

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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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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CONTRADICTIONS OF THE JACKSON CAMPAIGN

by Albert Harris

From within the oldest capitalist party in the United States Jesse Jackson has been articulating a left-wing (essentially social democratic) perspective with a significant *class* component. He has been getting a hearing and effectively appealing to millions of working class voters. This sort of response is reminiscent of what happened in the first two decades of the twentieth century, when Eugene V. Debs ran for president on the Socialist Party ticket—although there is no sign that Jackson intends to lead this into an uncompromising struggle against capitalism, as Debs did, which makes his effort qualitatively different.

The Jackson campaign involves a contradictory fusion of working class and capitalist politics. With his rhetoric against war, racism, and corporate greed and for working class solidarity and dignity he has provided a pole of attraction for an accumulation of votes and has helped create a leftward shift in "mainstream" politics. He is mobilizing a constituency which has a basically anticapitalist and politically radical orientation into support for the Democratic Party, whose program and entrenched leadership are impeccably pro-capitalist and fundamentally antiradical.

All of this can be documented from a rich variety of sources. But if one opens a single bourgeois newspaper on a specific day—say the *Pittsburgh Press* on April 6, 1988—sufficient material can be found. (Pittsburgh, home of more than 20 international corporations, is hardly a backwater of capitalist America, and the *Press* is a relatively sophisticated and solidly established daily of the Scripps-Howard chain.) Turning to the editorial and opinion pages of this particular issue, we find two items which merit attention.

One is the reprint of a *Washington Post* column by Eleanor Randolph which concentrates on assertions that Jackson: doesn't know who his father is; is a poor administrator of Operation PUSH ("most people who vote for Jackson should know by now not to expect Lee Iacocca," as she coyly puts it); was once supported by Black Muslim Louis Farrakhan; four years ago used the word "Hymies" to describe Jews; has been photographed with Castro, Arafat, and Qaddafi; has been accused of being "a womanizer"; falsely "claimed to be at Martin Luther King Jr.'s side when he was assassinated" (she triumphantly reveals that he "was many yards away" at the time); and has been denounced by the neoliberal *New Republic* as being "bad." Jackson, she tells us, is "an ultra-ultra liberal" who "speaks in bumper stickers"—just like the ultra-ultra conservative Ronald Reagan. In spite of all this, she comments in

wonder, massive numbers of people are responding to what he has to say.

Amidst the smears and trivia, Randolph does raise a question of substance. Most political journalists have been struggling recently to figure out what would happen to the government if Jackson actually did what he said he would do. If he got into office, somehow, would the defense budget be scaled back by \$10 billion or \$100 billion as some commentators have argued? It's like trying to figure out how candidate Jimmy Carter would cut the nation's nuclear arsenal to 200. (He didn't.) Or figuring out how Lyndon B. Johnson would end the Vietnam war. (He couldn't.) Indeed, this identifies the genuine contradiction of the Jackson campaign.

The Democratic Party is committed to preserving "the American way of life" (i.e., capitalism and U.S. corporate interests), in part through militarism, nuclear weapons, and whenever it seems necessary, through military interventions abroad. Jackson as a Democratic president, or as the supporter of a Democratic president, will have to accommodate to that—regardless of his radical rhetoric. That's why important sectors of the U.S. ruling class have been trying to build up Jackson as a "legitimate" politician, while still keeping him from getting enough support to actually win the nomination. They understand that as long as he keeps his followers within the Democratic Party any movement he chooses to build is unlikely to constitute a serious threat. In fact, it might become an important safety valve for a U.S. capitalist system in crisis, something quite useful for the rulers of this country.

But there is another side to the question too. Randolph is kidding herself when she dismisses Jackson's radical rhetoric as simply "fluff and nonsense." The more politically astute editors of the *Pittsburgh Press* recognize, in their editorial "Jesse Jackson's Agenda," that the Jackson campaign is raising questions that pose a serious challenge to the capitalist status quo. Or as they put it in their own slanted way, "the more respectable Rev. Jackson's agenda becomes in either party, the greater the threat to the nation's prosperity and security." Those elements of the ruling class which have chosen to legitimize Jackson, the politician, run the risk of legitimizing the issues he is raising. That contradiction poses a serious problem, and it is obvious that not all ruling class circles are comfortable with Jackson's success so far.

The *Press* editors identify six issues on which they feel especially threatened.

1. They complain that Jackson "wants Washington to guarantee high-quality health care not just for the elderly and poor but for everyone." They are not opposed to rich people being guaranteed such health care (as they naturally are simply because they're rich), but if the working class majority gets good health care the cost could run to \$300 billion a year. "Where does the financing come from?" they ask anxiously. (More of this below.)

2. They complain that Jackson has floated the idea of establishing community development programs that could cost \$60 billion over a 10-year period. Again, where would the money come from? (More on this below.) Of course, it will take more than \$60 billion to rebuild our communities to ensure decent lives for working people—but any step in this direction is "too costly" for the spokesmen of U.S. corporate wealth.

3. The editors protest: "Rev. Jackson wants to reverse the best parts of the 1986 income-tax overhaul, hiking the top tax rate to 38 percent for individuals and 46 percent for corporations," without restoring "the deductions and exemptions that previously made such rates less painful." *This* is where some of the money could come from to provide for American working people's good health and better communities—from the wealth hoarded by the rich and the big corporations. The owners of the *Pittsburgh Press* don't like that.

4. The editors are mortified that "Rev. Jackson would scrap every new weapon needed to modernize our strategic deterrent. He would even get rid of cruise missiles and declare a unilateral nuclear freeze." Of course, many of us are attracted to the idea that the threat of nuclear holocaust would be a less prominent component of U.S. foreign policy—in fact, it should be eliminated altogether (a step Jackson is not prepared to call for). In any event, the cutbacks in military waste would provide additional funds for the program of social reconstruction that the *Press* editors find so distasteful. It's worth pausing for a moment over the phrase "our strategic deterrent." *Our* deterrent? Most people in the United States don't have a deterrent from the things that really threaten them—like the greed and callousness of the powerful business interests which dominate our country, exploiting U.S. working people while pressing down the quality of life of their communities. What the *Press* editors care about, however, is a deterrent to protect the interests of U.S. corporations in a world which is increasingly rebellious against U.S. corporate domination.

5. In line with the point just made, the *Press* editors are upset that Jackson "denounced both the 1983 liberation of Grenada from Marxist dictatorship and the 1986 anti-terrorist raid on Libya." In 1983 the genuinely popular and Marxist-influenced government of Maurice Bishop was overthrown by a quasi-Stalinist faction; U.S. troops were used to take advantage of this tragedy, invading Grenada to install a repressive right-wing government loyal to U.S. corporate interests. In 1986 the U.S. government "flexed" its muscles by bombing men, women, and

children in a country whose government had been insolent enough to challenge U.S. power. A U.S. government employing such policies in the world will need a very big "strategic deterrent" indeed!

6. The *Press* editors denounce Jackson because "he has traveled to Havana to hail communist revolutionaries with the cry, 'Long live Castro! Long live Che Guevara!'" Even Jackson's most left-wing supporters understand that he is hardly a revolutionary, regardless of his occasionally friendly gestures toward symbols of liberation in the third world. The *Press* editors understand this too, but are disturbed that any legitimacy could be bestowed upon those who represent socialist revolution.

The editors of the *Pittsburgh Press* are not afraid that Jackson will win the presidency, nor are they afraid that he would turn his radical rhetoric into reality even if he did win. But they are afraid of the larger radical mood to which his campaign appeals (and which it thereby encourages, even as it tries to channel it into the Democratic Party). They are afraid of what will happen as radical ideas spread within the U.S. working class. "It is risky for America to have a candidate pushing such ideas," they warn. "Even if Rev. Jackson helps put George Bush into the White House, sooner or later a Republican administration will stumble—perhaps with a major scandal or a recession. Then the voters might well turn to leadership similar to the Labor Party that choked Britain for decades after World War II."

From the standpoint of the working class, the Labor Party *did* choke Britain—because although it took office, it refused to make good on its radical rhetoric. Committed to compromising with capitalism, it refused to go beyond halfway social reforms, refused to lead the working class to power, refused to fight for socialism. (The same drift to "respectability" would also disastrously incapacitate and discredit Jesse Jackson if he took office.) But from the capitalist standpoint, the very *potential* of the Labor Party—based on a militant, socialist-minded working class—to transform Britain along socialist lines was quite enough for "choking" concern. The *Press* editors urge supporters of the capitalist status quo to "take a long-term view": the Jackson campaign reflects a process which might eventually result in the rise of a militant labor party in the United States. They conclude: "Republicans should not be complacent about that danger. Neither should Democrats."

Neither should socialists.

Although the Jackson campaign leads to the dead end of the Democratic Party, it also suggests an immense potential. Today the possibility exists in the United States to begin building a mass working class movement capable of challenging capitalist politics-as-usual, and ultimately capable of bringing socialism to our country. The realization of this potential will only be achieved through the hard work of dedicated socialist activists—and it can't be done in the Democratic Party. The same mass consciousness which "the Jackson phenomenon" reflects

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PROBLEMS OF STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATION FOR THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

by Samuel Adams

The June 14, 1986, demonstration of 100,000 people in New York City was a high point for the anti-apartheid movement. That demonstration proved that the movement has the ability to mobilize enormous numbers of people in support of its demand for sanctions against South Africa. It also revealed the potential for the movement's growth.

But in the two years since that action, the movement has failed to realize this potential. In fact, when measured against the yardstick of moving masses into the streets and organizing other highly visible militant actions, it may be argued that the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. today is *weaker* than it was two years ago.

What accounts for the movement's failure to maintain its level of activity and to grow? One factor was the nature of its response to the sanctions Congress voted against South Africa shortly after the New York demonstration. Virtually every sector of the anti-apartheid movement, including the left, hailed this as an important victory, cautioning at the same time that the fight was far from over. But the extent of this victory was generally overstated. A tough sanctions bill introduced by Congressman Ron Dellums, had it been adopted as proposed, could have struck a hard blow against the apartheid regime. What actually emerged, however, was a diluted measure that has proven to be hardly more than an irritant to the Botha government.

When Washington grants reforms it is usually in response to mass pressure and the capitalists' conscious decision to try to *defuse* social movements that are creating that pressure. So it was in this case.

But there was a second factor, undoubtedly more devastating to the anti-apartheid movement. That was the action taken by the South African government in prohibiting television from showing the brutal suppression of Black masses demonstrating for their freedom. We have only to remember the civil rights struggle in the 1960s and how TV helped ingrain on the American consciousness the grotesque Nazi-like manner in which racist cops and politicians sought to destroy that struggle. The South African authorities knew what they were doing. They largely succeeded in getting the story of anti-Black violence in South Africa off the evening news and therefore out of the consciousness of millions of people.

So the anti-apartheid movement lost its momentum. While the American public continues by an overwhelming majority to oppose U.S. support for apartheid, and while the Black community, the labor

movement, and other progressive forces have taken strong stands on the issue, these factors have not translated themselves into powerful mass actions in the recent period. And only such *actions* (not merely sentiments or sympathies) have the potential to force a change in government policies—either here or in South Africa. And when, on February 24, Botha imposed the most drastic crackdown yet on South African anti-apartheid organizations—extinguishing the last flicker of their right to function—the full implications of this brutal measure were clearly not reflected in any massive protest in the U.S. The protest by foes of apartheid in the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of February 24 was extremely limited in scope and number.

It is essential that decisive steps be taken to get the anti-apartheid movement back on course. We need to regain our lost momentum.

Problems of Strategy and Direction

Social movements generally proceed in zigs and zags, not in straight lines. But within that context, the key to their ability to grow and respond to events—regardless of objective problems or external factors over which they may have limited control—is *to have a correct analysis and program*. This must be the starting point. Yet it is precisely here that many forces within the U.S. anti-apartheid movement have gone astray.

The *central* demand of anti-apartheid activists in the U.S. must be directed against the complicity of our own government with the racist regime in Pretoria. We must call for an *end* to that complicity, and for *total sanctions against South Africa*. In addition we need to actively campaign in defense of *all* victims of apartheid repression, irrespective of what political tendency or current any particular individual may belong to. Campaigns around these kinds of demands can unify the movement and win support in unions, the Black and other minority communities, churches and synagogues, among women and student groups, and in other places.

The problem, however, is that many leaders of the anti-apartheid movement now contend that such demands and slogans—such as "End U.S. Support for Apartheid!" "Comprehensive Sanctions Against South Africa!" "Free All Victims of Apartheid Terror!"—by themselves are insufficient. More is needed, they assert, contending that it is also necessary to demand that opponents of apartheid in the U.S. support the African National Congress (ANC). This position has been endorsed not only by many left

groups here but also by certain trade union figures. The ANC itself believes that it is the correct approach for anti-apartheid activists in the U.S.

The February 18, 1988, issue of the *People's Daily World*, organ of the Communist Party, U.S.A., quoted ANC leader Dennis Goldberg as saying:

The ANC declares particular tasks for each year. This year the task is to build unity for people's power. We ask of the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. the same thing. Leave your ideological conflicts to other arenas. Instead of having five little demonstrations on a particular day in the Bay area, have a mass demonstration. Don't dictate to each other what slogans you can have. Don't fight about this.

It's not enough to be anti-apartheid. You've got to be pro-national liberation. That means recognizing the ANC as the leading organization. Support for the ANC, victory to the ANC, freedom for the people of South Africa, that's all we need. If you want to argue about whether it's a class struggle or a struggle for civil rights—argue that elsewhere" (emphasis added).

Goldberg is an important leader of the ANC and one of its authoritative spokespersons. He was one of the nine original defendants with Nelson Mandela in the 1963 Rivonia trial. Now based in London, he works full time for the ANC.

Other ANC leaders speak in the same vein. Pathfinder Press recently sponsored a tour for Victor Mashabela. At public meetings he hammered away on the theme that anti-apartheid activists in the U.S. *must* emphasize their support for the ANC. "Just" being anti-apartheid is not enough. ANC representatives even go so far as refusing to speak at meetings or rallies if anyone who belongs to a different South African political group is present.

In the last several months, anti-apartheid meetings have been held in Cleveland, Ohio. Those attending reported that both Prexy Nesbitt, formerly a UAW official in Chicago and presently working for the Mozambican government, and Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of District 65, UAW, New York, echoed this idea. Robinson, of course, was the key organizer of the June 14, 1986, demonstration in New York. (NOTE: The demand for comprehensive sanctions, not support for the ANC, was the unifying slogan that built that massive demonstration.)

The U.S. anti-apartheid movement is not alone in acting to officially endorse the ANC. The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Great Britain, which has organized demonstrations of over 100,000, expressly calls for support of the ANC. (See "The British Anti-Apartheid Movement," by Peter Bloomer, *Bulletin IDOM* No. 49.)

Yet the impact of such a position on the U.S. anti-apartheid movement will inevitably be to narrow it. For example, while participation by sec-

tions of the labor movement can be won for demonstrations calling for strong sanctions against South Africa, it is obvious that demanding support for the ANC—a particular political group with a particular program for social change in South Africa—will inhibit and limit such participation. Moreover, it places the anti-apartheid movement in the position of having to argue the merits of various ANC positions and defending various ANC actions, when our total energies should be directed toward demanding a change in U.S. government policies.

There is no compelling need for the broad-based U.S. anti-apartheid movement to place its stamp of approval on any particular South African organization. The question of who is to be the leadership of South Africa's rebellious Black masses can only be determined by those who are on the front lines, in the day-to-day battle against apartheid—i.e., by the Black people of South Africa themselves. We can most effectively show our support and solidarity for their freedom struggle and its leadership around the kind of clear-cut, popular demands that brought 100,000 people into the streets in 1986.

The Anti-Racist Struggle

In the U.S., the recent period has seen an increase in racist attacks, racially motivated violence, police brutality and killings. The wanton and widespread attacks on Blacks have spurred the development of a fight-back movement. The January 18 "March for Social Justice" by thousands in New York and the student takeover of the New Africa Building at the University of Massachusetts on February 12 are just two examples which illustrate this anti-racist struggle.

The fight against apartheid in South Africa and the fight against racism in the U.S. are inseparably linked. From the point of view of the anti-apartheid movement, the more the connections are drawn between these two struggles, the greater will be the relevance of the movement for the masses of Black people and their allies in this country.

But this requires concrete action to make the link. When coalitions form to protest the murder of Michael Griffith in Howard Beach, or the kidnapping and rape of Tawana Brawley, the anti-apartheid movement must be there. It should mobilize to build protest actions against racist violence in the U.S. called by these and other forces.

This is not a matter of changing the focus of the anti-apartheid movement, which will remain South Africa. It does mean, however, being active participants in a related struggle which can broaden the anti-apartheid movement and win new adherents to it.

This may seem obvious, but the fact remains that the literature of the anti-apartheid movement in this country—of which there is, unfortunately, a paucity—deals little or not at all with the anti-racist struggle here. Both movements can be strengthened by linking them more closely together.

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VIEW FROM A WEST BANK HOSPITAL

Epidemic of Army Violence

From the Ittihad hospital, perched neatly on a steep Nablus hillside, a panorama of flat stone rooftops, spiraling minarets, and modern office blocks unfurls into the valley below. Nablus, encircled by four refugee camps and a handful of small villages, is the largest town in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and since the Palestinian uprising began in early December, at least 22 people have died here in demonstrations against the 20-year-old military occupation. At 1 pm, the lull is suddenly but routinely broken by a storm of gunfire in a street just below the hospital. As the shooting crackles down towards the town center, and then, seconds later, bursts out somewhere on the opposite hillside, doctors at the Ittihad stand by to receive casualties.

The first ambulance arrives carrying five injured people, two with gunshot wounds. As it reverses away, ready for the next call, a second ambulance pulls into the forecourt. A few minutes later, three more ambulances sweep up the hill in quick succession, the last carrying a man with critical head injuries. While one doctor administers first aid, another arranges for a transfer to an Israeli hospital in West Jerusalem. There are no neurosurgical facilities in the West Bank. Outside, a helicopter flies over the hospital, circles over the Ain Beit al-Ma' refugee camp just to the south, and then dives down in the direction of a fleeing group of demonstrators, bombing them—there is no other word for it—with tear gas canisters. Clouds of deep blue smoke envelop the spidery figures before turning white and slowly fizzling out. Around 3 pm, 33-year-old Salah al-Din Abdel from the nearby Askar camp is pronounced dead on arrival. In medical terms the cause is "acute respiratory failure," but, as his weeping mother explains in more everyday language, he died after a tear gas canister was fired into their tiny three-room house. The canister carried a warning spelled out in English: "Use in confined spaces may cause death or serious injury."

At 3:30 pm, the flow of injured people comes to a temporary halt. In two-and-a-half hours over 20 people have been admitted to the Ittihad: one dead, one to be transferred, two more critically injured by live ammunition, and the remainder suffering from a variety of less serious bullet wounds, broken bones and bruises caused by beatings, tear gas suffocation, and rubber bullet inflicted injuries. Only one of the victims came from

outside the immediate Nablus area. Throughout this period, gunfire, ranging from single shots and sporadic outbursts to concentrated rounds of fire lasting for several minutes, could be heard in the vicinity of the hospital building. At 7 pm the shooting starts up again, but this time army flares as well as sweeping spotlights pinpoint the location exactly. The ambulances set off without waiting to be called.

"What we are dealing with here are war injuries," asserts one surgeon as he later sets off on a routine ward round. "Bullets are for battles, not for demonstrations. It's only in places like South Africa and Israel that troops open fire on protesters who can't shoot back." The analogy with the Pretoria regime is not strictly apt: in South Africa, demonstrations by Blacks are severely restricted, but in the Israeli-occupied territories Palestinians have absolutely no right to protest. Almost all the patients crammed into the Ittihad's 90 beds are the victims of Israel's effort to stamp out the demonstrations that have racked the territories for four months now. Since December, according to the Ittihad's records, 720 people have been treated for injuries inflicted by the IDF's arsenal of weapons—250 of them shot by live ammunition. Two other hospitals in Nablus have also been admitting injured people. "In the past month things have got far worse," continues the same surgeon. "Almost every day people are getting killed and there is a far greater number of serious injuries coming into the hospital. Rabin publicly announced that soldiers can shoot to kill people with petrol bombs, but how can a soldier, probably from a distance, tell what is a petrol bomb and what isn't? They are opening fire indiscriminately as soon as a demonstration starts up."

The Ittihad is small, sparsely equipped and understaffed and, like all the hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza, has been hard pressed to cope with the casualty overload of recent months. During one three-day period in late January, when 98 people were admitted, including 35 shot by live ammunition, doctors were obliged to treat patients on makeshift mattresses in the corridors. "A few days ago we received 7 gunshot cases from Fara'a camp at exactly the same time," remembers the surgeon. "We only have three emergency operating tables so some had to wait. Obviously we prioritized the most serious cases and started with them. They're all doing well now, but we're not always so fortunate." Khalid al-Arda, shot through the head, was already in critical condition when he arrived at the Ittihad on March 6. In a last-ditch attempt to save his life, staff decided to transfer him to

This article is reprinted from the April 11, 1988, issue of News from Within, published in Jerusalem by the Alternative Information Center.

a hospital inside Israel where a neurosurgeon might have been able to save him. He died during the one-and-a-half hours' ambulance journey. Muhammad Sulaiman Khaled from Ain Beit al-Ma' camp was even less lucky. Hit by a bullet in his knee on March 18, he was taken by the army, not to a hospital, but straight to a make-shift interrogation center at about 6 pm. At 8:30 pm Muhammad's corpse was brought to the Ittihad. The bullet had severed a major blood vessel, and without medical treatment he had simply bled to death.

The current "epidemic of army violence," as a visiting delegation of American doctors termed it, has highlighted the inadequacy of existing hospital services in the occupied territories. The Ittihad is in urgent need not only of a brain scan, but a second multipurpose operating theater as well as basic equipment for laboratory analysis. Yet compared to Israeli-administered hospitals, the Ittihad, run as a charitable foundation by the local Arab Women's Union, is a haven of medical care and comfort; it is moreover free. Since December all fees have been waived for victims of the Israeli crackdown, leaving the hospital to foot a bill that now stands at approximately U.S. \$400,000. The cost of treatment in the military government sector depends on the payment of health insurance contributions. Less than half of all the Palestinians living in the territories are enrolled in the scheme, and of these many fall behind in their payments. The abysmal quality of the service is as much a disincentive to enrollment as low income. According to Jack Geiger, one of the five-member American team, the Israeli-run hospital in Hebron had only two blood pressure cuffs, one of which was not working, while the Shifa hospital in Gaza was "filthy."

That most Palestinians prefer to seek medical attention at private rather than Israeli-run hospitals is due not only to financial or medical considerations, but is also because, relatively speaking, they are safer. Troops regularly enter government hospitals to make arrests, on occasion dragging seriously injured patients from their beds against doctors' orders. In Ramallah hospital, soldiers stood guard at the bed of an unconscious man who had just spent four hours on the operating table after being shot through the abdomen. In another incident at the same hospital, a woman suffering from the effects of tear gas was being resuscitated when soldiers barged into the emergency room looking for injured demonstrators. Only when they realized that she really was unconscious, not feigning, were the doctors allowed to continue with their efforts to revive her.

Private hospitals are subject to less frequent but equally harrowing army raids. Soldiers have broken into the Ittihad three times since the uprising began. During the last raid on February 25, the hospital was completely cordoned off by troops

and pronounced a closed military zone. Soldiers then rampaged through the wards, beating and even tearing out drips from seriously injured patients. "We were busy working when we heard screaming from the direction of the lobby," recalls one nurse on night duty at the time. "Immediately afterwards some soldiers barged into the delivery room where I was helping a woman in labor. When I told them to get out and that their behavior was shameful, one shouted that they were looking for the troublemakers and then he began to search the room for young men even though there was only a pregnant woman there. They said that a shot had been fired from the hospital, but the only bullets around were the ones removed in the operating theater. They completely ignored our pleas to negotiate and started throwing medicines on the floor and smashing up equipment. They were behaving like madmen who'd lost all control."

Not surprisingly, people only come to hospitals, whether private or Israeli, as a last resort. This means that official records give no real indication of the scale of the damage done in the past few months. Based on a study conducted in the West Bank between December 12 and March 13, a recent report estimates that 7,500 people have been shot with live ammunition, 13,000 injured through beatings, and 15,000 arrested. But it is not just fear of arrest that prevents people from seeking prompt and professional medical care; army harassment extends to delaying ambulances en route to hospitals. In one incident an ambulance carrying the critically injured Mayssara al-Bitneiji was stopped while soldiers carried out a prolonged search of the vehicle. The patient died before reaching the hospital. In another case, soldiers hijacked an ambulance sent to evacuate wounded people in an East Jerusalem suburb and used it as a decoy to disperse and arrest demonstrators. During one week in January there were at least eight occasions when UNRWA ambulances were simply refused entry to areas in the Gaza Strip where injured people were in need of transport.

"We've always been at war here," says one doctor. "It's just that the world hasn't noticed until now. We have to fight even for the right to treat sick people and improve health awareness in the population at large. The bullets that we're fighting now are just more visible to the outside world than all the other weapons the Israelis have been using against us for over 20 years."

But how do doctors like him cope with working in such difficult conditions, especially at a time like this? "Yes, of course it is difficult, it always was, but so far we've managed. If the situation continues to get worse then maybe we won't, but one thing that helps is that we are all fighting the war this time. Now there are no doctors and patients, just Palestinians." ■

K.R.

ISRAEL: THREE MYTHS

by Michael Steven Smith

The first time I toured and worked in Israel was over the summer of 1959. I was sixteen years old. Israel was eleven. I expected to find the land of milk and honey.

I visited my cousin and his son in Jaffa. Hungarian refugees from European fascism, they had managed to escape to a two-room apartment off an alley in the ancient once-Arab city north of Tel Aviv.¹ My cousin's son, a boy of ten, greeted me at the door. He wore a blue shirt embroidered with white Chinese characters on the chest. I recognized the shirt, it had once been my favorite. My grandmother, who herself had fled Hungary one world war earlier, must have sent it in one of the care packages she regularly assembled and mailed.

He took me inside and I met his father. His job? He made silver "chotkes," trinkets to be sold to tourists. Pressing several key chains in my hand, he beseeched me to ask our Chicago relatives to send him money for a refrigerator. I was shaken up.

Several days later, in a park in East Jerusalem,² I talked to a dark-skinned Jew from North Africa. More like an Arab than a Western European Jew, he hadn't fared well in Israel and he complained. That bothered me too, but I was unable to articulate why.

Twenty-nine years, several wars, and the current uprising later, these incidents have for me become understandable.

The Myth of Israel as Moral Legatee

Instead of the socialist ideal of universal human emancipation which many European Jews supported, Zionist Israel is the outcome of an ideology which a relatively small number of middle- and upper-class Jews advanced, unsuccessfully until after World War II.

Israel is the product of a colonial-settler ideology that has its roots in the racist imperialist practices of the European powers of the last century. Theodor Herzl after all was a great admirer of Cecil Rhodes. And despite its own self-promotion, Israel is not the moral legatee of the victims of the Holocaust, much less of the prophets of the Hebrew people.

In point of fact, the Zionist movement actively collaborated with Nazism from the beginning. They sabotaged world Jewry's attempt to boycott the Nazi economy in order to be allowed to send money

from Germany to Palestine. They fought against liberalization of U.S. immigration laws, for they wanted European Jews to go to Palestine, not America. "This obsession with colonizing Palestine and overwhelming the Arabs led the Zionist movement to oppose any rescue of the Jews facing extermination, because the ability to deflect select manpower to Palestine would be impeded."³

David Ben-Gurion summarized to a meeting of "left" Zionists in 1938 in England: "If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England and only half of them by transporting them to Eretz Israel, then I opt for the second alternative."⁴

My cousin was one of several thousand Hungarian Jews that survived the fire: 800,000 died. A pact was signed by Dr. Rudolph Kastner of the Jewish Agency Rescue Committee and Nazi exterminator Adolph Eichmann in 1944 allowing 600 prominent Jews to leave in exchange for Zionist silence on the fate of the remainder.^{5,6}

The Myth of Little, Insecure Israel

Israel's economy is not as flimsy now as it was 29 years ago when my cousin was a chotke maker. It has become a small subimperialist power, exploiting Arab labor from the captured territories much in the same fashion as its friend South Africa, with its passbooks and Bantustans.

It has also become an international arms merchant, selling weapons to a multitude of rightist regimes, including Somoza, when the U.S. got too embarrassed to do it themselves.

Israel has the fourth strongest military machine on the planet, and the third mightiest air force. She is a major nuclear power with its Dimona plant having manufactured, with U.S. plutonium, an estimated 100 nuclear and 100 thermonuclear bombs.

The Myth of Israeli Democracy

The third myth, that Israel is a democracy, at least with respect to the Palestinians, has been damaged irrevocably by the Palestinian uprising.

In 1977 the National Lawyers Guild sent a delegation to Israel and published its report on *The Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza*. This extraordinary document stands up well today. In describing Israeli territorial deprivations, involuntary resettlement of Palestinians, the development of a colonial economy, the suppression of efforts at self-determination, the suppression of resistance through collec-

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tive punishment, demolition of homes, curfews, arbitrary imprisonment, and large scale torture, the authors of the report, and the NLG which courageously published and backed it, won the admiration and respect of Palestinians everywhere.

The great Palestinian uprising which began in December of 1987 continues—unbent and unrepentant—to expose to the world the true face of the Israeli state. We in the Guild have been speaking out for an end to the violence and for self-determination for Palestine. In addition, I believe, we should call for an end to all American aid to Israel (since 1948, \$92 billion of U.S. tax money—\$6 billion in 1987 alone) inasmuch as it is a human rights violator, has violated multiple UN resolutions, and ignored the Geneva Accords, although a signatory to them, regarding forced population transfers and collective punishment.

The Sunday *New York Times* of March 13, 1988, published a statement signed by hundreds of progressives, including many Jews. "Today, the Jewish National Fund administers 93% of the land of Israel. To live on land, lease it, sharecrop or work on it, one must establish four generations of maternal Jewish descent. If, in any country, people had to prove they did not have generations of maternal Jewish descent in order to enjoy elementary rights, no one would mistake the quintessentially racist character of such a state."

As the eminent socialist scholar of Jewish origin Isaac Deutscher wrote in the wake of the 1967 war, "I hope that together with other nations, the Jews will ultimately become aware—or regain awareness—of the inadequacy of the nation-state and that they will find their way back to the moral and political heritage that the genius of the Jews who have gone beyond Jewry (Spinoza, Marx, Luxem-

burg, Heine, Freud, Einstein, Trotsky—MSS) has left us—the message of universal human emancipation."⁷

April 2, 1988

NOTES

1. "In the territory which came under Israeli occupation after partition (by the U.N. in 1947—MSS) there were approximately 950,000 Palestinian Arabs. They inhabited 500 villages and all the major cities, which included Tiberias, Safed, Nazareth, Shafa Amr, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Lyda, Ramle, Jerusalem, Majdal, Isdud, and Beersheba. After less than six months only 138,000 people remained. The great majority of Palestinians were killed, forcibly expelled, or fled in panic before slaughtering bands of Israeli army units." *The Hidden History of Zionism*, by Ralph Schoenman, 1988.
2. It was captured, along with the West Bank and Gaza as a result of the Israeli-initiated war of 1967.
3. Schoenman, *Ibid*, P. 7.
4. Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, p. 149.
5. Malchiel Greenwald, an Hungarian survivor, exposed the deal and was sued by the Israeli government, whose leaders at the time had actually drawn up the terms of the pact. Greenwald won. The Israeli court concluded that "The sacrifice of the majority of Hungarian Jews, in order to rescue the prominents (to send them to colonize Palestine—MSS) was the basic element in the agreement between Kastner and the Nazis." "In addition to its Extermination Department and Looting Department, the Nazi S.S. opened a Rescue Department headed by Kastner." Judgment given on June 22, 1955, Protocol of Criminal Case 124/53 in District Court, Jerusalem.
6. On January 11, 1941, a formal military pact with the Third Reich was proposed by the Irgun—a Zionist military organization of which current Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir was a leading member. In offering to enter the war on the side of Germany, the Irgun proposed "The establishment of the historical Jewish State on a national and totalitarian basis, and bound by a treaty with the German Reich, would be in the interest of a maintained and strengthened future German position of power in the Near East." Brenner, *Ibid*, p. 267.
7. Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, p. 41.

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DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

by Bill Onasch

The ruling class doesn't like people like Mark Curtis—a packinghouse worker who is a militant unionist, a defender of undocumented workers, an opponent of U.S. intervention in Central America, and a socialist. He is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431 and of the Socialist Workers Party. On March 4, Curtis was arrested by cops in Des Moines, Iowa, on a framed-up rape charge. While taunting him as a "Mexican-lover" and "colored-lover," Des Moines's finest beat him severely, fracturing a cheekbone and leaving him with an eye swollen shut and numerous bruises and abrasions. In typical police fashion, Curtis was also charged with "resisting arrest."

While this is the first time that Curtis has ever been charged with a crime, he has long been a target of police surveillance. As part of their illegal secret investigation of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) the FBI kept close tabs on Mark Curtis in Birmingham, Alabama, where he formerly lived and was a CISPES activist. There is no doubt that the police in the very up-to-date city of Des Moines have a dossier on him detailing his continuing involvement in the anti-intervention movement.

Another government police agency—the Immigration and Naturalization Service—had reason to be interested in Curtis. Just three days before his arrest the INS raided the Swift packing plant where Curtis is employed and arrested 16 Mexican and one Salvadoran worker on the very serious charge of working to support their families without having the proper papers. Curtis, who speaks Spanish fluently, was a leader of protests in the plant against these raids. His arrest occurred shortly after he left a meeting to discuss a response to the raids.

What happened to lead to Curtis's arrest? According to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, "a woman ran up to Curtis's car while he was stopped for a traffic light. She pleaded for a ride home, saying that a man was after her. After arriving at the

house, she asked Curtis to wait on her porch while she looked inside, which he did. Moments later the police charged onto the porch, arrested Curtis, and charged him with rape."

The smell of frame-up is clear to every honest worker. Curtis has a well-established record of support to women's rights, including defense of women against violent attacks. Curtis's wife, Kate Kaku, is a stalwart of his defense committee.

Mark Curtis is a victim of class justice, targeted because of his role as a unionist and socialist. He deserves the support of all defenders of democratic rights.

Among those who have spoken out in Curtis's defense are: Tom Moss, secretary-treasurer, Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 1-547; Andy Dawkins, state representative, Minnesota House of Representatives; Dianne Feeley, editor, *Against the Current*; David Riehle, president, United Transportation Union Local 650; Joe Milkanin, vice president, United Auto Workers Local 2125; Bob Nelles, business representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431; Larry Regan, president, United Steelworkers Local 1014; Angela Sanbrano, executive director, CISPES; Carroll Nearmyer, state president, American Agricultural Movement of Iowa; Dennis Brutus, South African poet and professor at the University of Pittsburgh; the Progressive Student Network; and the National Lawyers Guild of Lawrence, Kansas.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is asking that letters and resolutions, demanding that the charges against Curtis be dropped and calling for an investigation of Curtis's beating, be sent to the Des Moines chief of police, William Moulder, 25 E. First St., Des Moines, IA 50309, with copies to the committee.

Endorsements of the Curtis defense and financial support are urgently needed as well. The defense committee's address is: Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, IA 50311.

WOMEN AND WORK IN THE 1980s

by Mary Scully

In the time available I will focus on women in the work force, because that is where the most dramatic changes for women have been taking place. Women's liberation is a big and complex subject, involving many new issues and problems. I hope that other delegates will take up and expand on developments which I will be unable to cover fully.

Likewise, I won't be able to go beyond indicating in a broad way how the situation of women today affects the tasks of the F.I.T. That's something which we are just beginning to discuss formally, and the process of working out our perspectives will need to continue after this conference is over.

Working Mothers

The tremendous changes in women's lives and in their relationship to the work force that began primarily in the 1960s have only accelerated in the past several years. Women have become, and it is predicted that they will continue to be, the fastest growing part of the wage-work force and of the labor movement. In 1975, 46 percent of all women 16 years of age and older worked. Today that figure is nearly 54 percent. In 1979, women made up 42 percent of the total work force. By 1990 it is predicted that they will be 50 percent. This entrance of women into the permanent wage-work force is unprecedented. It will not prove transitory as did the entrance of women into the work force during World War II, and it is not a situation which will change easily.

A chief characteristic of the changed nature of the work force is the presence of married women and women with children who now work full time, year around. Fifty-six percent of married women work outside the home, as do 60 percent of all women with children. What this means is that women are no longer predominantly houseworkers, but both houseworkers and permanent wage workers. Based on the low-paying dead-end type jobs available to most of these women, we can be certain that they are not entering the labor force to seek personal fulfillment, as the mass media frequently tries to depict, but are forced to work as a result of the capitalist economic crisis.

The two-worker family is now the norm—something which has become generally recognized in society. If women had not entered the work force in such numbers during the 1970s, overall family in-

come in the U.S. would have declined during that period. The wages of male heads of households was simply unable to keep up during this period. The AFL-CIO reports that between 1979 and 1985 alone, real hourly earnings dropped six percent.

Not every working woman is part of a couple, however. Forty-five percent are single, divorced, separated, or widowed. Households headed by women, now 15 percent of all households, are the fastest-growing family type in the country. This partially explains why women are also the fastest-growing poverty group in the U.S. Poverty among men is usually associated with unemployment, but for women it's a different situation. This is due, of course, to the low wages women generally receive. The median wage of year-around, full-time women workers is quoted by some sources as low as \$7,600.

Sex Segregation in Employment

The traditional view that women are only marginal, temporary workers, not "real" workers, is often used to restrict women to certain kinds of labor and to justify lower wages. Women are grouped into a narrowly defined and clearly oppressed part of the work force. The majority work in 20 (out of a total of 420) occupations listed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The women's movement has challenged sex discrimination and has gone far in undermining the legitimacy of sex inequality in the work place. But the position of women has undergone very little change. The clearest indicator of this is the gender gap in earnings. Full-time, year-around women workers today earn, on average, 69 cents for every dollar paid to men. Until quite recently that figure stood at 65 cents. But this apparent decline in inequality is not due to any *increase* in the number of women entering previously all-male occupations, nor in the wages paid to women. Rather, it reflects a drastic *decline* in the level of wages paid to male workers due to the loss of relatively high-paying jobs in basic industry.

Women are not only paid less than men for the same work—though of course that practice is pervasive, the problem is primarily the concentration of women in poorly paid, low status jobs. Despite the advances of the women's movement and the record number of women entering the work force, this sex segregation remains a blatant barrier to equality. In fact, it has gotten worse.

According to the AFL-CIO's 1985 report, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions," manufacturing and construction currently employ only 22 percent of the work force, and it is ex-

This is the edited text of the women's liberation report approved by delegates to the F.I.T.'s national conference in Cleveland, Ohio, last February.

pected that this will decline to between five and ten percent by the year 2000. In contrast, the service sector of the economy is experiencing the largest growth. During the 1970s, about 90 percent of all new jobs were added in this sector, and it is expected to employ three-quarters of the work force by 1990.

The AFL-CIO report neglects to mention that these changes in the work force are accompanied not only by occupational shifts but also by shifts in gender composition. The fastest growing sectors of the wage-work force are female dominated and the growth in the number of working women has primarily been the result of the large expansion in the numbers of clerical and service workers.

Of the 37 million women workers, 67 percent are employed as clerical, domestic, and service workers; 16 percent had professional and technical jobs, mostly as teachers, health workers, librarians, and the like. Over 80 percent of women were in female-dominated, low-paying jobs.

It's estimated that four to five million women have entered male-dominated fields as a result of affirmative action, including both blue-collar and professional work. But many of these gains are being eliminated as a result of cutbacks in manufacturing.

It should be added that sex segregation does not occur only in the general economy, but also within industries. Rigid distinctions between jobs done by men and women are practiced in industry, with the lowest paid going to women.

The Fight for Comparable Worth

When the overwhelming majority of women workers are trapped in a low-paying job ghetto, it is clear that simply demanding "equal pay for equal work" is not adequate. Unions and women's rights groups have been campaigning, litigating, and striking for comparable worth plans which help address this situation. Comparable worth is not a new concept. Battles were fought over it in industry forty years ago, when many women took over previously all-male jobs during World War II. It was resolved after the war with the expulsion of women from these occupations, but has become an issue again as a result of the changing character of the work force.

Comparable worth, or pay equity plans, recognize that women are not paid as much as men even in jobs which require comparable skills, training, and responsibility. The sex gap in wages is *not* explained by differences in job requirements. Nor can we accept the kind of analysis presented by members of the Socialist Workers Party—that women's work is inherently worth less than that performed by men. Women's work is *undervalued*, purely and simply because it is performed by women.

The intent of comparable worth proposals is that job duties, and not race or sex, should determine wages. The point is to deal with the consequences of pervasive occupational segregation and

unfair pay rates. Job discrimination by sex has taken different forms throughout the history of capitalism, but the general pattern has always been maintained. Clerical work is the most prominent example of the feminization and devaluation of an occupation once male dominated.

Women in the Unions

Because of the recent decline of union strength in male-dominated industries, and the increase of union members in more heavily female sectors, women today make up a greater proportion of union membership than ever before. In 1980 they constituted 30 percent of all union members. By comparison, in 1956, women were only 18 percent. This increase did not result from any commitment on the part of the present trade union bureaucracy to organize women or the expanding service sector where they are primarily located. But organizing among teachers, hospital workers, and public service sectors—undertaken in large part in order to overcome losses suffered by the unions among industrial workers—has meant that women were responsible for almost all of the growth in union membership in the 1970s.

Yet women workers in this country remain largely unorganized, as do males. That is because there have been very few efforts to extend unionism to the millions of women workers in private industry. The continuing lack of unionization among these women remains a critical problem. In 1980 only 15 percent of all women workers were members of unions.

In the public sector, management opposition to unionization is generally less formidable than in private industry. This is one reason why unions like AFSCME, SEIU, CWA, the AFT and NEA have grown so dramatically. Others, like the Steelworkers, have also gotten into the act, organizing government employees. Today over 40 percent of the women in the public sector are unionized—more than twice the level of organization among women in the economy as a whole. Public sector unionism has been the most important source of union growth among women workers and of the unions in general.

In spite of the high level of unionization, however, the median salary of full-time female public employees is not much different from the average of all full-time women workers. So the issue of pay equity is of extreme importance to, and emerged primarily from, these public sector unions. As a result, organized labor has become an important ally of women's groups on the question of comparable worth and a few impressive victories have been chalked up. (See "Nine Days That Shook Oregon, Or: How OPEU Became a Union," by Ann Montague, *Bulletin IDOM* No. 52.)

Impact on the Labor Movement

Within the labor movement as a whole there has been increased attention to women's issues. This is certainly attributable to the impact of the independent women's movement on the unions, as well as

the increased pressure of women in the ranks. The 1970s saw extensive activity by union women: women's caucus and committees were formed, and they began to pressure and raise issues like pay equity, affirmative action, child care, and sexual harassment, through collective bargaining and litigation.

There have been some very important developments: in 1973 the AFL-CIO endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment, reversing its long opposition; in 1974 the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) was formed, and many women's issues were taken up by the unions in the following years. We can see how significant these steps were if we contrast them with the rather unsavory past of the AFL-CIO with regard to women workers.

The impact of feminism on the unions may be unprecedented, but it is still modest compared to the extent of change in the larger society, and to what is actually necessary. Unions remain male dominated, with macho images. There is an entrenched conservatism and sexism of the union officialdom, though this is not so much the case in the male ranks, where attitudinal changes are apparent. My union (IUE Local 201) provides a very good example of this dichotomy. We have had several battles over women's issues—comparable worth, sexual harassment, rape. In a number of instances the membership, which is mostly male, mobilized to force the leadership to undo the results of its complicity with management's moves against the women workers.

Because of the shifts in the labor force and the increased numbers of women in unions, resolving these sexist problems is critical for the union movement as a whole. What was once a marginal problem is now a major conflict. The unions must not only improve relations with women who are already members, through championing their particular demands and needs, but must also get serious about organizing unorganized women. The two go hand in hand.

The activity of women activists in the unions, along with the large influx of female members, has so far had remarkably little effect on the overall character of trade unions or their day-to-day functioning. This, too, has to change. Unions may have advanced positions, on the national level, on issues like affirmative action, organizing women workers, sexual harassment, etc., yet there will be no effort to educate about or enforce these positions locally. Women in the ranks are left to fend for themselves. The one woman who is a national officer in my union, also a member of the national executive board of CLUW, speaks all over the country on the question of comparable worth. But when

women in my local filed a pay equity lawsuit, the local leadership opposed it.

In addition to problems and conflicts with women members, unions have resisted organizing women workers. The shifting composition of the work force requires such an organizing effort. Sometimes the bureaucrats will complain about the "organizability" of the jobs in which women have been ghettoized—for example, clerical workers. But they have little or no concrete experience to demonstrate that these workers are more difficult to organize than others once a serious effort to do so is undertaken. In fact, there is some evidence to the contrary.

There has been experimentation with different methods of organizing women workers, and a great deal written by feminists on this subject. That is something which we should learn more about. But it is certainly true that if the unions are serious about organizing women they are going to have to address women's concerns a bit more ambitiously.

We should also not forget that the problems of women in the unions are tied absolutely to the general problem of the transformation of the unions' orientation—from business unionism to class-struggle organizing—which we discussed in the trade union report (see *Bulletin IDOM* No. 52).

F.I.T.'s Orientation To the General Women's Movement

There are many other problems that affect women: parental leave, child care, affirmative action, sexual harassment, and particularly the attacks on abortion rights. I hope that we can begin to take this up in the discussion, and continue after the conference. The reformist orientation of the overall women's movement has to a large extent determined, or limited, our activity. But there are many things going on all over the country. We don't always know about them unless we follow what's taking place and get involved where we can. One of the problems I faced in preparing this report was that we have little recent organized activity to draw on.

The women's movement encompasses hundreds of organizations from NOW and CLUW to union committees and small local groups. We should try to participate to the extent our small forces allow, and we must also step up our literary contributions. We want to maintain the quality which has been established in articles for the *Bulletin IDOM*. It is particularly important for us to contribute to the discussion in the Fourth International which the last meeting of the International Executive Committee made a priority for our world movement. ■

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY TODAY

A Balance Sheet of Degeneration

by Frank Lovell and Paul Le Blanc

The organizational unity of revolutionary socialists is a necessary goal in the effort to advance the struggles of the working class. Many have understandably expressed dismay over the fragmentation of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States—with the initial split in the Socialist Workers Party brought about through a bureaucratic purge in the 1982-84 period, and subsequently with the inability of those driven out of the SWP to form a common organization.

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency has maintained a distinctive position on the problem of revolutionary socialist unity here in this country. Central to this position is the continued seriousness with which we view the past, present, and future of the Socialist Workers Party, which was once one of the foremost representatives of world Trotskyism but which, under the leadership of its national secretary Jack Barnes, has now become an opponent of the Trotskyist program. Our attitude to the SWP—how we judge it as a revolutionary factor and what we think are the prospects of reforming it—colors our relations with other tendencies in the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country, and with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International itself. So it is useful to draw a balance sheet at this juncture on the degeneration of the SWP and the destructive influence of the Barnes faction in the FI.

Origins of Disunity

Following the 1981 SWP convention, two oppositional currents formed in the party's National Committee. One was represented by Frank Lovell and Steve Bloom, the other by Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson. Both opposed the challenge that the Barnes leadership was posing—through its uncritical adaptation to the weaknesses of Castroism—to the revolutionary Marxist program which had guided the party from the time of its founding. In particular, the Barnes leadership had adopted untenable positions against Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as well as in regard to events in Iran (failing to oppose the reactionary Khomeini regime) and Poland (opposing acts of revolutionary solidarity with the Polish workers against the Jaruzelski dictatorship). Both NC oppositional tendencies also criticized the sectarian and abstentionist trend of the Barnes leadership in regard to the labor movement and social struggles in the United States. And both opposed the Barnes group's gross violations of party democracy.

On the other hand, there were differences between these two tendencies—especially on how to evaluate the Nicaraguan revolution, but also on how to relate to the nuclear freeze movement, and on the question of how to propagandize within the union movement for a labor party in the U.S. Rather than merging into a common tendency, therefore, these two currents in the SWP National Committee maintained their distinct identities, agreeing to work together in a united oppositional bloc on the positions they held in common.

A more fundamental difference also existed: Divergent evaluations of the SWP and how the struggle should be waged within it. The analysis of the Fourth Internationalist Caucus (FIC), which Lovell and Bloom represented in the SWP's National Committee, was explained by George Breitman after the infamous January 1984 purge in which many loyal oppositionists were expelled from the party. Drawing attention to the attitude of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky in the USSR in the late 1920s and of the Left Opposition in the U.S. to the American Communist Party in the years 1928-31, Breitman argued that the efforts of the FIC to fight for political and programmatic clarification and to reform the party had been justified, and that this approach should be maintained even after the clique-style purges from the SWP.

The Weinstein/Henderson tendency sharply disagreed and when all of us were kicked out we soon went our separate ways. They had concluded that the SWP had already been destroyed as a revolutionary organization. Impatient with the struggle for programmatic clarification, they were determined to launch a new Trotskyist party. The FIC insisted that a more serious approach toward program was required. This difference between our two currents remains unresolved.

The present-day existence of two separate groups—the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.) and Socialist Action—has its roots in this divergence. Impatience and insufficient concern for serious programmatic clarity also contributed to the later split in Socialist Action, which resulted in some of its members regrouping with non-Trotskyist forces to form a third group, Solidarity. The hallmark of the current which established the F.I.T., on the other hand, has been a patient commitment to carrying through to the end the struggle against Barnesism—defending, clarifying, and further developing the program of revolutionary Marxism.

First Declaration

We made our position clear within the SWP National Committee (or tried to) from the first public attack on Trotskyism by the Barnes faction. This attack came in veiled form in an article signed by Doug Jenness, the editor of *International Socialist Review (ISR)*, "How Lenin Saw the Russian Revolution" (Nov. 1981).

In a letter to the SWP National Committee (Dec. 23, 1981) Bloom/Lovell defined three political tendencies in the NC: the majority tendency (Barnesites); ours (FIC); and a third represented by Weinstein/Henderson. This was a programmatic statement differentiating the FIC from the others on five major issues of the time: 1) solidarity with the political revolution in Poland against the Stalinist bureaucracy; 2) the analysis of events in Iran; 3) the need for a free and open discussion within the party on Leninism; 4) Castroism and the Fourth International; 5) U.S. working class radicalization and work in the unions and other mass organizations (text in *Bulletin IDOM* No. 3, Feb. 1984).

Relations with the FI

On January 30-31, 1982, Bloom and Lovell met with United Secretariat representatives in Montreal. The purpose of these meetings was to explore the extent of political agreement in documents of the FI and those of FIC on Poland, Iran, Castroism, and Leninism.

Immediately following these meetings, the United Secretariat members also met with Barnes and Barry Sheppard from the SWP majority. The result of that meeting was never reported to us by any of the participants on either side.

The Barnes faction continued its attacks, open and veiled, on the FI majority leadership. The June 1982 *ISR* carried an article by Doug Jenness, "Our Political Continuity with Bolshevism," an attack on Ernest Mandel's defense of Trotskyism which had appeared in the April issue of *ISR*.

From the first open attacks on Trotskyism by the Barnes faction at the NC plenum immediately following the August 1981 party convention in Oberlin, the Bloom/Lovell/Breitman tendency sought agreement with the Barnes faction to hold an open ideological debate within the party over Leninism/Trotskyism. But this was rejected by the Barnesites, who proceeded instead to impose new organizational "norms" to outlaw any discussion or dissent. They thereby prevented an open political debate.

Having been denied political expression within the SWP, we sought support from the FI leadership and urged them to organize an ideological struggle in defense of Trotskyism against Barnesite revisionism, in all sections of the International. We have not yet succeeded in getting this long overdue ideological struggle organized. The FI majority has consistently criticized the organizational abuses of Barnes and his allies in the International. But the politics underlying these abuses have yet to be thoroughly explored and exposed.

SWP Purges Exposed

After the bureaucratic purges of SWP members, the United Secretariat published an *International Internal Information Bulletin* in several languages, "The Organizational Situation in the Socialist Workers Party (USA)." The English edition appeared as *International Viewpoint*, Special Issue, February 1984. It was a 30-page compilation of SWP and FI documents, including a useful "chronology of events 1981-1984." It also included a brief one-page introduction by the United Secretariat Bureau, which listed and summarized the conclusions of a series of resolutions adopted by the world movement condemning the bureaucratic organizational practices of the SWP leadership, beginning in 1982. The bureau summary said, "the USec passed another resolution 26-29 January 1984 which noted the new wave of expulsions, reaffirmed its position of October 1983, and explained why it had established political relations with Socialist Action within this framework." (This international bulletin was withheld from SWP members by the Barnes faction, as noted in *Bulletin IDOM* No. 7, May 1984.)

These were not the last such resolutions. In 1985, "The World Congress rules that, as long as S.A. and F.I.T. are not collectively reintegrated into the SWP, the entire organized membership of S.A. and F.I.T. will be considered as full members of the FI, with all the rights and duties prescribed by its statutes, and within the limitations imposed by reactionary U.S. legislation" (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 16, March 1985).

None of this explained why the SWP had abandoned Marxism, or what this betrayal by the SWP leadership means to the future of the international revolutionary movement.

F.I.T.'s Critique of Barnesism

We have subjected the political degeneration of the Barnes group in the SWP to continuous analysis from the first unmistakable evidence of their deviation from Marxism beginning with their repudiation of permanent revolution in 1981. The record of this ideological challenge is in *Bulletin IDOM* which published in issue No. 1 (December 1983) the text of our draft resolution for the SWP National Committee plenum of August 6, 1983, "Resolving the International Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership Today." Every issue of the *Bulletin* for the past four years has dealt with some aspect of the political degeneration of this current. We did such a thorough job in this respect that one of our members decided a year or so ago that we had concluded our ideological campaign against the Barnesites, that there was nothing more to say about their politics, and that we ought to turn our attention to other matters. He left the F.I.T. and joined Socialist Action. But nearly everyone else in F.I.T. thought more remains to be said about this pernicious tendency in the general radical movement. What is the anti-Trotskyist pressure that drives the Barnesites away from Marxism. What is its source?

We began at the 1981 SWP convention with an analysis of the Castroist current and its influence on the "revolutionists of action" in Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador, and elsewhere in the Caribbean and in Central America. The unfolding struggles in each of these countries, locked in mortal conflict with U.S. imperialism, led us to the conclusion that "Castroism," as a political tendency, is an *adaptation to Stalinism* in exchange for material support to Cuba tendered by the Soviet bureaucracy.

We then had to explain how the Trotskyist-educated SWP leadership could succumb to this adaptation to Stalinism.

Mistaken Expectations

The levy of new recruits that joined the SWP in the early 1960s, among whom Jack Barnes became recognized as the leader—first in the youth (Young Socialist Alliance) and later in the party—were campus radicals with few exceptions. They were oriented and motivated by antagonistic feelings toward bourgeois society in general and the seemingly insane war in Vietnam in particular. They shared these feelings with other radicalizing youth of their generation, most of whom were drawn into the anticommunist "New Left" or the counterculturalist segment of the radicalization. Those who joined the SWP were attracted by the revolutionary tradition of Trotskyism in the U.S. and became convinced that the experienced cadres of the SWP were capable of helping them learn how to organize massive protests against the particular war at the time in Southeast Asia, and perhaps later against other evils of capitalism, leading ultimately to the overthrow of this unjust system—as had most recently happened in Cuba. The 1959 Cuban revolution profoundly influenced the radicalization of the 1960s in the U.S.

When U.S. military intervention in Vietnam failed in 1975 the great mass of antiwar protesters celebrated *their* victory. They felt they had prevailed, finally, after a decade of intensive agitation. At last the youth of this country were free of the fear of being drafted and shipped to the slaughter.

By this time the "young leaders" of the SWP were responsible for the overall strategy and day-to-day activity of the party. Under the direction of Barnes, who became SWP national secretary in 1972, they proceeded cautiously, consulting with Farrell Dobbs in party politics and with Joseph Hansen in the analysis of international events and relations within the FI. This relationship between the "old guard" and the new leaders ended abruptly in 1979, though not because of any deliberate decision. Dobbs was in retirement, and Hansen died January 18 of that year. When revolutionary uprisings triumphed in Nicaragua, Iran, and Grenada a few months later, the new crop of SWP leaders were in control and on their own.

Bad Times

The brief four-year period from 1975 to 1979 was not an inspiring time for that generation of

campus radicals which was then ten years out of college. Many became disillusioned with radicalism and adjusted their life-styles to the prevailing bourgeois norms of capitalism under the Carter administration. The radical movement tended to stagnate, occupied mainly with regroupments and organizational experiments. The social democrats and Stalinists both recorded some numerical growth in these years, recruiting members in the lower rungs of the union bureaucracy and among graduate students and newcomers to university faculties. But there was no qualitative change in either the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) or the Communist Party.

For the SWP it was a time of testing—for the "young leaders" and for the broader layer of new recruits to the party. They were without experience in the mass movement except in the politics and mechanics of mobilizing antiwar demonstrations. And what was learned in this activity was not easily transferred to protest actions in Black communities or to the education and recruitment of union members and other workers.

The successful 1976 SWP presidential campaign brought 700 new recruits into the party, but few remained. The party leadership busied itself with reorganization of the branch structure, systematizing colonization in selected industries such as rail, steel, coal, and auto. Later they would experiment with a system of national union fractions that in many essential functions began to supersede the necessary responsibilities of party branches, in such areas as literature sales, financial contributions to the national organization, and union tactics at the local level. The main emphasis within the party shifted gradually from external to internal work, i.e., the attention of members was directed more to party life and developing leadership within the party, and less toward the problems of the working class and especially the problems of the union movement in those years.

The party gradually became more centralized than it had previously been. Over time all major decisions came to be made by the national office in New York, with little or no prior consultation among members in branches and union fractions across the country. Rank-and-file party members were assigned to sell the party press at their places of work. Literature sales, combined with weekly financial pledges, became the standard measure of worth in the organization. Those who failed to sell the *Militant* every week or could not maintain a high weekly sustainer contribution were treated as second-class citizens. Party membership began to decline. The SWP was becoming unattractive to young rebels.

What Went Wrong?

The reasons for this distorted development, which took a relatively short time to manifest itself, are complex—conditioned mainly by the student composition of the recruits to the SWP from the 1960s generation. They were a majority in the

party in the 1970s, and the Barnes leadership was drawn from their ranks. They had not received the necessary education, and were ill-equipped to understand and explain the specific social and economic problems of U.S. capitalism in the 1970s. Many quickly discarded the youthful hopes they may have had that the working class would replace the radicalized student youth of the previous decade and challenge the arrogance and stupidity of the ruling class. They began to feel betrayed by the working class, and tried to make up excuses for the militant segment of the class (Blacks, women, Hispanics and other minorities, and unrepresented youth in the unions) to explain to themselves why these oppressed sectors had failed to radicalize as predicted. They could not see or sense the ferment within the union movement and were oblivious to the tempo of the new stage of working class radicalization. They lost confidence in the working class's ability to challenge and replace the capitalist rulers in this country in the foreseeable future.

The disillusionment of the Barnes group with the industrial working class in the U.S. coincided with a series of revolutionary uprisings in the colonial and semicolonial world, and the seizure of power in 1979 by revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, Grenada, and Iran. As Barnes and the close circle of personal followers around him turned away, in disappointment, from prospects of revolutionary struggle in the U.S., they were captivated by the glowing promise of revolution elsewhere. These exotic prospects were made more alluring by the geographic proximity of Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua. If Iran was far away this simply added a worldwide dimension to the anti-imperialist struggles in our own backyard. The SWP could not become an integral part of this revolutionary process in the Caribbean and Central America, but at least it could identify with the process and in its own way begin to emulate it.

In Search of a Leader

At this point the Barnes group began to question, among themselves, the previous SWP analysis of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua, and in the semicolonial world as a whole. Why were Trotskyists not in the leaderships of these revolutions or even part of the leadership? Could this be entirely due to the individuals involved? Or does it demonstrate that we have all been misled by Trotsky? The party leaders reminded themselves that even they had endorsed Joseph Hansen's critical evaluation of the Castro regime in Cuba on the eve of victory in Nicaragua, yet the Sandinistas were encouraged and inspired by the Cuban revolution and by Fidel Castro, who had become an avowed opponent of Trotskyism.

Their conclusion was implicit in their questions, and they were uninterested in which came first. Either way, they had convinced themselves by the time of the 1981 SWP convention that Trotskyism was flawed and that those who want to understand the post-World War II revolutionary process must

learn from Castro and other "revolutionists of action." The necessary corollary to this proposition is the fallacy of Trotskyism. The Barnes group embarked enthusiastically on their new project, hoping to forge an alliance with Castro.

This transformed political thinking of the SWP leadership ought, according to all past traditions of the party, to have set the stage for a rich and rewarding debate within the ranks over the theory and practice of revolutionary politics. It would surely have reviewed Marxist history since the organization of the Bolshevik faction under Lenin in the Russian Social Democratic Party at the beginning of this century. The history of American Trotskyism is replete with examples of how such discussions are prepared and conducted: the 1935 struggle against the sectarian attitudes and methods of Hugo Oehler in the Communist League of America, the 1939-40 struggle in the SWP against the opportunism of Burnham/Shachtman, the 1946 struggle against the capitulation of Morrow/Goldman, and the 1953 struggle against the liquidationist tendency of Cochran/Clarke/Bartell. Each of these reviewed revolutionary history, but all were also directly concerned with the immediate problems of the revolutionary movement at that particular juncture in history. The struggle in each instance was to decide "what must be done now."

Revisionism vs. Marxism

What to do? Barnes and his group decided this for the SWP in 1981, without consulting the party. In fact they lied to the party, claiming at the convention that year that they in no way questioned the validity of Trotskyism. They waited until *after* the convention to announce their repudiation of Trotskyism, and then only to their newly elected, largely handpicked, National Committee. By reaching their decision in the way they did, and by imposing it on the ranks of the party without benefit of debate and open struggle over conflicting ideas and methods of understanding, the Barnesites deprived the SWP (including themselves and their personal followers) of the opportunity to prepare for coming struggles. Those who champion a set of ideas—especially if poorly conceived—must be prepared as well as possible to defend them. This is one of the advantages of factional struggles in the Marxist movement, as explained many times by Cannon. In 1953 he said, "Factional struggles in the party of revolutionists are justified only by serious differences of opinion over principles and policy, and should be conducted with the most scrupulous honesty. For it is only by an honest presentation of one's own position, as well as the position of the opponent, that the issues can be clarified and the youth can learn. That was Lenin's method. That was Trotsky's method. And it has been our method, the method by which we have assembled and educated our cadres for twenty-five years."

This is not the method of the Barnesites, partly because they never had an opportunity to learn its value. During the 30 years from 1953 to 1983

there were moments when the Trotskyist movement dozed, times when there seemed such tranquility and unanimity of opinion in the SWP that Cannon cautioned it might be a sign of sleepiness. The truth is there was never unanimity of thought, neither in the ranks of the party nor in the National Committee. But during the 1960s and 1970s dissenters were quickly isolated and either left the party or were forced out before the social pressures that produce cleavages at different junctures could be thoroughly analyzed and explained for the education and reeducation of the entire membership. Frequent nuances among top leaders were reconciled or compromised by consensus.

The exception was the ideological struggle within the International from 1968 to 1978 over the role of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. This is recorded in the 1979 Pathfinder publication, *The Leninist Strategy of Party Building* by Joseph Hansen, which appeared shortly after his death earlier that year. This struggle as it developed was reported to the SWP membership but it was not one in which the membership directly participated. It is true that Barnes was a major participant, but he contributed more to the organizational side of the struggle than the ideological core.

When the Barnesites finally revised their opinions about Trotskyism and discarded the Marxist method of social analysis they did so in the same way as all previous revisionists in the Marxist movement have done or tried to do: by organizing a faction before they announced their program. Like the Stalinists before them they began by falsifying the history of Bolshevism, claiming to discover the fatal flaw of Trotskyism in what Barnes called the "weaknesses in Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution" ("Their Trotsky and Ours," *New International*, Fall 1983).

Also like the Stalinists, they stifled all discussion in the party and expelled the opposition to preclude debate. They then falsified the reason for the expulsions and tried to ignore the arguments of the opposition even within the councils of the FI, where they still pretend to be loyal organizational supporters while working feverishly to destroy the sections of the world movement wherever possible.

How the F.I.T. Characterized Barnesism

Shortly after the founding conference of F.I.T. in February 1984 we adopted the programmatic document that defines our tendency. The "Platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency," published in *Bulletin IDOM* No. 5, April 1984, stated unequivocally our attitude to the SWP: "Even if we are forced to remain outside the party, we will do what we can to build, defend, and strengthen it. We are not trying to create a rival party or a separate organization in *competition* with the SWP. In addition to attempting to convince the party to change its wrong perspectives, we have asked to work with the SWP in such areas as the 1984 election campaign, publication projects, sales of the *Militant*, and defense cases."

We characterized the political and programmatic deviation of the Barnes group as *adaptation to Castroism*, at the same time that Castro was adapting his political orientation and governmental policies to Stalinism. "Instead of learning from and utilizing the *strengths* of Castroism in their efforts to establish ties with the Cubans, the SWP central leadership has adapted to that current's *weaknesses*, and is progressively abandoning our Trotskyist program," we said. "Such an approach cannot succeed and will ultimately lead to political bankruptcy."

We had no illusions that the Barnes tendency, then in full control of the party, was capable of reforming itself. For them, there was no turning back at that late date. We did, however, look closely for the cleavages and divisions that we thought were bound to develop among them, and between them and the party rank and file. In *Bulletin IDOM* No. 22, Sept. 1985, George Breitman called attention to "divergences in the SWP leadership team" which broke through the closed circle and finally into the pages of the *Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*, which at the time was still published and a valuable SWP asset. But such altercations did not foreshadow any serious programmatic difference among the Barnesites. In this instance what was involved was routine apocalyptic reporting on Reagan's embargo of Nicaragua. Barnes did not hesitate to publicly embarrass Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness, editors respectively of the publications in question and among his most loyal personal supporters, to make a necessary political correction. The group was becoming a "Castro" cult with Barnes the acknowledged infallible interpreter and chief disciple. Yet it is highly questionable whether Fidel Castro and the other militants who made the Cuban revolution would have felt comfortable in such an organization.

A Test of the Membership

We thought the SWP's August 1985 convention would be a crucial test for the party membership, and wrote accordingly. We noted that the leadership had failed to make room on the convention agenda for "the single most important question facing the party at this time—what to do about the decision of the 1985 world congress of the Fourth International, which upheld the appeal of the expelled party members, and *demanding* by an overwhelming vote that we be readmitted to the SWP with full membership rights and responsibilities." We said, "The SWP convention, as the highest body of the party, has the responsibility to act on this question."

We were well aware that the preconvention discussion in the party had been throttled. The number of discussion articles fell from 239 (921 pages) in 1981 (the last time a normal SWP preconvention discussion was allowed) to only 53 (223 pages) for the August 1985 convention. We knew also that the convention delegates had been carefully selected, awarded loyalty badges as a token of recognition by the "leadership" (which in the

SWP consists formally of all NC members and many full-time functionaries, who do not have to stand for election as regular delegates, but influence the convention in their capacity as "fraternal delegates").

Nonetheless, we watched carefully for signs of membership reaction to bureaucratic practices in the party which were intensified on the eve of the convention. The New York branch held a trial of Keith Mann, in absentia, and expelled him. Keith had been the only party member in the country to present a counterplatform to that of the party leadership for the SWP's pre-world congress convention in January 1985. His expulsion was not designed to encourage outspoken criticism from others at the August convention, but members of a voluntary organization have many ways of expressing dissatisfaction and disagreement. Some leave quietly.

Shortly after the 1985 SWP convention, Tom Barrett, a former SWP member, appealed to others who had left the party (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 23, Oct. 1985). He said, "The F.I.T. has taken on a dual task—or rather, a single task with two aspects: we are fighting to return the SWP to revolutionary Marxism, through patient explanation, in publications, in international debates, and we are intervening in the class struggle, attempting to show in action what the Trotskyist program means. This single task is building the revolutionary party. To the hundreds of former party members who still believe in socialist revolution I make this appeal: fight for the program to which you were recruited! Join the F.I.T.!"

We were not then overly sanguine about the prospects for reforming the SWP. The more likely development, it seemed to us at the time, was that the Barnesites would retain their organizational grip on the slowly disintegrating SWP while continuing to inject their revisionist poison into the veins of the Fourth International. In an announcement that a meeting of the F.I.T. Organizing Committee in Cleveland had discussed new perspectives, Stuart Brown said, "there was general agreement that with the conclusion of the most recent pre-convention discussion in the SWP it would be appropriate for the F.I.T. to make a number of shifts. Rather than continue concentrating almost exclusively on the very specific discussion we have been trying to have with the leadership and membership of the SWP, we will now undertake a broader, more comprehensive analysis of the U.S. and international class struggles. This will be reflected in the kinds of articles which will be featured in future issues of the *Bulletin IDOM*." A thoroughgoing analysis of Barnesite revisionism in collaboration with the majority leadership of the FI was anticipated.

The Barnesite Image

It is more than four years since the SWP purges. Our attitude to the SWP now is determined by the rate of disintegration and degeneration of the party. Its gradual disintegration cannot be

measured solely by its numerical decline, but this is a factor. The court decision in the SWP case against the U.S. attorney general found, based on trial testimony, that party membership in 1981 was 1,250 nationwide. "The annual budget of the SWP is around \$1.5 million," it said.

By the time of the postponed national convention in August 1984 (after the general membership purge and "reregistration") the official count had declined to 826; and one year later, at the 1985 "constitutional convention," it was down to 780. There was also report of a decline in income and talk of "budget revision," but no exact amounts were revealed to delegates at either of these conventions.

At the SWP education conferences in 1986 and 1987 efforts were made to stem the tide of membership losses, to find ways to compensate for this trend and reverse it if possible. The SWP launched a "summer campaign" to bring potential recruits to the 1986 conference, the hope being that new *Militant* readers, young workers, minority youth especially, and others could be brought to Oberlin for a week of intensive indoctrination. The character of the conference was changed from that of previous years to accommodate these new unspoiled potential recruits.

Exactly how these projected changes in the nature of the reports and discussions at the industrial fraction meetings were to be implemented was not readily apparent to some members who had regularly attended the annual party gatherings for more than a decade. But there was a very serious effort by the top leadership of the party to reach new people. A special subcommittee of the PC was chosen to approve requests for reduced fees at the conference in order to insure the widest attendance possible. They talked about redesigning the classes and discussion so as to "open up" the conference, and to "build on" the regional education conferences that had been held in the spring of that year.

This special effort to devise new recruiting techniques brought no immediate overall results. Party dropouts continued to exceed recruits. But in the course of these efforts enough young people—students for the most part—were attracted to warrant revitalizing the YSA.

When the 1987 national education conference was held the party leadership announced that the membership decline had finally been halted, that new recruits about equaled dropouts. But it was obvious that the party was smaller, and at this conference transfer arrangements were made to relocate a large part of the party membership. This had often been done in the past, but this time eight branches were abandoned: Albany, Dallas, Louisville, New Orleans, Denver, Cincinnati, Tidewater, Toledo.

The True Gauge

The degeneration of the SWP must be measured by the headlong abandonment of the program and

method of revolutionary Marxism, not by fluctuations in numbers of members or even in terms of momentary political influence (presently invisible).

In 1981 the party leadership, prior to the August convention, claimed to be the continuators of the Marxist tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. But after they quietly purged nearly all suspected Trotskyists from the new National Committee at that convention, they came out with a slight revision in what they claimed to stand for. They still claimed to be the continuators of the Marxist tradition, but with a major omission—Trotsky. This was the sure sign of political degeneration in the leadership circles, not only because of their easy abandonment of Marxism but also because of their cynical denial and transparent after-the-fact cover-up attempts.

To what extent and in what forms this would affect the SWP membership could not be surmised in 1981. But it was clear after the 1985 convention that the party, during the four-year interval, had changed drastically. By this time the membership was unable to challenge what some among them perceived to be ineffective activity in the unions and other areas of party work. The vast majority, however, was indifferent to programmatic questions. The composition of the party had changed numerically as the above-cited statistics show (from 1,250 members in 1981 to 780 in 1985, a 38 percent decline), but that is only part of the story. A few new recruits partially replaced the large number of dropouts, and these new recruits had been indoctrinated against fundamental Marxist tenets as a result of the anti-Trotsky campaign of the Barnesites.

This degenerative process would continue without countervailing forces impinging from outside and germinating within the party. At the 1987 national education conference in Oberlin one of the most striking facts was the absence of any discernible interest among those in attendance about the almost nonchalant disregard of the SWP constitution by those in control of the party. The constitution specifically provides for a national delegated convention at no more than two-year intervals. Conventions are preceded by discussion periods during which alert members express in writing and in oral debates in the branches their ideas and opinions on major political problems. Delegates are elected on the basis of this discussion and debate.

The convention is the highest party body where the membership, through its elected delegates, has an opportunity to chart the future course of the party. In contrast to this, the education conference (preferred by the Barnesites) is an annual gathering of party members and sympathizers where the leadership tells them what the party will be doing for the next few months, insofar as the pragmatic character of this leadership allows it to foretell what it will do.

One of the unexpected events at the 1987 education conference, with about 1,000 party members, sympathizers, and invited guests in attendance (which specifically excluded members of F.I.T. and Socialist Action), was a class on recent events in

the Soviet Union. Since the theme of the conference was the *overriding importance* of the new Cuban "rectification," this sideshow class on the anti-Stalinist upheaval in the Soviet Union wasn't staged to attract much attention. Several other classes were scheduled for the same time, but this one was packed with comrades sitting in the aisles and standing along the walls. That, of course, is evidence of the impact of world events on the SWP membership and testifies to the fact that this membership remains susceptible to outside political forces. We can expect any change of political climate in the U.S. to have repercussions inside the SWP.

At the main sessions of the conference the leading Barnesites (including Barnes) explained their basic political orientation: 1) Cuba is the center of socialist ideology and the inspiration of revolutionary action (some say Fidel is leading a *political revolution* against the incipient bureaucracy); 2) a Castroist political current ("our current") is developing within the world working class movement, but as yet (wisely) has no organizational structure; 3) included in this current, besides the SWP, are comrades who remain members of the FI in Iceland, Sweden, Britain, New Zealand, and Australia; 4) these FI comrades (including the SWP) are not, properly speaking, part of any "Fidelista current," which according to Castro himself does not exist; 5) the FI is in crisis and the task of "our current" within it is to cleanse the international movement of the old Trotskyist rubbish and false predictions.

Barnes, in his contributions, reiterated his previous contention that the theory of permanent revolution must be rejected, that the FI as presently constituted is an obstacle to further growth of the international revolutionary movement, that Trotskyism expresses an ultraleft bias. He listed among Trotsky's false predictions that the anti-Stalinist struggles in the Soviet Union would develop under FI aegis; that the mass following of the FI (which Trotsky promised in 1938 would come about in the next decade) obviously did not; and that the FI will become the party of world revolution. Barnes told his followers, "The new mass revolutionary movement won't recognize its origins in the FI, but in Marx/Engels/Lenin. He disassociated himself from the anti-Trotskyist group in Australia (once Barnes's closest co-thinkers) by pointing to their ahistorical notion that the formation of the FI was a mistake from the beginning. In his opinion it didn't turn out the way it was supposed to, but in the 1930s it served to preserve the continuity of the Marxist movement. Barnes says preserving revolutionary continuity is a task today for "our current" in the FI which he hopes will be accomplished by transforming and replacing the FI with the "new international." In his opinion the end result of the early struggle for Marxist continuity was the Cuban revolution, and out of this revolution is emerging the new leadership that will open the way for the struggle against Stalinism that Trotsky hoped would develop.

This hodgepodge of impressionistic theory and contrived rationalization is presented in oral reports, and left unpublished. It is passed along within the SWP in the form of "reports from the conference" and by word of mouth in informal discussions among party members, and in branch educational. It reappears in various guises in the reports and discussions at plenums of the National Committee, in party publications, and in the pronouncements of SWP candidates in the general electoral arena, and in occasional public talks by party or YSA representatives.

Passing the Word

A few examples will suffice to show how the party line is disseminated, how it is fed into the so-called revolutionary continuity concept.

● Inside the party organizational structure:

At the December 1987 NC plenum Barnes lectured his followers on the need to further centralize and tighten up the work of the party, to increase party press sales, to "firm up" the turn to industry (meaning industrial fractions must raise sustainer contributions to the national office and sell more *Militants* on the job), and to publicize the mural painting in progress on the wall of the party's publishing house, Pathfinder Press, in New York. It was reported that party finances are "in shambles" and comrades from the outlying branches were urged to increase membership in the "Over 50 Clubs," consisting of those self-sacrificing comrades who contribute more than \$50 weekly to the national office. A low-key presidential campaign in 1988 was projected. The position on Cuba as the ideological center of world revolution was reaffirmed, and the FI was dismissed as "too narrow" and otherwise meaningless.

● Using the party press:

To begin the new year the *Militant* (Jan. 1, 1988) ran an editorial on "60 years of the 'Militant,'" the purpose being to project the false impression that the weekly newspaper of that name remains essentially the same as when it was founded, and to boost sales.

Those slightly familiar with the Barnesite leadership and politics of the SWP will spot the lie. The *Militant* began proudly as a Trotskyist publication. It remained a Trotskyist publication for 53 years, until 1981. In 1981 it became an anti-Trotskyist publication and remains so.

The inaugural 1988 editorial by its present anti-Trotskyist editors says, "Our first issue, dated Nov. 15, 1928, was published by communists committed to advancing the fight for a workers' and farmers' government in the United States as part of the worldwide struggle for socialism." This is the truth as far as it goes. But it fails to mention the other part, the programmatic part, which is that the *Militant* was founded in the struggle against the perfidious Stalinist bureaucracy in the young workers' state, the Soviet Union, and in defense of the Marxist program and party of Lenin and Trotsky, who organized and led the victorious

1917 revolution in Russia and created the Communist International to organize revolutionary struggles in all nations of the world as the only means of achieving socialism.

In 1953 the *Militant* celebrated its 25th anniversary. George Breitman was editor at the time. On that occasion James P. Cannon, the founding editor, spoke about its original purpose and real meaning. His talk was titled "How we began and where we are going." It was published in the November 9, 1953, issue and should be read in contrast to the editorial policy that disgraces the pages of the *Militant* today. The following is a small sampling from Cannon's talk, restating what was said in the first issue. "The Stalinist program of socialism in one country is a revisionist betrayal of Marxism. The Trotskyist program of international revolution is realistic and right and [we] will support it at all costs, no matter how small our numbers may be, because we believe the program will carry us to victory in the end.

"We said we would support the program of international revolution as advanced by Trotsky, and on that rock we would build a new party in this country."

The party that was built was the SWP, founded in 1938.

Where was the SWP going in 1953? Cannon believed that "the program, formulated by Trotsky in his lifetime—in the latter 11 years in direct collaboration with us—is the only program to organize the revolution and to lead it to definitive victory and the transition to socialism."

That is the difference in the *Militant* between then and now: the present editors use the paper to repudiate the Trotskyist program.

● Speaking to the public:

For an illustration of how the Barnesite program finds public expression we now go to radio station WERE in Cleveland, December 2, 1987. Marea Himelgrin, editor of the YSA newspaper, *Young Socialist*, is on the Joel Rose talk show. She was asked the usual questions about how socialism will work and why she thinks it is superior to capitalism. Her answers were reasonable and persuasive. When questions became specific she hewed to the Barnesite line. Where is there a socialist country that she can point to with pride? Cuba, she said. What about the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe? Marea thinks Cuba stands in contrast to a lot of backward steps that are being taken in the Soviet Union and China right now.

She said a big discussion has been going on in Cuba for the past two years about how to fight bureaucracy. This is how the trend toward capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China can be reversed. What about countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland? These are underdeveloped countries and to understand their problems we must look at their history.

Would it be possible to have a radio talk show under a socialist regime? Yes, in Cuba. But not in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. What about the U.S., will workers here support socialism? And (a called-in question from a sympathetic listener)

what can we do to establish socialism here? Marea said she thinks workers in this country will support her ideas because the *Militant* subscription campaign has gone well; and she has been encouraged by workers when she had a job in an auto plant and when she worked in a garment shop in St. Louis, and as a meatcutter in Minnesota. She said she had gone to Nicaragua in 1983 and believes the workers' and farmers' government there would be able to eliminate sexism and racism, give jobs to all, and begin to raise the standard of living if it were not for the U.S. war on the peoples of that country.

She failed to answer the question about what should be done to win socialism in this country, except by implication that it would help to make a trip to Nicaragua and see how the people there are fighting against great odds. Before more could be said, time ran out and Marea was off the air.

She made a generally favorable impression, and many listeners were undoubtedly anxious to hear what she would say about how to organize the struggle for socialism in this country. How do we get from here to there? The problem with this question for young comrades like Marea who have been educated almost entirely in the Barnes school of politics is that they never studied the Trotskyist Transitional Program (with capital "t" and "p" as Barnes says by way of denigration) and tried to master the Marxist method of social analysis.

● Playing the Barnesite game in the FI

We have another example of Barnesism in action from London. On November 13, 1987, the British section of the FI sponsored a debate between Ernest Mandel and Brian Grogan (leader of the Barnesite faction in Britain) on "Permanent Revolution vs. Communist Convergence." This was unusual for the Barnesites because they avoid open debate where their ill-formed and largely nebulous program can be challenged. On this occasion they came off badly battered.

In order to keep their ranks intact they resorted to an organizational ploy in which they are more experienced and which better serves their factional disruption. Their excuse, in this instance, was that the editor of *Socialist Action*, the newspaper of the British section, had refused to run a big spread on the public meeting in London which launched Pathfinder/Pacific and Asia Publishers' distribution campaign for their new book, *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*. (This book was published with the assistance of the Jose Marti Foreign Languages Publishing House of Havana, Cuba, so it has special meaning to the Barnesites.)

A meeting in New York on December 6 to celebrate the publication of this book was hailed in the *Militant* in a series of articles (Dec. 18, 1987). In London the Barnesites pretended indignation that it wasn't accorded the same attention there. The Grogan faction announced that they would refuse to sell *Socialist Action*, or to participate in any way in the writing and production of the paper; and further, that they were withdrawing from all full-time positions in the party so as to remove any obstacle to the majority faction as the self-defined "unfettered leadership."

The majority of the organization reacted by moving to expel the Groganites. This was the signal for Grogan's group to move out and set up their own headquarters and bookshop for the distribution of Pathfinder publications and other books handled by the Barnes network. They got prearranged help from Barnesites in Sweden and from "other visitors."

Grogan pronounced the FI dead in Britain, and announced at the same time that he and his followers would remain within the organizational structure represented by the United Secretariat. [Later developments are discussed in "A Perversion of Internationalism: Founding Conference of the Communist League of Britain," *Bulletin IDOM* No. 52.]

What Can F.I.T. Do?

The F.I.T. has recognized from its inception that Barnes presents the most serious challenge to the existence of the FI since 1953. We were convinced in 1981 that the Barnes tendency had embarked on a suicidal course, and we didn't think we had much chance of heading it off. But we tried.

In 1984 we were convinced that the Barnes clique in the leadership of the SWP had consciously and definitively rejected the basic philosophy and organizational methods of Marxism. We had no illusions of salvaging anything from this cynical cabal. After the 1985 SWP convention it was clear that the membership was trapped in a cult-like organizational structure in which one was either a demonstrative believer in the leader or excluded from full rights of membership. We had no illusions that this would change in the near future as a result of our propaganda efforts from outside the group. But we continued to believe that the SWP represented a viable political force in this country, and so we said that it remained a revolutionary party. What can we say about it now, four years later?

We know that the composition of the SWP is changing even as the leadership continues to discard what it considers the excess baggage of Trotskyism. And this membership is subject to all the pressures of political change in this country and throughout the world, as was shown in small ways at the 1987 education conference.

Another fact about the SWP that we must never forget is its Trotskyist heritage, which is also ours. However much the Barnesites may try to discard Trotskyism, they will never succeed until they have destroyed the SWP and obliterated its name from political memory. The other enemies of Trotskyism will not permit the Barnesites to do otherwise. But this is a complicated process still in the experimental stages. No one can tell how it will be affected by the coming crisis in the U.S., and by world events. All segments of the radical movement are bound to be affected, even the CP. The SWP membership will eventually be divided along new political lines. The F.I.T. must strive to be part of that process.

Even though the SWP is presently a small group it is well organized and an important part of the fragmented and largely demoralized radical movement

in this country. It compares favorably with other radical groups, including social democrats and Stalinists. It may not be exactly correct to call the SWP a *party* any more because the leadership does not strive to project the image of a party. But as an organized political group it retains some *revolutionary force* largely because of its Trotskyist heritage. Our attitude to it must remain comradely because of our common heritage, and because of the potential within it for change in a revolutionary direction which we can help to bring about.

What can we do in this respect? Two things: first, continue to explain and expose Barnesism; secondly, analyze and explain and submit some answers to the problems of the working class in the U.S. today. These are generalizations, easier said than done. But if we try, we can expect to attract some others who can help us in this effort.

Within the International we have recognized from the beginning that Barnesism is a *liquidationist current*. This must be obvious to many others by now. F.I.T. must try and explain how this liquidationist current arose because we know it better and have the good fortune to be able to study its antecedents and its political and social roots better than anyone else. In conjunction with this task we must continue to explain what Barnesism is in terms of its position on events in the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, and above all Cuba (the so-called socialist countries). In this connection, many politically drowsy people are beginning to wake up and ask what socialism is supposed to be anyway and whatever happened to Marx.

Here again it is easy enough to say what ought to be done. The problem is how to do it, and do it. We must try to carry out our task within the FI. This is not easy because Barnes is threatening to split the organization. He claims to have no intention of terminating the SWP's status as a sympathizing organization of the FI, but he continues to chip away at the sections. He hopes to destroy the FI piecemeal. That is the meaning of recent events in Britain, earlier in Canada, here in the U.S. of course, and possibly in other sections that we don't know about.

One of the most difficult tasks is to prevent Barnes-provoked squabbles and splits in the FI. This will never be accomplished by debating organizational issues, by allowing ourselves to be sucked into arguments over how it happened that false charges are hurled in the heat of debate. Nothing is learned from such confrontations, and there is no way of resolving them until first the fundamental political questions at issue have been sorted out and clarified.

The overriding problem with the Barnesites is programmatic. We must keep the organizational

structure of the FI intact if at all possible, despite the political differences and other centrifugal forces within it, because it is here that the Barnesites can be cornered and forced to explain as best they can and try to defend in open debate their anti-Trotskyism. If we try in this way to smoke them out programmatically we may find others who will want to join us in this effort, and some may have ideas about how to do it that we haven't yet thought of.

Summary

The trajectory of the Barnes-led SWP does not inspire confidence that it can be won back to the Trotskyist program and to democratic functioning. But certain facts about the SWP cannot be disputed: 1) it remains a substantial force on the U.S. left; 2) elements remaining from its Trotskyist heritage plus the pressure of objective events continue to affect the thinking of some of its members in a manner inconsistent with the revisionist disorientation of the Barnes leadership; 3) as a "sympathizing group," fraternally affiliated to the FI, it remains part of the broad Fourth Internationalist movement in the U.S. and internationally; 4) the political perspectives and policies of the Barnes leadership represent a sharp internal challenge to the programmatic and organizational integrity of the FI; 5) the objective factors which explain the course and perspectives of the Barnes leadership are factors which also affect other sectors of the revolutionary left in the U.S. and in the FI as a whole—which means that Barnesism has a capacity to make destructive inroads far beyond its current sphere of influence.

Because of such facts, the F.I.T. remains committed to politically confronting the challenge of Barnesism in the SWP and in the FI. This is required as part of the struggle to rebuild the revolutionary Marxist movement in our own country as well as to safeguard and strengthen the Fourth International. The commitment to this is a distinguishing characteristic of the F.I.T. We seek to win other forces in the Fourth Internationalist movement, in the United States and throughout the world, to this struggle. A thoroughgoing political defeat of the Barnes leadership will eliminate an important obstacle to the growth of the revolutionary movement and will contribute to the political education and clarification which are a prerequisite of that growth. The process of programmatic clarification is also a necessary basis for a durable reunification of revolutionary socialist forces in the United States. ■

January 30, 1988

LET HISTORY JUDGE ME Trotsky in the Soviet Press

by Vladimir Pimonov

Moscow—Glasnost gave everyone a voice. Some have taken advantage of the democracy, others have held back. But glasnost did give a voice to everyone.

In the context of a growing social interest in past events, learned professional historians who were prolific with their oversimplified categorical evaluations during the period of repression are not in a hurry to speak out. In fact, many of them now plead that there is a shortage of archival sources.

One of the first attempts to pose the question of "overcoming the schematic Stalinist version of the victory of October and of the construction of socialism in the USSR that is so far from the truth" in a scientific way was made by the rector of the Moscow Historical Archives Institute, Professor Yuri Afanasev, who was countered by an open letter from colleagues, in essence making an indirect ideological accusation of Trotskyism.

The leading role in the discussion and illumination of historical questions has passed to writers and publicists who are trying to interpret events of the past primarily from a position of civic morality. For the first time, they are recalling an episode from the life of Tukhachevsky¹ that has been omitted from textbooks. "His services must not be forgotten," writes journalist Lev Voskresensky in the weekly *Moscow News*. "But the unjustified brutality of the punitive expeditions he headed during the suppression of the Tambovsk insurrection should also be mentioned." He is referring to the largest peasant uprising in the 1920-21 period—a reaction to the policy of requisitioning farm produce.

That same theme found expression in an unexpected genre, a fantasy tale by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, "The Fateful Torrent," a chapter of which was printed in the journal *Knowledge Is Strength*. The name of the marshal here is not given (the place of the action and the hero are fictitious), but he is easily recognized in "the handsome fellow with icy eyes and lips plump like a youth's." He is "the pride of the young army, the pride of the young country." In his path is the peasant called Van, a common folk figure. "What does Van have to do with him?" the authors ask. "He killed dozens of Vans with his own hands."

The journalists and writers do not enter into polemics with one another. Each genre is simply

adding its own aspect to a many-sided historical truth. "To write about the bitter circumstances of past years is a noble and necessary cause," observes journalist Ya. L. Varshavsky, warning against the canonization of figures who suffered during the years of repression.

In the philosophic tale of the Strugatskys, one of the most dramatic subjects of Soviet history is allegorically played out on a chessboard. Instead of wooden figures, living people are sacrificed by the Great Strategist, "whose mustache on a face with yellowish, pockmarked skin" is familiar to millions of people through millions of representations. In the features of one of his victims, a person "in pince-nez, with an elegant little beard and a shock of black hair," one can divine the figure of Leon Trotsky. The photograph of this man known during the revolution to all Russia has long since disappeared from books and encyclopedias for ideological reasons. Recently, Trotsky was faintly perceptible in a new television documentary called "More Light," still another attempt at historical revelation.

"Isn't it time that there simply was light? The promise of truth is no substitute for truth." Such was the opinion of the film's viewers. And a reader of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Cultura* verified: "I finally did manage to see Trotsky on the screen. And I did not, thereby, become a Trotskyist." The character of the Strugatskys's tale, called "the great orator and the one who never became a tyrant," perishes in a far-off country from the blow of a spade held by "a dark complexioned, non-Russian, non-European looking man."

Who is this murderer? Trotsky himself answers that question as the character in a new play by Mikhail Shatrov, "Onward! Onward! Onward!", published in the January issue of the journal *Znamya* [The Banner]: "On August 20, 1940, I was mortally wounded in my study by a blow in the back of my head with an ice axe by a certain Jacson, the name used by a man from Spain named Ramon Mercader."

"His role was simple and understood," Stalin says in the play. "He was carrying out the sentence of a proletarian court."

Unlike the historians, neither the Strugatskys nor Shatrov, for all the dissimilarities of their historic and artistic conceptions, needed archival documents in order to speak out loud about the generally accepted (absent only from Soviet textbooks) version of the execution of one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. It is enough for them to make history human, to let it begin to

(Continued on page 28)

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NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

21. More About Boris and the Features of the Time

At about the time when I began to participate in the enlivening of *Evening Moscow* [about 1933], Boris Gorbatov's novel appeared, the same one whose chapters I had listened to during the winter of 1929. *Oursity*, he called it, with the words run together. Nowadays it is not written any way at all. The book had hardly appeared when it was smashed everywhere as Trotskyist, and Boris was forced to disavow it. It was identified as harmful and you won't find a harmful book even in a second-hand bookstore.

The concept of books being harmful for the people (for adults, and not for children!) is an insult to me as a reader. It is based on a total disrespect for people, who are treated like children. Children must not have matches, sharp razors, or harmful books.

As early as the beginning of the 1930s, writers had a clear enough understanding of what themes to avoid. It's true, there were only three or four such themes, but they were rather broad ones. First was the famine, the destruction of cattle and other natural calamities, for which behind the figure of God Almighty—the main culprit—one could see the shadow of Stalin. If he had not been at fault, news about the famine would not have been so carefully silenced. Second were the shortcomings of the party apparatus, from bottom to top, and of the Soviet apparatus, above the provincial level. Third, was the preferential provisioning of responsible workers with socialism's wealth. You can verify my list by going to *Twelve Chairs* or *Little Golden Calf*.¹ In fact, these immortal works were the sharpest satirical novels of that time; there were none sharper then, nor are there today.

But after the first lie, there had to be a second to cover it up. So there grew a list of questions which became taboo. And not only in the press but in conversations the harmful themes disappeared and we began to breathe the controlled air of loyalty and respect for rank.

Long education taught us to consider understandable things which are generally speaking impossible to comprehend. What are "subversive fabrications"? Dozens of prisoners have told me about the slander for which they were condemned under Stalin. At a meeting, one person asked the reporter a question about the private distribution center for NKVD workers (in those times this abundantly supplied center was for some reason called "Dynamo," and so was the sporting goods store attached to it—I will be glad if my information proves useful to historians of Soviet soccer).² He asked why this center had semolina, when the private

workers' cooperative of the Dynamo factory in Moscow had not had semolina for two years. Another said, not at a meeting but over tea, that in a democracy candidates should not be elected by secret commissions, which consider the factories one by one and apply the indicated quotas handed down from above—so that, say, one factory must send to the Soviet a skilled worker who is not a party member, while another factory must send a woman who is a party member. And as a result, every four years in all the republics there is a remarkably coincidental picture of surprisingly similar ratios, achieved on the basis of genuine democracy without the slightest planning: a good percentage of women (usually 40-45 percent), an excellent percentage of people who are not party members (in the range of 50-55 percent), a splendid percentage of workers and peasants (consistently about 60-65 percent).

This lover of democracy got a ten-year term for slander. I became acquainted with him in the camp soon after the 1950 elections.

Any judgment of slander must begin with an examination of the facts the accused had pointed to, and not the means he used to slander or the aim he was pursuing. (As a rule, it is absurd to try people for their aims—this is tantamount to trying people for their ideas.) First place the words alongside the facts they refer to. Then judge the person for the words if it turns out that they do not correspond to the facts. Whether it is the truth is the first criterion. But in thousands of instances we start not from the truth but from a stereotype that has been beaten into our heads: violating a taboo is slander, whether it corresponds to reality or not.

Who, for example, would write a letter to an editor and ask: Explain, comrade editor, why no one publishes the statistics about the drinking problem and crime? No one would. God forbid! The question itself would be declared slander!

Statistics on the drinking problem were published at one time. That was quite a long time ago, it is true, before the taboo system had become full blown. I can cite figures on the sale of vodka (30 proof, nothing stronger was produced then). In 1924-25 (the fiscal year began in those days on October 1), it was 0.6 bottles per person. The next year, 2.9 bottles per person. A year later, 4.3. Not a bad rate of growth. The 1966 figures, if you dig in special publications and place together various oblique indicators—since direct ones are taboo—show the following: around fifteen billion rubles worth of alcohol was sold during the year. That comes out to 22 half-liter bottles of 40 proof

vodka (not the 30 proof, as in the 1920s) per person per year. The success of the tsarist "*monopolky*" thoroughly disproves the hypocritical claim that consumption of alcohol reflects the growth of economic well-being.³ It was profitable to get the population drunk. To a certain extent, as economic well-being grows, there is a very slight increase in the number of evening parties, domestic celebrations, and such things where it is usual to consume alcohol. However, the fundamental reason for drinking is not economic improvement but social deterioration. Everyone knows this but keeps quiet about it. Aloud, people utter all sorts of pious little thoughts.

With the growth of vodka's successes, a social evil grows, and then the factors stimulating it are augmented by a certain snowballing effect. And thus arise new, unforeseen social problems, which are even more difficult to fight against than is drinking.

I do not have the figures for the first years after the revolution, but a simple comparison is enough. By the entrance to the Young Communist club one would never see a drunk youth, or even a slightly tipsy one. Not in Odessa, in the early 1920s, or in Artemovsk, in the mid-1920s, did I ever see anything of the sort.

At first the difficulties of establishing Soviet power were the reason for such a drop from the old tsarist drunkenness level. In a year, two, three? The revolution created such a social atmosphere that one did not need additional intoxication, while the most renowned and newest romantics of today never go without vodka. During the period when the Artemovsk activists were engaging in wild outbursts and other activities having little to do with the revolution, it turned out that they were not the only ones who were beginning to drink more. The overall consumption of vodka sharply increased. And corresponding to this, more likely outstripping it, preparations began for the first five-year plan—the Stalinist plan. The projections were increased as soon as they were made. By the final year of the plan, the production of cast iron had grown by 113 percent; textiles by 41 percent; vodka by 227 percent. A growth in textile consumption is related to an improvement in economic well-being no less than is the increase in alcohol consumption; but what a difference in their rates of growth! I don't want to say that there was a plan to get the population drunk. No. There was a socialist goal in view: to find money for industrialization, which required considerable investment. But means that were sharply contradictory to this goal were chosen to achieve it, antisocial means, the negative effects of which were incalculable, having a telling effect on all aspects of the people's lives. Don't the many kinds of damage vodka has inflicted on society mean that vodka costs more than it brings in, even considering the magnitude of the vodka revenues?⁴

To stop manufacturing vodka will not help now. But to stop keeping secret the statistics linked with it will help. The entire population must fight against this problem. But such a mobilization is impossible when the topic is taboo.

All the taboos, from the nondisclosure of vodka statistics to the timeless problems posed by Boris Gorbatov in his suppressed *Oursity*, had a common origin and a common aim. And I unwillingly recall still another more interesting taboo with which I became closely acquainted in Butyrka prison.

We were forbidden to go near the window. On the other hand, we were ordered to polish the bars on the windows so we would not get ill by breathing air that was insufficiently clean. The wardens strictly observed both rules: Don't go near the window, but at the same time polish its bars.

The prisoners thought up a name for the guard: "Mr. Fidget," from the Ukrainian words meaning "Don't Fidget," which we were often to hear. In Butyrka, in the cell for those under investigation—No. 358—oldtimers taught a green newcomer to address the guard as "Mr. Fidget." The newcomer believed the jokers and immediately got a three-day term in the special punishment cell. The jokers got five days. After 120 hours in Butyrka's punishment cell, people could no longer move their legs.

But unless you are in the special punishment cell, you pace about your regular cell. And forgetting yourself, you go up to the window. At once, the feeding trough gets banged against the door and the guard orders: "Get away from the window!" (He hisses, because loud conversation is prohibited.)

Again you walk from one corner to another. Six steps to one side, six steps back. Again you forget. "Get away from the window. Do you want to go to the punishment cell?"

Thank you, Mr. Fidget, but no, I don't. I appreciate your concern. Thank you for worrying about the air I breathe. There, outside the window, the air is dirty and you are worried about my health. Filter that air!

However, among my cellmates were people who took fully seriously this window taboo. It hardly seemed to them that what was outside the window could corrupt them and make bad prisoners of them. They reasoned another way and it was convincingly explained to me: Since the prohibitions existed, they should be scrupulously observed; otherwise, all prison discipline will be shattered. Insofar as the prison is a Soviet prison, we, the prisoners, are obligated to uphold its procedures as we would uphold the procedures of any Soviet institution. This is precisely how one of my cellmates explained why he had impeccable conduct.

It should be noted that this procedure was not required in cells of prisoners who had already been sentenced—those no longer under investigation. We were allowed to go up to the window as many times as we wanted.

But I began today's story talking about Boris Gorbatov. I should finish talking about him.

Of all my friends, Boris Gorbatov was the most enthusiastic, not inferior even to Yeva, except that she was not able to express her feelings on paper and little was known about them. But about Boris, everything was known.

They were both people with a pure conscience. My Odessa friends, Yeva's brothers, and I—all of

us who were in the Opposition had a faith, which had at one time cracked but been glued back together, and which did not ring with the same crystalline pure tone. But Borya at the beginning of the 1930s sounded just as he had ten years ago, when he had just joined the Komsomol. He rather easily reconciled himself to the removal of all the copies of his *Ourcity*, and began to write about the Arctic—candidly and sincerely. Maybe he himself believed that his novel had become ideologically disloyal due to the influence of some of his friends who were participants in the damned Trotskyism.

During the three years since I had lived with him at No. 2 Brest Street, he could not have changed too sharply. It takes a long effort to break and rewind a person before he or she will become something else. And then change is slow. Usually if a person seems to us changed by circumstances, it is a mistaken conception on our part. Some of his old but previously concealed traits have simply come to the surface.

But in Boris's character, generally speaking, there existed no hidden features. And his love for the Donbass, which reached the point of absurdity, his capacity to fly into a passion on a moment's notice, his consideration for his friends, his enthusiasm, the eternal enthusiasm of a never aging Young Pioneer, all this had not changed. They were features of the time that had been etched into him. Time passes, but a person's traits remain; and in the setting of the new time, no matter how sad this may be, they help the hypocrites who hide behind honest people to fool the youth, who are accustomed to believing the honest people. And several generations in a row believed Gorbатов. They believed in his sincerity and ingenuousness, not knowing that he himself had been betrayed and was involuntarily assisting the betrayal.

Now Gorbатов is read less. Contemporary youth do not like his uplifting tone; it seems pompous to them. But no, Boris is not pompous. He is simply the product of his time—a larger-than-life epoch.

He was a believer. Could a believer imagine that the devil had moved into the temple? Having unexpectedly spied his horns beneath the golden raiments, the believer does not trust his eyes, and thinks he is only imagining. He crosses himself three times and invokes the name of God. And he has already suggested to himself that it was a mirage. The golden horns of the devil are shattered and blurred together, taking on in his eyes the outlines of a halo around the holy head. And he prays to this figure and compels his children to do likewise.

In the predictions of the Opposition regarding the degeneration of the revolution, the Borises and Yevas were not taken into account—the dozens and tens of thousands like them. But these people did not degenerate. On the contrary, they changed too little. Their internal world remained as before, preventing them from seeing what had begun to change in the outside world. Their misfortune was their conservatism (I would call it "revolutionary conservatism"), expressed in their unchanging devotion once and for all to the standards and definitions acquired during the first years of the revolution. It was even possible to convince such people that for the good of the revolution they needed to confess to being spies. And many indeed were convinced, and they died believing in the revolutionary necessity for doing so.

The most complex period of the revolution, the one filled with amazing surprises, it seems to me, was the beginning of the 1930s, designated in history by the simple term: the period of collectivization and the first five-year plan. But indeed it was also a period of preparation of the popular

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

Memoirs of Ukrainian Left-Opposition supporter

Mikhail Baitalsky

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consciousness for the massive repression, for the destruction of the former Communist party, and for a one-man dictatorship; the period of the introduction of the passport system, for the purpose of tying the peasants to the land; the period of the liquidation of hopes for a revolution in Germany; the period of the official proclamation of the Stalinist epoch (although it had essentially begun, of course, earlier).

The textbooks of history report that in these years there was an unprecedented strengthening of the economic foundations of socialism—of heavy industry and collectivized agriculture. Only the foundations? The superstructure also grew vigorously. The facade was successfully erected, beginning with the gilded stations of the Metropolitan railway and ending with the grandiose reports about the successes of the collective farms. (The destruction of livestock was not mentioned in the reports. This was not part of the facade.) The most important official facilities were also energetically erected—the private dining rooms and distribution centers. Material was unceasingly prepared for the most extensive system of torture chambers. One judicial proceeding after another was organized against wreckers, and the index card files of future enemies of the people were made more precise. And finally, the magic words were created for the establishment of stereotypes of thought. Thus, for example, a new class stratum was thought up: a kulak's henchman. A "kulak's henchman" became one of the most frightening expressions in the countryside. Any peasant could be accused of being this.

Whole villages and large Cossack settlements were deported. Several of my old friends worked in the countryside at that time. And they also looked for kulaks' henchmen. One of them, who had matured sufficiently over the recent years, told me, despite his maturity:

"All the same, you don't know! There was a real class struggle; you have to understand this. Try!"

All right, I'll try. I myself took part in the suppression of a kulak uprising, but that was in the 1920s. We did not adopt the method of mass executions. We did not deport whole villages. We had no desire to apply cruel methods and resorted to repression only in extreme cases, clearly realizing that this was not our method but was being forced upon us by the circumstances.⁵ But the time came when, being moved along by unalterable revolutionary sentiments, faith in the absolute correctness of the party, we strangely ceased to notice cruelty. We began to measure the successes of socialism by billions of rubles and millions of workers' busy hands, and moral standards slipped through this system of measures and fell away and were lost in the construction debris.

Changes occurred that were imperceptible to us. Not the least important of the changes that occurred, it seems to me, was the change in the composition of the working class. Beginning with the first five-year plan, huge masses of peasants, including dispossessed kulaks, poured impetuously

into construction and later into production—is this an insignificant fact?

The Russian proletariat from time immemorial had been made up of former peasants, but it grew at an even rate and always succeeded in digesting its peasant replenishments. But then, due to the process of industrialization dictated by the revolution and vitally necessary to it, another parallel process began: the peasant element began an advance on the city. It attacked from within, having put on overalls and grabbed a wrench.

A partial thinning out of the working class took place as far back as the first world war, when numerous workers were torn from the production process and immediately replaced by people not at all like them. During the civil war this course of events was sharply accelerated but in a changed way. Massive numbers of workers abandoned production to go to the front, for government work, and to reinforce Soviet power in the countryside. And many never returned. During the period of reconstruction, industry achieved its former levels but the working class was not at all restored to its previous composition. And with every year of subsequent development of industry hundreds and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's peasants flowed in continuously to work at construction sites and factories. They were not only subjected to influences, but they themselves exerted an influence, above all because they came directly into the production process in great masses.

By 1940, the number of people working in industry was triple the number in 1928. This means that after a 12-year period had passed, alongside every worker on the shop floor there were two people who had just arrived from the countryside. The pressure of the peasant element is not measurable in tons. Changes in consciousness, as we know, occur more slowly than changes in being. While living as workers, peasants will not so quickly begin thinking as workers. The heavier the concentration of the semi-peasant mass in the factories, the weaker and more prolonged the process of proletarianization. Not infrequently, it is replaced by the reverse process. Read Lenin's letter to Molotov (vol. 45, p. 19): "There is no doubt that our party, judging on the basis of its majority composition, is not proletarian enough. . . . Since the war, the industrial workers in Russia have become less proletarian in composition than previously, because of the fact that during the war many people went to work in the factories to avoid military service. . . ." And further, "If one does not close one's eyes to reality, one must acknowledge that at the present time the proletarian policy of the party is determined not by its composition but by the enormous, undivided authority of that very thin layer which could be called the party old guard." And it was this "very thin layer" about which Lenin was writing that Stalin chopped off. What could determine the "proletarian policy of the party" in the future? Whose "enormous authority"? Obviously, that of Stalin, for whom the past authority of the old guard had only proven to be an obstacle.

The old party guard, destroyed by Stalin, consisted of proletarians of the strongest cast, who had gone through the entire school of exploitation and prison; and of the best intellectuals of old Russia. In the second and third generations of communists there were proletarians close to that mold but younger, like Yeve's brothers, and like Grisha Baglyuk and Shura Kholokholyenko. And almost all of them, just like the Leninist guard, perished in the torture chambers.

The annihilation of the old party cadres tragically coincided with the changes that had taken place in the nucleus of the working class, and also within the party, whose composition is inseparable from the composition of its replenishments. Is this coincidence accidental? Couldn't things have happened another way?—new tendencies are bursting out, but their appearance is impeded by people of the past, who are incapable of repudiating their former ideas.

Doesn't it look as though the personal aspirations of Stalin, his craving for omnipotence, his burning jealousy of the praise for Lenin, his eastern, feudal-khan psychology, his vindictiveness, his excessive vanity, by some fluke fell

into the path of history? Without this coincidence, could he have been so successful in his evil deeds? ■

End of Notebook III

[Next month: Notebook IV—"Holy and Unholy Work"]

NOTES

1. Twelve Chairs (1928) and Little Golden Calf (1931) were satirical works of Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov.
2. The Dynamos are a contemporary Soviet soccer team.
3. The monopolky were the small shops or commercial centers where liquor was on sale under the state monopoly of tsarist times.
4. Baitalsky has written an extensive study of the catastrophic social and economic effects of alcoholism in the USSR. In it he manages to demonstrate by extrapolating statistics, from deliberately vague official figures, that revenues from vodka sales are by far the largest source of Soviet government income. See "Commodity No. 1," written under one of Baitalsky's pseudonyms, A. Krasikov, Samizdat Register, edited by Roy A. Medvedev, New York, W.W. Norton, 1977.
5. Here Baitalsky adds the note: When I wrote this I did not know about the directive concerning deliberate annihilation of Cossack settlements, which Roy Medvedev writes about in his book The Life and Death of F.K. Mironov.

Trotsky (Continued from page 23)

speak, not with quotations from *The Short Course*,² but with living language. Leon Trotsky's political path is presented in today's history courses by an enumeration of labels: splitter, opponent of Lenin from the Second Congress of the RSDLP to the discussion of the trade union question, organizer of an antiparty bloc, expelled from the party November 14, 1927, deported from the country. In August 1936, prosecutor Vyshinsky named him an agent of the Gestapo and the organizer of terror inside Soviet territory.

But there was another Trotsky, according to Lenin's words, "distinguished by outstanding talents"; leader of the 1905 revolution; after October, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, People's Commissar of the Navy,³ Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic; organizer of the Red Army. Advocate of administrative-military methods of governing, organizing the revolution, and shaking up the cadre, he criticized the bureaucratization of the party apparatus as early as 1923 in his book *The New Course*. These aspects of his views were recalled by Gavriil Popov, professor at Moscow State University, in an article for the newspaper *Moscow News* devoted to an analysis of Boris Yeltsin's conception of perestroika.

Until the historians take the floor, dramatist Shatrov has left it to those who, as he stated in

the prologue to his play, "in October of 1917 and significantly later, stood in the foreground of history, even if on different sides of the barricades. We want to give them an opportunity to speak with us."

Says the character in the play: "I, Lev Davidovich Bronstein, party pseudonym Trotsky, a soldier of the world revolution, surrender without hesitation to the verdict of posterity."

In the period of glasnost, Trotsky has taken the floor. ■

NOTES

1. Marshal M.N. Tukhachevsky was one of a group of generals, including three of the four marshals of the Soviet Army, who were executed after a secret "trial" in June 1937. Their execution signaled the onset of a purge of the armed forces which led to the imprisonment and execution of tens of thousands of military officers, decapitating the Red Army on the eve of World War II. Tukhachevsky was among those rehabilitated during Khrushchev's rule.
2. The Short Course is the Stalinist textbook on the history of the Bolshevik Party.
3. So far as we can determine this is an error. Trotsky was Commissar of War.

AGENDA FOR A DEBATE ON REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM: A SANDINISTA CONTRIBUTION

Fire in the Americas, Forging a Revolutionary Agenda, by Roger Burbach and Orlando Nunez. London: Verso, 1987. 109 pp., \$11.95.

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

This book is among the most important political documents of our time. As its authors note, it "owes its existence to the Nicaraguan Revolution." In their opinion, "although Nicaragua is a small, underdeveloped country, the course of its revolution provides insights and lessons for revolutionary movements throughout the Western Hemisphere" (pp. 1, 54). Its Spanish-language edition won the Carlos Fonseca Prize in Managua in October 1986. Knowledgeable readers will understand that its relationship to the Sandinista revolution is the same as Regis Debray's "semi-official" work *Revolution in the Revolution?* was to the Cuban revolution.

A brief comparison of the two books may be useful. Debray's 1967 book was a highly abstract and idealized exposition of the revolutionary *foco*: small groups of daring young men with weapons engaged in combat with repressive forces of the status quo, conducting war on behalf of the oppressed masses (from whom they would necessarily remain isolated until the decisive revolutionary moment). It was a coldly logical, consistent, well-written scenario for rural guerrilla warfare throughout Latin America—as influential as it was disastrous for revolutionary activists of the late 1960s.

The book by Burbach and Nunez had a different and better title and subtitle in Spanish than in English: *Democracy and Revolution, Agenda for a Debate*. This is more descriptive, less pretentious than *Fire in the Americas, Forging a Revolutionary Agenda*. As the authors themselves tell us, "some of the ideas presented here must be further developed. Indeed, when we sat down to write the epilogue, we found it virtually impossible to tie up the book, precisely because so many of the themes and ideas lead in many different directions. Thus, what was intended as a conclusion is in many ways an introduction. This is perhaps as it should be, because it is our intention that this book initiate discussion, not end with an artificial closure" (p. xiii). It is a warmer, more contradictory, more complex and mature work than Debray's—and it will hopefully have an even greater impact among activists in the Americas. "In this work," they stress, "we do not mean to imply that we have discovered immutable political principles or the 'correct path' for political struggle. Rather, it is our hope that we can help open up a rich political debate" (pp. 14-15). The book will be particularly valuable if it becomes a focal point for discussion and debate among activists across the left end of the political spectrum in the United States. From the start, it insists that we must view realities

in our own country from the standpoint of revolutionary internationalism:

Many readers in the United States and Western Europe may criticize us for painting too optimistic a picture of the revolutionary potential throughout the Americas. Yet we believe that the possibilities for socialism in the United States and Western Europe ultimately can be assessed only by looking at the increasing linkages between social movements and class forces on the different continents of the third world.

The political pessimism that many of us experience in the developed world can be overcome only if we are aware that our struggles are inextricably linked to those of our allies in the third world. Their refusal to accept the dictates of imperialism and its local allies challenges the power of international capitalism and weakens our common enemies. Yet at the same time, our third world brothers and sisters look to us to make our own demands, because their dreams of socialism and democracy are unlikely to be fully attained if we do not achieve these goals for ourselves. This book is an effort to draw the struggles in these two worlds more closely together, to bridge the political gap that exists between us and to begin forging a common political vision (pp. xiii-xiv).

Limitations—Unavoidable and Avoidable

Of course, the authors are limited, as is every person, in what they themselves know and have experienced. Thus we are offered many more ideas and examples related to the United States (Burbach's home) and Nicaragua (Nunez's home) than to Mexico or Brazil or Canada. There is also an obvious difference in the quality of political experience which the two writers actually have had in their native lands. Nunez, a leading Sandinista, has helped to make a revolution and has been playing an important role in the social reconstruction of Nicaragua. Burbach, on the other hand, seems to have spent more time in the serious study of Latin America (Chile in the early 1970s, Central America in more recent years) than in revolutionary organizing within the United States. Perhaps this is why the book's discussion of Nicaraguan realities seems more satisfactory than its discussion of U.S. realities.

We are therefore treated to proportionately more discussion of the early "new left" in the U.S., particularly Students for a Democratic Socie-

Democracy and Revolution

ty, than to the far more decisive civil rights and Black liberation struggles of that period. We are told that SDS was "propelled into the leadership of the antiwar movement" in 1965, but not that other forces were soon compelled to assume leadership of that movement after SDS leaders wrongly concluded that "U.S. Out of Vietnam" was an unwinnable demand. We are told: "In the 1960s and early 1970s, . . . the youth and antiwar movements accused the white working class of being prowar and socially conservative, while the workers responded that the antiwar protestors were arrogant 'bums' and social misfits who couldn't do an honest day's work" (pp. 33, 76). These flat abstractions—"the youth and antiwar movements" and "the workers"—make it all too easy to slide into glib generalizations. It is true that many arrogant "youth leaders" of the "new left" haughtily dismissed the working class. But the major organizations of the antiwar movement—whether the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, or the National Peace Action Coalition—consisted largely of members and children of the working class, and reached out, with growing success, to draw segments of the trade union movement into the antiwar struggle. Many of "the workers" agreed with AFL-CIO chieftan George Meany that those opposing the war were unpatriotic "bums"; by the early 1970s, however, polls indicated that a majority of the working class (including union members, and by bigger margins than the "middle" and upper classes) opposed the war.

Fortunately, in both the Spanish- and English-language editions the authors provide a footnote which refers readers to Fred Halstead's outstanding *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War*. For some reason the English-language edition adds the comment that this is "the most comprehensive, although partisan, account. . . ." Because *all* of the works cited in the book are "partisan" in one way or another, it seems odd to reserve the tag for Halstead's work. Sadly, many of the works cited in the Managua edition of the book (including a couple by Michael Lowy) are not cited in the London edition. There are other differences between the two editions. For example, this sentence from pages 57-58 of the Managua edition has been cut from the London edition: "In the United States in the beginning of the 1930s the Communist Party and to a smaller degree the Socialist Workers Party, a political organization that reflected the break between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky, figured prominently in the organization of the industrial working class around militant demands." The deletion of this modest passage and the retention of a fairly lengthy description of the U.S. Communist Party's activity in the 1930s gives an unbalanced picture of the history of the labor and radical movements of our country. This is as regrettable as it was avoidable.

Because so much of this book is grounded in the concrete experience of the Nicaraguan revolution, however, it largely succeeds in transcending such limitations.

Burbach and Nunez note that "Karl Marx's writing left no doubt that he believed a classless communist society could be achieved only if it were thoroughly democratic." They add that in the upsurge leading to the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin "argued that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most democratic of all states, since it is the dictatorship of the majority." They go on to point out: "No Communist state to date has established an authentic socialist democracy, an objective which Marx, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, and other revolutionary leaders advocated" (pp. 44, 45, 46).

A central theme of *Fire in the Americas* is the proposition that "today democracy is at the center of the ideological battle between capitalism and socialism." The shallowness of bourgeois democracy, the class bias and elitism which are built into it, the manipulative and corrupt dynamics that are essential to it, are dispassionately analyzed. Genuine democracy, on the other hand, "is a potentially revolutionary demand and it is imperative to place it at the head of the revolutionary agenda." The liberation struggles of the past have been infused with this profoundly democratic element: "The popular classes feel that their presence in a particular movement can make a difference and that they can change reality. This is participatory democracy in its most fundamental form." This must be an essential aspect of the struggle for socialism from the earliest organizing efforts all the way through to the difficult and immense tasks of creating a new world from the ashes of the old: "Democratic values will form an integral part of the broader struggle for building the communist society that Karl Marx enunciated in the *Communist Manifesto* over a century ago" (pp. 43, 49, 105).

The problem of Stalinism, while not analyzed as thoroughly as has been done within the Trotskyist movement, is confronted seriously: "Given the problems that developed in the Soviet Union—Stalin's domination, and purges of the Soviet Communist Party, the program of forced industrialization, the liquidation of the kulak class—the close identity of Marxism-Leninism with the Soviet experience soon created tremendous ideological and political problems for revolutionary movements elsewhere." It is observed that "most Communist parties [which have power in Eastern Europe and the third world] tend to be authoritarian and have even become self-perpetuating elites," which have "put forth a reductionist or simplistic theory, i.e., one which justified the concentration of power in the highest levels of the Communist party." The authors cite Lenin's comment that even in the early 1920s the Soviet Union was a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations (though at least in the London edition "workers' state" is mistranslated as "socialist state"). They also observe that the Popular Front strategy imposed by the Communist International under Stalin meant that "Communist parties wound up sacrificing their militant programs for political alliances that were of questionable value

in advancing the class struggle" (pp. 38, 43, 45, 46, 23).

On the other hand, the authors observe that the "rejection of Social Democratic models by the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan revolutionary movements" has been matched by the tendency of Social Democratic governments of Western Europe "to pull back from their independent stands in Central America and to endorse U.S. policies to some extent." They are explicitly critical, as well, of Democratic Socialists of America which "argues that it is possible for socialists to capture control of key political institutions in the United States like the Democratic Party." As they point out "In the United States, the forging of a new Democratic Party coalition in the 1930s and 1940s with a strong working class base also illustrated the tendency of mass movements to be subordinated in reformist coalitions." They assert: "The political revisionists in the United States and Latin America who believe we must start anew by discarding Marxism do not advance either political realism or the cause of social change. Rather they reinforce existing political fragmentation and abandon historical vision" (pp. 87, 47, 25, 14).

Writing of progressive social movements in the U.S., Burbach and Nunez observe: "They have no overarching political banner or philosophy that unites them. To the extent that they express themselves on the national political scene, they adopt the strategy of trying to influence the Democratic Party, a party that is unlikely to respond to the legitimate social demands of these movements as it tries to compete with the New Right for the same political ground." Such forces lack a clear class analysis and a strategic socialist vision, the authors argue: "By focusing on the masses and rejecting the need for a vanguard party, they in effect adopt a 'tailist position': they ignore the reality that the popular classes in the early stages of most struggles are almost inevitably influenced, if not dominated, by the values of the established order" (pp. 5, 48).

Burbach and Nunez believe in "the need for a political party, a vanguard, a liberation movement, or a revolutionary bloc of parties to provide leadership in shaping strategy," but at the same time "the democratic principles enunciated by Marx and other revolutionary figures must be incorporated into a new concept of the vanguard, and applied in the very process of class struggle, both in the political and social revolutions." In fact, "political pluralism within the vanguard and within the entire revolutionary movement is now on the agenda." In many cases "an array of left political parties makes it essential to build broad coalitions based on debate of revolutionary strategy and programs." This is inseparable from the ability of revolutionaries to win mass support—revolutionary parties must be "able to demonstrate that their struggle is to expand the areas of democratic participation rather than to constrict them, and that their own political structures and programs are truly democratic. No political movement can emerge triumphant in the Americas—in the United States or

in any Caribbean or Latin American country—unless the masses are convinced that their fundamental democratic rights will be advanced by a revolutionary movement" (pp. 9, 49, 53, 54, 50).

The excerpts from *Fire in the Americas* offered here give only an indication of a more thoroughgoing and stimulating discussion of the inter-relationship between democracy and revolution.

Developing Our Own Contributions to Revolutionary Marxism

Throughout their book Burbach and Nunez argue that Marxism is in crisis today, but they reject the notion that "Marxism and the body of revolutionary thought and practice that flows from it can simply be cast aside. The building blocks for a revolutionary movement are still found in this vital scientific tradition. The challenge we face as Marxists is to take these building blocks and apply them to the contemporary world." They observe that "the revolutionary leadership in Nicaragua was comprised of Marxists, Marxist-Leninists [many FSLN militants "had actually been members of Maoist, Trotskyist, and other Marxist-Leninist organizations"], liberation theologians and radicalized social democrats," adding: "The refusal to label the revolution Socialist or Marxist-Leninist does not mean, however, that socialist and Marxist analyses are not at the core of the political program of the Sandinista Front. . . . The genius of the *Frente* is that it has fused Marxism with Sandinismo, the revolutionary nationalist tradition of the country" (pp. 47, 53, 56).

The crisis of Marxism, they believe, flows largely from the failure of Marxists to ground themselves in the specific national traditions and experiences of their respective countries. "Marxism, while it has now firmly implanted itself in the intellectual tradition of the Americas, is still not an integral part of the broader political discourse." They assert that this is partially "due to Marxism's European origins. Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, Gramsci were all products of an interrelated European history and culture which remained the ground of their revolutionary theory and practice" (pp. 37, 17). Aside from the great Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariategui and some of the theorists associated with the U.S. journal *Monthly Review*, Burbach and Nunez see little creative development of Marxism having taken place in the Americas. It could be argued that the authors fail to give adequate attention to elements of the U.S. Marxist heritage which they so easily dismiss. There is no indication, for example, that they are aware of contributions from the American Trotskyist tradition—many of which parallel some of their own ideas and some of which address problems which they don't take up. While such contributions must be integrated into the revitalization process which Burbach and Nunez call for, however, this in no way invalidates the general thrust of *Fire in the Americas*. They see their book as an effort in general theorization of the Nicaraguan

experience (as well as an effort to help advance discussion that will stimulate others in the Americas to contribute to Marxism's development as a political force).

The attention which they have given to democracy and pluralism are obviously related to the Nicaraguan experience. So is the creative and (sometimes overly) flexible concept which they advance under the label of "the third social force" for revolution, which is comprised of a variety of elements: "the middle classes, the intellectuals, the urban poor, the petty bourgeoisie, and the ethnic and social movements." *The first social force* is the working class, which "remains at the core" of the revolutionary process and without which socialist revolution is impossible. *The second social force* is the peasantry, which "in most underdeveloped countries . . . constitutes the largest single social force." They point out that one of Lenin's major contributions was his stress on the necessity of the workers and peasants alliance. But the Nicaraguan experience, they believe, highlights the importance of *the third social force*: "In Nicaragua the popular classes—the barrio residents, the artisans, the petty merchants, women, youth, the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie, etc.—were the driving force behind the revolution" (pp. 7, 8, 55). They also attempt to develop the concept of *a fourth social force*, consisting of movements in solidarity with national liberation struggles, opposing U.S. military interventions, etc. On a theoretical plane this may be one force too many, and even the conception of "the third social force" is in need of critical refinement. At the same time, we can see here an exemplary determination to integrate revolutionary theory and practice, closely related to realities and experiences in Nicaragua and beyond.

An unambiguous strength of this short book is the recognition that *actual struggles* of working people and the oppressed are the essential first step toward liberation. "A starting point for developing a new democratic revolutionary project is the recognition that revolutionary struggle in itself is an explosive, democratizing force, regardless of whether it is led by reformists or socialists." While expressing an appreciation of recent studies on the dynamics of U.S. military interventionism and imperialism, they caution that "many of these studies fail to recognize that U.S. imperialism is limited—even contained at times—by other factors, particularly by the development of revolutionary and popular movements in the third world, and by the development of anti-imperialist and non-intervention movements in the United States." They also warn that "the revival of a progressive movement" in the United States cannot simply rest on "whether or not it can field a major presidential candidate, or incorporate some of its agenda into the Democratic platform." They call instead for "a protracted struggle in the institutions that shape society—the media, the universities, in the home, churches, trade unions, and the wide range of social organizations . . . that are

part of day-to-day life at the community level." They point out that "the successes of the New Left and civil rights movements [and here we should add the antiwar movement] in the 1960s and 1970s were not due to victories on the national electoral level (they were defeated in major elections, as the presidential campaigns of 1968 and 1972 demonstrate)," but rather on concerted and wide-ranging extra-electoral struggles "that led to upheaval and change" (pp. 48, 88-89, 78).

Unfortunately, the authors seem to set aside their own insights in their discussion of the Rainbow Coalition: "The one glimmer of hope on the national level in recent years has been the formation of the Rainbow Coalition under Jesse Jackson. It has brought together many of the leaders and activists of the old social movements, and it has built a mass base, particularly among the poor and exploited in the Black and third world communities." They recognize: "The coalition could get too caught up in pursuing an electoral strategy within the Democratic Party, or at the other extreme, it could form a separate party and fall by the wayside like so many other third parties in U.S. history." But—overstating the Rainbow Coalition's strengths and understating its weaknesses—they are inclined to see it "as the first incipient effort to build a political organization that might someday have a revolutionary agenda" (pp. 77, 102-103, 54). While significant forces currently drawn to the Rainbow Coalition will undoubtedly be a part of building such a revolutionary organization, the coalition itself can hardly be expected to break free from the reformist, electoralist, and class collaborationist trajectory which Burbach and Nunez themselves reject.

As the authors point out, the case of Chile in 1973 (when the democratically elected socialist-reformist alliance of Salvador Allende was brutally overthrown by the military) "was particularly illustrative in showing how the electoral road to socialism failed." Regarding the U.S. electoral system they point out: "The people may have a final say at the ballot box over which party or group will hold power, but this comes only after the elites have drawn up programs and nominated candidates that are committed to preserving some variant of the status quo and to maintaining the power of the dominant economic interests" (pp. 37-51). The central analytical thrust of *Fire in the Americas*, as well as the experience of the Nicaraguan revolution, points activists in a revolutionary socialist direction. More creative work remains to be done before it is clear how this can be fully translated into practice in the United States.

Compressed into this small book are innumerable fruitful insights and provocative assertions. Almost every paragraph could be expanded into a substantial essay or polemic—which is fitting for an "agenda for a debate," a debate which ultimately must be resolved in practice. All revolutionary socialists and radical activists should read this book, wrestle with it, use it to push forward their own thinking and education, critically discuss it

and act on it. The present moment in history—as Burbach and Nunez explain to us with admirable succinctness and clarity—is particularly important for us:

Today serious conflicts among ruling classes are leading to fissures in the system of domination. But this crisis in the ruling bloc will lead nowhere if the popular movements and the revolutionary forces do not act. U.S. imperialism under Ronald Reagan has already set in motion a two-pronged offensive for reconsolidating its rule in the Americas. It involves: 1) an offensive against U.S. working people, including a rollback in real wages and the slashing of social programs, and 2) the use of military force in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the imposition

of tough economic measures that benefit U.S. multinational interests. The bottom line for the U.S. bourgeoisie is to increase the economic surplus so that it can rebuild its economic base and deal with its accumulation crisis. The success or failure of this program hinges on what the popular classes and the revolutionary movements do in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States. Left to its own devices, the U.S. ruling class will very likely succeed. Only strong opposition from the lower classes and a redynamized left can stop it. The struggle will not be easy (pp. 98-99).

This book is an important contribution to the process of political clarification and revitalization which must take place if we are to succeed. ■

Anti-apartheid (Continued from page 4)

For a National Anti-Apartheid Coalition

Like the anti-intervention movement, the anti-apartheid struggle would be infinitely stronger if a broad and representative national coalition existed to call united massive actions. As it is, the various labor committees, area coalitions, and student groups involved in anti-apartheid work function pretty much on their own, in isolation from one another.

A national coalition could provide a place for activists to discuss, debate, and seek to resolve differences over strategy and tactics. It could set dates for actions. It could elect a leadership that could speak authoritatively for the movement. And it could unite diverse constituencies.

The creation of such a coalition would be a big morale booster for the various anti-apartheid formations around the country. It would mark a gigantic step forward in the consolidation and growth of the movement.

Unfortunately, as yet, no individual or group having the necessary authority has stepped forward to serve as a catalyst in this process. A few years ago Randall Robinson, the head of TransAfrica, called national meetings of a selected group of anti-apartheid activists. But the purpose of those meetings was not to launch a democratic national anti-apartheid coalition geared to mass action. Instead it was to implement programs previously decided upon, involving lobbying, boycotts, etc.

Today, more than ever, the people of South Africa look to their supporters worldwide for help in their desperate struggle for freedom. Since it is the U.S. government which is directly responsible for preserving in power the hated apartheid regime, the opponents of apartheid here have a particularly pressing responsibility to build a movement powerful enough to change U.S. government policy. The sentiment for this is present now. What is needed is a correct program and structure to get the job done. ■

March 1988

A Comment on Samuel Adams and Mike Patrick

After I read Mike Patrick's letter to the editor in your May issue ("In Defense of Solidarity's Anti-Intervention Work") I went back and looked over the article to which he was responding, "Solidarity's Contradictory Perspectives for Its Anti-Intervention Work," by Samuel Adams in the February *Bulletin IDOM*. I was struck by two things.

First, though not most important, Patrick's response is disappointing on the level of really trying to deal in a serious way with the political points Adams raises. How does the sentence he quotes from the Solidarity resolution ("Obviously, building labor anti-intervention activity is also a priority wherever we are in a position to do so.") contradict what Adams had said ("when it comes to the section on anti-intervention work, building labor anti-intervention activity is strictly a secondary priority")? Even a reader who isn't familiar with the Adams piece could conclude, from the "also" in Solidarity's resolution, that this is, indeed, a *secondary* priority. Had Adams said that this was something Solidarity ignored completely then Patrick's defense would have some merit. But Adams's point was quite different. Patrick seems more interested in finding a means of explaining away a problem than of dealing with it in an honest and serious way.

The more important question, however, is the striking methodological difference between Patrick and Adams. Patrick bases his entire argument on what *is*, what *exists now*. Adams wrote about what was *objectively necessary* to meet the needs of the situation, of *what could be* if a little leadership was provided to the anti-intervention movement. Patrick explains: "If a visible broadly based national coalition opposed to U.S. intervention in Central America existed, and there certainly is a very real objective need for such a coalition—you may be assured that Solidarity would be a staunch supporter of and active participant in such a coalition. Given the absence of such a coalition . . . Solidarity's perspectives include working with groups that do exist."

The primary difference between Marxism and empiricism is precisely the difference between bowing down before accomplished "fact" and a vision of how to act today to bring about a future which will be different from the present. The problem of revolutionary socialists in the movement today can't be reduced to becoming "a staunch supporter of and active participant in" a national anti-intervention coalition should one somehow be brought into existence. That would be easy. The difficulty lies in deciding what to do and how to act to *try* to bring such a coalition into existence. That is what Samuel Adams addressed himself to.

The fact that the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean has not yet been successful in its efforts along these lines is hardly a basis to conclude that those efforts should never have been undertaken, or that it is incorrect to try to build

an organization within the anti-intervention movement with this perspective. As a general rule, I would rather see us try, and fail, to do what is objectively needed than to throw up our hands and wait for someone else to act. I wish Patrick and Solidarity had participated in the efforts of the ENC along these lines over the last few years. It might have made a difference in the outcome, but even if it hadn't the number of people who could have been reached with this all-important idea (of a democratic national coalition based on the perspective of defending the right to self-determination in Central America) would have been greatly enhanced. That is always an important groundwork for the future, when a different outcome might be possible.

None of this is to say that Patrick and Solidarity are wrong for "working within groups that do exist." That's essential too. It simply isn't sufficient, and it certainly isn't useful to gloss over the programmatic points that divide revolutionary Marxists from others within the anti-intervention and solidarity movements.

A loyal reader
New York City

Samuel Adams Replies to Mike Patrick

In his letter to the *Bulletin IDOM* (May 1988), Mike Patrick charges that I inaccurately described Solidarity's position on anti-intervention work in my article in *Bulletin IDOM* (February 1988). An examination of that article will verify that Patrick's charges have no validity or foundation whatever.

Patrick takes me to task on two counts. First he quotes me as saying that "when it comes to the section (of Solidarity's 1987 convention resolution on 'perspectives and tasks') on anti-intervention work, building labor anti-intervention activity is strictly a secondary concern." By way of answer, he points to a statement in that resolution which says, "obviously, building labor anti-intervention activity is also a priority wherever we are in a position to do so," as proof of my alleged inaccuracy.

The central point I made was this: the labor movement can best be won to the anti-intervention cause on the basis of broad demands and in defense of the right of self-determination. Organizations that call for solidarity with the Salvadoran liberation movement and with the FMLN-FDR will have little appeal for trade unionists.

Does Patrick agree with this or not? He does not say. All we know is that anyone who reads Solidarity's resolution is left with no doubt that its *primary* orientation is toward CISPES and the other solidarity networks (whose labor constituency is extremely narrow, as I'm sure Patrick would acknowledge). The resolution makes *no mention whatever* of relating to the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, local labor anti-intervention committees or

local anti-intervention coalitions, which are best able to attract trade unionists.

The fact that Solidarity says we *also* want to build labor anti-intervention activity does not contradict in any way my contention that—at least insofar as their resolution is concerned—that is for them a *secondary* priority. In fact, it confirms it.

Patrick's other objection is to my statement that Solidarity relates empirically to the more prominent anti-intervention organizations in spite of programmatic differences with them. "This is quite false," Patrick says. Solidarity's support for CISPES and local solidarity committees is based on political agreement, he asserts.

But if that is the case, *why did Solidarity's resolution itself list major political differences between its orientation and that of CISPES?* I repeated those differences in my article and was quite scrupulous in stating them accurately. Patrick should reread his organization's resolution before he accuses me of misrepresenting it. To refresh the reader's recollection, here are some of the major differences between Solidarity and CISPES:

1) Solidarity calls for the formation of a democratic national anti-intervention coalition. CISPES does not.

2) Solidarity calls for an anti-intervention movement that is independent of the capitalist parties. CISPES supported Jesse Jackson in 1984 and (here I am quoting Solidarity's resolution) "CISPES in particular has acted on occasion as if building a broad coalition necessarily involves electoral alliances with Democrats."

3) Solidarity is a consistent supporter of mass action. CISPES is not. It frequently calls for *lobbying* as a central activity.

Patrick sees my "fundamental (and sectarian, in our judgment)" error as counterposing the need for broad national anti-intervention coalitions to the need for organizations in solidarity with the revolutions in Central America. What is the basis for drawing that conclusion? In spite of the fact that Patrick has before him my article in the *Bulletin IDOM* covering five full pages, he is unable to substantiate his assertion with a single quote. He apparently hopes the reader will accept what he writes at face value. The fact of the matter is that my article extolled the contributions made by CISPES and the other solidarity groups. I wrote the following:

It is certainly true that the solidarity groups have done valuable work in educating large numbers of people about the nature of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; that they have been in the front lines against U.S. war policies in the region and have been targeted by the government for repression as a result; and that they are unquestionably *one* of the key constituencies in the anti-intervention movement.

But there is nothing inconsistent about recognizing the positive aspects of the work of these organizations while recognizing at the same time that basic differences exist between the positions, strategies, and tactics which they advocate and those advanced by revolutionary socialists.

The solidarity networks can and must be a key sector of a united national anti-intervention movement. Nothing in my article suggests anything to the contrary.

What is urgently needed today is concrete action to bring about the national unity of the anti-intervention movement. The Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC) has been the most consistent voice in the anti-intervention movement over the past years in calling for the creation of a national coalition, with a special orientation toward achieving maximum labor involvement. Rather than disparage the ENC, as Patrick does repeatedly, he ought to join forces with it and all other organizations with the same perspective in helping make such a national coalition a reality.

Samuel Adams

1988 Elections

Thanks to Bill Onasch for his intelligent assessment of the currently running election campaign.

I have sent my few dollars to the SWP campaign, and, if possible in Missouri, will vote for their ticket. But I do so more as a protest vote against the Democrats and Republicans than any affirmation of their ability to lead the people of this country.

Of course, Jackson's candidacy is doomed. However, I am surprised how far he has come and how much influence he has been allowed in the rhetorical war between rivals. The ruling class must be rather panicky or in a special good mood to permit such brazen posturing. He will, however, be swallowed up. Nevertheless, it may be that the Democratic Party could be the starting point for a labor party in the future.

Not to enter the Democratic Party to sway the leadership or reform it, but to enter with the express purpose of forming a faction and withdrawing! What are the alternatives?

A labor party will not spontaneously generate outside the two-party system—especially in the mafia-ruled, class collaborationist controlled union halls. However, "splinter" parties are an American tradition. Indeed, the Democrats and Republicans were splinter parties. More importantly, American communists entered the Socialist Party with the intent of forming a new group within, knowing they would leave by choice or force.

Most splinter parties have been right wing in recent history (George Wallace, for example). They died quickly because of it. They were anti-working people in basis and in fact. But a labor movement within the Democratic Party might stand a chance of forming, breaking away, and eventually winning the confidence of the U.S. people.

Jack Bresee
Fordland, Missouri

In Reply: *It is certainly possible that elements of the U.S. labor movement which are now strongly ensconced in the Democratic Party could, after finally concluding that their efforts within that party have proven futile, choose to break from it and create a new party. This, however, should not be mixed up with the question of whether revolutionary socialists themselves ought to join the Democratic Party. The key to such a development would not lie in Democratic Party politics per se, but in a new commitment by a layer of the labor movement to a genuine fight—on the trade union and on the political plane—for the interests of working people. This is what has been lacking up to now. That change will come about as a result of struggles which erupt in society at large, not first in the Democratic Party, and the most important thing that revolutionary Marxists who want to advance the idea of independent labor political action can do is to participate in the labor movement attempting to advance a militant, class-struggle program—including the idea of independent political action, but by no means limited to this.*

If we postulate a change in the labor movement along these lines, it would then become counterproductive for revolutionists to join the Democratic Party. Such an action would hardly advance the

education of union militants who need to make a break with that organization. This is quite different from the entry, in 1936, into the Socialist Party. The SP was an organization based on the working class movement. It was therefore not an absolute necessity, from a programmatic point of view, for revolutionary elements, or even genuine working class militants, to separate from that party. The break was a necessity for tactical reasons, because it was impossible under the given circumstances for the revolutionary wing to take over control of the entire party. It was hopelessly weighted down by its older, bureaucratic elements.

The Democratic Party, however, could never be taken over and run in the interests of working people. It is a completely bourgeois political institution. The task is rather to demonstrate our absolute conviction of this fact through our actions, by refusing to join it, vote for it, or participate in its petty internal squabbles. This position is the only one which can explain a correct principled outlook to others who are presently confused.

We should also not write off the possibility (indeed, even the likelihood) of a new political movement arising strictly outside of the Democratic Party. If we believe it is possible for the labor movement to rejuvenate itself, to become a fighting organization (i.e., to overcome the "mafia-ruled, class collaborationist" union leadership), then it is certainly possible for elements of that new class-struggle left wing to conclude that a new kind of political effort is needed. This may not take the form, right off the bat, of a "labor party," but could begin simply in the form of one local union deciding to run a campaign for Congress, or some lesser office.

JACKSON *(Continued from page 2)*

is also reflected in innumerable struggles of working people and others against manifestations of capitalist injustice. We must help make those struggles larger, more effective, more conscious, increas-

ingly interrelated—ultimately coalescing into an independent political force of the working class.

Through this process the nightmares of bourgeois editors, and the dreams of Jackson's supporters, can come true. ■

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