's immense power come from? The general secretary during Lenin's time was not the main party leader. It was an "organizational" post, and in it Stalin grew. He used his post to select his own people, personally loyal to him. His personal authority in those years was in no way greater than the authority of the other members of the Politburo. But he knew: first get the apparatus set up, and then the authority will materialize. Such things must be checked by going to primary sources

and not on the basis of writings of later years. Of the authentic documents, accessible to someone with an interest in history, all that remains are the letters and articles of Lenin. Read with particular attention the letters of his last years, which have been published for the first time. For example, a letter addressed to Kamenev, who was then Lenin's deputy, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. And read the letters to Trotsky.⁵ And then think about all this again: Who, in the final analysis, is being blotted out, casting so dark a shadow over not one, and not two, but a whole number of people who worked with Lenin?

The selection of people he liked logically led the general secretary to remove those he didn't like. And the intrigues linked with this resulted in the accumulation of secrets about what was happening "in high places." And in most of these secrets, there was not a grain of ideology; they were secrets typical of a sultan's court. But their number grew and grew, and in time there arose the need to conceal, in addition to the court intrigues, a number of other items: Lenin's letter, an objectionable book, the eyewitness testimony of the participants in October. And finally, by the inexorable logic of events, it became necessary to bury the witnesses themselves still deeper.

Neither the concealing of documents nor the removal of witnesses has clearly defined limits. What is to be done with witnesses to the removal of witnesses? And what do you do with those who execute the plans? How do you silence those who are asking various questions?

Having been at first the master and manager of the slippery means of his own choosing, the leader in the end unavoidably falls captive to them. Having begun with the exile of several hundred of his ideological opponents, he inevitably moves to camps for millions.

* * *

It is not without reason that memoirs are provoking greater and greater interest. Only those whose consciences are not clear prefer them in

diluted form. I was never a close friend of any of the major figures of the revolution and cannot write about them. But I had my generation. It produced my major figures. What life had in store for my friends, I could not have foreseen; they were not literary heroes but people who really existed.

But now I have in Moscow other acquaintances—workers, engineers—who never suffered at all from the repression. Some of them did not know until the Twentieth Congress what had taken place. It seems to them now that nothing special even occurred because it never touched them. They do not notice how deeply they were affected or how seriously they were traumatized by the explosive wave of shootings, the long chain of betrayals and hypocrisy, the falsifications and expulsions, the compulsory genuflection and voluntary flunkysm, the unending silences and eternal looks back for the opinion from above, the noisy public trials of dozens of people and the secret sentences to millions.

And those secretly sentenced remained in the camps until their deaths, but even in the camps continued to work and to build cities and factories. And dying, they believed, despite all evidence to the contrary, that their friends outside would at some time be inspired to search for the truth and would mention them, the innocent, with kind and approving words. In fact, those who died were the most unknown of the unknown soldiers of the revolution. There is no eternal flame over their grave.

Why not ask about their lives, their devotion to the revolution, their working class consciousness, their right to people's respect?

The living who forget about the dead are themselves as cold as corpses.

Some say: The fate of those innocently condemned affects you because you yourself were imprisoned. No, the fate of those tormented and shot troubles me the more strongly the less others seem to know about it. It is not the dead who haunt me in my sleep, but the living who cause my anxiety. ■

[Next month: "I Make the Worst Choice"]

NOTES

1. Aleksander Blok (1880-1921) was a Russian poet and symbolist.
2. Article 58 of the criminal code of 1926 consisted of 14 sections defining "crimes against the state" which were punishable by a minimum of 10 years' imprisonment to a maximum of execution. In the 1930s it became a means for eliminating millions of people who stood in the way of the bureaucracy at any level.
3. Ivan Goncharov (1812-1891) was a Russian novelist whose third novel, *The Precipice* (1869), had a female character named Vera.
4. Lazar Kaganovich (1893-) was a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party from 1924, and of the Politburo from 1930. He was removed from all his posts as an "antiparty element" when Khrushchev took over the Soviet leadership in the 1950s. During the Russian civil war, the town of Tsaritsyn, which had a strong tradition of partisan guerrilla warfare, was the headquarters of the Russian Tenth Army, under Voroshilov. Under Stalin's influence, it became the seat of the "military opposition," which opposed the use of military specialists from the old tsarist army and resisted the centralization of the Red Army under a unified command. Stalin used the group of

commanders there as a basis for his personal intrigues and maneuvers, capitalizing on their grudges against the center of command to accumulate personal loyalties to himself. The Eighth Congress of the Russian party in 1919 rebuffed the Tsaritsyn group and reaffirmed the military policy that Trotsky, as head of the Red Army, had been implementing. In 1919, when the group began disobeying direct orders and endangering the course of the civil war, Lenin and Trotsky finally had Voroshilov transferred to the Ukraine, where, again with Stalin behind him, he created a similar opposition group. After Lenin died, Stalin renamed Tsaritsyn "Stalingrad."

5. Lenin's September 29, 1922, letter to Leon Kamenev and his last letters to Trotsky are in *Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism*, by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, Russell Block, ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975). Kamenev (1883-1936) was an Old Bolshevik who helped Stalin initiate the crusade against Trotskyism in 1923, then blocked with the Left Opposition until being expelled from the party in 1927. He capitulated but was a victim of the first big Moscow show trial and was executed.

THE STUDENT AS TEACHER: REMEMBRANCES OF GEORGE BREITMAN

A Tribute to George Breitman: Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary, edited by Naomi Allen and Sarah Lovell. New York, Fourth Internationalist Tendency, 1987. 163 pages, plus photos, \$5.00.

Reviewed by Paul Lee

When I die, George Breitman is remembered to have remarked in 1966 after the death of a comrade, please let's don't hold any meetings about it.

Fortunately this wish was ignored by his family, friends, coworkers, and admirers, for the result is now a remarkably *functional* record of the talks and messages to two memorial meetings held in Los Angeles and New York, respectively, in June 1986. Even the man who could, after nearly a half-century of extraordinary political dedication that left his coworkers and countless unknown admirers in awe, complain that a birthday greeting sent to him for his seventieth birthday was "overly laudatory," would probably find it difficult to disclaim this amazingly balanced and candid chronicle and remembrance. And because he worked toward and respected an ideal of objectivity, this book is an appropriate tribute to his vision, the political tradition to which he was committed, and to the durability of his influence.

Who was George Breitman? A thumbnail sketch might read, as does an advertisement for the book by coeditor Sarah Lovell, as follows:

- Author of *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*, and editor of *Malcolm X Speaks*, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, and *By Any Means Necessary*; chief editor of the 14-volume series *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929-40)*.

- Organizer in the unemployed movement of the 1930s.

- A founder and leader of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and several times editor of its newspaper, the *Militant*.

We would add to this sketch that, after his controversial expulsion from the SWP in 1984, he was a founder and leader of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.), which seeks "to win the [SWP] back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective and for . . . readmission to the SWP" of those who were expelled, and he was an editor of its journal, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.

The book will, of course, have a natural appeal to those who share Breitman's political convictions, as well as to those who knew him personally or through his work or reputation. But it is also much like the man, and one of his more distinguishing qualities was his appeal to and ability to communicate with people from all walks of life. It is certainly and properly a political document, as its editors probably intended it to be. But it is also a very human document—one of those rare instances when the sum of a book somehow transcends the often carefully crafted purposes of its cre-

ator(s) and assumes instead dimensions outside even their best expectations.

In an attempt to suggest the character of George Breitman, consider a list of attributes and abilities culled from the tributes: an incisive mind, honesty, a critical intelligence, a skilled organizer, integrity, unpretentiousness, drive and determination, master of the declarative sentence and lucid prose, a creative mind, meticulous scholarship, loyalty (personal, organizational, and ideological, but not blind loyalty), a willing listener, a phenomenal memory, a quick, dry wit, great empathy for others, passionate.

Consider also these frank observations of Breitman's faults and weaknesses (simplifying, of course, as in the above, the complex dynamics of the human dialectic): impatience and intolerance with others whose work and practice did not measure up to his standards; an "extreme sobriety" and ruthless candidness that was grating; a sometimes gruff and intimidating manner; "an agnostic position on most scientific issues," according to coeditor Naomi Allen, that allowed him "to be led by those with strong convictions."

But probably his greatest weakness was one which writer Paul Siegel surmised Breitman felt was "the trick fate had played upon him." As attorney Michael Steven Smith poignantly recalled, "I remember George at Pathfinder [Press] meetings. . . . He was always, always in pain." According to his obituary, which is one of the appendices to the book, he had endured "almost thirty years of unremitting illness," including, among other ailments, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcers, and cancer, before finally succumbing to a heart attack on April 19, 1986. In taking notes for this review, the author wearied of noting references to Breitman's fragile health. David Herreshoff, a Breitman associate from the '40s, echoed the sentiments of many when he confessed, "I am not personally acquainted with a comparable example of prolonged devotion to duty in the face of persistent, crippling disease."

What these talks and messages essentially attest to, it seems to me, is that George Breitman was fundamentally a gifted and sincere perennial student. It is perhaps this particular quality which is the key to understanding his motivation, character, appeal, and practice, or at least much of it. And it may be that it was the purity of this quality—the innocence and idealism, balanced by an equally strong critical curiosity and common sense practicality—which accounts for the strong affinities expressed by many of the speakers and writers who felt especially drawn to this or that aspect of his character or work. For example, among those who addressed the New York memorial meeting, this reviewer felt Breitman to have been "a kindred spirit" in the motivation underlying his research on Malcolm X; Paul Le Blanc, an F.I.T. comrade and a

gifted writer much influenced by and, indeed, reminiscent of Breitman, acknowledged "a certain deep sense of kinship" with his comrade's critical intelligence and appreciation for the complexity of political realities; and scholar Alan Wald felt a special regard for Breitman's self-critical approach to historical research, and perhaps had himself in mind when he concluded his talk by affirming that the memorial was for, "in some respects, our father." Like any true artist—a term which, by predisposition and active interest, he probably would have been proud to claim had he chosen a more traditionally cultural path—his virtuous strivings and accomplishments inspired the best in others.

This is one of the most striking and consistent themes that emerges, cumulative fashion, from the tributes—the enduring influence and impact of Breitman's efforts and example. This is not hagiography, but it is certainly special. "George's blue [editing] pencil," assured Melissa Singler, one of his former Detroit students, "and his smile will always be poised above my life." Bob Fink, another former Detroit branch SWPer, maintained that "many of the people who feel they have learned from me often don't even know that they are really gaining the benefit of the wisdom of a man they never knew."

Perhaps even more significant, however, are the tributes from comrades whose political paths diverged from Breitman's, some decades earlier and some in opposition or competition with his political efforts. Outstanding also is the message on behalf of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from Ernest Mandel, the renowned Marxist scholar, whose political path reconverged with Breitman's after a period of separation. Breitman's long-time friend and comrade, Frank Lovell, offers a brief but informative glimpse of the famous Mandel/Breitman letters of the mid-fifties, which eventually led to the healing of a breach in the international Trotskyist movement several years later. There is also a message from Michel Pablo, who was the leader of the faction to which Mandel belonged.

Fraternal messages from Afro-American organizations and individuals, and a short but forceful message from the brilliant UCLA political scientist, Victor Wolfenstein, pay particular tribute to Breitman's works on Malcolm X and contemporary black nationalism.

Cosponsors of the memorial meetings, Solidarity and Socialist Action (also composed of SWP expellees), sent respectful tributes. These helped to lay in sharp relief, however, the SWP's decision to decline to cosponsor the meeting or send a message—even to his widow. The anger which emerges toward the SWP in some of the tributes appears to

have been prompted more by these failures than by the political differences which divide the expellees from the party. In fact, there is little discussion, let alone rancor, concerning the expulsions, although it is perhaps understandable that those who did, spoke or wrote with the passions of their political convictions. And none are more eloquent than Breitman's own detailed defense and appeal to the SWP National Committee in April 1984, included as an appendix.

The nature of the occasion inevitably led to some exaggeration and sentimentalism, but not much, and not all of it is necessarily inappropriate in any case. Dorothea Breitman, his wife and comrade for 46 years, in a spare reminiscence which precedes the talks, relates practically nothing of a "romantic" nature about their courtship or marriage. But its clipped sentences and imagery are one of the warmest parts of the book.

I remember many things. George's voice over the phone asking why I had not been around. Would I like to resume my membership in the Spartacus Youth League? I went to the next meeting where George was chairperson, took the minutes, and collected the dues. When the meeting was over he took me aside, asked if I had any questions, and gave me a few pamphlets to read. Everyone else at that meeting spoke more than he did. This was in 1935.

(Mrs. Breitman also relates that "his last nonpolitical writings were in letters to his youngest friend, Kristen Bloom." In the book's photo section, the only shot in which he is seen clearly smiling is in one of the two photos with Kristen, age three.)

As should be clear, this is a rich remembrance. Because the influence of its subject reaches into many areas, it should be a standard reference and supplement to Breitman's published works, particularly for scholars, students, and libraries, not to mention those engaged in political movements or struggles. It is evidently a labor of love—well edited, with a clean, intelligent structure and an attractive design. Although it could be read in a relatively short time, it probably won't be. The images, emotions, ideas, individuals, and issues that it evokes are of a kind to be pondered; for some, reexperienced; for others, it will be a fascinating initiation to a dynamic, living legacy.

For those, like this reviewer, who wished that they could have known him better, this book will be a satisfying compromise. Even those who felt that they knew him well may feel similarly. For this, its editors have earned our gratitude. ■

A SHOP STEWARD AND REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST

From Militancy to Marxism, by Alan Thornett. Left View Books, BCM Box 3956, London, WC1N 3XX, England, 1987. 278 pp., \$16.95.

Reviewed by Wayne McElyea

This book, the first of a projected trilogy, will be of value to those interested in militant unionism, the application of the transitional program in the unions, and British postwar history. Alan Thornett weaves these elements together in a very readable personal accounting of his experiences as a shop steward and revolutionary socialist in Britain's most important industrial complex—the Cowley car works.

Thornett grew up in a conservative rural area, not far from the stately stone campus of Oxford. But Thornett never made it to university. At age 15 he left home to work as a farm laborer. Seeing no future in that occupation, he joined the British army, which proved even less attractive as a career. In 1959, at age 21, Thornett went to work at Cowley where he remained until being fired in 1982.

During his nearly 24 years in that plant, Thornett always seemed to be in the center of big battles which, on occasion, had national impact. The Cowley workers in general, and Thornett in particular, became the stereotypical examples used by the British ruling class and Trade Union Congress bureaucrats to demonstrate "what's wrong with British labor." But they also became an inspiration to millions of British workers who take union principles and socialist goals seriously.

Thornett deals with the "small" day-to-day shop floor problems as well as the big battles that captured headlines, and he puts everything in the broader context of British and world politics. Both shop steward and historian will appreciate his thorough, honest approach.

It didn't take Thornett long, working in the center of the British auto industry, to conclude that militant unionism alone was insufficient for defending the working class. He soon became attracted to the Communist Party, which presented a radical face. But, while maintaining respect for some of the CP's trade union militants, the more he learned about the party's perspective and composition, the more he became convinced that it was not the answer to the workers' problems. Writing about his experiences with the Oxford branch, he explains:

Organization in the car plants did not feature in the work of the city branch. CP candidates in local elections were a major focus. The new young group of us from the factories never really fitted in either politically or socially. The wine and cheese parties at the Johnsons' or Dudmans' went

down as well with us as John Tarver's organized "walks by the river with fine comrades and a pint of beer at the Perch."

We saw them as genuine people but having little to do with us. They were attracted to the Soviet Union and they were involved in the movement against the US bases which was strong in Oxford at the time, but they were steeped in the particular class collaboration of the CP war-time politics and they supported the parliamentary road to socialism.

In 1964 Thornett encountered the ideas of Trotskyism as presented by the Socialist Labor League (SLL). The SLL, dominated by Gerry Healy, was already beginning to degenerate into a sectarian cult. Healy was to utilize physical assault and intimidation and Stalinist-style slander campaigns during his slide into political and moral debauchery. But in 1964 this degeneration was in its infancy. The SLL was in the leadership of the Labor Party Young Socialists and winning significant layers of militant workers. In the early '70s it was to become a semi-mass party for a brief period, able to mobilize thousands at rallies, publish a daily newspaper, and recruit celebrities such as Vanessa Redgrave.

Thornett began to have discussions with SLL students and academics around Oxford University.

A group of us from the car plants were gradually won to Trotskyism (although not at this stage membership in the SLL) through the influence of this group. We began to see Trotskyism as a set of ideas which rejects the bureaucratic degeneration and the brutal dictatorship which exists in the so-called "communist countries" and bases itself on the conviction that a socialist order of society with a planned economy can be established by the working class without this kind of dictatorship, whilst guaranteeing democratic rights.

When talking of the struggle in the unions they argued that the crisis of the working class is the crisis of working class leadership; how could we argue with that? They argued that the task of Marxists was to seek to resolve that crisis through the building of a serious revolutionary party—and we could not argue with that either. When we talked about the possibility of the election of a Labor government later that year they argued that it would end up supporting the bosses and betraying the working class movement, and we could

see that they were doing something about that as well.

Ten years later Thornett, and a number of other Trotskyist auto workers, were brutally expelled by Healy and subjected to vilification and physical threats. That experience will be taken up in Thornett's second book. But clearly Thornett,

and others, grasped the fundamentals of Trotskyism sufficiently to allow them to survive the disorientation and degeneration of Healy's organization.

The book is well organized and flows well. But I would have appreciated an index, and, considering the volume of initials and the scope of the book, a glossary and chronology would have been helpful.

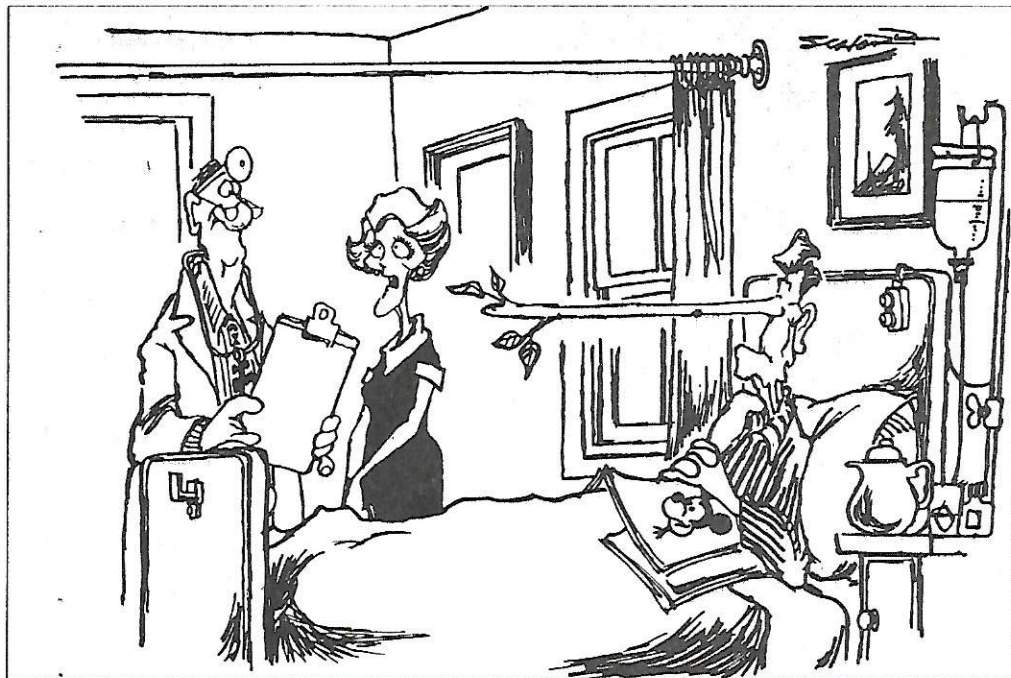
I'm looking forward to the next two volumes. ■

(Continued from page 24)

lutionary not because everyone is forgiven, or because forgiveness is all in God's hands. God is part of the revolution. Forgiveness is revolutionary because the former victims of an unjust system—such as that of Somoza—are able to see the systemic character of victimization and recognize thereby their former oppressors also as victims. Those who forgive are prepared

to blame the way society was structured rather than simply the individuals who participated in it. The individuals are held responsible primarily for the future, not the past. They are given a chance to change rather than being cast away.

Whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. ■



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'Actually, Doctor, we first noticed the growth on Ronnie's nose right after his press conference on the Iran-Contra affair'

Deindustrialization

The article by Steve Bloom on the "Myth of Deindustrialization" (July/August 1987) is very timely. It should be published as a pamphlet. Like the articles by Tom Barrett on apartheid in South Africa, it discusses an issue which the general public is very much concerned with. The *Bulletin IDOM* is performing an important task as a Leninist, Trotskyist continuator of Marxism which sees its application to the present time.

A companion article or perhaps an addendum to Bloom's article would be some comments on modern day U.S. imperialism with its use of finance capital not only to exploit foreign natural resources but also inexpensive foreign labor to manufacture products more cheaply abroad.

Joe Carroll
Newark, N.J.

More on Pay Equity

Here's a postscript to my article, "How Will Women Workers Gain Pay Equity?" (July/August issue of *Bulletin IDOM*) which argued against the position of Socialist Workers Party leaders opposing comparable worth. In researching material regarding violence against women, I looked through my file of 1984 issues of the *Militant*. To my surprise, I found a number of articles *advocating* and *supporting* pay equity (also called comparable worth).

An editorial in the 3/3/84 issue of the *Militant* supported the comparable worth victory won in the suit filed by women workers in the state of Washington. "The issue here is one of simple justice—the right of women to equal pay with men." In taking up White House arguments against comparable worth, the editorial explained: "Women with lower-paying jobs do *not* have an equal opportunity to work at jobs with higher salaries—otherwise they would!

"Another objection is that it's not possible to assess the value of different jobs in order to determine which should have comparable pay scales. But not only is it *possible*, it's been done—in Washington State; in San Jose, California; and by other governments and employers."

At the 1984 national conference of the National Organization for Women, an SWP member told the gathering: "What we need to win our rights is a strong, fighting, women's liberation movement that would counter the assaults on abortion rights and clinics, join with Black and Latina sisters to fight for affirmative action, fight for lesbian and gay rights, *for pay equity* and child care" (emphasis added, p. 5, 7/20/84).

Other articles published during 1984 supported the strike of Yale University clerical and technical workers who were demanding comparable worth wage increases. In one article, Tom Leonard wrote: "This continuing struggle for comparable worth has been the cornerstone for solidarity received by

Local 34. From the beginning the unionists have had support from the Black community surrounding Yale. Local 34 has also received support from students and faculty members on the campus and from women's organizations and trade unions that have a big stake in combatting racist and sexist employment practices" (p. 16, 12/14/84). I have no idea exactly when or why the SWP changed its position from supporting comparable worth to denouncing it. But this is another rather interesting demonstration of the sharp reversals in position taken by the SWP leadership with no explanation.

Evelyn Sell
Los Angeles

A Genuine Pleasure

It was a genuine pleasure to be able to read the October 1987 issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. I think the magazine has become, especially over the past two years, an invaluable source for thoughtful socialist activists—offering clear and stimulating articles that have a depth and relevance not sufficiently evident in many other radical publications. You are publishing certain kinds of articles which can't easily be found elsewhere.

For example, your series by the late Mikhail Baitalsky, "Notebooks for the Grandchildren," provides a moving and insightful account of the early revolutionary socialists of Russia's young Soviet Republic—inspired by the ideals of the Bolshevik revolution; struggling to build up a society of, by, and for working people; heroically resisting the hostility of world capitalism as well as the internal corruption of bureaucratic authoritarianism and privilege—and each installment not only gives us an incomparable "feel" for what it was like back then but also gives us food for thought regarding the revolutionary struggles of our own time. The translator, Marilyn Vogt-Downey, also deserves thanks for her rich account and analysis of "New Developments in the USSR" under the policies of *glasnost*.

Also extremely useful is the article by Bill Onasch on "The Central America Peace Plan and the U.S. Anti-Intervention Movement." Along with certain related articles in the same issue, it puts forward a perspective for U.S. opponents of imperialism which—although unfortunately uncommon in the anti-intervention and solidarity movements at present—suggests a clear and practical orientation for future struggles. Because of that clarity and practicality, it seems to me this now-minority perspective should have a growing impact among U.S. activists who would like to contribute to the success of the Central American revolution. A publication which gives us things worth reading on two sectors of the world—and in a single issue!—is certainly something to be valued. But you don't seem to be satisfied with that, because you also turn your focus on the plight of the workers' movement in the United States itself.

Frank Lovell's article "Labor's Answer to Today's Problems" has a deceptively simple title for what it actually delivers—a survey of the past 16 years of the U.S. labor movement's experience, a thoughtful look at certain current trends of labor militancy, and then a *critical-minded* look at how the Trotskyist movement's *Transitional Program* of 1938 applies (and in some ways doesn't apply) to the realities we face now. It seems to me that the manner in which he introduces and discusses the transitional program—in a serious-minded way seeking to generate discussion, not smugly pretending to have all the answers (which would close discussion)—is consistent with "the transitional method" which he advocates. And doing this, he performs a real service.

A Reader
Pittsburgh

Jesse Jackson and the Class Struggle

While agreeing generally with the views expressed by Paul Le Blanc in his article "Peter Camejo and the Ballot Box Myth" (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 45), I strongly disagree with his statement "The Jackson campaign *has* given expression to aspects of the class struggle in our society, but it has also facilitated class collaboration" (emphasis in the original). I believe the first part of that sentence is flagrantly incorrect.

How does Jackson's campaign to win the Democratic Party nomination for president *in any way* give "expression to aspects of the class struggle"? Paul Le Blanc does not say. He makes no attempt to document his assertion.

The purpose of the Jackson campaign is to divert any impulse toward independent political action by Black masses and other oppressed strata of our society into the safe confines of bourgeois politics. Jackson's program is to reform capitalism. He preaches sweet reasonableness in employer/

worker relationships. (That was his message in P-9's strike against Hormel and that is his message in the professional football players' strike, where he has sought to intervene as a mediator.) In short, Jackson's campaign is based on a "progressive" form of class collaboration. It has nothing whatever to do with class struggle.

As to the possible argument that, irrespective of Jackson's personal orientation, there are elements within the Rainbow Coalition that advance a class struggle line (an argument Le Blanc does not himself make), I would ask who these elements are, what specifically do they espouse and, most importantly, how does the campaign *itself* give expression to their views. Populism, pacifism, social reforms, etc., do not constitute class struggle. Organizing the working class independently in opposition to the employers, with the ultimate aim of winning state power—that is the meaning of class struggle politics.

Samuel Adams

In Reply: *To say that the Jackson campaign "gives expression to" the class struggle is not the same thing as saying that it advances that struggle. The class struggle takes many forms in bourgeois society. A conflict which is so fundamental must constantly find one form of expression or another. When there are no class struggle leaderships and no class struggle methods available through which the conflict of working people and the bosses can express itself, it will inevitably do so through some distorted form. A good example is the AFL-CIO, a completely bureaucratized and enfeebled union movement which hardly has a class struggle strategy. Yet it is certainly true that the class struggle "finds expression" (though of course in a distorted way) through actions taken by AFL-CIO unions. It is in this sense that the statement in Le Blanc's article about the Jackson campaign should be understood, and not in any sense of endorsement.*

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