

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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WHERE DOES THE CENTRAL AMERICA MOVEMENT GO FROM HERE?

by Bill Onasch

The U.S. ruling class has been forced to put a hold on its contra war to overthrow the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Faced with continued opposition to the war at home, the inability of the contras to make any significant military or political headway in Nicaragua, and the decision of the contra leaders themselves to enter into negotiations with the Sandinistas, the strategy has been shifted—at least for now. Military efforts have given way to stepped-up economic and political pressure against the Nicaraguan people and their revolution.

This promises to bring some relief to the hardpressed Nicaraguan army and the civilian victims of contra terror. But even if a viable armistice is reached with the contras, the Nicaraguan revolution still faces grave dangers. Reagan has every intention of continuing the embargo which has had devastating effects on that country's economy. The United States will still try to block international aid and loans. Contras entering civilian political life will undoubtedly attempt to exploit the economic crisis by promoting strikes, demonstrations, and other disruptions of the type used effectively in Chile in 1973, paving the way for the coup against the popular Allende regime and a bloodbath in that country.

There are, of course, many differences between Chile in 1973 and Nicaragua today. The most important is the political and military strength of the Sandinistas, who dismantled the old Somocista, bourgeois state after the revolution and have substituted for it the armed people. This approach stands in stark contrast to Allende's strategy of relying for the defense of his government on the old, pro-imperialist armed force created by his predecessors—the same armed force that ultimately overthrew him. There seems to be no question that, despite all the pressure they have been under and despite the considerable concessions they have been forced to make as a result of the contra war, the Sandinistas remain firmly in power and the Nicaraguan masses continue to overwhelmingly support the revolution. That makes imperialism's task in Nicaragua far more difficult than it was in Chile.

But for this very reason we can be certain that Washington's efforts to undermine the stability of Nicaragua will not end, even if the present cease-fire leads to a more long-range accord. And the contras will continue to receive plenty of financial support—covertly from the CIA if not openly from the U.S. Congress—whether they continue as an armed force or shift their tactics to that of a civilian opposition. Should the contra

disruption fail, the only real option remaining for Washington would be direct U.S. military intervention. So now, perhaps more than ever, there is a crying need for a mass movement in this country against U.S. military and political intervention.

Unfortunately, the Central America movement has been largely demobilized. Even before the actual cease-fire agreement it was disrupted by the 1988 presidential election campaign. Hundreds of activists who had formerly devoted their time and energy to anti-intervention work have been sidetracked into hustling votes for capitalist politicians—above all Jesse Jackson. Now the illusion that the war is over in Nicaragua has further disoriented activists.

Need for Leadership

In April 1987, nearly a quarter of a million persons were mobilized in the streets of Washington D.C. and San Francisco in opposition to intervention in Central America and South African apartheid—by a national coalition including unions, churches, campus organizations, and solidarity groups. That coalition dissolved after the April actions, and there have been no nationally coordinated campaigns since, though clearly the potential, as well as the objective need, for continuing to channel sentiment into action was present—especially during the congressional debates on contra aid and the threatening U.S. military buildup in Honduras last March. The Iran-contra revelations, the exposure of FBI spying on the movement, the congressional maneuvers around contra aid, all helped to develop consciousness and popular opposition to the imperialist effort to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. But this was not reflected in a corresponding growth of the national movement.

This default confirms that genuine national organization does not spring up spontaneously. The movement against the war in Vietnam, for example, was a genuine mass movement with thousands of activists and involving millions of participants in actions over a period of more than ten years. That movement not only had an enormous impact on the outcome of the war; it also transformed political attitudes in this country. What has come to be called the "Vietnam syndrome" has acted as a powerful restraint upon the ability of U.S. imperialism to militarily intervene in other countries. But it would not have developed without conscious preparation—and a number of significant political fights—by political leaders who had a vision of what was possible and a determination to bring it into existence.

There has been no such substantial force, with a nationwide base, within the Central America movement today. The Socialist Workers Party, which helped to organize an effective leadership during the Vietnam movement (see box on this page) has been severely weakened—both organizationally and politically—as a result of a nearly decade-long programmatic degeneration. When not completely abstaining from anti-intervention work, it has tail-ended the self-appointed leaders of the "peace movement." The forces which were expelled from the SWP (organized in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity) include many former leaders of the Vietnam movement. These individuals have had important influence in local areas, but their organizations have proven to be too weak to have had the necessary impact on a national level.

As a result, the Central America movement finds itself in a real crisis of perspective today. First of all, it does not consistently focus on the right of the Central American peoples to self-determination. This was demonstrated most clearly when a major wing of the peace movement actually supported the Democrats' "humanitarian" contra aid package in Congress. The overwhelming majority of the movement supported the Arias peace plan, though it made serious inroads into Nicaragua's sovereignty. Peace movement leaders are infected with a compulsion to be "realistic," to compromise other nations' rights.

The fact that the Nicaraguans have felt compelled to agree to compromises is no excuse for those in this country—who are not under the same military pressures—to endorse concessions extracted at gunpoint by our "own" imperialist government.

False Perspectives

What do most leaders of the peace movement propose to do today? There are three primary areas of focus:

- Support for "peace candidates" in the 1988 elections—above all, mobilizing for Jesse Jackson. Hundreds of activists who formerly worked on Central America are thereby throwing all of their energy into capitalist electoral politics.

- Material aid. A great deal of effort has been expended on collecting material aid for Nicaragua. The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) recently launched a campaign to raise material aid for the popular movement in El Salvador. Of course, any aid to the revolutionary fighters in Central America is important. But too often this work is *counterposed* to anti-intervention work, and that's a problem. Aid raised by the movement in this country is but a drop in the bucket compared to what Washington spends to destroy the Central American revolutions. Clearly our most important job is to stop this intervention. That is where our focus should be. Only a small fraction of the U.S. population is prepared to actively support armed guerrilla fight-

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY AND THE ANTI-VIETNAM WAR MOVEMENT

A consistent driving force in building the sentiment against the war in Vietnam into a mass movement around the demand for U.S. withdrawal was the Socialist Workers Party. Although the SWP had only a few hundred members at the beginning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and never reached more than 2,000 even at the peak of its influence in the early '70s, the party played an indispensable role, both in giving political leadership and in accepting key organizational responsibilities. The SWP acted as a prime component (and to a large degree as the stimulant for the creation) of a broader current that focused on defending Vietnam's right to self-determination. It popularized that right through the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now!" This current also advanced the perspective of protest effectively mobilized through periodic mass, peaceful, legal demonstrations in the streets.

This viewpoint did not win hegemony within the antiwar movement immediately, or without a fight. Many divergent strategies were proposed and tried: electoral support to capitalist "dove" politicians; individual "solutions" through draft evasion; calling for "superpower" negotiations to determine Vietnam's fate; personal acts of civil disobedience; tacking Vietnam onto a multi-issue "anti-imperialist" perspective; collecting material aid for the people of North Vietnam; proclaiming political support for the military victory of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front over U.S. GIs.

Without the intervention of the SWP, and its youth organization, the Young Socialist Alliance, it is likely that the sentiment against the Vietnam war would have been dissipated in various futile experiments with these alternative perspectives. But the centralized dedicated work of SWP and YSA cadres, who were also tireless activists within the movement, helped the antiwar movement find an effective orientation.

—Bill Onasch

ers or revolutionary regimes in Central America at present; but a majority can be tapped in opposition to intervention in the region by Washington.

Another variation of the material aid perspective is the current campaign by the SWP calling for reparations to be paid to Nicaragua. Certainly justice demands that the United States pay for the tremendous damage inflicted upon Nicaragua by the CIA and contra mercenaries. But calling for reparations today only promotes and reinforces the illusion that hostilities in Nicaragua are concluded. U.S. intervention continues, and this intervention, not abstract propaganda calling for reparations, is the issue that has the greatest potential for mobilizing broad layers of the population in this country. That is why it should be the focus of our attention and action today.

● Merging Central America into multi-issue activities. Most of the peace movement leaders have a dream of creating a new multi-issue coalition that could become a power base in the Democratic Party, or perhaps the basis for a new left-liberal party. There have been many attempts to parlay popular issues into such a political construction over the years—and all have failed. Nevertheless these coalition politicians never cease trying. The latest multi-issue project is the June 11 demonstrations in New York and San Francisco. The national call for these demonstrations gives a political endorsement to the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. Its primary emphasis is on support for the disarmament gimmicks cooked up by Reagan and Gorbachev, and the central demand is that the world be subjected to nuclear terror for no longer than 12 more years. Peace movement bureaucrats have attempted to lure the Central America, Palestinian, South Africa, and Philippine movements into the SSD III coalition by saying a few words about these areas in the fine print of their call.

There are two major problems with the perspective of SSD III. First, inherent in any multi-issue approach, is the fact that the various issues get blurred. The purpose of the action is often unclear to observers and even participants. Also there is the problem that many who oppose intervention in Central America may nevertheless support Israel or even accept the government's rationalizations for maintaining a nuclear arsenal. People develop unevenly in their political awareness. Multi-issue actions actually tend to narrow the base of participation, not enhance it.

In the case of SSD III, enthusiastically endorsed by the SWP in addition to the CP and the social democracy, the focus is not just blurred—it is false. The call supports the United Nations, which is an instrument of world imperialism. Let's not forget that it was under the banner of the UN that the U.S. war against Korea was fought. Let's not forget that it was UN troops that strangled the revolution in the Congo and handed Patrice Lumumba over to his murderers. Let's not forget that it was the UN that partitioned Palestine and established the Zionist state.

The SSD III coalition fosters the illusion that disarmament can be achieved through negotiations between the imperialists and the Stalinists. This illusion can be expected from the pacifist and religious leaders within the coalition. But it is also being promoted by those who presume to speak in the name of socialism—the social democrats, the Communist Party, and now the Socialist Workers Party—who remain silent about this pernicious myth. There was a time when the SWP told the truth: that only a socialist revolution can remove the threat of nuclear war.

What Needs To Be Done

The Central America movement has been demobilized. What will it take to get it back on track?

We can be confident that sooner or later dramatic events in Central America will shake things up. A resumption of the contra war in Nicaragua, breakthroughs by revolutionary forces in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, direct U.S. military intervention, a further exposure of Washington's dirty tricks. Any of these can help to refocus the anti-intervention effort in this country. In the meantime, revolutionary socialists and other defenders of self-determination must remain active within the movement, and need to participate in the discussions that are taking place. We will have to patiently explain our views on how to build an effective movement to those individuals who are prepared to listen, and be prepared to act when objective conditions become more favorable.

Our perspectives for the movement include:

● Defend self-determination. The United States has no right whatever to intervene militarily, diplomatically, or through economic pressure, in the internal affairs of nations in Central America or anywhere else.

● Raise the most appropriate slogans which include: End the Embargo of Nicaragua! No Aid Whatsoever for the Contras! No Aid to the Regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras!

● Keep the movement focused on Central America, not lost in a "laundry list" of issues that do justice to none.

● Organize periodic mass, peaceful, legal demonstrations in the streets. (We understand that these will be modest in size given the present situation in Central America and level of consciousness in this country. But if we have no illusions that Washington's war against the peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Honduras, etc., has ended, then it is necessary to maintain a policy of mobilization.)

● Establish democratic structures for decision making by the ranks of the movement.

● Place a special emphasis on building on the already impressive anti-intervention forces in the labor movement.

Rebuilding the anti-intervention movement will not be easy. But we can rely upon the proven fact that the majority of the U.S. population opposes intervention and that whenever authoritative calls for action have been issued people have responded by the tens and hundreds of thousands.

For revolutionary internationalists in the United States today there is still no more important task than defending the Nicaraguan revolution. The best way to do this is to build the biggest, broadest, most effective movement to stop Washington's attempts to impose its will on the peoples of Central America. ■

June 1, 1988

MAY 14 FAMILY DAY: UNREALIZED POTENTIAL

by Mary Scully

Thirty-five thousand people assembled in Washington D.C. on May 14 for an "American Family Celebration," initiated by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and cosponsored by the AFL-CIO. Twenty national unions and 150 civil rights, women's, religious, and senior citizens' groups either cosponsored or endorsed the event.

Despite the conservative-sounding theme of "strengthening our nation's commitment to families," the breadth of endorsement requires taking a closer look at this action. Its thrust was a far cry from the right-wing's clarion call to "save the family." In contrast to the reactionary idea that family problems are matters of private concern and responsibility, the CLUW action called for a series of progressive actions by government: on child care, health care, and pay equity.

The action's demands were extremely diverse, and formulated only in a general way: "family and medical leave, quality child care, comprehensive health care, equity in quality education, and economic justice." But the fact that such an action was called at all by the reformist union leadership is significant. Given their historic inactivity in answering the onslaught against unions, and against women, this action signals increasing pressure from the ranks to do something to alleviate the increasingly difficult condition of U.S. workers.

The demonstration was built unevenly in different unions across the country. In most cases there appears to have been little publicity—a few articles in union papers, a mention in mailings, etc., and there was little coordinated effort to draw in broader participation. The notable absence of large contingents from women's organizations may in part be due to the conservative theme, but is more likely due to this desultory building effort of the union leadership.

The organizers could not have done more to make this event appear tame, and the official organizing suffered from a noteworthy lack of militancy. Its chief weakness was that there was no march, and not much of a political rally, to focus the activity of those who came to Washington. Thousands of men, women, and children came to the assembly point, and, after milling around and looking at the literature displays and listening to the entertainment and occasional speeches on stage for awhile, left to see the tourist attractions. This dispersal of forces made it hard to estimate the size of the crowd, and seriously diminished its political impact. The police estimated attendance at 5,000, and no more than that number were present at any one time. The larger estimate of the activity's orga-

nizers was drawn from the number of buses which arrived from out of town, and the idea that many people came and went during the course of the day.

The union movement certainly has sufficient clout and resources at its disposal to pull off a more effective action on these issues. At present, federal programs to address questions such as health and child care are extremely limited, and are being further ravaged by budget cuts. Under the circumstances, more than non-events are required. But they do suit the reformist political orientation of the present crop of trade union misleaders. The bureaucrats hope to influence legislation currently pending in Congress and want to appear responsive to the needs of the union rank and file, while at the same time not stimulating any genuine development of rank-and-file militancy or consciousness.

Yet despite the temporizing of the bureaucrats, the issues raised by "family day" are shaking up the labor movement. The thousands of unionists who participated were quite clear on what was at stake. Contingents came from as far away as Washington state and Nevada; there were large numbers of Blacks, Asians, Latins, and hundreds of older women workers; there were whole families and lots of single mothers. Those I spoke with were ardent about what had brought them—in many cases hundreds of miles—to Washington: union-busting, the lack of child care, inequality in pay scales, the crisis of care for the elderly, the low minimum wage, and similar concerns.

Feminism's impact on the unions was visible everywhere. Aside from the various union insignias, pro-ERA badges were the most conspicuous, being worn by hundreds of participants. Literature tables of the participating unions and organizations were besieged by people. The brochures put out by many unions indicated extensive research and at least literary attention to the issues of the day. They provided much valuable information on the scope of the problem.

This event—regardless of its limitations—can serve to raise the expectations among unionists for future action. More than sufficient evidence exists to show that a few pieces of legislation, even if they are passed, are hopelessly inadequate to address the urgent problems faced by working women and men. Something more is needed. The unions *are* capable of really using their strength to influence government policy in this country. That kind of effective action is what we must continue to urge and fight for today. ■

POLAND'S CYCLE OF HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

by Tom Barrett

Since the imposition of Stalinist rule on Poland after World War II the Polish working class has risen in struggle every decade or so, as each new generation of young workers has come of age. In 1956, 1970, 1980-81, and now in 1988, a new wave of militants has gone into action to fight for basic freedoms and for improvements in the standard of living, which is abysmal for an industrialized country. Each time their hopes have been dashed. The regime has always promised reforms and, with the exception of the most recent period, the bureaucracy has replaced the man at the top as a concession to the working class. But there have never been any real improvements. In fact, the material conditions of Polish workers are worse now than they were 20 years ago.

But while it has never succeeded in achieving its goals, the Polish working class has also never been crushed, and each time it has gone into action it has done so at a somewhat higher level of consciousness and organization—reflecting the lessons learned in the previous upsurge. Specifically, 1980-81 saw the formation of the opposition trade union Solidarity, giving organizational form to the Polish workers' democratic and economic aspirations. This year, seven years after the imposition of martial law and the outlawing of Solidarity, the union flexed its muscles once again, organizing strike actions and occupying the Lenin steelworks at Nowa Huta, near Cracow, and the Lenin shipyards at Gdansk—Solidarity's birthplace.

This year, because of the reforms which the Soviet bureaucracy is carrying out under the rubrics of perestroika and glasnost, there was hope that the Polish bureaucrats might be persuaded to stop price increases, grant larger wage raises, and allow improvements in civil liberties, including the legalization of Solidarity. Those hopes have now been dashed.

Devastated Economy

The Polish economy is a nightmare of bureaucratic mismanagement. Shortages, high prices, and low wages are the day-to-day reality, with no improvement in sight. Government spokesman Jerzy Urban blames Poland's economic troubles on U.S.-imposed sanctions, and that may be partially true. But the sanctions are a relatively recent development; Poland's economic woes began decades before they were imposed.

The postcapitalist societies which are dominated by entrenched bureaucracies mimic a number of the worst features of capitalism. At the same time,

some of the mitigating factors which exist in the advanced capitalist countries have been eliminated. For example, in Poland, as in the United States, industries are run by managers who are, by and large, out of touch with the actual productive process. In the United States, in time, those enterprises where management is incompetent cannot compete in the open market—they lose money, and the directors either take steps to change the management or the companies go bankrupt. In Poland the same mismanagement exists, but the market does not provide a corrective mechanism, and there is no democratic form by which the workers themselves can make the needed changes. Party loyalty, rather than turning a profit (as in capitalism), or running an efficient operation in the interests of the workers (as in a genuine socialist economy), is the criterion for advancement in management.

Neither capitalism nor the bureaucratic monstrosities often mistakenly referred to as "socialism" draw on the abilities of those who are really capable of running the industries—the workers themselves—and in both the United States and Poland it is working people who come out on the short end. This is the primary reason why the Polish working class has such a low standard of living, and why it must turn to political action to fight for its economic rights as well as its civil rights.

Latest Wave of Protest

The recent strike wave began at the Lenin steelworks at Nowa Huta on April 26. The workers combined economic and political demands and occupied the plant. The steelworkers' strike inspired other strikes and mass protests in the streets on May Day. A strike at the munitions plant in Stalowa Wola was settled after one day; the workers won a pay raise there. On May 2, the Lenin shipyard workers at Gdansk went out on strike.

At first the government did not confront the strikers head-on. The Communist Party-controlled union at Nowa Huta actually supported the strikers' demands. After the May Day protests, the government appointed Roman Catholic priests as mediators to settle the dispute. However, on May 4 the government withdrew its offer of a pay raise, and on May 5 the police stormed the plant, arrested the strike leaders, and broke the strike.

The Nowa Huta defeat had a chilling effect on the Gdansk workers. The police blockaded the shipyards, attempting to starve the strikers out. At the same time, the government negotiated directly

with the strike leadership, rather than negotiating through the plant management. The government's war of attrition served its purpose, as hundreds of workers left the shipyard and simply went home. On May 10 the strikers ended their occupation. They were not defeated in a head-on confrontation, but they did not win any of their demands.

Crisis of Perspective

Since coming to power in 1980, Wojciech Jaruzelski's government has been quite successful in resisting the antibureaucratic struggle. It has selectively used repression and compromise to weaken and disorient Solidarity, leading to a serious crisis in that organization. When Lech Walesa closed his speech to the shipyard workers after their strike had ended with the slogan, "There is no freedom without Solidarity," his wife summed up the crisis by muttering bitterly, "There is no Solidarity."

Since the imposition of martial law, Solidarity has lost about two-thirds of its leadership. Half of these have emigrated to the West, and the others have simply dropped out of activity. A mood of pessimism and cynicism is clearly evident among many workers who went through the previous wave of struggles, as demonstrated by the fact that nearly all of the strike leaders this spring were not yet out of school during the 1980-81 period. Veterans of the 1980-81 events were, in general, not willing to put themselves on the line this time around. Even Walesa himself was reluctant to play a leading role, partly because of his deteriorating health, but to a great extent because he no longer believes that positive social change is possible in Poland.

This conclusion was evident in one of the speeches he gave during the shipyard strike, in which he warned the government that "bloody revolution" would result if the regime did not institute reforms. It was clear that revolution—"bloody" or otherwise—was not something he favored. However, in seven years of martial law, and with the fresh experience of the repression of the Nowa Huta steelworkers and Jerzy Urban's "pit-bull" attacks on the working class and democratic movement, it has become clear that appeals to reason will not be sufficient to bring about changes in the direction of democracy and better living standards.

Solidarity has always had a general idea of the kinds of changes it wanted; it has, however, never had a clear idea of what it would take to win them. Today it faces a crisis of perspective, and *this crisis is far more dangerous to Solidarity's existence than government repression*. Even if Solidarity's leadership isn't aware of that reality, the Polish government certainly is. Jaruzelski has been willing to wait Solidarity out, and let the contradictions of its program, or lack of a program, steadily weaken the organization. It must be said that so far the government's strategy has been successful.

Solidarity's programmatic and strategic weaknesses were never more apparent than with the

events of April-May. First is its reliance on the Catholic Church. There are a number of complex historical reasons why this has come about, but its result has not been any more positive for that. The clergy, especially the high-level clergy such as Cardinal Glemp, serves as a brake on the struggle. It has turned the Polish workers away from clear political demands in favor of empty expressions of patriotic piety. In every confrontation with the state, the bishops have called upon the workers to back down in the interests of "peace."

The church has made it easy for Jaruzelski, since it is much easier for the Stalinist bureaucrats to make concessions to religion than to the genuine demands of the workers. It costs nothing to give a practicing Catholic a post in the Cabinet; it is no problem to allow a priest to say mass in the Lenin shipyards. Pilgrimages to the shrine of the Black Madonna in no way threaten the bureaucracy's rule. And for all of the pope's rhetoric about supporting trade unionism, he and the church he heads are no more interested in working class rule in Poland than in Nicaragua—where the church has made its position abundantly clear.

National Oppression

A second weakness has been on the question of nationalism. While an appeal to the national aspirations of the Polish people against domination by the Soviet Union can play a progressive role in mobilizing opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy, it has sometimes tended to get too much weight in the propaganda of Solidarity's leadership. The common view that Stalinist rule in Poland is fundamentally a continuation of Russian domination is only partially true. The Soviet bureaucrats have, at least since Stalin's death, never been interested in domination for its own sake. They have acquiesced to Yugoslavia and Albania's complete independence from Moscow, and they have allowed Romania and lately Hungary wide autonomy.

What the Kremlin still will not tolerate is any concessions which weaken bureaucratic rule. The Soviets did not send troops into Yugoslavia, Albania, or Romania, because bureaucratic dictatorship has never been threatened in those countries. When a question mark was placed over the bureaucracy's rule in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968, the tanks rolled in. The Soviet government has given Jaruzelski the chance to defeat the democratic movement without Soviet intervention, which, from their point of view, has proved to be a far better strategy than outside intervention. No one can credibly claim that Jaruzelski is simply Moscow's puppet. Solidarity must confront the issue of bureaucratic dictatorship in its own right, not simply as an extension of Soviet domination. The Polish people must wage a *combined* struggle—consciously intertwining and giving the necessary weight to the demand for national independence aimed at the USSR, and demands for economic and political change aimed at the native bureaucrats of Poland itself.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Solidarity has not addressed the social question, the question of which class shall rule in Poland. This, above all others, must be answered correctly. It is true that Solidarity has not called for the restoration of private ownership of the large factories, nor does it have any connection with Poland's bourgeois government-in-exile, which still meets, in glorious irrelevance, in London. However, the hostility of many of Solidarity's leaders to the Nicaraguan revolution, their open admiration for "Western-style (i.e. U.S.A.) democracy"—and for the pope and Ronald Reagan—cloud an issue on which absolute clarity is essential.

We are not talking here about labels. The name "socialism" has been largely discredited in Poland because of the abuse it has received from the Stalinists. But names are not important. What is important is a clear rejection of bourgeois political and economic systems and a conscious understanding that only genuine, democratic, workers' rule can bring the Polish people what they are looking for. Most of Solidarity's perspectives move objectively in that direction, but the lack of a thought-through formulation about what political and economic forms the movement is fighting for stands as a barrier to actually achieving them. Solidarity's failure to address the class question head-on has given the government another weapon to use against it, and Jaruzelski, Urban, and their colleagues have used it with some success so far.

Reform or Revolution

Related to the social question is the problem of reform or revolution. The majority of Solidarity's leadership has, so far, clearly answered this question in favor of reform. Unfortunately, that is the wrong answer. In what may be the irony of ironies, Walesa, who has consistently appealed to Polish patriotism in opposition to Soviet domination, called on the Soviet Union to pressure the Polish bureaucrats to institute perestroika and glasnost! In the real world, however, glasnost and perestroika are not what they seem. While they appear to be steps towards democracy and improved living standards, perestroika has been, in reality,

more of an assault on the assembly-line worker than on the wide-bottomed bureaucrat. Soviet workers are facing speedups and even the threat of unemployment, hardly an improvement in workers' living conditions, and certainly not a concession to democracy. Glasnost has opened up widespread discussion, which is good, but little of that talk has so far been translated into action.

Reforms will not do the job. The problem in Poland, as in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and China (among other countries) is rule by a parasitic bureaucracy which has attached itself to the working class. The bureaucrats will not give up power voluntarily. There is no appealing to their patriotism, to their reasonableness, or their sense of fair play. The only choice working people have, if they want to bring about a democracy in which *they* will make the decisions and in which *they* will be able to enjoy a few of life's luxuries, is precisely the course which Walesa hopes to avoid: revolution. The bureaucracy must be overthrown, by any means necessary, by a working class which, in seizing control of the state, maintains state control of the economy. In reality this would be a great extension of democracy beyond the limited popular suffrage which workers have won in the advanced capitalist countries. It is commonly explained as a *political revolution*: a revolution which overturns the bureaucracy but which does not overturn the socialized economic foundation on which the bureaucracy has imposed itself.

Solidarity has a proud history of mobilizing the Polish people to fight for their rights. No one can deny Lech Walesa's important contribution as a working class leader. However, today Solidarity is at a turning point in its history. The democratic movement faces a far more sophisticated and able adversary than it did thirty years ago, and the slogans of the past will not work. A well-organized leadership, based on the program of working class political revolution, can make the difference between the workers successfully meeting the challenges which face them or being condemned to continue the cycle of valiant uprisings and dashed hopes. ■

May 22, 1988

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT Manuel Noriega and the CIA Connection

by June Martin

"Always kill a man before throwing him out of a helicopter." That was the important lesson Manuel Antonio Noriega said he learned after he and other U.S.-trained military goons threw a priest—Hector Gallego—alive from a helicopter in 1971. The fall didn't kill Gallego immediately. It is now reported that he "clung to life for a few days."

The life of Father Gallego and the basic details that were known about his death were described in a book by Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People*. It is an account of the struggles and repression of Latin American church and lay people who subscribed to liberation theology in the 1960s and '70s.

What the Panamanian Bourgeoisie Feared

Hector was a young Colombian priest with a deep concern over social injustice. He had gone to Panama in 1967 because he wanted to work with one of the socially active Central American archbishops, Marcos McGrath, in Veraguas province. McGrath had been doing important work helping some of the 10,000 impoverished and dispersed peasants there organize work and consumer cooperatives to lessen their dependence on the landlords and merchants of the region, which left the peasants in perennial poverty and debt peonage.

Lernoux says that the life of the peasants had changed little since the eighteenth century: no schools, no medical care, no electricity or running water; little to eat; an income of less than five dollars per month. Those peasants who were lucky enough to have a tiny plot of land to produce a marketable crop were forced to sell it at depressed prices to the 600 inhabitants of the only town in the area, Santa Fe, a miserable place which survived primarily by buying the peasants' wares cheaply and selling them goods at inflated prices. The peasants were able to get only seasonal jobs harvesting crops on the large, often distant, estates. During the six-month-long annual rainy season, the only dirt road that connected Santa Fe to the provincial capital turned to mud, making the outside world virtually inaccessible.

When he arrived in the region, Hector first tried to convince the residents of Santa Fe to fight for an all-weather road to the country's main urban areas. This could help the region break out of its isolation. But the villagers—headed by the local landlords, the agents of absentee landlords, and the merchants who managed to do well enough by exploiting the peasants—opposed this idea. They

had a school, access to medical care, some electricity; anyway, they said, the peasants were too stupid, filthy, and immoral to take advantage of opportunities; best to leave things the way they were.

Hector then went to the peasants. After two years of "grueling work, tramping through the jungles and mountains . . . a nucleus of thirty Christian communities" was in place "with sixty 'responsibles,' the term Gallego invented to describe the lay leaders." The entire effort encouraged emphasis on "communal responsibility" and critical thinking about a situation. With the diocese offering training in management to high-school-aged youth, the movement gained considerable strength.

By 1969, there was a "federation of cooperatives . . . that acquired legal title and . . . set up stores to buy and sell its goods, first in the provincial capital at Santiago and then in the principal towns, including Santa Fe." By the fourth year, the Santiago store had sales of \$500,000, which had allowed the peasants to make communal purchases of needed seeds, fertilizers, and equipment.

"From humble, passive peasants, with heads bowed and straw hats in hand, they had developed into upright persons speaking independently and fairly about religion, their families, and their attempts to improve their situation. . . ." Lernoux says, "Suddenly, the myths were being destroyed."

The local elites were enraged. On several occasions the peasants were attacked by locals. Hector's tiny shack was burned to the ground, and he barely escaped alive. Numerous forms of harassment occurred as the local elites tried to frighten the peasants away from the projects. But the peasants were no longer docile. And with the help of Archbishop McGrath, Hector, and other church people, the peasants were able to organize and resist the threats. The local powers were forced to back down.

"On the night of June 9, 1971, two armed men in National Guard uniforms appeared at the hut where Gallego was sleeping and demanded that he come outside. . . . Gallego was reluctant to do so, but he was also worried about the safety of the hut's two other occupants, and eventually he stepped out to speak to the men. He was instantly knocked to the ground and thrown into a waiting Jeep, in which the two men drove off."

The entire peasant population mobilized to find Hector. They appealed to General Omar Torrijos Herrera, the strongman head of state in Panama

City, in a search that continued a full year, but to no avail. There were, however, unconfirmed reports that Hector had been thrown from a helicopter.

The U.S. Connection

"Why Democrats Can't Make an Issue of Noriega" was the headline of the May 4, 1988, *New York Times* Op-Ed article by Seymour M. Hersh, breaking the news of Noriega's role in Hector's kidnapping and murder. It appears that as the U.S. government finds itself thwarted in its current efforts to get Noriega to remove himself from power, some important people are beginning to expose still further crimes in which he was involved. The problem for the U.S. government is that the more Noriega's dirty deeds are exposed, the deeper the U.S. government itself is implicated in the same crimes.

Hersh, who unearthed the story while researching a book on the Iran-contra affair, reports that General Noriega "was known by United States intelligence to have been directly involved in the brutal and controversial slaying on January 9, 1971, of Rev. Hector Gallego. . . . Father Gallego's activities [in helping the peasants organize the cooperatives] cut into the profits of a close Torrijos relative who ran a large store nearby."

"There were repeated and widespread reports in subsequent years—never publicly confirmed, until now—that the popular priest had been thrown alive from the helicopter, and clung to life for a few days more," Hersh reports.

"One American official, who reviewed all the intelligence about Panama before the 1978 debate on the Panama Canal treaties, said that General Noriega's presence on the helicopter was confirmed by a member of the Panamanian military who participated in the murder and later told American agents about it."

So, it is not just Noriega who is implicated, but also General Omar Torrijos Herrera, then head of Panama. Noriega was his head of intelligence. And that's not the end of the story either. According to Hersh, during that period (the late 1960s and early '70s) "the American intelligence community literally had Panama wired."

Hersh does not go into the fact that since Panama was created through U.S. military and political intervention in 1903 it has been under U.S. control. Why the U.S. military "had Panama wired" is unclear since nothing much that took place in the Panamanian military, trained and assisted as it was by the United States, was not at the behest of U.S. interests. General Torrijos had been placed in power because the U.S. government felt he could do the job that needed to be done: destroy the independent mass organization leaders, contain popular unrest through piecemeal reforms, and direct popular anti-U.S. sentiment into support for a Panama Canal treaty that served U.S. interests.

The canal treaty that was passed in 1978 guarantees U.S. control until the 21st century. It now appears that as part of the deal the U.S. government intelligence agencies agreed to cut the Pana-

manian military apparatus into its lucrative international narcotics and arms trade. In return, the Panamanian military protected U.S. interests and sought to guarantee the status quo: docile trade unions, superprofits for U.S. corporate interests, and a continuing large U.S. military presence in the Canal Zone. Inside Panama, the military defended the large estates from land seizures by poor peasants and guaranteed the maintenance of an impoverished, dispossessed pool of urban and rural workers.

Hersh points out that this has been a bipartisan policy: the Nixon, Carter, and Reagan administrations were well aware, even counted on the fact, that the Panamanian military was deeply involved in drug and arms traffic. But it is not simply that all these administrations "knew" about what was going on and kept quiet about it because the Panamanian military was serving U.S. interests. The fact is that the U.S. government was training, supplying, and financing the Panamanian military during this time. In 1971, Hersh reports, "the U.S. Army, which operated a large communication intercept site in Panama, quickly learned much of the story [of Hector's murder]. General Noriega was overheard joking and bragging about the incident to a colleague, saying that he learned an important lesson" from the incident (the one quoted in the opening lines of this article).

Noriega, it is now reported, was on the CIA payroll at least since George Bush was head of the CIA under the Ford administration in 1976-77. However, even if Noriega was not on the CIA payroll in 1971, he was surely paid by U.S. funds which are essential to the functioning of the Panamanian National Guard, its training, and its maintenance.

"United States intelligence routinely eavesdropped on the most intimate telephone conversations between strongman Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, and his close aides, including General Noriega, who was then Panama's intelligence chief," Hersh continues. After the Panama Canal Treaty was ratified, the U.S. government agreed to cease such widespread surveillance if the Panamanians would "in return report on its ally, Cuba, through General Noriega. Similar agreements not to collect internal intelligence were struck by the Central Intelligence Agency with Israel and the Shah of Iran," Hersh reports. These had also proven to be reliable allies as far as U.S. corporate interests were concerned.

Clashing of Interests

What is happening today, with the Reagan administration's efforts to oust Noriega from power, demonstrates the complex dynamic by which Washington actually dominates its client states. This domination is not direct, as it was in the old colonial empires, but indirect. It takes myriad economic, political, and military forms. The objective of U.S. policy is to find those elements in the native ruling classes whose interests most closely align with those of the imperialists, pro-

mote them, and support them. This is usually sufficient, since rarely do independent tendencies arise which are strong enough to threaten a cozy relationship given Washington's overwhelming economic and military dominance.

Occasionally, however, things don't quite work according to plan. The interests of the native ruling classes, even when they are being subordinated to those of U.S. imperialism, are by no means identical to them. Both Noriega and his predecessor, Torrijos, have tried to express a little independence, to defend their own nationalist bourgeois policies as opposed to strictly following the U.S. State Department's dictates.

This creates problems. The economic sanctions levied against Panama by the Reagan administration represent an effort to discipline its disciple, to bring Noriega into line, to either impose a more docile policy on the Panamanian government or a more docile government on Panama. All of this is, of course, justified by rhetoric about illegal drugs and lack of democracy in Panama. But U.S. government agencies were involved in drug dealing long before Noriega was. Nor does Washington promote democracy in Central America. It has gone to great lengths over the past 100 years to guarantee that democracy does not get a foothold there, because democracy is incompatible with continued U.S. corporate domination of the region.

The real victims of the recent economic pressures imposed by the U.S. are not Noriega and his military cronies. It is the poor and working people of Panama who are suffering, many of whom already live a marginal existence. While these recent U.S. measures are particularly blatant displays of U.S. corporate and military arrogance, they are not qualitatively different from U.S. relations toward the Panamanian people over the past eighty-five years.

"One cabinet-level Reagan administration official," Hersh reports, "acknowledging that the drug activities of General Noriega were widely known told me years ago: 'Nobody's going to touch Noriega, and he knows it, because of the intelligence he provides and his capacity to affect events in Central America. He lets us do what we want down there and we need it.'"

The hard reality is that when Noriega kidnapped Gallego and threw him from the helicopter, he was not simply acting for Torrijos and his friend. He was undoubtedly following orders from even higher places. As head of Panamanian intelligence, he was simply doing his job. The CIA and the U.S. military set up the School of the Americas in the Panama Zone and other similar facilities to train Latin American military and police officers in "counterinsurgency" techniques, that is, how to control and suppress the struggles of their own

people. U.S. advisors teach local military personnel how to "contain" worker and peasant organizing which is labeled "communist," as Hector Gallego's was. The local elites tried to convince the illiterate peasants that "the New Testament was a communist book that Padre Gallego had brought from Colombia." Following the Cuban revolution, starting with the Alliance for Progress funds, this has been the source of the suppression and murder of hundreds of thousands of worker and peasant organizers and cadre throughout Latin America. Hector's death is a product of this policy.

Changing Times

The difficulty which Washington is experiencing in its efforts to oust Noriega shows how much its domination of international politics has slipped since U.S. troops were defeated by the liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people. In the past it would simply have been sufficient for the president of the United States to sneeze in order to induce an epidemic of pneumonia in Panama City. Today Noriega defies Washington with impunity.

All opponents of imperialism should also oppose Washington's policy of sanctions against Panama. An ouster of Noriega by Washington won't serve the interests of the Panamanian people. But we should not, in the process, harbor any illusions in the Panamanian dictator himself—as if he were some resolute and determined fighter against imperialism. Noriega is a petty thief (petty by international standards) standing up against the representatives of organized international thievery. What the Panamanian people need is to boot out the thieves altogether, and install a government that will expropriate their ill-begotten wealth and turn it over to the vast majority of Panama's working people.

Until the working class and the poor peasants of Panama organize to throw out all the landlords and capitalists and their goons, U.S. and Panamanian, the way the poor and working people of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua are trying to do, they will continue to be victims of the low-lives like Noriega, the only sort who will collaborate with the U.S. in carrying out its contemptible antisocial policies.

General Noriega's U.S. sponsors may actually be doing him a favor in seeking to get him extradited to the U.S. to stand trial on drug charges. It could save him from facing murder charges in Panama for his role in Hector's death. In fact, the more just scenario would be for the Veraguas peasants to seek the extradition of Richard Helms, who was CIA head in 1971, to stand trial alongside Noriega for overseeing the entire operation. ■

PAN-CANADIAN TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION FORMED

by Keith Mann

A big step forward for the Fourth Internationalist movement in the pan-Canadian state took place in Montreal over the May 20-22 weekend when two sympathizing groups of the Fourth International—one based in Quebec (Gauche Socialiste) and the other in English Canada (the Alliance for Socialist Action)—fused into a single, pan-Canadian, revolutionary organization. Their unification was the fruit of a long period of common work and serious political discussion that took up many of the complex issues facing revolutionaries in the pan-Canadian state today. The new organization will be called Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste.

The Montreal conference took place in the context of a noticeable intensification of the class struggle throughout the Canadian state. Earlier this year an historic victory for women's rights was won when the Supreme Court, under tremendous social pressure that included mass actions and the involvement of the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), declared the reactionary Canadian abortion law of 1969 unconstitutional. The struggle of post-al workers, who won a modest victory last year against government attacks, has shown no signs of abating. Opposition to the proposed U.S.-Canadian trade bill that would remove trade restrictions between the two countries—an essentially large-scale North American protectionist scheme—poses a sharp challenge to fighters for independent working class action, especially since part of both the Canadian and U.S. ruling classes oppose the measure for their own narrow reasons.

The so-called Meech Lake Accord (see "The Drowning at Meech Lake," by Barry Weisleder, *Bulletin IDOM* No. 46) represents an effort by the present Canadian government to use the constitution as part of the Canadian bosses' economic and political offensive. Among other things it is one more blow against Quebecois national rights, though it attempts to cover up this fact through the empty formula of Quebec as a "distinct society."

In the last few months there has also been a resurgence of Quebecois nationalism. Members of both parts of the new fused organization have been active in these and many other struggles.

Canada is a country with a strong labor movement, one that has actually grown by 2.2 million members since 1981 in spite of the class-collaborationist policies of its official leadership. A full 55 percent of the workforce is unionized (as compared to only 17 percent in the United States). This augurs well for the ability of workers throughout the Pan-Canadian state to stand up to the attack of the bosses.

The Quebecois Struggle

One of the fundamental features of the class struggle in the Pan-Canadian state is the question of national liberation for the historically oppressed French-speaking, and overwhelmingly working class, population that comprises the majority of the six million people living in Quebec. It was not until the 1960s, however, that revolutionary socialists began to develop a proper appreciation for the national question in Canada. Among the complicated reasons for the failure to do so up until that time were the misleadership provided by the Stalinists and Social Democrats and the hegemony of reactionary clerical influence in the Quebecois nationalist movement.

The emergence of a militant Quebecois working class in the 1960s opened the way for Trotskyists to fully appreciate and explain the revolutionary potential of this struggle for national liberation, along with its dialectical relationship to the workers' movement and the struggle for socialism. The resolutions of the GS-ASA fusion conference dealt extensively with this problem, and also included a serious effort to understand and explain the struggles of indigenous Indian and other oppressed nationalities in Canada.

In many areas of political activity there are big differences between Quebec and English Canada. For example, the New Democratic Party—a party based on the Canadian trade union movement—is a mass organization throughout English-speaking Canada, while its Quebecois counterpart, the Nouveau Parti Democratique, is much smaller and enjoys much less influence. This is in large part due to the failure of the NDP, as a national organization, to support and defend the independence of Quebec. It means that within Quebec politics are dominated much more strongly by bourgeois organizations, and gives quite a different character to the problem of forging a militant, independent leadership for struggles as they erupt.

The question of building a pan-Canadian revolutionary organization, as opposed to separate groups in Quebec and English Canada which could establish mutual collaboration, was a key component of the discussions at the Montreal conference. Experiences with previous pan-Canadian revolutionary organizations have proven problematic, at best, so the different views on this reflect important issues that need to be thoroughly thought through. An overwhelming majority of the delegates voted to undertake the fusion project.

Overcoming the Language Barrier

The uneven tempo of the class struggle across the Pan-Canadian state and linguistic differences are naturally reflected within the new binational organization. As many of both the Anglophone and Francophone comrades are not bilingual, the entire conference proceedings were simultaneously translated with electronic equipment. The conference voted to maintain two public organs—one in each language. As some struggles in each nation have a particularly regional character to them, the two newspapers will not, for the most part, consist of the same articles simply translated into the other language. They will, of course, present a common political line.

An 18-member united Central Committee was established consisting of 11 Quebecois and 7 Anglophone comrades. The composition of this body was consciously chosen to include as many women, youth, and representatives of each city and region as possible.

The new organization established three broad political campaigns for the Pan-Canadian state as a whole: 1) opposition to any new anti-abortion laws, and for free access to abortion on demand; 2) the fight—oriented particularly toward the unions—to build a united, militant, and democratic movement

against U.S. intervention in Central America and to end Canadian complicity with U.S. policies in the region; 3) for an NDP government in Ottawa that will satisfy the demands of the workers. Questions of trade union, women's liberation, anti-intervention, and youth work were taken up in greater detail in workshops devoted to these areas. Three young militants from Montreal—all under 20—asked to join the new organization at the conference.

Celebration of the FI's 50th Anniversary

One of the highlights of the weekend was a public meeting to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. The theme of the rally, which was attended by 135 people, was "Socialism, an International Struggle." Speakers included: representatives of both the Anglophone and Francophone wings of the new organization; one of several observers at the conference from the United States (see text below); a leader of the Mexican section of the Fourth International, who outlined the work of Trotskyists in that country including the presidential election campaign of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra; and Livio Maitan of the United Secretariat of the FI, who gave a wide-ranging speech explaining the necessity of continuing to build the Fourth International in the world today. ■

50 YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR TROTSKYISM IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

by Keith Mann

It is an honor for me to address you this evening. I am not the only representative present of U.S. organizations which are fraternally affiliated to the Fourth International. There are also comrades from Socialist Action and Solidarity—an organization which contains a component in solidarity with the FI. Unfortunately, it isn't possible for all of us to speak, and I have had the good fortune of being chosen to do so.

This evening we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Fourth International. When I joined the Young Socialist Alliance in the U.S., one of the first things I learned was the story of how the Trotskyist movement was born in our two countries.

In 1928, at the sixth congress of the Communist International in Moscow, Maurice Spector of the Canadian Communist Party and James P. Cannon of the U.S. CP became convinced by Trotsky's critique of the bureaucratic policies of Stalin. On the spot, they made a pact to struggle for the politics of the Left Opposition in their respective organizations.

This is the text of remarks presented by Keith Mann, who represented the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, to the May 21 Montreal rally in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Fourth International.

From that moment our two movements have worked together—in the fight for the Left Opposition, in the movement for the Fourth International, and then in the Fourth International itself. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the Trotskyists were a small and persecuted minority within the workers' movement. We had to have great courage and confidence in our ideas, against the power of bourgeois reaction and of Stalinism. Those efforts brought about the growth of our forces throughout the 1930s, to the point where, in 1938, we were able to found a new international after the definitive Stalinist degeneration of the old.

The birth of the Fourth International is extremely important for us today, when the Trotskyist forces in Canada and the U.S. are once again small and persecuted—though this is certainly less true than it was in the 1930s. Our 50th anniversary takes place in the context of mounting struggles in places like Poland, Palestine, Central America, Western Europe—that is, in all three sectors of the world revolution.

At the same time, the ranks of the Fourth International are growing in many countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, and in Europe. We are sure that our movement in Canada and the United States is also going to grow if we continue our activity to

advance the workers' and social movements under the banner of the Fourth International.

The objective situation of the class struggle in the United States clearly demonstrates the need for revolutionary Marxist leadership. The general situation is marked by an offensive on the part of the ruling class, and by the class collaborationist policies of the misleadership of the trade union movement. These bureaucrats continue to impose a policy of concessions on the workers' movement—despite a drop in unemployment below 6 percent, according to official statistics.

The bourgeoisie is seeing its profits grow, while the real wages of workers are shrinking. More and more, single mothers are forced to take the worst, lowest-paying jobs. The material situation of Blacks, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities is presently worse than it was before. Large cities in the U.S. are filled with homeless people, including women, children, and even whole families. The government gives practically nothing to ameliorate the situation of those struck with AIDS, or to contribute to the effort to find a cure.

At the same time there are changes which can be seen on the American political scene. Bourgeois observers of the Jesse Jackson campaign have been shocked by the positive response he has received—not only in the Black community, but also among workers, especially those affected by plant closings. This shows that the so-called rightward drift of politics in the U.S. is a myth.

Jackson raises many of the problems faced by the oppressed in the U.S., but he doesn't offer a real solution. His campaign serves objectively to attract them into the Democratic Party, which is a capitalist party. There is no U.S. party which represents the independent activity of the working class, as there is in Canada.

Most people in the U.S. oppose Washington's policy of intervention in Central America. When he became president eight years ago, Reagan vowed that he would not leave office with the FSLN still in power in Nicaragua. He has not succeeded in carrying out that pledge. There was a major split in

the ruling class. One wing had no confidence in the contras and also feared an explosion of opposition in the U.S., such as occurred during the war in Vietnam.

The popular opposition to imperialist policy in Central America has been expressed by the participation of hundreds of thousands in mass demonstrations, but these actions have been marked by a lack of continuity and an absence of a consistent policy on the part of movement leaders to form united fronts around the basic issue of self-determination for Central America.

Despite the current cease-fire, Washington has not ended its opposition to the Nicaraguan revolution, nor to the liberation struggle in El Salvador. The Central American revolution still needs international solidarity.

Although it is not yet generalized, one can see the beginnings of militancy in some sectors of the U.S. working class. What exists today are the objective conditions for an explosion like that which took place during the 1930s. This situation gives us great confidence for the growth of the Fourth Internationalist movement. In fact, all of the three organizations represented here have experienced growth. In addition, we have the perspective of working on common projects whenever that is possible. Last March 19, for example, a meeting was held in New York to demand the rehabilitation of all the victims of the Moscow trials during the 1930s. More than two hundred people attended. Among the speakers was Esteban Volkov—the grandson of Leon Trotsky.

In the U.S. we will also be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the FI—in August in San Francisco and in October in New York. We hope that our comrades from Canada will be able to attend, and we invite you all. We believe that it is necessary to establish the closest possible collaboration between the working classes and the oppressed of Quebec, English Canada, and the United States.

Thank you.

Long Live the Fourth International! ■

SOVIET PRESS DENOUNCES ANDREI VYSHINSKY: PROSECUTOR IN THE MOSCOW TRIALS

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The state prosecutor in all three Moscow trials—August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938—Andrei Vyshinsky was strongly denounced as a "monster and thug" in a full-page article in the January 27 issue of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, organ of the Writers Union. Since Vyshinsky's ignominious role was such a critical component in the trials, this public denunciation of his methods and behavior is tantamount to an exoneration of the trials victims.

At the trials 54 persons, including prominent figures in the Bolshevik Party leadership during the Russian Revolution and in the revolution's history, who had devoted their lives to the revolution, recited forced confessions of espionage, wrecking, conspiring to poison masses of workers, assassinate government figures, and working in league with fascism and imperialism to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. On the basis of their confessions alone, with no other evidence presented, they were all convicted and shot.¹ They included Zinoviev, Kamenev, Pyatakov, Radek, Bukharin, and Rakovsky. The chief defendants in absentia in all three trials, Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov, were subsequently assassinated by Stalin's agents.

Vyshinsky, as the state prosecutor, not only provided the leading questions to set the stage for the trial victims to recite their phony confessions, but zealously used the confessions, with all their bizarre details and unlikely subplots, to whip up hatred for the defendants and to justify his ringing calls for their execution.

The *Literaturnaya Gazeta* article, signed by Arkady Vaksberg, had apparently been submitted some time ago. The French daily *Le Monde* had reported a few days prior to its publication that the article had been suppressed:

"During a discussion evening devoted to problems of history that took place January 7 at the A.A. Fadeev House of Writers in Moscow, Soviet dramatist Shatrov declared that an article about the general prosecutor at the Stalinist trials 1936-38, Andrei Vyshinsky, which was supposed to appear in the next issue of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has been suppressed by the official censor.

"I am very upset over the fate of perestroika," Mikhail Shatrov declared, waving Arkady Vaksberg's article before the several hundred people, mostly intellectuals, who were present."

The editors of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* responded in their preface to the article: "The meeting . . . actually took place, but what was motivating the secretary of the board of the USSR Writers Union M. Shatrov, who was 'waving' an article still not

ready for publication?! He only needed to make one phone call and he would have learned that the usual editorial work was under way on the article, to define more exactly and verify the facts it contained. . . . Now this work has been completed and the article is offered here for the readers' attention."

Mikhail Shatrov, whose plays *The Brest Peace*, and *Onward . . . Onward . . . Onward!* have gone much further toward "filling in the gaps in Soviet history" than has the work of most other artists and scholars under glasnost, is widely known and respected for his bold efforts. It could be that his publicizing the article's existence in the way that he did pressured the "censors" into releasing it for publication.

In any event, the writing and publication of this assessment of Vyshinsky is a sign of the deep pressure coming from sections of the working class and intelligentsia on the reform-minded bureaucrats to put some substance into the campaign for glasnost or "openness." While the article is cautious in the way it deals with the Moscow trials and is not specific as to their details, the travesty of justice that they represented and the victimization of the defendants are unmistakably established.

The article contains some important material. First, there are delicate references to the bureaucracy's falsification of history: "Those today, who would want to learn the biography of this man [Vyshinsky] whose name terrorized an entire country, would have to work pretty hard, accumulating a mosaic of information from the data contained in reference books, encyclopedias, and dictionaries, which has all been carefully selected . . . illuminating some parts of history and some facts, while darkening others. However, taken together . . . they allow us to see the strange zigzags of the career of a servile grey blob who was raised to such heights as enabled him to use his power to trample down and manipulate the fate of millions."

Vaksberg notes that while the 1951 edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* informs the reader that Vyshinsky "actively participated in the revolutionary movement since 1902," which is not completely false, "one needs to look at an edition of the same encyclopedia twenty-two years previously" to learn that he was "a Menshevik who joined the Bolshevik Party only after the revolution had firmly brought the Bolshevik Party to power."

He also learned that Vyshinsky, having finished his juridical training in Kiev, worked in Moscow as a barrister's assistant in 1915, prior to

the revolution. After February 1917, when the tsar was ousted, he "cropped up as a modest, but notable figure in the new administration [of the Provisional Government]. . . . One [directive] he carried out with particular zeal: as chairman of the first Yakimansky regional board, Vyshinsky signed the order for the strict enforcement in the territory entrusted to him of the high-priority government order—to find, arrest, and turn over to the courts the German spy Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin)."

One might try to absolve Vyshinsky of blame for this, Vaksberg says, by claiming that he was "only doing his job."

"But this was not a simple official," he goes on. "He was a Social Democrat, who considered himself a revolutionary; a man who knew very well that the order concerned the leader of a political party, a person recognized by all as a leader of the proletariat. Imagine what would have happened if October had not occurred. What kind of career would this zealous servant from the Yakimansky board have made for himself?"

"By a tragic turn of history, it was precisely he, only twenty years later as the country's prosecutor, who accused Lenin's closest collaborators of having planned (they, not he!) to assassinate Ilyich. For them, Vyshinsky demanded the death sentence. He was again the zealous servant and again played his role with ardor and passion."

Vaksberg postulates that Vyshinsky's Menshevik past was a "constant bleeding thorn in his side" and that to atone for this Vyshinsky took the most "vile and decadent course"; a renegade to his own cause, he sought to prove his loyalty to his new master by desecrating those who had remained true to their ideas. He was pushed to the summits of power by Stalin, who gradually unleashed in Vyshinsky the capacity to do "anything, absolutely anything" he was ordered to do.

A former law student, Vaksberg recently reread Vyshinsky's statements at the three trials, which as a youth he had considered "a source of legal wisdom and a model of juridical eloquence." "Now, having reread them and for several evenings running having immersed" himself in "the oppressive atmosphere of those years," he found them to be "outright political banditism combined with the seductive appeal of well-worn judicial formulas; bombastic phraseology, and wrenching pathos, with the subtleness of legal analysis and an indubitable ability to make his way in a labyrinth of contradictory and disjointed facts." Vaksberg says that those who link Vyshinsky only with the crimes of "the period of the cult" will be surprised at what one can learn from the "literary heritage"—that is, the historical record—of this "monster and thug." "The 'political trials' of the 1930s came after many years as an enlightened jurist in cases of another kind."

Vaksberg then traces Vyshinsky's career, commenting on the significance of each rung of his "upward mobility."

In 1919-20 he was head of the distribution board of the People's Commissariat of Food in the Russian region. In 1921 he was prosecutor on the

criminal collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, where he prosecuted numerous criminals at whom he inevitably threw the charges of "agent," "spy," "saboteur." In a way, Vaksberg argues, this prefigured his subsequent trial tactics.

Vyshinsky was made rector of Moscow State University, "having written not one scholarly line," although he was suddenly heralded as "a prominent scholar." While in that post he wrote *A Course on Criminal Proceedings*, a thick volume. The "revolutionary" scholastics of it, according to Vaksberg's testimony, would make your "head spin" today. He notes one passage as deserving particular attention: "It would be a big mistake to see the fundamental role of the prosecutor as one of working to back up the accusations. The main task of a prosecutor is to be the vehicle and guardian of legality."

"Already, by the end of the 1920s, huge judicial spectacles began to be staged that were to reach their culmination ten years later. And from the very beginning, their director was none other than Vyshinsky." Vaksberg mentions particularly the Shakhtinsky case, for which Stalin revived a long-discredited illegal review procedure to examine and judge in secret, the Special Judicial Session. Vyshinsky was appointed to head it.²

In 1928, Vyshinsky was appointed to the collegium of the People's Commissariat of Education. Vaksberg raises the following question in this regard: How many unknown victims were purged by him from that period alone? How many talented people were lost to society and how many of those without talent were promoted?

In 1931, Vyshinsky was made prosecutor of the Russian Republic and in 1935, as the large-scale purges, show trials, and executions were being prepared, he was appointed to the post of prosecutor of the USSR.

At this point Vaksberg makes an aside to show a part of Vyshinsky's reputation that is "now well forgotten. Three months before the beginning of the first of the three famous 'Moscow trials,' which in history is known as the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev, the attention of the country was drawn to a case" in which Vyshinsky prosecuted some apparently horrible murderers. His success, and the popular reputation whipped up around his vigorous prosecution, helped boost his credibility when the August show trial opened.

Vaksberg now comes to a discussion of Vyshinsky's role in the Moscow trials.

"As is well known, this and other cases are now being examined by a commission created by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The charges of espionage, of course, will fall away, but the political platform of each person whose cases will be examined will have to be analyzed attentively. We will await the objective assessment of the commission. It will apply to the judicial proceedings and to each of its participants. But there is one detail that hits you in the face when, in trying to control your rage, you read the stenographic records of the trials, and particularly the

prosecutor's speeches: There was no proof of any kind to support the charges. Instead of proof, there was calumny."

The article then gives some examples of Vyshinsky's style, calling the leading figures of the revolution "scum," "stinking carrion," "dung," "filthy dogs," "vermin," etc.; calling Bukharin "half-fox, half-pig"; insulting and humiliating the defendants. "To insult and humiliate, not simply to physically annihilate, those who had been beaten down—such was the desired dream of the 'top director.'" (This could be a reference to Vyshinsky, or it could refer to Stalin. Vaksberg is careful throughout the article to avoid focusing attention on Stalin by name.)

"To realize this 'desired dream,' Vyshinsky created a type of criminal trial heretofore unknown, where there is not the least need for proof. What kind of proof could be necessary when you are talking about 'stinking carrion' and 'filthy dogs.' . . . It is curious that after having cursed and bullied people who were in no position to respond, having presented not a shred of evidence, Vyshinsky triumphantly concluded: 'So strong is the evidence, so convincing the proof!' Indeed!"

Vaksberg notes that the general political atmosphere of the time provides the backdrop against which these events can be understood:

"For the sake of justice, it must be said that abusive language in place of arguments was first heard not in the courtroom but in the press. It was there—before the trial and instead of it—that the psychological fine-tuning of public opinion was begun, to make it sound the note that the conductor had commanded. Future victims competed with one another in castigations and vulgar swearing, heaping mud on their comrades who were preceding them on the executioner's block. Vyshinsky, with cynicism and virtuosity, used this in subsequent trials to his own advantage. He abused Radek, who in the press had called Zinoviev and Kamenev 'a band of bloody murderers,' and Pyatakov, who publicly called for them to be 'exterminated like vermin,' and who five months later ended up himself in the role of 'vermin' and 'bandit.'"

Vaksberg finally explains that he is calling attention to these events in order to help contemporaries learn "the source of these deformations which we are trying to eliminate today." Vyshinsky's method, that the defendant's confession is the best and only evidence of guilt a prosecutor need present, reigned supreme in Soviet jurisprudence "from the 1930s until the 1950s and thousands of legal figures in the USSR today were educated in 'the Vyshinsky school of jurisprudence.'" And the influence continues to reign today, as the article points out.

The charges in the press prior to a trial, the personal attacks, the humiliation instead of proof, guilt by association, refusal to listen to the defendant's side of the story, declaring any questioning of trial procedure to be "slander of the Soviet state"—all this is part of Vyshinsky's legacy. It was Vyshinsky's book, *Theories of Judi-*

cial Proof in Soviet Law, that legitimized the idea that such concepts as "rights of the accused," "innocent until proven guilty," were "bourgeois," and should be replaced with the method that the defendant's confession was "the most important, decisive proof."

The Moscow trials were the consummate example of this method.

Just days after Vaksberg's analysis appeared, on February 5 of this year, the "Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Additional Study of Materials Connected with the Repression of the 1930-40 period and beginning of the 1950s" announced that ten of the defendants convicted in the March 1938 trial of the "so-called anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist Bloc" were declared not guilty of the charges of "conspiring, upon instruction of foreign governments hostile to the USSR, to overthrow the socialist social and political order in the USSR, conducting sabotage, wrecking, terrorist and other activities."

The commission found that the preliminary investigation of the defendants was in "crude violation of Soviet legality, falsified reality, and obtained confessions by impermissible methods." The convictions by the military collegium of 1938 were abrogated and "the cases closed . . . due to the absence in [the defendants'] behavior of the components of a crime." With the juridical "rehabilitation" of these ten—including Bukharin and Rakovsky—the number of defendants in the third Moscow trial who have been absolved of guilt is 20 out of 21.³ One of the victims of the second trial, N.I. Muralov, was similarly "rehabilitated" in July 1987.

Vaksberg cites Rakovsky's case as an example of one in which the charges were totally unfounded:

"One of the defendants in the third 'Moscow trial,' Christian Rakovsky, whose name is part of the history of the revolutionary movement of Russia and the Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania, was the son of a landowner. All the money that he received in his inheritance he turned over to the party's needs. He financed the Social Democratic Party of Romania and its newspaper, of which he himself was the editor. A significant share of his money went to aid revolutionaries oppressed by the tsar, including the sailors of the battleship 'Potemkin,' . . . Rakovsky tried to explain this in court but Vyshinsky would not let him utter a word. With abusive questions, he went after only one thing: Rakovsky's confession that he had 'hostile class origins' and 'a noxious bourgeois morality.'"

The usual official formula used since the 1950s has been that Vyshinsky's "theoretical mistakes(!) in practice led to violations of legality. Can that be the way it was?" Vaksberg asks. "Perhaps it was the other way around. It seems to me that the need for the 'violations' (I put the word in quotes since the conscious annihilation of innocent people cannot simply be considered a 'violation') caused a powerful foundation to be built to support them. Only such an erudite, thoughtful, scholarly individual like professor Vyshinsky could do the necessary job."

Vyshinsky's *Theories of Judicial Proof in Soviet Law*, awarded a Stalin Prize and deemed a classic work, has poisoned Soviet jurisprudence to this day. Vaksberg notes that following the Moscow trials, in 1939, Vyshinsky received a "rare then" Order of Lenin as recognition for his services rendered. Vyshinsky "left" the post of prosecutor and became deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; in 1950 he became minister of foreign affairs; and in 1952 the USSR's permanent representative to the United Nations. He died six months after Stalin, in 1953. His ashes are in the Kremlin.

Vaksberg's public denunciation of Vyshinsky and his methods are extremely important to the resurrection of history for the Soviet people. It is not, however, only historic truth that is at stake. If the repression by the bureaucratic counterrevolution headed by Stalin of the victims of those trials, and of the numerous other trials, is not officially recognized and condemned by Stalin's heirs today, if the multitude of criticisms by Stalin's opponents of the bureaucracy's economic and political policies in the 1920s and '30s isn't made into a legitimate subject for study and consideration, who today in the USSR will really feel free from the legacy of the terror that characterized those years? Many of the ideas of those who perished in the purges of that period are just as relevant today as they were then. Some, such as the writings of Leon Trotsky, provide the key to a Marxist understanding of the entire sequence of events, and point the way forward. It is these which the bureaucracy today will have difficulty revealing, but, it would appear, even more difficulty continuing to conceal.

"Now," Vaksberg says in the end, "at the present time, we need to protect ourselves from the extended influence of this monster to the cause of justice, to a genuine investigation and trial. It is impermissible that his long-clawed clutch, stealthily and on the sly, should shamelessly invade our today, and even more our tomorrow."

Of course, despite glasnost, the "long-clawed clutch" has never really left the scene in the sense that critics of bureaucratic policy have been flatly convicted and sentenced on charges of "anti-Soviet activity" throughout the 1950s, 1960s,

1970s, and into the 1980s, even if not nearly on the vast scale nor with the massive executions and death/labor camps of Stalin's time. Only the full revelation of the truth can leave the terror behind.

While a small, relatively isolated group of revolutionists in the world, led by Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, fought for the truth about the frame-up nature of the Moscow trials and Vyshinsky's role in them at the time they were taking place, it took over 50 years for a certain acknowledgment of this truth to appear in the Soviet press. The historic significance of this admission, part of the reform bureaucrats' glasnost campaign, emphasizes how important it is for today's revolutionary currents to call for still more opening of archives and historical libraries as part of the campaign to open up the political atmosphere in the USSR today.

Vaksberg's point, then, is well taken.

For the sake of justice and the people in the Soviet Union itself, this means stepped-up efforts to support the campaigns internationally to clear all the names of the accused in the Moscow trials, to rehabilitate all the victims of the repression, and to open up for the Soviet people to read the political discussions that have been banned for so many decades. ■

NOTES

1. All 16 defendants in the first Moscow trial of August 1936 were immediately shot. Of the 17 defendants in the second trial of January 1937, 13 were immediately shot and 4 received prison terms. Of the 21 defendants in the third trial, of March 1938, 18 were shot and 3 received terms of imprisonment. Those receiving terms of imprisonment are believed to have been shot shortly after their terms began.
2. The "Shakhtinsky case" or the "mine affair" was one of the first large-scale frame-up amalgams the bureaucracy organized, in early 1928. Its 53 defendants—managers, workers, and specialists of various types—were accused of organizing mine accidents and wrecking, as well as working with the White Guards, as the bureaucracy sought to make them scapegoats for its own mismanagement of the mining industry. Five of the defendants were shot. For details of this case and others that followed in its aftermath, see Roy Medvedev's *Let History Judge*, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 1972.
3. The only defendant from the third trial who has not been exonerated is Henry Yagoda. As head of Stalin's security police he had helped to supervise the organization of the first Moscow trial, among other repressive projects.

THE MEANING OF RAKOVSKY'S SURRENDER

by Leon Trotsky
(March 31, 1934)

Rakovsky's declaration making known his intention, in view of the acute sharpening of international reaction, to submerge his differences with the "party" and to submit completely to "discipline" came to many as a bolt from the blue. And no wonder! In the course of the years of his exile, the old fighter was transformed from a human figure into a symbol, not only for the International Left Opposition, but also for wide strata of the working class in general.

The average reader's reaction to Rakovsky's surrender is that it is a victory for the bureaucracy, or—if this stratum be given its personal pseudonym—a great victory for Stalin! True, Rakovsky did not declare his views false nor sing Byzantine paeans of praise to the bureaucratic leadership, but in any case by his declaration he acknowledged that in the struggle against international reaction cessation of the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy is necessary. If, from the purely individual point of view, his declaration contains nothing of the revolting and shameful self-abasement and self-degradation that have become now indispensable conditions for "Bolshevist" party loyalty, it appears at first glance all the more important from the political point of view.

It would, however, be absolutely false to dwell only on the immediate impressions and purely psychological effects of events. It is the bounden duty of every Marxist to appraise Rakovsky's case not as a case in itself but as a political symptom, that is, to bring it in relation with the deeper processes of development.

More than half a year ago, we wrote: "The extremely difficult conditions under which the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists work exclude them from the possibility of playing the leading role on the international scale. More than this, the Left Opposition group in the USSR can develop into a new party only as a result of the successful formation and growth of the new International. The revolu-

tionary center of gravity has shifted definitely to the West, where the immediate possibilities of building parties are immeasurably greater" ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State").

These lines were no chance remark but, rather, summed up the whole experience of the last decade. The Russian Left Opposition, which set itself the direct aim of reconstituting the Bolshevik Party and of shunting its policy back on the rails of the international revolution, succumbed in the struggle. One may suffer a defeat because one pursues a fundamentally false policy. But also with a correct policy one may fall victim to an unfavorable relation of forces. Engels repeatedly pointed out that a revolutionary party that suffers a decisive historic defeat is inevitably reduced to nought organizationally. At first glance it would seem that the fate of the Bolshevik Party, which, despite the defeat of 1905, twelve years later achieved the greatest revolutionary victory in world history, contradicts this. But, on closer scrutiny, this example only strengthens Engels's statement. As a mass organization, the Bolshevik Party disappeared from the scene during the years 1907-11. There remained only a few scattered, for the most part, vacillating cadres; there remained a tradition; there remained, above all, the emigrant staff with Lenin at the head. The rising tide of 1912-14 brought a new revolutionary generation to its feet, roused a part of the Old Bolsheviks out of their lethargy and thus created a *new* party organization, which was historically—but in no way organizationally—the continuator of the old Bolshevik Party. This example by no means exhausts the question with which we are concerned, but it offers certain points of support for its understanding.

The Left Opposition began with the struggle for the industrialization and agrarian collectivization of the Soviet Union. *This* fight it won in a certain sense, namely, in that, beginning with 1928, the whole policy of the Soviet government represents a bureaucratically distorted application of the principles of the Left Opposition. Without this the Soviet Union would not be in existence any longer. But the economic questions of the USSR formed only one part, and a subordinate one at that, of our program, whose center of gravity rested in the sphere of international revolution. And in this sphere we have during the last eleven years, together with the whole world proletariat, suffered nothing but defeats: in 1923 in Bulgaria and Germany; in 1924 in Estonia; 1925-27 in China; 1926 in England and Poland; 1928-32, the progressive bureaucratic degeneration of the Comintern; 1933, the Nazi victory in Germany; 1934, the Austrian catastrophe. In all these events and processes, the analyses and prognoses of the Left Opposi-

Earlier this year Christian Rakovsky, a leading member of the Left Opposition to Stalin in the 1930s, along with the other defendants in the third Moscow trial, was juridically rehabilitated by the Supreme Court of the USSR. His initial conviction, based solely on his own "confession," provides a good example of the kind of "justice" practiced by Andrei Vyshinsky (see preceding article). We reprint here an appreciation by Leon Trotsky of the pressures prevailing in the USSR at the time which created the conditions for the frame-up trials to take place. The specific occasion was Rakovsky's capitulation to Stalin's control over the Bolshevik Party. It appears in the Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1933-34, Pathfinder Press.

tion have been strikingly although, unfortunately, negatively confirmed. One may read carefully, for instance, the novels of the French writer Malraux¹ *Les conquérants* (*The Conquerors*) and *La condition humaine* (*Man's Fate*). Without fully realizing the political interrelations and consequences, the author presents here an annihilating indictment against the Comintern's policy in China and strengthens in a most striking manner through his images and figures all that the Left Opposition had already laid down in its theses and formulas before the events themselves. No one can dispute these invaluable theoretical triumphs of the Marxist method! Just so, in the year 1905 it was not the Marxist method but the Bolshevik Party that was defeated. Later, after a period of years, the methods proved victoriously correct. Right after the defeat, however, 99 percent of the cadres—including the members of the Central Committee—quit the party, turned into peaceful citizens, sometimes even into philistines.

It is not by chance that national reaction triumphed in the USSR on the basis of the social achievements of the proletarian revolution. The proletariat of the West and the oppressed peoples of the East exhibit nothing but defeats. Instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of fascism spreads. Irrespective of what the reasons for this may be, since the revolution itself proved inadequate, the idea of the international revolution was bound to suffer discredit. The Left Opposition, above all, as the representative of the principles of the international revolution, experienced a loss of confidence in the eyes of the toiling masses of the Soviet Union. This is the real reason for the growth of the autocratic rule of the bureaucratic apparatus in the Soviet Union and of its national-conservative degeneration.

Every Russian worker feels now too with his whole heart his solidarity with the proletariat of the rest of the world and hopes that it may be finally victorious, but the international revolution as a *practical factor* has gradually disappeared from the field of vision of the Russian masses. They pin their hopes on the economic successes of the Soviet Union; they discuss passionately the problems of food and shelter; they grow optimistic on the basis of a good crop—but what concerns the international working class movement has become the profession of Manuïlsky-Kuusinen-Lozovsky,² whom no one in the country takes seriously.

As to the spiritual makeup of the ruling upper crust of the Soviet Union, one example is highly illuminating—how Kirov³ expressed himself at the last party congress. "How beautiful it is to live now it is almost impossible to express." Kirov is no chance figure; he is a member of the Political Bureau and the political governor-general of Leningrad; he occupies that post within the party that Zinoviev held at the pinnacle of his influence. That Kirov rejoices over the technical successes and the mitigation of the food scarcity is quite understandable. There is not an honest worker in

the whole world who does not rejoice over this. The frightful part of it is that Kirov sees only these national partial successes but leaves out of sight the whole field of the international workers' movement. Military dictatorship rules in neighboring Poland, the worst reaction in all other neighboring states. Moscow is forced to preserve "friendship" with Mussolini, and the Italian proletariat remains, after twelve years of fascism, still completely powerless and dispersed. The Chinese Revolution was wrecked; Japan rules in Manchuria; the Soviet Union sees itself forced to deliver to Japan the Chinese Eastern Railroad,⁴ the most strategic instrument of the revolution in the East. In Germany the Nazis have scored a victory without a fight, and no bureaucratic cheat or trickster will dare any longer to pass this victory off for the "acceleration" of the proletarian revolution. In Austria the chained and bleeding proletariat lies prostrate on the ground. The Comintern is compromised beyond redemption; it has become a brake on the revolution. Despite its crimes, the Social Democracy becomes anew the strongest party of the working class and in all "democratic" countries prepares the way for fascist slavery. In France Thaelmann's⁵ policy is being carried on by Thorez.⁶ In Germany while the flower of the proletariat languishes in concentration camps and prisons, the Comintern bureaucracy seems to be conniving, almost consciously, with the Social Democracy to make the whole of Europe, yes, and the whole world, into one fascist concentration camp. And Kirov, a member of the leading body of the first workers' state in the world, admits that he lacks words to express the joy of living today. Can this be simple stupidity? No, the man is not stupid; moreover, he gives expression not only to his own feelings. His winged word is repeated and praised by the entire Soviet press. Speakers and listeners alike simply forget the whole world; they act, think, feel only Russian and, even in this frame, only bureaucratically.

The capitulation statements of Sosnovsky⁷ and Preobrazhensky⁸ reflect the same spirit. They close their eyes to the world proletariat. That alone makes it possible for them to reconcile themselves to the national perspectives of the Soviet bureaucracy. And if they seek reconciliation, they need it because they see no point of support, no lever, no great historic possibility in the storms of proletarian catastrophes in the West, following one on the heels of the other.

After Hitler's victory, which brought the prehistory of the Fourth International ("Left Opposition") to an end, it was not easy for us in Germany as well as in Europe in general—that is the law of inertia that rules in all fields—to realize that now we must build new proletarian parties in relentless struggle with the old. Had we, however, not taken this road in time, the Left Opposition not only would not have emerged from its prehistory into its own history proper but would have disappeared from the political scene altogether. How much more difficult, however, it is for the old cadres of the Left Opposition in the USSR,

dispersed, isolated, disoriented or, what is worse, systematically misinformed, to embark on the new road. Rakovsky has a great revolutionary temperament, a personality, a lucid mind. But no one should be deified. Rakovsky, too, is only a man and, having been for years separated from the great historic perspectives that inspire the cadres of the Fourth International, the "human" in him won the upper hand. By this we do not at all mean to justify Rakovsky. For fighters to explain does not mean to forgive; it means only to strengthen one's revolutionary certainty.

The *Gleichschaltung* [elimination of opponents] proceeded downwards for years from revolutionary internationalism to national reformism, from Lenin to Kirov. Thus the victory over Rakovsky is only the most glaring symptom of the degradation and wreckage of Marxism in the country that became a workers' state due to Marxism. A remarkable dialectic, a bitter dialectic, but it is actually here and cannot be evaded by mental acrobatics.

Rakovsky's declaration is the expression of a subjective impasse and of pessimism. Without exaggerating by a hair's breadth, we can say that Stalin got Rakovsky with the aid of Hitler. That means, however, that Rakovsky's road leads to a political nowhere. His example can carry away a dozen or more young comrades. In the scope of the international politics of the proletariat, it will change nothing. In Rakovsky we mourn a lost political friend. We do not feel ourselves weakened by his elimination from the struggle, since it strengthens, although tragically from the personal point of view, but politically unshakably, our fundamental principles. As a revolutionary factor, the Comintern is dead. From the Moscow leadership, the world proletariat can expect only obstructions, difficulties, and sabotage. The situation is difficult to an unheard-of degree, but by no means hopeless, since our difficulties are only reflections of the difficulties of world capitalism as refracted through both bureaucracies. Two processes run alongside, into and through each other: on the one hand, the decomposition of the old structure, the renunciation of old beliefs, capitulations before Hitler and, as a shadow thereof, capitulations before Stalin; on the other hand, however, the awakening of criticism, a feverish search for the broad revolutionary road, the gathering of the cadres of the Fourth International.

The Leninist current in the Soviet Union can, from now on, only be revived by great revolutionary successes in the West. Those Russian Bolsheviks who remain true to our cause under the unheard-of pressure of national reaction—and there are more of them than we suspect—will be recompensed by the further course of development. But now the light will come not from the East but from the West. Even the shamelessly betrayed Chinese Revolution waits for a new impulse on the part of the world proletariat.

We have no time to weep long over lost friends—be it even comrades of thirty years of struggle. Let every Bolshevik say to himself: "A sixty-year-

old fighter with experience and prestige left our ranks. In his place I must win three twenty-year-old ones and the gap will be filled." Among the twenty-year-old ones, new Rakovskys will be found who, with us or after us, will carry forward our work. ■

NOTES

1. Andre Malraux (1901-1976) was a member at this time of a committee formed to provide security for Trotsky in France. During the People's Front period, he collaborated actively with the Stalinists and refused to speak up for Trotsky against the Moscow trial slanders. After World War II, he became a Gaullist government official. Two 1931 articles by Trotsky on Malraux appeared in *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*.
2. Dmitri Manuilsky (1883-1952) was, like Trotsky, a member of the independent Marxist group, the Mezhrayontzi (Inter-District Group) which fused with the Bolshevik Party in 1917. In the 1920s he supported the Stalin faction and served as secretary of the Comintern from 1931-1943. Otto Kuusinen (1891-1964) was a Finnish Social Democrat who fled to the Soviet Union after the collapse of the Finnish Revolution in April 1918. He became a Stalinist spokesman and a secretary of the Comintern from 1922-1931. Solomon Lozovsky (1878-1952) was in charge of the Profintern, the Red International of Labor Unions, and the ultraleft tactics it imposed on Stalinist trade-union work throughout the world in the "third period." According to *Khrushchev Remembers*, Lozovsky was arrested and shot on Stalin's orders during an anti-Semitic campaign.
3. Sergei Kirov (1886-1934), member of the Political Bureau and head of the CP's organization in Leningrad, was assassinated in December 1934, partly as the result of GPU bungling of a plot designed to smear Trotsky (see *Writings* 34-35).
4. The Chinese Eastern Railroad was the portion of the original route of the Trans-Siberian Railroad which went through Manchuria to Vladivostok. Earlier, Trotsky had been a caustic critic of those in the Left Opposition who argued that since the Chinese Eastern Railroad was a czarist, imperialist venture, therefore a workers' state must disown it by giving it to the Chinese bourgeoisie. Stalin hung onto the railroad until 1935, when he sold it to the Japanese puppet government of Manchukuo in an effort to ward off a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. The railroad came under Soviet control again in World War II. Although the forces headed by Mao Tse-tung took over the Chinese mainland in 1949, it was not until 1952 that Stalin ceded the route to the new Chinese government.
5. Ernst Thaelmann (1886-1945) was the leader of the German Communist Party, its presidential candidate and a supporter of the Kremlin policies that led to Hitler's victory. Arrested by the Nazis in 1933, he was executed at Buchenwald in 1945.
6. Maurice Thorez (1900-1964) sympathized with the ideas of the Left Opposition in the mid-1920s but later became the chief Stalinist in France, defender of all the Comintern's zigzags and, after World War II, a minister in de Gaulle's government.
7. Lev Semyanovich Sosnovsky (1886-1937), an outstanding Soviet journalist, was, like Rakovsky, among the early supporters of the Left Opposition and one of the last to capitulate.
8. Eugene Preobrazhensky (1886-1937), one of the secretaries of the Bolshevik Central Committee in 1920, was a member of the Left Opposition. He was expelled from the party in 1927, readmitted in 1929, expelled again in 1931, and again readmitted. His last public appearance was at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934, where, like other oppositionists, he apologized for past misdeeds and denounced Trotsky. During the purges Preobrazhensky refused to make a confession and was shot without a trial.

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

NOTEBOOK IV

"Everyone knows that it is impossible to speak about anything so precisely that its meaning cannot be misinterpreted." Pierre Abelard, Credo, 12th century.

22. Holy and Unholy Work

Since the time that Yeva had become a liberated party worker, she had devoted herself fully and ever more diligently to this activity. She was indifferent to domestic matters. Loving the children in a kind of concentrated and somber way, it was as if she stored up her love, postponing it until her day off—in the same way that she taught herself not to get sick on workdays, but postponed an indisposition until Sunday. Day after day she held out, coming home totally exhausted; but in the mornings without the slightest hesitation jumping up at seven sharp in order to rush to the plant. And she never asked for sick leave except in very unusual circumstances.

But on the other hand, on her day off, she did not just sleep late, but in fact did not have the strength to get out of bed. I got so accustomed to this that I was surprised to see her up and about on a Sunday. But on those days off when she did feel fairly good, she no longer sang about prisons and churches while cleaning the room, but was silent the whole time, internally reliving something that was not worth speaking about to the husband because he wouldn't understand it anyway.

When I reminded her that such and such had to be done, she answered in an offended voice: "I have work to do." I heard these words from her a good deal more often than I said them myself. She had a somewhat sarcastic attitude toward my journalistic activities (i.e., toward my writing), she never read my opuses, and she considered the likes of us insufficiently devoted to the cause of communism. Our high fees led her to new thoughts about the moral qualities of journalists—ideas that were healthy enough.

She pronounced so seriously the word "work" when referring to her meetings and conferences that for a time I could not hold back a grin. And she sacrificed herself entirely to them. And now, recalling her work, work, work, I think: My god! A person devotes herself entirely but does there remain in anyone's heart even the slightest trace of her sacred activity? The day after a meeting a new directive came down—and as it often happened, exactly the opposite of the previous one! And Yeva again called a meeting in order to "implement it," as this was referred to in our free, powerful, superb newspaper language. So she spent all her years.

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

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

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

Yeva remained to her dying day a Komsomol member of the 1920s. If I cannot speak of the effects of changes going on around her on her inner life, on the other hand they become distinctly apparent when comparing two fates: Yeva's and our daughter's—the fates of women of two generations.

Yeva and all her friends had sharply changed their family lives compared to those of their mothers. Not one of them wanted to be a housewife. Even during her maternity leaves, Yeva rarely sat at home sewing little jackets for the expected baby, but continued her party work. She had only two children, and she gave birth to the second one for health reasons and not because she wanted it.

Yeva's mother had seven children, and my mother had five. Yeva and I had only two. And they in turn had altogether only two, that is, one each. This was not peculiar to our family, but the norm, verified by statistics. All my daughter's friends, forty-year-old women, had one child, and not one wanted a second.

I will note, by the way, that our Communist women decided on the sly to violate Soviet law during the Stalin years, when abortion was banned.

Party morality, it turns out, allows men and women Communists certain underground activity—true, it never reached the point of forming factions.

How did Yeva manage to achieve her clearly expressed aim not to divide herself in two, between family and work? She used her mother. In addition, at the beginning of the thirties, living in Moscow, she hired a housekeeper, which in those times was rather easy to do: peasant girls rushed to the city; first they got work as domestic labor; and, later, in a factory.

For Yeva, the equality of women proclaimed by the revolution was fully realized. However, she did not liberate herself from domestic slavery by liquidating the slavery, but first shifted it onto her mother, and second limited the number of children. And if you think it over, you will understand that with her participation, a fate that was doubly difficult was prepared for her daughter.

It is only the first generation of women that can shift the burden onto the grandmothers because those grandmothers are from the prerevolutionary time. But the second generation, for whom Komsomol members of the 1920s became the grandmothers, has a problem that is a great deal more complicated. Those grandmothers won't take it.

So the second generation is forced to fall back still more strongly on the only control mechanism available to them: to consciously limit the number of their children. This process was begun in the 1920s on grounds having certain ideological implications. But the matter at that time affected only the urban population, which was not so large in those years, and it was not difficult to close one's eyes to the coming dangers. People began to speak about the decline of the birthrate when it was time for the grandsons to get married. And what does this represent if not women's response to what has happened to them? This is their only possible answer—their friendly, silent, unpunishable, and terrible strike that has lasted for so many years. Before us is a rare instance when society has spontaneously given its assessment of a state's actions in one of the areas most important for the life of the people. Who will dare to accuse society of having an incorrect assessment?

The work of Soviet women is widely used in all sectors, including that of unskilled labor physically beyond their strength (and, in addition, the percentage of women among party and Soviet leaders is immeasurably lower than it is in the rank-and-file labor force). The work of women is necessary to the state—and it has been necessary for many reasons. And the state frees her from having to stay at home to the extent that the state needs her outside the home. But the price for this freedom is the doubling of housework pressures in those hours after she finishes her work for the state. To refer to any domestic technological equipment—washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators, and so on—is hypocritical. There are more such things in the capitalist countries than in our country and there they are produced not to emancipate women but for convenience, like elevators, electric razors, or

central heating. They make housework easier but do not remove from women a single one of their domestic kitchen duties.

Compare the words of Lenin in his article *A Great Beginning* (I will not quote them here because everyone knows them) with the situation of an urban working woman whose housework, according to statistics, takes up 34 hours a week—with no time off; on the contrary, it increases on their day off from their state job.

It became especially difficult for my daughter and for millions in her age group when their children grew up and went to school. Then, there was nowhere they could look for help. My daughter, and millions of her contemporaries who have two school-age children, for all intents and purposes have not a single free evening in the prime years of their lives. They have to fix tomorrow's lunch for the children, mend their clothes, do their laundry, and very often, help them with their homework.

How did this happen? Yeva's emancipation from the kitchen and the cradle, which was her ultimate aspiration as a woman and which allowed her to become a Communist, a fighter, an activist in the Woman's Department, and party secretary—turned around and became for her daughter a more than 13-hour workday, beginning at 6:20 a.m. with the preparation of breakfast for her schoolchildren and being far from finished at 9 p.m., when she clears off the table after supper and begins to prepare tomorrow's lunch.

Were Yeva alive, she would, very likely, play the same role for her daughter (or at least a part of it) that her mother played for her. However, her mother fulfilled that role thinking that it was necessary, a duty imposed by God. But Yeva—having won her freedom—what would she think? What would she feel, remembering the work to which she had devoted herself so passionately?

Among Yeva's friends, there was not one who would work as her daughter works today. Among her daughter's friends, there is not one who would work as Yeva worked in her time. Can one go on without investigating what is below the surface of a phenomenon when the part of it that is exposed is so enormous?

Remembering Yeva, I try to imagine her and the difficulty she would have had changing her convictions and habits (and especially her prejudices) in today's circumstances. I will take a simple example from everyday life. Suppose you work where she was a secretary and you want to go abroad as a tourist. In "their" country, this is simple: you buy a ticket, receive a visa in one hour's time (if you aren't coming here), and you're off. In our country, you have to fill out an application, write an autobiography, and—most important! get a reference from a primary party organization, regardless of whether you are a member or not a member of the party. Yeva will write the reference for you and we will try to transplant her into our day.

Later, you will be summoned to the regional committee of the party, they will talk with you, and all your "departure case" will go to the office

to which you will not be summoned but which alone has the ultimate right to decide whether you can go or not. It is clear that if you were not on their special register until that time, they will first of all read the reference Yeva wrote. Who knows you better than anyone else?

How should a secretary be, when writing references for everyone? Of course, vigilant, so as not to let someone out who may not return. She must also be well informed about you, about your personal life, your thinking and your attitudes.

Lenin persistently reminded the party: study the attitudes of the working class! It is well known how he loved to converse with frequent travelers and those arriving from far corners of Russia.

Today's secretary, writing a reference for you, a nonparty comrade, who wants to see Poland, or, much more difficult, Sweden, must also study your attitudes. But what a difference there is between the old and new ways of "studying." The old one was a political task; but what is the new one? The word defining the new tasks set for Yeva is from the same Latin root. But the aim is altogether different than it was for the "studying" then, so long ago. Then they tried to take stock of your frank opinion, so as to know the best course of action. Now they know beforehand their course of action if you begin to speak too frankly.

In the last years of her life, Yeva was demoted to less important duties. Evidently, she was not suited to the new conditions. Her sacred devotion was not required.

* * *

Thus my life with Yeva did not return to normal. It is true that we did not have family scenes. Through the thin walls of the communal apartment the neighbors did not hear arguments or even abusive language. Nor did we share either thoughts or experiences. Our friendship had long ago disappeared and our love vanished.

Comrades did not come to visit us as they had in Kharkov, whether because of the distance or because of Yeva's extremely blunt character. She was not able to sustain a feigned politeness with those of my friends who were uninteresting to her. And she could not get interested in them. I spent my free time away from the newspaper and domestic troubles playing cards at Sasha Ratskin's and Volodya Serov's. We did not drink. Our conversations were most often about literature or associated themes; sometimes an anecdote (usually attributed to Radek) or some joke we had heard.

At Tsypin's apartment, literary conversations were supplemented by quasi-official themes. He and his wife circulated in the upper echelons. Yeva was acquainted with both of them but did not visit them. She had no special liking for them, believing evidently that they were not reverent enough toward the work the party assigned to them. Marya Yakovlevna (she now edited a small journal) more than once assigned articles to me—the purest hackwork—and I cooked them up right there in their apartment

at her writing desk, writing long-accepted truths using the standardized popular language. She would set a bottle of sweet wine on the desk—it would, she joked, make my style more popular. One day, I boasted about my chef's art in front of Yeva and she got very upset. I had defiled a sacred banner!

Grigory Yevgenevich, a talented man, worked, studied at the Red Professor Institute, and was also writing a book. It was entitled *The Organizational Principles of Bolshevism*. Personal devotion to Stalin had already begun to be advanced as an ideological principle; while not yet openly proclaimed as an organizational principle, in practice it reigned.

The Leninist principle about professional revolutionists, which related exclusively to the period of the underground revolutionary struggle, Stalinism applied—in a very distorted way!—to the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He created a whole army of professional administrators of state matters, *nomenklatura* workers,¹ who, in the event that one work project failed, were transferred to another one but were never fired from the state apparatus.

Among the people whose acquaintance I made over tea at Marya Yakovlevna's was a certain fascinating red professor who was in the same field as Grigory Yevgenevich and was the author of a fat book about the finance theory of Hilferding. The entire book was the development of a single quotation of Joseph Vissarionovich [Stalin]. He scattered seeds of wisdom, and the disciples picked up all the little grains, planted them in their generously fertilized furrows, and grew book after book.

Having ground Hilferding into powder, our professor had become a luminary in the theory of money. But over tea, one cannot speak endlessly about money, at least in purely theoretical terms. We began to speak about Gogol. The professor admitted that he had never in his life read one line of Gogol. Well, then, what about Lermontov or Pushkin? He had been studying all his life and had had no time to read the poets. That's what he said: "studying."

Tsypin felt a little uncomfortable but soon began to join the fun and helped his wife egg on the theoretician. She never once smiled. (I buried my nose in a book, choking back suppressed laughter.) When he left, we laughed for a long time remembering his words, "I've been studying all my life."

Like all of Stalin's people, Grigory Yevgenevich never said his name without using his first and middle names. But if the conversation was at home or confidential, he simply called Stalin "the boss." In addition to the main boss, there were also lower-level bosses. In the enterprises and institutions, everywhere, the local officials were often called "bosses." The custom caught on and the word didn't grate on people's ears. One day I asked Grigory Yevgenevich why in Kharkov he had once thrown the old worker correspondent Petya Ryzhov out of his office for calling himself the boss of factories and plants.

"Petya Ryzhov?" He shrugged his shoulders. "I don't remember the guy."

In fact, can one really remember all the bitter sots who chattered on about the boss and his henchmen. And who is really the boss anyway?

Tsybin successfully climbed the *nomenklatura* ladder. He was appointed assistant to Bukharin, who was in those years the editor of *Izvestiya*. And Grigory Yevgenevich then invited me to work, even though I was a rather tarnished individual. However, he was the one who decided. He earnestly recruited essayists and all sorts of other enlivening elements in the newspaper field.

Everyone understood that the new assistant editor had been appointed as an ever-vigilant eye attached to Bukharin, the former favorite of the party. Lenin had not called him that for nothing; everyone in the editorial office immediately liked him. He had a brilliant mind, a broad education, and the fullest sense of democratism without a trace of affectation. There was no stiffness, no airs of a dignitary about him. He was natural, ordinary, and able to approach everyone, not by going down to their level, but on the contrary by raising them to his level in the only true way possible: by respecting each person's human dignity.

He had the typical look of a party intellectual of those days: a little thin pointed beard, eternally baggy jacket, lively movements. His gait seemed particularly quick because of his small stature.

You could go to his office anytime without a prior appointment. He did not always sit in his office, but often sat at somebody else's table and, looking over galley proofs, made brief but keen remarks. As an editor, he had no equal: he instantly grasped an author's idea. With a precision that surprised all the authors, he singled out the major from the secondary points. He was able to shorten an article in such a way that nothing was spoiled, and to insert a word or two that immediately improved an article. He was able to *read*. But he was also able to write.

He wrote quite frequently at the corner edge of somebody else's table, in the noisiest room of the editorial office. During his time as editor of *Izvestiya*, there was absolutely none of the affectation or solemn ceremonial sluggishness that had taken root (like the term "boss" had) in all high institutions, including the editorial offices of the newspapers. When an apparatus has ten people, each with many things to do, people have to move quickly. But when there are a hundred, it is possible to move about with solemn deliberation. The same amount of work is required. It seems as if the amount of work has increased, but it is only the outward show that has been augmented.

The typesetters, as if to show their bias toward him, gave Bukharin a small privilege: they accepted his articles without retyping. He wrote clearly, without scratching out words, and very quickly.

As a theoretician, Bukharin could make mistakes, but no one who knew him could imagine Nikolai Ivanovich with a staff of researchers trying to find eloquent words and literary examples for him.

He thought for himself. He wrote for himself. And when he made a mistake, it was a mistake of his own thinking, keen and strong as it was, inclined toward a distant, perhaps too distant flight. But he did not shift the blame for his mistakes onto others; he was not that kind of person. Vain people want to appear infallible, but Nikolai Ivanovich had not a drop of vanity.

For some time Bukharin's letter, composed just before his death, has been circulated from hand to hand. Some doubt its authenticity. They say that he could not have succeeded in writing it. I suggest that he could have written it before he was arrested, clearly seeing the inevitability of his arrest and the nearness of his death. The whole spirit of the letter is in the same spirit that was so characteristic of those years: a confidence in history, that history will settle everything. Bukharin, having managed during his lifetime to see everyone, simply everyone, bow down to Stalin, could place his hopes in nothing other than the justice of history.

It is natural that he shared with us little about what was going on at the highest levels. He always called Stalin by his old underground nickname "Koba." Once he accidentally let slip this name in the presence of several coworkers.

"You can't give a single manuscript to Koba to read. Without fail, he will steal it and later he will present it as his own!"

I remember this sentence word for word. Then he caught himself and playfully shook his finger at us.

"Now, not a word about this, lads."

History is still unearthing the means used over several years to force Bukharin to confess in court to imaginary crimes. One thing we already know well today: Stalin left alive only those whose talents did not threaten to rival his. He could not bear to have near him even ordinary intelligence, without any particular talents. It made more obvious his lack of intellect, which penetrated everything.

In that blessed period, *Izvestiya* abounded with photographs. How we improved the paper! We treated the readers to portraits of the most attractive girls of Magnitka. But we printed larger portraits of the leaders. Every photograph of Stalin, before it went to the printer to be set in the printer's block, was worked over for a long time by touch-up artists. The problem was that Stalin's forehead was not the correct height. What do you do with a forehead like that? That was the question torturing all editors of Soviet newspapers. The touch-up artists whited out part of his hair, adding two or three centimeters of brow to the great low forehead. The portraits, displayed by the millions everywhere, had the desired forehead height. Tsybin said:

"It is impermissible to distort a photograph of Joseph Vissarionovich. But it is also impermissible to print it the way it is, with that forehead. Who retouched the photo? Tell him this: If he ever again spoils the boss's head, I'll take his head off."

Could Grigory Yevgenevich have done his deed without choking in his soul from laughter? He was intelligent and certainly knew crude secrets from Stalin's kitchen. He had already seen that the rabbit stew had been made out of cat meat.

It happened that he told me about the banquets and receptions he attended. Banquets became fashionable. The *Izvestiya* office received visiting French sportsmen and well-known people from our country. With the French, only Bukharin could converse fluently; and we drank tea and smiled.

Izvestiya's receptions were modest affairs; there was tea on the table, baked goods and candy. But even then, Stalinist luxury had already begun to flourish, the direct purpose of which was to throw dust in the eyes of foreigners.

The collective farm workers were offered the stick of a definite required workday unit while the subway stations were fixed up like palaces. Bukharin hated luxury. And the French, who arrived as guests at the editorial office, after we had proudly shown them the subway—which was much prettier than the one in Paris—"the best subway in the world," our newspapers always said; the French, I dare say, were charmed not by the gilded subway stations but by Bukharin's original mind.

Needless to say, Bukharin never read his speeches from scraps of paper. Never lecturing anyone, he exerted a strong, if inconspicuous influence on every worker in the editorial office by simply being the way he was. Grigory Yevgenevich changed before my very eyes. Instead of giving orders, he often requested things be done. Bukharin always requested. Was this the same Grigory Yevgenevich who not so long ago threatened to take off the head of the touch-up artist?

As before, I visited his home. In the quiet of the family environment, he sometimes hurled out another kind of pointed remark.

"Yesterday," he said, "I was at a meeting of the Moscow Soviet. Bulganin said: 'Soon we'll get a tighter grip on the tails of the Trotskyists.'"

"But where would there be any Trotskyists now?" I asked naively.

"As if you don't know!" Grigory Yevgenevich responded.

Bulganin was then chairman of the Moscow Soviet. He undoubtedly did not know Stalin's designs. No one ever did. But he was simply instructed (as offhandedly as was always done in those circles) to refer to the fact that the Trotskyists were still alive and had to be grabbed tighter by the tail.

* * *

That autumn, I saw Maryusa Yelko for the last time. The meeting turned out to be just as short as the one when Rafa waited for me by the Pushkin monument. Where they had languished those three years since then, I do not know. Where I languished, you know. Returning from the "Prague," I met on the *Izvestiya* stairway—my god!—Maryusa. She was poorly dressed, her face had an exhausted look, but in her eyes was the same sarcastic sparkle

as before, the same marvelous restrained smile on her lips.

"And I had already begun to think that you would eat lunch until suppertime," she said cunningly.

I dragged her upstairs and sat her on a bench in the huge bookkeeping hall.

"Where are you going? Where have you come from? Where is Rafa?"

"Rafa is still there, in Tara; do you know where Tara is? After a great deal of difficulty, I obtained permission to take the baby to my sister's."

"Do you need money?"

"You are asking a childish question. That's precisely why I came."

I broke away and flew into Tsypin's office for an advance. He consented without a word, but he evidently read something in my face. He went down the stairs behind me and in passing cast a quick glance at Maryusa. He surely guessed: an advance; a woman who clearly doesn't look like a lover—short-haired, with the old Komsomol look, a shabby shirt—evidently on the road; that means old contacts. And I can't take my eyes off her.

"Well, I am holding you up; go to your post, get to work," she said after half an hour, and offered me her small, rough hand. She looked me in the eye. For an instant, the usual cunning smile disappeared from her face, and I see a Maryusa she seldom showed—a suffering, tormented person, my best friend, the inspiration of my youth—standing there in the corridor of the editorial office among the preoccupied writers and reporters hurrying back and forth. And not one of them will ever get an assignment to describe this small woman with such a big, proud, and fearless heart!

The all-knowing reporters have never heard of the existence of that place from which she had been graciously permitted to take her child. Tara: it is somewhere out there.

Another meeting also reminded me of the past. The wife of Grisha Baglyuk arrived in Moscow, also with a child; with the little boy who was born the same week as Nina. While the children played in the yard, Dusya talked. She had spent some time with Grisha; he was in exile in Kazan. There he was a cutter, not in any poetic sense of the word, but a cutter of paving stones. He was earning subsistence wages in a bridge-builders artel.

Dusya stayed for one day with us, and left for the Donbass. After that, I heard nothing about Grisha until we met in the place where many paths converged.

Those are the only flashes of memory I have from the years of activity at the Moscow editorial offices.

[Next month—"My Second Arrest"]

NOTES

1. *Nomenklatura* is a system in the USSR by which appointments to specified posts in government or economic administration are made by organs of the Communist Party. With increasing rank one receives increased access to privileges.

FRED HALSTEAD: FIGHTER FOR SOCIALISM

by David Williams

For me and for hundreds of other radicalizing young people, our first encounter with the revolutionary socialist movement was a poster on a campus bulletin board which read, "Vote Against the War: Vote for Fred Halstead!" The year was 1968; Fred Halstead, with his running mate Paul Boutelle, was the presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party. The name of Fred Halstead will always be inseparable from the struggle against imperialist war and the building of the Socialist Workers Party during one of the proudest periods in its history. On June 2, 1988, Halstead died of liver cancer at his home in Los Angeles.

Halstead understood that the struggle against war and the struggle for socialism were interrelated. As a U.S. Navy sailor in the Pacific at the time of Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945 he, like many other servicemen, was infuriated when he found that there were plans to keep them in Asia indefinitely to insure U.S. domination of the Pacific region. He joined in massive demonstrations which were organized demanding, "Bring Us Home!" The Truman administration, finding itself with an army and navy which could not be relied upon, acquiesced to these demands. Halstead learned two important lessons from this early experience: first, the power of mass action, and second, that soldiers and sailors could be organized and mobilized against war and had the power to stop it.

When Halstead returned to the United States, the most extensive strike wave in U.S. history was in progress. Workers were coming very quickly to radical consciousness, and hundreds joined the Socialist Workers Party. Most of those who joined the party at that time were soon either intimidated by the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the 1950s or became demoralized by the downturn in the class struggle which accompanied the post-World War II prosperity in the United States. Few remained in the SWP for very long. Halstead, however, was one of the exceptions. He joined the SWP in 1950 and maintained his commitment to the socialist movement for the rest of his life.

One of the consequences of the intimidation and demoralization of the 1950s was a serious factional struggle in the Socialist Workers Party, culminating in a deep split in 1953. Among the branches most seriously affected by the split was Detroit, which was reduced to about eight members. The national leadership of the party asked comrades from other branches to move to Detroit to help rebuild the branch, and Halstead was one who responded. He remained in Detroit for three years, working in a plant which manufactured auto parts.

In 1956 Halstead was asked to move to New York, where he became a writer for the *Militant* and a national party leader. In the 1960s he not only made a major contribution to the SWP, but actually helped to influence the course of international events.

After the Students for a Democratic Society organized a successful March on Washington in 1965 to protest the rapidly escalating Vietnam war, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance recognized the importance of mobilizing opposition in the U.S. to the government's aggression in Southeast Asia. Halstead helped direct the party's participation in this movement, applying the lessons he had learned twenty years earlier.

In contrast to those who proposed that the way to stop the war was electing liberal Democrats and Republicans to office, Halstead and the SWP argued that the antiwar movement must remain independent, nonpartisan, and nonexclusionary. Against those who would demobilize antiwar sentiment into "community organizing" schemes, or who wanted to stage dramatic acts of individual civil disobedience, Halstead and the SWP argued that the movement must remain in the streets and visible in massive numbers. In response to those who blamed G.I.s for the slaughter in Vietnam and encouraged draft-age men to go to Canada to avoid service, Halstead and the SWP countered that the rank-and-file soldiers were also victims of the war—disproportionately people of color and almost entirely working class—and that they, too, could be organized in opposition to it if they were given sufficient support by the civilian movement. And to those who counseled the antiwar movement to call for "negotiations," "phased withdrawal," or "setting a date," Halstead and the SWP answered in the most forceful terms that the United States had absolutely no right to be in Vietnam or to negotiate anything, that the antiwar movement must demand, "Bring the Troops Home Now!"

Halstead's 1968 campaign for president was the most ambitious and successful SWP campaign up to that time. The Young Socialist Alliance recruited many new members as a result of it. Together with other student antiwar activists, trade unionists, and antiwar GIs and veterans, the strengthened SWP and YSA built local and national coalitions which organized massive street demonstrations demanding immediate U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Halstead was prominent in their day-to-day leadership, often taking responsibility for organizing the marshal teams which insured the demonstrations'

(Continued on page 35)

DANIEL GUERIN: 1904-1988

by Rafael Sabatini

Longtime French revolutionary socialist and Marxist scholar Daniel Guerin died on April 14, at the age of 84. Though he was only briefly a member of a section of the Fourth International, Guerin was politically close to many of the positions held by the Trotskyist movement and often collaborated with the French Trotskyists. His passing further reduces the number of living participants in the early days of the anti-Stalinist left and the great class battles of the 1930s.

Guerin began his political activity in 1930 as a journalist for the left-wing journal *Monde*, where he published articles against French colonialism in Indochina and Morocco. In the spring of 1933, shortly after the Nazi takeover in Germany, he bicycled through that country, recording the situation there in a series of articles brought together under the title "La peste brune" (The Brown Plague). These were published in several newspapers including Socialist Party leader and future prime minister Leon Blum's *Le Populaire*, various publications of the French CP, and the revolutionary syndicalist leader Pierre Monatte's newspaper *La Revolution proletarienne*. He later reflected in greater depth on the problem of fascism in Germany and Italy in his book *Fascism and Big Business*, which remains among the finest Marxist treatments of the subject.

The mid-1930s was a time of tremendous social and political upheaval, of great revolutionary possibilities as well as missed opportunities and infamous betrayals. Guerin participated in many of these experiences. He was a member of "Gauche revolutionnaire"—the left-wing current in the SFIO (the French SP), led by Marceau Pivert—until it was expelled from the party. His book on the Popular Front, *Front Populaire, revolution manquee* (The missed revolution), shared Trotsky's analysis: that the period of the Popular Front represented a pre-revolutionary situation that could have been turned into a serious bid for workers' power if the mass workers' parties (the SFIO and French Communist Party) hadn't been guided by a policy summed up in PCF leader Maurice Thorez's infamous words "it is necessary to know when to end a strike" (spoken in the midst of one of the greatest mass workers' upheavals and strike waves in history). During the war and the occupation of France, Guerin fought with the antioccupation, anti-Vichy, anticapitalist underground, which included many Trotskyists.

Directly after the war, in 1946, he published an important study of the French Revolution which has been translated into English under the title *Class Struggles Under the First Republic*. Perhaps more than any other work, this book owed much to the thought of Leon Trotsky. Set within the framework of the Marxist view of the French Revolution as fundamentally bourgeois in inspiration and outcome, Guerin focused on the dynamics of the popular struggle of the amorphous preindustrial mass of artisans, laborers, and urban poor known as the "sansculottes." He showed how their struggles during the radical phase of the revolution took on many of the features of a nascent proletarian revolution.

Guerin spent the years 1946-1949 in the United States where he participated in the political life of the Socialist Workers Party. He was particularly interested in and moved by the social situation of Black Americans, a subject he later wrote about in a book called *Negroes on the March*. After his return to France he authored a history of the U.S. workers' movement of the years 1867-1967.

The 1950s saw Guerin in the forefront of the anticolonial movement against French imperialism's role in Vietnam and Algeria. He was among the first signers of the famous appeal of 121 against the torture of Algerian liberation fighters and for the right of independence for Algeria.

He was also a familiar figure in the May-June events of 1968 in France, frequently at the center of the debates held in the amphitheater of the Sorbonne. Later that year he delivered a report to a cultural conference in Havana organized by the Cuban government. In the early 1970s, Guerin founded an antimilitarist committee and became a leading activist in the gay liberation movement in France. He was most recently involved in demonstrations against repression in Kanaky (New Caledonia).

Though he shared many political positions with the Trotskyist movement, Guerin held fast to what he called "libertarian communism"—a sort of quasi-anarchist reaction against what he perceived as the abuses of the democratic centralist conception of party-building. He was a member of the Union of Libertarian Communist Workers (UTCL).

The many writings of Daniel Guerin will continue to educate, arm, and inspire revolutionary militants, and his life will serve as an example for all revolutionary socialists dedicated to bringing about a more just and humane world. ■



«NOUS SOMMES LE POUVOIR»

IN TODAY'S CLIMATE, it is not surprising that the twentieth anniversary of May 1968 has been the occasion for running up the colors of political or economic "realism", or for a war of words about cultural change/renewal, changes in standards and so on. Platitudes drown out what is most specific in a concentrated social and political crisis such as May 1968.

CHARLES-ANDRE UDRY

WHAT MAY 68 represented was the emergence for a brief time (the last week of May) of a limited range of possibilities for thoroughgoing changes. It was not a phantasmagoria of maybes or a revolution right around the corner. It was the appearance on the social and political scene of crossroads, and, depending on how these were negotiated, other possibilities opened up or closed....

The May crisis, like all great social and political events, speaks with a number of voices, and for good reason. From May 3 to June 6, 1968, the protest of many sections of society converged. That opens up the floodgates for a plethora of interpretations.

The minister of the interior at the time, Raymond Marcellin, started the ball rolling with his "theory" of an international plot directed from Cuba and East Berlin. This was manna from heaven for the right-wing press. Then some innovative sociologists discovered the "crisis of higher education." As the first lesson in the syllabus, it is acceptable. As an explanation for a crisis that led former prefect of police Maurice Grimaud to write, "fear is taking hold of the state apparatus", it is a bit thin.¹

Edgar Morin talked about the "eruption of the youth" on the scene; Gérard Mendel, about "the Oedipus complex." This has had its day! For Touraine, May 1968 was a "social movement of a new kind"! Engineers, technicians and media people were at its center. Millions of striking workers supposedly were overshadowed by them.

Nonetheless, over and above the real complexity and myriad facets of such an explosion, some powerful tendencies cannot be conjured away. May 1968 was the intersection, not the fusion, of a mass student movement and a gigantic working-class mobilization. In the beginning, the

student movement combined very immediate demands with a maximalist radicalization of perspectives. It was a sort of "juvenile constituent assembly," as Lucio Magri nicely puts it.²

Biggest general strike in the history of France

But he continues "everyone recognizes that the entry of the working class into the struggle was the most important event in May." That is obvious. It was the biggest and broadest general strike in the history of France. A strike that shook up society and the government more than the electoral shock-waves of 1981 and 1988.

The figures show that. "The number of strikers grew continually. On May 24, it was not far off 9 million. In 1936, the June strikes involved 3 million people. The record, therefore, was shattered. No industry was spared. Even agricultural workers were caught up in the wave."³ Estimates differ on the number of strikers, from 5.8 to 9 million. The comparison says a lot. According to Pietro Kemeny, who systematically takes the lowest estimates, the figures were 2.45 million strikers in 1936, 2.9 million in 1947 (the big struggles at Renault and other plants at the start of the cold war) and 5.7 in 1968.

Kemeny concludes: "Almost ten days lost per person employed is atypical, even with respect to the other exceptional years; this meant that more days were lost than the total since the war." That amounted to nearly 150 million days lost through strikes. If you try to establish a rate of participation relative to the working population, the indices are the same. For every 100,000 economically active people, 34,233 participated in the 1968 strike. In

1936, it was 21,234, and in 1947, it was 17,311.⁴

These figures explain the momentary fright and disarray of more than one "top leader" of the Gaullist state. Is this simplistic? Look at the memoirs and biographies.⁵ These prefects, ministers or top servants of the state have a sense of the relationship of forces and power. In any case, they have more than those recycled "leftists" who have said a retroactive "farewell to the proletariat." This view represents nothing more than an abdication and throws absolutely no light on how society today (and in 1968) resembles or differs that of the inter-war period.

Strike wave spread spontaneously

The strike wave spread spontaneously. A snowball grew into an avalanche. After May 10, the movement ceased to be solely students. On May 11, the trade-union confederations (the CGT and the CFDT), as well as the National Teachers' Federation (FEN) and the Students Union of France (UNEF) issued a call for a 24-hour general strike and for "powerful demonstrations" on May 13. The sweep of solidarity was to extend far beyond that.

With a hesitant spontaneity, the workers took advantage of a political situation that seemed to open the way for a more effective struggle for their wage and conditions demands than partial strikes or the "24-hour national days of action" that had dominated trade-union life since March 1966. The thirty-four decrees issued by de Gaulle, Pompidou and Debré over the summer of 1967 had exacerbated discontent and politicized demands. These measures involved jobs (assuring the "mobility" of the workforce); social security; linking wages to productivity; freeing businesses from taxes; and concentration of land ownership.

On May 14, a strike broke out at Sud-Aviation-Bougenais in the outskirts of Nantes. On May 15, the working class fortress of Renault-Cléon went on strike. On Friday, May 17, Paris subway, railway and postal workers came out. "C'est la chien-lit," "It's a mess," de Gaulle said. On May 20, everything stopped!

The peak of the May crisis took form. It came between May 22 and 30. In this period, there was a subtle interaction of the strengths and weaknesses of the strike, the inertia of the past and the possibilities rush-

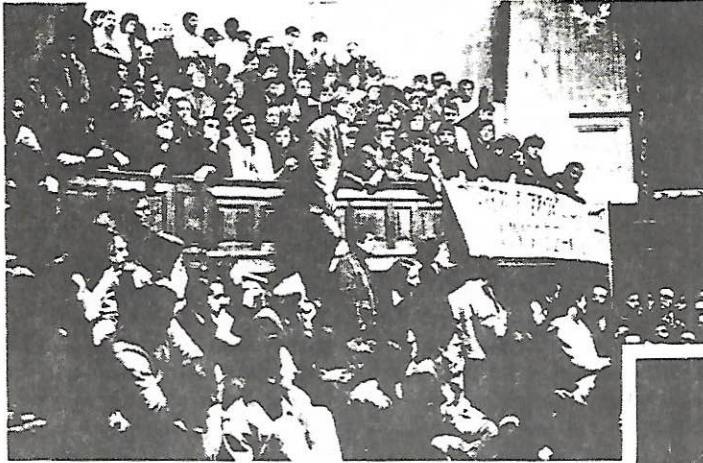
1. Maurice Grimaud, *En mai, fait ce qu'il te plaît*, Stock, 1977, p.279.

2. Lucio Magri, *Temps modernes*, August-September 1969, p.19.

3. Michel Winock, *La fièvre hexagonale. Les grandes crises politiques 1871-1968*, Calman-Lévy, 1986, p.328.

4. Pietro Kemeny "Il movimento degli scioperi nel XX secolo," *Il Mulino*, 1979.

5. G. Pompidou, *Pour rétablir la vérité*, Flammarion, 1982; Yves Guéna, *Le temps des certitudes*, Flammarion, 1982; Jacques Massu, *Baden 63*, Plon, 1983; Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle, le souverain*, Seuil, 1986.



Mass meetings of students and workers (DF)



ing into a breach that had been partially opened, choices and abstentions whose result was recalculated at every moment....

Supposedly, May 1968 played the role of forceps assisting the birth of a modern France that was fathered by de Gaulle in 1958 but had a difficult gestation. Once again, this leaves very little room for choices by the social and political actors in a field of possibilities — these were limited, but not to one possibility standing splendidly alone.

The strike was based on the industries that had been reinforced by years of growth and on the public services. But it spread beyond that, not just to the students, but to unusual areas — to radio and TV, in which prolonged strikes took off, to the Ministry of Equipment, to insurance and banking. It lasted. More than four million wage earners struck for more than three weeks.

Regime on the ropes by May 14

The giant demonstrations were a characteristic of May. They were the meeting place of new generation of students and young workers.⁶ They were also the expression of the idea that "maybe politics is in the streets." But there was a serious lack of a project, and during what exaggeratedly came to be known as the "government's vacation," it fell into the abyss between the all or nothing of a radical but inexperienced youth, as did the far left organizations that had developed within this stratum (and hardly at all in the ranks of wage earners).

The entry of one new layer after another into the strike paralleled the deterioration in the regime's position. But there was no clear consciousness of this interaction. And why should this have been automatic?

By May 14, the regime was on the ropes. The economics minister in the recently ousted Chirac government, Edouard Ballur, wrote: "The government no longer existed as an organ of deliberation and decision making; it was no more than a coterie, a cabal."⁷ Maurice Grimaud, who was in a strategic position in the police appara-

tus, specifies: "We sensed better than others the fragility of the leading circles."⁸

It is undeniable that the question of the government was posed, if not that of power in the full sense. Obviously, the concentration of power inherent in the Gaullist system made it easier to shake a pyramid that had suddenly been thrown on its head by this unexpected crisis. We should not forget that in April the polls indicated that 61% of the population were "satisfied" with de Gaulle.⁹

On May 24, the general launched his proposal for a constitutional referendum on participation. It was a flop, a fiasco. The demonstrations responded, "He is the mess." (*C'est lui, la chienlit!*) The strike grew stronger.

In his monumental biography, Lacouture reports that de Gaulle "could only tell his crest-fallen entourage: 'I missed the target.' Then he went away repeating that word, coupled with a formula that everyone of his intimates would hear endlessly in these twilight hours — 'unmanageable, the situation is unmanageable'."¹⁰

"The CP only jumped on the train to pull the brake"

The "great visionary" was blinded by what is a feature of very acute political and social crisis: the possible. Pushed down every day under the weight of the established system, it germinates beneath the real. Initially it finds its existence denied, and then it is combatted with determination, as de Gaulle began to do on May 30.

Magri — a member of the Italian Communist Party at the time, who was to become the editor of *Il Manifesto* [a magazine that represented a split from the CP] and who is now back home in the Communist

Party — said something that was justified in this context:

"It is also true that, on the basis of the existing conditions, it was possible to envisage quite a different outcome to the May crisis. And from this starting point we can legitimately talk about the subjective responsibilities of those who had the power to accomplish these decisive options."¹¹

This brings us to the policy of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), led by Georges Séguy of the French Communist Party, with the duo Waldeck-Rochet/Georges Marchais, and François Mitter-

rand/Pierre Mendès-France. On May 25, 1968, *The Economist* wrote:

"A revolution requires the coming together of a revolutionary situation and a party or an organization ready to take power. Since France has been virtually brought to a standstill, the situation might appear revolutionary. But the party that has always claimed the revolutionary role shows no sign of wanting to fill it. The Communists have jumped on the train, but only to pull the brake."

One might smile in reading this simplistic interpretation coming from a head under a bowler hat, plagiarized from text-book "Leninism," about the seizure of power by a party in a developed capitalist society. However, it correctly illustrates the two facets of the crisis between May 24 and May 30. On the one hand de Gaulle and the Gaullist regime, which had been strong, were notably weakened, fragile. The problem of another government was vital in those days.

On the other hand, the CGT, the Communist Party and François Mitterrand — who headed a loose constellation of forces, the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS) — each in their own way did their best not to develop the potentialities of

6. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, Editions de Minuit, 1984, p.217.

7. Edouard Balladur, *L'arbre de mai*, Atelier M. Julian, 1979, p.249.

8. Grimaud, op. cit., p.289.

9. Winock, op. cit., p.332.

10. Lacouture, op. cit., p.686.

11. L. Magri, *Temps modernes*, October 1969.

this general strike that was demoting a general.

Caught off balance by the cumulative momentum of the strike, the CGT could only ride with it. It favored slogans for specific categories of workers, for specific enterprises, ignoring general slogans. In short, it did everything to assure that a factory occupation remained only an occupation and did not become a starting point for altering the political relationship of forces, for mustering both defence and counter-attack by wage earners.

"We could have gone a lot further"

Nonetheless, there was a sentiment that "the state had to change." As the general secretary of the CGT in Renault, Aimé Halbeher, acknowledged: "I know that among a good part of the workers, the most conscious ones, there was the idea that we could have gone a lot further. They were very confident about what could come out of the crisis and, on the basis of that, in the installation of a people's government."¹²

Logically, the CGT, which dominated the trade-union movement, neglected any initiative that could give the general strike a different tenor, one that would have assured that the tremor provoked by society developed into the beginnings of a challenge to it. It could have done this in practice by offering other forms for

democratic leadership of the movement and putting forward demands pointing toward a different organization of "wage relations."

With contempt, the CGT rejected the proposals for self-management made by a radicalizing CFDT. So, there was no attempt to promote the emergence of a democratic central organization that would be representative, even if at the beginning it did not lead the bulk of the strikers. Such organization was seen on a smaller scale in the 1986 student mobilizations or in the strikes of railway workers and teachers at the end of 1986 and the beginning of 1987 [see IV 111 & 112]. This is what we called the possible; it was pushed back under the ruptured bark of the real.

The start of the Grenelle negotiations on May 25 (in the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Rue de Grenelle) echoed the proposal for a referendum on participation launched by de Gaulle. Séguy and Pompidou came to an agreement. The millions of strikers made the cabal difficult. Higher wages were made the central demand. The negotiations dragged on. The strike continued, and the discord also.

"No one seemed think that a solution was near at hand. Then suddenly, at 2.30am, Chirac and Séguy put their heads together. Between the CGT and the regime, a deal was concluded in two hours. It was offered unchanged to the other parties (the bosses and the other union confederations), with the important reservation that the workers

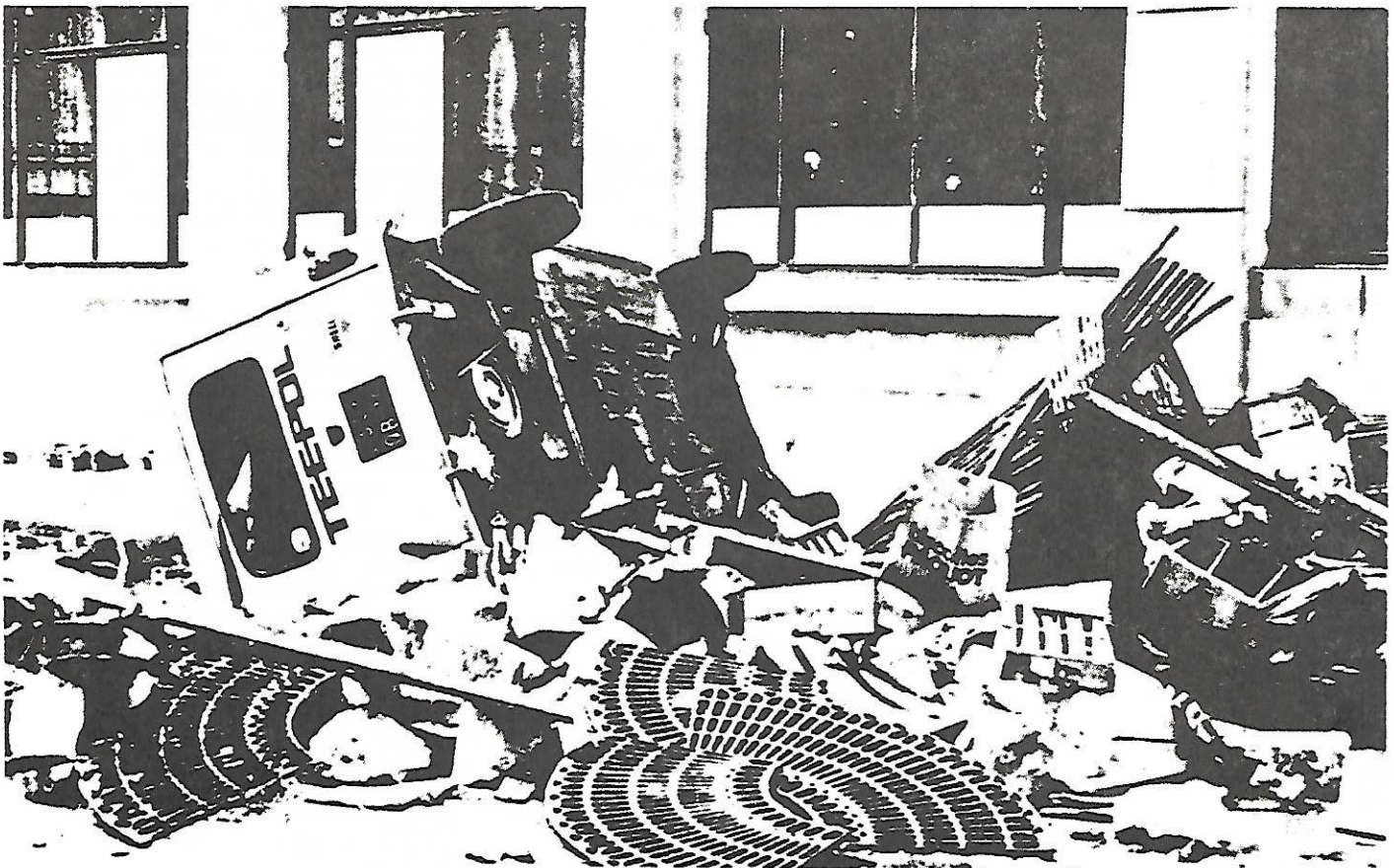
had to accept it," explained Jean Poperen, future secretary of Mitterrand's Socialist Party.¹³

The government made concessions on wages (a 35% increase in the minimum wage, from 2.22 francs an hour to 3) on the working week (two hours less for those working more than 48 hours a week and one hour less for those working 45-48 hours). No concession was made on the demand for a sliding scale of wages, and none on the 1967 decrees.

The editor in chief of *Le Monde*, Pierre Vianson-Ponté, who had chewed over the theme of "France is boring" during March, wrote on May 28: "If the conclusion of the Grenelle negotiations does not manage to resolve the social conflict, and is not accepted by the 'base,' then France may go from a grave national crisis to a revolutionary situation in a climate of violence and confusion."

"Suddenly the stakes have multiplied"

Jean Poperen asked the question: "Logically, the Grenelle accords are supposed to stop it [the movement] cold. Why should we deprive ourselves of this formidable means of action? What is the reason for putting on the brake when the incapacity of student vanguardism is leaving the Communists in command of the terrain, at a time when the regime is accepting them as its



sole interlocutors, at a time when the question of power [that is, of the regime] is posed?

"The reason precisely is that this question is posed. Suddenly, the stakes have multiplied, and with them the risks. One more step, and a crisis of the system will open up. The Communists no doubt have the means to open up such a crisis. They are not doing it....The truth is rather that the Communists are concerned about stabilizing the situation and do not consider it imperative to modify the relationship of forces."¹⁴

On May 22, Lacouture recounts: "The confusion of Vendroux [de Gaulle's brother-in-law] was all the greater because in the midst of all this Waldeck-Rochet, the general secretary of the French Communist Party, told him loudly enough to be heard by everyone: Above all, insist that they hold firm, 'he' [de Gaulle] must not leave."¹⁵

The eruption of May 1968 upset the habits and plans of the CP leadership. What kind of storm could fail to upset the routine of a long distance run toward toward the 1972 presidential elections. In fact, that was what the CP leadership had its sights set on. The reference point was an anti-monopoly coalition. Its weapons were the monopoly control its apparatus held over the working class. Without this background, it would be incomprehensible why the theme of provocation ran like a red thread through the official speeches. The student movement and then the spontaneous strike were infractions of the code that was supposed to regulate this long march.

Furthermore, from the CP's standpoint, de Gaulle had the merit of taking France out of NATO and even of building up the French independent nuclear deterrent, the "force de frappe." In this respect, he was more useful to the "socialist camp" than the likes of Guy Mollet, Mendès-France or Mitterrand, who were devoted to NATO. This clarifies Waldeck-Rochet's statement to Vendroux.

Workers reject Grenelle "accords"

Finally, the CP was not ready to smooth the path for those — from the PSU (a left centrist group) to the SFIO (the SP) and the Conventions de Institutions Républicaines (Mitterrand) — who were trying to put together a left force to rival it. The Mitterrand experience in the 1970s shows that this fear was well founded. The result was that the CP channelled the movement, while trying to capitalize on it. It did not orient the movement toward achieving its potentialities. In this sense, it blocked it.

This is why the effects were less cataclysmic than predicted by the editor of *Le Monde* when the workers rejected the Grenelle "accords", first at Renault and then elsewhere. To prevent a blow up, they were not to be called "accords." What was the

reason for this rejection? The gap was too great between what seemed possible and what had been obtained. But the gap was just as large between this rejection and its translation on the political level into a governmental alternative.

No governmental perspective

The Charléty rally on May 27 was a crossroads of the political projects represented by Mendès-France, by the emergence of a revolutionary and self-management current and by the maximalist illusion expressed in the cry, "power is in the streets." This was not the case. But it is true that the crisis of the regime had reached its climax.

Mitterrand, a parliamentary politician and constitutionalist who learned later to bide his time, made a sudden move. "I am a candidate" [for the presidency], he declared on May 28. In a press conference, he announced the FGDS's rejection of the referendum. He saw de Gaulle's defeat as leading to the dissolution of the Assembly.

De Gaulle, on the other hand, had gauged things well. Hesitant at his low point, this manic depressive — as Lacouture describes him — went to visit his loyal soldiers (Massu in Baden-Baden) in order to psyche himself up. Then he came back for the counterattack.

The CP organized its own demonstration on May 29, an orderly one. It proposed a "people's government," without being very specific about it. In fact, the trade-union left gave up the idea of giving the strike any centralized organized expression. With this logic, respecting the division of labor between parties and unions in order to better dam up the movement, the political left offered no governmental perspective. That is, they offered no proposal for a government whose tasks would harmonize with the more or less expressed aspirations of the movement, aspirations, moreover, that needed to be articulated more explicitly.

In order to set the tone, in his news conference Mitterrand went as far as saying: "Depending on our imagination and our will, the question posed in Prague in this spring of 1968 could find its answer in Paris."¹⁶ The grandeur and abjection of May 1968!

At that point, the government, because it was the government, took advantage of the failure — of the vacation! — of the left in the political arena. On May 30, de Gaulle announced over TV that he was postponing the referendum. He stayed, kept Pompidou as his premier, dissolved the National Assembly and organized elections. This time, he was "on target." He did not defeat his adversary; he retook the chair that it could not occupy.

In a crisis, the party on the attack loses everything if it does not know how to advance. The lack of a solution aroused uneasiness in the social layers initially

favorable to change. So, the tide turned quickly. On May 31, Séguéy announced that the CGT "has no intention of disrupting the election; it intends to achieve a positive settlement of the workers' demands."

The strike wave ebbed, but unevenly, with new flare-ups. It took a week for the ranks of the strikers to break up. This was another confirmation, a negative one, of the power of the social mobilization.

The acuteness of the political crisis highlighted, in a condensed space of time, the possible alternatives, the role of the choices facing the political and trade-union forces and their decisions. It was then that the possible could have been grasped. Otherwise, it would pull back into its shell. After that point, it was pointless to drivel piously about how "everything is possible." In fact, the social and political dynamic is more complex and alive than the sociologist-photographers and the economists who look at reality through a telescope can grasp. May 1968 cannot be dissected by looking separately at the power of the strike on the one hand and the policy of the CP and the CGT on the other.

An explosion after 20 years of economic growth

May 1968 exploded after 20 years of growth. The social weight of wage earners increased. But the patterns within this category shifted, and they were linked in a different way to society as a whole. Gains were achieved. But there was still a feeling that they had not received a large enough share of the wealth around them, and that they could lose what they had achieved. This is the source of the combination of the defensive and offensive, the vagueness about the goals of the strike that made it difficult for its potentialities to emerge.

Tradition — the role of the CP and the CGT — the political culture and history also weighed in the balance. The years preceding 1968 had not made it possible for experiences to ripen and for activists to mature qualitatively and quantitatively who could have appeared capable of leading a prolonged assault. It was one thing for the strike to get underway without any central control (but given impetus on more than one occasion by activists and cadres of the CGT or the CP). A limited outflanking of the trade-union apparatuses is another, especially if you measure this by the yardstick of the breadth of the strike.

The strike committees essentially represented the grip of the apparatus on the workplaces, through its activist base. The result was contradictory. The braking role of the apparatus was far from evident. The committees were not elected. There were

12. Jean-Marie Vincent, *Temps modernes*, July 1968.

13. Jean Poperen, *L'unité de la gauche 1965-1973*, Fayard, 1975, p.132.

14. *Ibid.*, pp.133-4.

15. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p.683.

16. Poperen, *op. cit.*, p.141.

(Continued on inside back cover)

THE GREAT-GRANDPARENT OF AMERICAN MARXISM

The Workingmen's Party of the United States, A History of the First Marxist Party in the Americas, by Philip S. Foner. Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1984. 148 pp., \$6.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

This little-publicized book by Philip S. Foner about the Workingmen's Party of the United States deserves wider attention and more readers than it has received. Foner himself observes: "Although in a formal sense, the WPUS did not enjoy a long life, in reality it has had the longest life of any radical party in the United States. In 1877, its name was changed to the Socialistic Labor Party, which is still in existence today as the Socialist Labor Party. That organization split, and out of the split the Socialist Party of America emerged in 1901. That party, in turn, split in 1919, and out of that split emerged the present-day Communist Party of the United States." This by itself is incomplete. For example, out of the WPUS tradition came the forces which formed the semi-Marxist/semi-anarchist International Working Peoples Association (led in Chicago by Albert Parsons and others who became the famed Haymarket Martyrs of 1886-87), and also key forces which formed the American Federation of Labor (the direct predecessor of today's AFL-CIO). In addition, the *present-day* Communist Party actually took final form only through splits generated by the process of Stalinization in the world Communist movement during the late 1920s, and one of the products—which is therefore also one of the great-grandchildren of the WPUS—is American Trotskyism. As Foner concludes, "despite its brief formal existence, the Workingmen's Party of the United States was the first link in a chain that has continued to the present day" (p. 7).

Since the 1940s Phil Foner has been one of the foremost Marxist historians in the United States. For many years his sympathies for the Communist Party have made him a target of Cold War anti-communist academics. Since the 1960s many younger scholars with "new left" inclinations have dismissed his particular brand of Marxism as "crude" and "vulgar," counterposing to his "narrow" approach to labor history (focusing on individuals and organizations) the broader social and cultural sensitivities of such splendid labor historians as Herbert Gutman and David Montgomery. None of this is quite fair, however, especially since Foner—coming first—helped pave the way for the others, and such differently focused works often complement more than they negate each other. And the fact remains that Foner's literary output far exceeds in quantity (and, in many cases, in quality) that of most of his critics. He has edited numerous volumes of speeches and writings by Tom Paine, Frederick Douglass, Jose Marti, W.E.B. Du Bois, "Mother" Mary Jones, Kate Richards O'Hare, and others, plus innumerable

documentary collections on the labor and radical movements, Black liberation struggles, etc. Drawing liberally from the studies of other scholars (occasionally evoking protests from some) and himself digging deeply into a broad array of primary sources, he has produced dozens of valuable books on America's revolutionary, progressive, and militant working class traditions—making commonly available an immense amount of important material that otherwise would *not* be available. This stands as an enduring resource for left-wing scholars and activists. One of the most substantial contributions is his ongoing (seven volumes so far) *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*. In short, few scholars are as well suited to tell the story of the first Marxist-influenced party to arise in our country on a national scale, an organization which attracted a broad array of energetic and talented individuals who played important roles in the labor and socialist movements.

The WPUS was formed in July 1876 through a merger of several groupings, including the North American remnants of Karl Marx's First International. The new organization included many immigrant and native-born labor radicals, including: Adolph Douai, Samuel Gompers, Laurence Gronlund, J.P. McDonnell, P.J. McGuire, Thomas J. Morgan, Albert and Lucy Parsons, George Schilling, Friedrich Sorge, Adolph Strasser, Philip Van Patten, and Otto Weydemeyer, as well as the first known Afro-American socialist Peter H. Clark. It was largely German-American and published the Chicago *Vorbote* and the New York *Arbeiter-Stimme*, but it also published an excellent English-language weekly, the *Labor Standard*, edited by J.P. McDonnell, a former Irish Fenian and secretary to Karl Marx in the International Workingmen's Association.

During its brief existence, the WPUS doubled its membership to 7,000, largely skilled craft workers with a keen sense of social consciousness. They were pioneers in trade unionism, socialist electoral work, agitation for the eight-hour workday, and the dissemination and popularization of Marxism and socialist ideas in the United States. When the spontaneous upsurge of mass strikes and working class street actions swept the country in 1877, WPUS militants played a prominent role—particularly in St. Louis, but also in Chicago and other cities.

The WPUS favored working class unity transcending racial and ethnic divisions. Yet there is evidence of prejudice among some members in California toward imported Chinese laborers and in Missouri toward Black workers. Nor was there an appreciation in the organization of the catastrophe wrought by the Republican Party's final betrayal of Reconstruction and Black rights in the South. There were also differences over whether women workers should be organized or instead driven back into

their "rightful place" in the home, so as not to compete with male labor. Finally, there was a failure to identify with the plight of the masses of poor farmers in the South and West whose oppression, a few years later, would generate the mighty Populist revolt.

When the labor uprising of 1877 erupted, Marx wrote to Engels (in a letter dated July 25, which for some reason Foner doesn't quote): "What do you think of the workers of the United States? This first explosion against the associated oligarchy of capital, which has arisen since the Civil War, will naturally again be suppressed, but can very well form the point of origin for the constitution of an earnest workers' party. The policy of the new president will make the Negroes, and the great expropriations of land . . . will make the farmers of the West, who are already dissatisfied, allies of the workers." This remarkable vision (which was later to become a central element in the perspectives of American communism in the 1920s) was unfortunately not shared by the pioneers of American socialism in the WPUS, although some of them were similarly optimistic about new opportunities for political action that would challenge the capitalist parties.

In fact, the most salient division in the WPUS revolved around electoral activity. The party had initially adopted a position favoring independent labor-socialist electoral campaigns only after a trade union movement was securely established. In the wake of the 1877 upsurge, however, many WPUS sections ran candidates—with some initial successes (e.g., Chicago and Cincinnati). This resulted in a split by October 1877, with a sizable minority—including such people as Sorge, Strasser, McDonnell, Weydemeyer, and Gompers—leaving the organization to concentrate on trade union work. The majority of the WPUS transformed the organization into the Socialist Labor Party, which remained a vital force for socialism and labor action until it was split by new differences in the early 1880s.

Valuable and richly documented, Foner's study remains problematical on certain points—particularly around his insistence on labeling the anti-electoral wing of the WPUS "Marxist" and the pro-electoral wing "Lassalleian." The participants in the dispute don't seem to have put such labels on themselves, nor were the issues dividing them quite those which had divided Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle in the 1860s. Respected historians of Marxism—from Franz Mehring and Gustav Mayer to Georges Haupt—have pointed out that in the 1870s all factions within the German socialist movement were still a long way from the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels; the outlook of Lassalle and that of Marx were not clearly distinguishable among members of that movement. It would be surprising if socialists in the U.S. would be more "Marxist" (or more "Lassalleian") than those in Marx's native land, where Marxism didn't exist as a clearly distinguished body of thought until the 1880s and the term itself was not common until the 1890s. Far more interesting than superimposing these labels on

the WPUS would be a more searching examination of the actual debate among WPUS activists.

It's only fair, at this point, to note that the reviewer is responding to a polemic initiated by Foner, who thanks "Paul Le Blanc for permitting me to read some of his writings on the Workingmen's Party of the United States," adding: "I also enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the [WPUS] with Mr. Le Blanc and am grateful for a number of valuable suggestions" (p. 8). At the same time, he argues that by challenging the "Marxist" vs. "Lassalleian" labels, "Le Blanc . . . minimizes the significance of one of the most important issues confronting the American workers of the period" (p. 134). I don't disagree with Foner's stress on the significance of the dispute—only with the way that he discusses it. Perhaps it's worth exploring the question further, since it may have implications for socialists today.

To portray the differences in the WPUS as a battle between "Marxism" and "Lassalleianism" gives a false impression of competing orthodoxies, and of greater theoretical clarity and ideologically based divergences than actually existed. Anti-electoralists such as Marx's friend Friedrich Sorge demanded, as Foner notes, "a concentration of all energies to the task of rebuilding the trade unions . . . and to establishing new unions." To see things differently doesn't place someone outside of Marxism, however. Marx himself asserted in 1871 that "the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from and opposed to all old parties formed by the propertied classes." And as we've already seen, in July 1877—precisely when anti-electoralists were insisting on exclusive concentration on trade unionism—Marx was suggesting that the labor uprising of that year "can very well form the point of origin for the constitution of an earnest workers' party" that might win support from Blacks in the South and farmers in the West. Foner seems to disagree, insisting that the "necessities of the hour" required "temporary abstention" from socialist electoral work and exclusive concentration on trade union organizing. Perhaps Foner is right, but we should recognize that this also provided a rationale for the transition to "pure and simple" trade unionism represented by an increasingly conservative AFL president Samuel Gompers. (It also sounds similar to the position advanced by the "Economist" trend in the Russian socialist movement against which Lenin and other Russian Marxists polemicized some years later—under very different circumstances, to be sure.) In any event, Foner's use of the "Marxist" and "Lassalleian" labels obscures more than it clarifies. The debate raises far more interesting questions about the evolution of the labor and socialist movements in the U.S. than is suggested by Foner's "Marxist good-guys vs. Lassalleian bad-guys" approach.

Also, the decade of experience after the split of revolutionary socialists like Albert Parsons in Chicago, with a less narrowly focused orientation than that of the Sorge-Gompers current, provides a

partial "success story" (until the savage ruling-class repression around the Haymarket incident) the implications of which Foner greatly minimizes in his epilogue to this book. (For more information on this alternative, see my essay "Albert Parsons and His Comrades: Working Class Revolutionaries of 1886," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, April and May 1986, and also Foner's own superb volume, *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs* [New York: Monad Press, 1977].)

Whatever criticism one can make of this volume, however, it stands as a welcome contribution

to the history of the labor and socialist movements in the United States, being the only book available on what Foner calls "the first Marxist party in the Americas." The author presents a substantial amount of hard information, lets some of the participants speak for themselves through many meaty quotations, and leads readers to additional sources in detailed footnotes. The value of this slim volume is enhanced by an appendix which offers the WPUS declaration of principles and constitution, and also by a useful index. It belongs in the library of socialist scholars and activists. ■

THE ZIONIST FRAUD

The Birth of Israel, Myths and Realities, by Simha Flappan. Pantheon Books, New York, 1987. \$18.95.

Reviewed by Haskell Berman

Simha Flappan's book represents important and serious scholarly work done at Harvard University between 1982-85 and completed in Jerusalem in 1987. Using primary sources, many of which have only recently become available—Israel state archives, central Zionist archives, political and diplomatic documents, documents of foreign policy of Israel, diary of Ben-Gurion (founder of the Israeli state), notes of Aziz Shahadeh (the founder of the Arab Ramallah Refugee Campaign), etc.—Flappan effectively lays out evidence to destroy those myths that have served as ideological props of support for the actions and policies of the Zionist leadership and the Israeli state.

Coming from a socialist Zionist background, Flappan admits that he once believed many of these myths. Through his experience in contact with Palestinians, as a director of the Arab Affairs Department of Mapam for 11 years, and as a result of his more recent study, Flappan has come to understand that much of the Zionist leadership's policies were and are based on myths perpetrated to justify their actions and hide their true motives.

Flappan's stated purpose in writing this book is to debunk these myths:

Myth one—Zionists accepted the UN partition and planned for peace.

Myth two—Arabs rejected the partition and launched war.

Myth three—Palestinians fled voluntarily and intended reconquest.

Myth four—All the Arab states united to try to expel the Jews from Palestine.

Myth five—Arab invasion made war inevitable.

Myth six—Defenseless Israel faced destruction by the Arab Goliath.

Myth seven—Israel has always sought peace but no Arab leader has responded.

Flappan explains his effort as "a quest for a just solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict through mutual recognition of both people's right to self-

determination." This is "not as an academic exercise but for a better understanding to provide a new generation of Jews and Palestinians a more accurate understanding of the past and to avoid a disaster in the future," he explains. As worthy as these objectives are, however, Flappan fails to really deal with the nature of a viable solution to the Arab-Jewish problem in Palestine, and also with the objective role that Israeli policy has played in serving imperialist interests in the Middle East and elsewhere. These deficiencies stem from his failure to break definitively with his Zionist background. Yet they cannot detract from the influence which the book should have because of its rigorous reporting of important factual material.

The author's socialist Zionist commitment began in his youth in Poland. In 1930, at the age of 19, he became a member of the Kibbutz Gan Shmuel in Palestine. Later he served as "National Secretary of Mapam, the United Workers Party associated with Kibbutz Artzi—the Hashomer Hatzair movement." He was founder of *New Outlook*, a magazine devoted to Middle East affairs.

To his surprise, Flappan discovered that the founder and first president of the Zionist state, Chaim Weizmann (someone whom he admired and whom he believed was a humanist) thought that Palestinians were not entitled to national independence. He learned that Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and others had no intention of granting equal rights to the Arabs of Israel and sought to deprive them of their civil rights. He cites evidence to contradict the myth perpetuated by the Zionist movement that the Palestinians wanted to drive the Jews into the sea. He points to the 1947-48 collusion that existed between Abdhullah, the emir of Jordan, and Ben-Gurion to abort and thwart any solidarity of the Arab leaderships of countries neighboring Palestine. He enumerates the armistice agreements made by many Arab villages with neighboring Jewish kibbutzim out of fear by the Arabs that Zionist policy would lead to the destruction of their communities and force them to become refugees deprived of their property and land and source of livelihood.

Flappan points to a consistent and continuous

policy that was conceived to drive the Arabs from all of Palestine and leave but a very small minority under the complete political, economic, and military domination of a Jewish state. Even when Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership agreed to the partition in 1948 that established the state of Israel and an Arab enclave, the complete domination of Palestine was their ultimate goal.

Because of its focus on the founding policies of the Zionist state and its left-wing Zionist perspective this work is somewhat limited. In one sense, Flappan's book complements the work of Maxime Rodinson's *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, which begins with the ideology and rise of the Arab nationalist movement and its perspective regarding Palestine and the state of Israel. It is important, however, because it lays bare the lies which prop up Zionist ideology and the policies of the state of Israel. Jews within Israel and elsewhere, along with many people all over the world, have come to

believe these myths and have been propagandized to believe "that the state of Israel can do no wrong."

In view of the current Palestinian rebellion in the Israeli-occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank, and the demonstrations of support given to them by the Arabs of Israel and the resultant polarization and division this has created within the Jewish population of Israel and elsewhere, the publication of Flappan's book is timely. It is an important resource and educational tool for those who may be, for the first time, questioning the Zionist cause.

How can it be that this "progressive, democratic, humanitarian" state which claims to represent the people who experienced the Holocaust adopts the same methods: the beatings, over 200 deaths, expulsions, arrests of thousands of human beings who are indigenous to that land? Why can it carry out such a brutal and bestial policy in contradiction to its proclaimed purpose and aims? Flappan provides some of the answers to these questions. ■

HALSTEAD (Continued from page 26)

security in the face of occasional unprovoked right-wing attacks or government-sponsored provocateurs. The biggest of these actions took place on November 15, 1969, April 24, 1971, and, fittingly, on the date of Richard Nixon's reinauguration in January 1973. The Vietnamese considered these acts of solidarity indispensable to their struggle, and never failed to send their thanks to the demonstrators or to encourage militants throughout the world to build mass actions against the war.

As the Vietnamese liberation fighters understood, the U.S. antiwar movement, in which Fred Halstead played such a key role, made a big difference in creating the conditions for their ultimate victory. U.S. imperialism remains unable, even to this day, to pursue its counterrevolutionary aims to the extent that it would like *because of the antiwar movement's legacy and the work of people like Fred Halstead.*

In 1971 Halstead returned to Los Angeles, where he remained for the rest of his life. He was assigned to the West Coast Bureau of the *Militant* and devoted a number of years to writing a history of the antiwar movement, first serialized in the weekly *Intercontinental Press* and later published in book form as *Out Now!*, published by Pathfinder Press in New York. That book remains a valuable textbook for revolutionary activists to this day; its lessons go beyond organizing against imperial-

ist war, and are applicable to all areas of struggle for social change.

At an SWP rally in the 1970s Halstead confessed that there were times when he wondered why he was devoting his life to fighting for socialism and building the revolutionary party. "Why don't I just chuck it? Have fun. Go swimming [one of Halstead's passions]." He then thundered, "Because this is not the kind of world I want to leave for my children!"

During the political and organizational crisis that engulfed the SWP in the early 1980s—which resulted in the 1983-84 mass purge of all those who remained loyal to the party's traditions and program, and a drastic decline in its membership and political authority in the broader movement—Halstead remained a part of the SWP and loyal to the Barnes faction which had taken over its leadership. He did not play an active role in the most recent movement in this country against imperialist war policies, which has organized protests over the past number of years around Central America. Yet, in spite of what has happened to his party, and regardless of what may happen in the future, the revolutionary socialist movement is stronger because of Fred Halstead's many contributions. Nothing can ever change that fact. ■

June 6, 1988

How To Promote Nuclear Disarmament

Samuel Adams's article on "Disarmament and Socialist Revolution" (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 52) correctly makes the point that only a socialist transformation will eliminate nuclear weapons. But he is incorrect in his criticism of Socialist Action and the Socialist Workers Party for endorsing the June 11 disarmament demonstrations.

War, racism, sexism, and economic exploitation cannot be ended without overthrowing capitalism. This does not prevent revolutionary Marxists from endorsing and building mass actions against these evils. Transitional demands raise the level of consciousness of activists and heighten the effect of the mass actions themselves. Among the slogans which are relevant to antinuclear actions are: No to Intervention; Fund Human Needs Not War; No to the Draft; No Support to the Democratic and Republican War Parties; Let the People Vote on Questions of War and Peace; Freeze and Reverse the Arms Race; etc. I would add that the last slogan was part of the call to action for the April 20, 1985, anti-intervention actions issued by the first ENC conference.

I would suggest that Adams's quotations from the 1930s attacking disarmament demands are not really relevant to the age of nuclear weapons when humanity's very existence hangs in the balance. (For instance, we don't propose to take nuclear weapons from the bourgeoisie and use them to arm the working class!) A mass action nuclear disarmament movement would be objectively anti-imperialist precisely because it is the imperialists who are wedded to these fiendish weapons.

Adams grants that struggles against specific weapons systems (nuclear testing, Cruise and Pershing deployment in Europe, Star Wars, etc.) can be worthwhile. Then why not recognize the progressive character of mass actions against nuclear weapons in general?

Nor do I agree that a demonstration like June 11 distracts from the anti-intervention struggle. Adams correctly notes that anti-intervention is part of the call and that there will be an anti-intervention contingent. There are also speakers to be selected. Revolutionary Marxists should wholeheartedly endorse June 11, build it, and participate in the coalitions where decisions are made.

Dan Rosenshine
Pittsburgh

In Reply: We would like to make one minor factual correction. The call for April 20, 1985, which contained the demand to "Freeze and Reverse the Arms Race," was issued by the April Actions Coalition, not the ENC. The action proposal adopted by

the first ENC conference did not include that slogan. Some of the issues raised in the letter are addressed elsewhere in this issue by Bill Onasch in his article, "Where Does the Central America Movement Go From Here?"

Panama

I was very surprised by some comments made in your editorial, "Hands Off Panama," appearing in issue No. 51: "Noriega's dictatorial rule is roundly opposed by the vast majority of the population of Panama itself. He is no friend of working people in that country or anywhere else." Where is the factual basis for this opinion? It seems the events have proven otherwise.

When one sees beyond the U.S. media, I think you will find that Noriega is very popular in Panama. Could it be that he is in trouble with the U.S. because Panama has relations with Cuba, has interfered with contra drug traffic, assisted Nicaragua, defended the working people against the oligarchy, and insisted upon Panamanian sovereignty over the Canal Zone?

When the U.S. needs a smoke screen to cover aggression against Panama, please, I beg, *do not provide the smoke!*

Tom Hanna
Minnesota

NOTE: See the article, "When Thieves Fall Out—Manuel Noriega and the CIA Connection," in this issue.

CORRECTION:

The article, "Contradictions of the Jackson Campaign," in our last issue was missing quotation marks in the first full paragraph, right hand column, on page 1. It should have read:

"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.

no strikes that started up the process of production again on a different basis, no active strikes, strikes that could have thrown the pendulum further to the left when it could go no further on the political level.

Thus, no experience, even partial ones, of direct democracy could take shape. That was the precondition for displacing the legitimacy of the parliamentary democratic institutions, especially since the masses' democratic feelings had been put on edge, and rightly so, by the Stalinist experience.

1968 laid the basis for other advances

Finally, the crisis of political leadership — which was real for some days, although cushioned by Pompidou's initiatives — should not be transposed onto the repressive apparatus. The prefect of police, the minister of defence, Pierre Messmer, and the chief of the general staff, General Michel Fourquet, did "deliberate" among themselves and take decisions. They did not just talk, they acted. Balladur, Grimaud and Lacouture brought up the question of using the army, which was discussed explicitly on May 29, but only discussed. In the army itself, with a few exceptions, the mood of the conscripts was to remain silent.

So, not everything was possible, far from it. But something different from the May 30 "debacle" without a fight was possible.

Those who realize today, like the *rénovateurs* and Juquin, what a vacuum was left by the failure of the CP to link up with such a social struggle are expressing in their way an understanding that there was a possibility to turn the situation in a different direction. It was within reach.¹⁷ The CP and the CGT rejected it.

Obscuring the difference between the May 1968 crisis and the post-May 1968 period is a sleight of hand. It confuses the reward of success with the consolation prize of defeat. Of course, once the momentum was broken the de Gaulle, Pompidou and Giscard governments were going to make concessions. They relaunched the economic machine. Braking the momentum does not mean crushing a movement.

So, on the basis laid down by 1968 there were advances in other areas — the women's movement, democratic reforms of the education system, greater trade-union rights. But one cannot retroactively say that these gains were all that was at stake in 1968 in order to throttle a debate on strategy, which according to the conventional wisdom today no longer has any place.

An intelligent observer like Viansson-Ponté, who has been wrong less often than the scribblers in vogue today, was totally off the track in March 1968. ★

17. D. Bensaid & A. Krivine, *Mai 68*, Edition La Brèche, 1988.

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