

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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U.S. Anti-Interventionists Move Toward United Action

by Jean Tussey

The October 8 national meeting in Washington, D.C., of organizations opposed to U.S. interventionist policies in Central America marked a significant advance in the historic process of unifying the movement (see "Call for October 8 National Meeting on Central America," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 67).

For the first time in many years representatives of the leading solidarity and anti-intervention groups came together to discuss strategies to strengthen their work by focusing on a united response to what is happening in the region. They adopted a program of action that included support for forming "national and local coalitions of religious, labor, students, peace and justice, solidarity, and anti-interventionist organizations to mobilize for the actions."

Focus on Central America

In keeping with the focus and purpose of the meeting, the body named itself National Actions on Central America (NACA). Delegates agreed to support a series of nationally coordinated protests being organized in communities across the country in the months ahead, culminating in united demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles on March 24, 1990, the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Arnulfo Romero in El Salvador.

The observance, initiated by religious groups to commemorate Romero's life and what he died for, will "bring to life Romero's call and demand that the U.S. stop intervening directly or indirectly, by means of military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressure, to influence the direction and destiny of the peoples of Central America."

The October 8 meeting adopted a structure "to maximize participation in implementing the Action Proposal adopted . . . as democratically, efficiently, and successfully as possible."

An Administrative Committee of five active and experienced leaders of the movement was elected "to start carrying out the decisions of the body and to convene the larger Working Committee for National Actions on Central America as soon as possible." Those elected were: Blase Bonpane, executive director, Office of the Americas; Mayee Crispin, coordinator, Nicaragua Network; José Escobar, Interfaith Office on Accompaniment; James Lafferty, executive committee, Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean; and Angela Sanbrano, executive director, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador.

Two themes in the welcoming remarks by Blase Bonpane reflected the thinking of the October 8 planning committee and of the religious, solidarity, and labor constituencies they represented. The first was that the anti-intervention movement is an historic one, with much experience worth reviewing and many lessons for the present. But the central purpose of this conference was "to *make* history" by uniting the movement for more effective action to end U.S. intervention in Central America.

The second theme was that "remaking the world means transcending sectarianism," reaching out, beyond the already committed, to the broad forces that must be united at this time to end the U.S. war in the Central America region as they did in Vietnam. These themes also motivated the proposed Action Program presented to the conference by Bonpane for the planning committee.

It Happened After Our Deadline:

- November 7: Michel Warshawsky sentenced to 30 months in prison in Israel; Alternative Information Center fined U.S. \$5,000—Emergency protests needed against this discriminatory political victimization. Write to Ministry of Justice, 29 Salah-Al-Din, Jerusalem, 91010, Israel; and Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Drive, N.W., Washington D.C. 20008.
- November 9: Berlin Wall opened for free passage between East and West.
- November 10: More than 160 attend Moscow Trials Campaign Committee public meeting in New York City.
- November 12: FMLN offensive begins in El Salvador; 300,000 in Washington, D.C., 100,000 in Los Angeles, and tens of thousands in other cities across the country rally for reproductive rights.

Watch the January issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* for further details and analysis.

Action Program Adopted

Speaking on the Action Program, the central concern of the delegates was how best to build a powerful movement uniting all who support the democratic right of self-determination for the peoples of Central America and who believe that U.S. taxpayers' money should be spent for decent housing for the homeless, health care for all, jobs and other needed social programs, rather than weapons of mass murder.

The delegates recognized that implementing and mobilizing for the proposed Action Program will not be easy, at a time when many Americans still have illusions about the "peace process" in Central America and do not appreciate that Congress and the Bush administration are driving ahead unremittably with their war against the peoples of the region. But they also recognized that uniting the anti-intervention movement — and reaching out to labor, student, and religious forces to join in actions — is the way to educate and organize to overcome the difficulties.

With the addition of several strengthening amendments, the conference agreed to organize the following actions:

- "Disseminate a statement from this body . . . demanding that the U.S. government allow the Panamanian people to settle their own affairs, that Washington . . . refrain from participating in or initiating further coup attempts."
- **November 16-19, 1989:** Week-long coordinated actions in front of congressional offices calling for an end to contra aid and protesting U.S. interference with the Nicaraguan elections.
- **December 2, 1989:** Annual memorial for the nuns murdered in El Salvador. Religious and educational community events under way.
- **January 31, 1990:** Tenth anniversary of the Spanish Embassy massacre in Guatemala. Local commemorative and educational events planned.
- **February 17-24, 1990:** Local public events to affirm the sovereignty of the Nicaraguan people and the legitimacy of their elections, and to protest U.S. intervention in those elections.
- **March 24, 1990:** Anniversary of assassination of Archbishop Arnulfo Romero. To commemorate his life and what he died for, "we support national actions in Washington, D.C., and . . . on the West Coast. . . . We support forming national and local coalitions . . . to mobilize for the actions."
- **United Emergency Actions**, when required by events, to be called by the working committee established by this meeting to implement the agreed-to program of action.

The planning committee's proposal on structure to implement the Action Program "as democratically, efficiently, and successfully as possible" was adopted. It provides for a Working Committee, "made up of representatives of national organizations and local coalitions opposed to U.S. interventionist policies in Central America," as well as the five-person Administrative Committee.

Debate on Exclusion of Political Parties

The main debate on the structure proposal came around an amendment by a delegate from the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP — the only political party with a delegated representative registered for the meeting) to delete a sentence which declared that the Working Committee "shall be non-partisan and to that end political parties shall not be eligible for membership on it." Delegates in favor of the FSP amendment said that barring political parties as such would be an unacceptable compromise with the principle of non-exclusion, and would only apply to the parties of the left, since all other political parties support U.S. interventionist policies.

Those who disagreed said that the principle of non-exclusion has to be addressed in the specific, not abstractly. To reach out to the broader, uncommitted religious and labor forces in the United States and bring them into the anti-intervention movement, political parties as such should not be on the policy-making body at this time. This is not an ideal situation, but it reflects the actual state of the movement and the consciousness of certain forces that need to be more actively involved. In time we can expect that these attitudes will change, but it would be a mistake to demand such a change as a prerequisite for their participation in the coalition.

Another aspect of this is important as well. There was absolutely no proposal to exclude anyone from the coalition because of ideological outlook or personal membership in one or another political organization. All viewpoints, all who oppose U.S. policy in Central America are welcome, which is the main thing that the principle of non-exclusion is designed to protect. So whatever compromise there is on the general principle of non-exclusion it is one which the majority of delegates considered necessary under the circumstances. Some supporters of National Actions on Central America advocate promoting the goals of the FMLN or the FSLN. But they agreed that this should not be part of the program of the coalition, which is designed to unite the anti-intervention movement and mobilize the massive support necessary to end the U.S. war in Central America.

After the Administrative Committee was elected, it was instructed to publicize the actions of the conference and to convene a first meeting of the Working Committee in November.

Breadth of Attendance

Sixty people attended the October 8 meeting. They came from the Washington, D.C., area, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Chicago, Twin Cities, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Kansas City (Mo.), Ann Arbor, and other cities and towns in Virginia, New Jersey, Maine, West Virginia, Illinois, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

In addition to the organizations represented by the members of the Administrative Committee, there were delegates from the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, National Pledge of Resistance, National

(Continued on page 10)

The Nicaraguan Elections And the International Solidarity Movement

by Steve Bloom

The February 1990 elections in Nicaragua come at a time when the revolution in that country faces a severe economic and social crisis caused by the years of contra war and economic sabotage—both engineered from Washington. Compounding these problems has been the recent significant reduction in aid to Nicaragua by the USSR and Eastern European governments.

This makes it all the more essential for working people around the world to rally in support of the basic democratic right of the Nicaraguan people to self-determination. And that is especially true here in the United States, where the Bush administration continues its efforts to undermine the Sandinista revolution. After failing to bludgeon the Nicaraguan masses into submission, Washington is now arrogantly trying to buy the election in that country—with a massive financial contribution to Violeta Chamorro, the bourgeois coalition candidate for president. Imagine the hue and cry that would arise if Daniel Ortega would make a financial contribution to some candidate in a U.S. presidential campaign.

Working people in North America must rally in opposition to this renewed interference in the affairs of the Nicaraguan people. Let that country and all the nations of Central America work out their own solutions to their problems, free from outside interference. Unfortunately the last year or two has seen a dramatic decline in public protest activity around Central America. This indicates that many still harbor illusions in the “peace process.” They think that somehow the difficulties of the Nicaraguan people have been resolved. But the situation in that country, as well as in neighboring El Salvador, continues to be critical, and U.S. government interference is still one of the primary factors which makes it so. Our efforts to mobilize sentiment against the policies pursued jointly by Congress and the Bush administration are important, and have the potential to be decisive.

The initiative taken by a conference of anti-intervention and solidarity forces in Washington, D.C., last October 8—to form a national coalition of groups concerned with Central America and to plan a united calendar of action—represents an important opportunity (see article, “U.S. Anti-Interventionists Move Toward United Action,” by Jean Tussey, on page 1). Activists in this country who are conscious of the continuing need to build a movement here should take advantage of this opening to revitalize effective public protest against U.S. government policy.

Even in the best of circumstances the choices facing an isolated revolution in a small country like Nicaragua would be difficult. The Sandinista leadership, by promoting a

genuinely democratic electoral process, has shown a tremendous confidence in itself and its continued mass base.

Situation in Nicaragua

All indications are that the Nicaraguan people will support the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the balloting, although there may be a decline in Daniel Ortega’s margin of victory compared to 1984, when he was elected president by a wide majority. Given the present situation, forces both to the right and to the left of the Sandinistas can expect to get a renewed hearing amongst layers of society which were once solidly behind the FSLN.

Those comprising the right-wing opposition, united around the candidacy of Chamorro, hope to capitalize on the difficulties of the revolution which they themselves have been instrumental in creating, and will try to convince a significant number of working people that a return to bourgeois rule in the country would be a positive thing. The consequences of a Chamorro victory would include demoralization and demobilization of the popular masses, further undermining of the social gains of the revolution, a stepping-up of attacks against the workers in the factories, efforts to definitively reverse the land reform introduced by the Sandinistas, etc.

A clear class line divides the Chamorro camp from the camp of the workers and peasants. The electoral struggle between the FSLN and the bourgeois opposition reflects the same social contradiction as the military battle against the contras. The barricades are simply erected across a different front. This remains the primary conflict in Nicaragua today, and there must be no doubt about whom we support. A decisive victory for the FSLN would clearly be an important blow against the counterrevolution. Working people in the U.S. and around the world would benefit greatly from such a victory for the Nicaraguan revolution.

Opposition from the Left

A number of left organizations are also running campaigns against the Sandinistas. True to their class collaborationist position, the Communist Party and the formerly Stalinist Socialist Party are presently part of the Chamorro coalition. But small left-wing groups which are fielding their own candidates include the ex-Maoist People’s Action Movement (MAP) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT)

(Continued on inside back cover)

Trotsky's Voice Heard Again in the USSR

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

There is nothing Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin fear so much as revolutionary Marxism. That is the chief reason why the rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky has presented them with a problem.

Trotsky continued the revolutionary Marxist tradition through his actions and his writings for his entire life. He fought against the usurpation of political power from the workers and peasants by the bureaucratic caste under Stalin's leadership—a caste which was concerned only with its own narrow self-interest. And he continued this fight despite the attacks and repression aimed against him—until his assassination by Stalin's agent in 1940.

Removing Trotsky from history—his role as a leader of the Bolshevik revolution, Soviet diplomacy, and the Red Army—was necessary so that the bureaucratic caste could falsely present themselves to the Soviet masses as Marxism's standard-bearers. After a decade of slander and repression against Trotsky and the Left Opposition, the bureaucracy formally banned Trotsky's writings from the Soviet Union altogether in 1935, even though possession of them had been treated as a crime for nearly seven years.

In the meantime, history was continually rewritten to reflect the changing needs of the parasitic caste. And Trotsky's name was erased from the record except as an "opponent of the peasantry," "a wrecker," "an enemy of socialism," "an opponent of Leninism," and a host of other slanders. Their sole function was to avoid an honest discussion of Trotsky's political ideas. The culmination of this campaign and the crescendo of bloody repression, the Moscow show trials of 1936-38, saw Trotsky as the chief defendant in absentia, charged with a series of monstrous conspiracies. The most prominent remaining Bolshevik leaders from Lenin's time were framed up during these trials as co-conspirators, convicted on the basis of confessions extorted through intimidation and torture, and shot.

Now, as a result of Gorbachev's glasnost policies in the USSR, all of these Bolshevik leaders have been juridically rehabilitated, that is, declared innocent of the charges—as have millions of other victims of Stalin—all the leaders, that is, except Trotsky. The reason Trotsky has remained anathema to Gorbachev and the one historical figure who cannot be rehabilitated is that the ideas of revolutionary Marxism he defended help to explain how the bureaucracy was able to take power in the USSR and how it can be overthrown. They thus provide the necessary tools for workers and peasants today who want to formulate a strategy for removing that bureaucracy—including its liberal, Gorbachevite wing—from their path.

Gorbachev and the reformist wing of the bureaucracy have a problem, however. The overwhelming falsification of history that took place under Stalin is well known to millions of

people who lived through the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. A few remain who even remember the revolution itself. This is why Gorbachev has had to call for "filling in the blank spots in history." Yet it is difficult to do this and avoid a discussion of the most important fact about these historical blank spots: the target of Stalin was revolutionary Marxism itself, and the foremost defender of this ideology was Leon Trotsky.

Today's bureaucrats would like to heap all the blame for past falsifications on those who are dead and buried in order to get themselves off the hook. But that has proven to be impossible. Gorbachev himself, in his speech in November 1987 marking the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, repeated Stalinism's old slanders.

Gorbachev claimed that Trotsky sought in the 1920s "to provoke a split" in the Bolshevik party. He tried to give the impression that Lenin in his last letters expressed apprehension about Trotsky instead of about Stalin. "Trotsky... after Lenin's death displayed excessive pretensions to top leadership in the party, thus confirming Lenin's opinion of him as an excessively self-assured politician who always vacillated and cheated." While Lenin did describe Trotsky as "excessively self-assured," along with other, positive assessments of Trotsky's talents, the phrase "always vacillated and cheated" comes straight from Stalin's campaign of falsification.

Trotskyism in the 1920s, Gorbachev continued, "was essentially an attack on Leninism all down the line." In defeating Trotsky "the party's leading nucleus headed by Joseph Stalin had safeguarded Leninism in an ideological struggle." But that position has become increasingly difficult to defend. More and more, the genuine ideas of Trotsky are being heard again in the USSR.

Even as Gorbachev was speaking, a special party commission was being formed to investigate the "repressions of the 1930s, '40s, and beginning of the '50s." That commission's findings laid the basis for the rehabilitations that have followed and continue today. They have been accompanied by wide-ranging revelations and admissions of previously concealed crimes of Stalin on all fronts. These include the establishment of "troikas"—or three-person teams—which issued summary death sentences to millions of workers and peasants on the basis of lists drawn up in advance by the state security police—the NKVD; the secret pacts with Hitler through which Hitler and Stalin divided up, invaded, and brutally occupied Poland and the Baltic states and which included a clause whereby Stalin agreed that the Soviet forces would repress opponents of Hitler in the territories Stalin occupied; the responsibility of the NKVD forces for the Katyn Forest and other massacres, and the millions of deaths due to the artificial famine in Ukraine, to name a few.¹

At the same time, Soviet historians began to examine the circumstances surrounding the suppression of Lenin's last letters, or Lenin's "testament," as they are called. And as a result historians have had to concern themselves with precisely those problems which had been most important to Lenin during the last months of his politically active life. The facts began to show that in his final days these problems revolved around what could be done to resist the rising bureaucratization of the party and a state apparatus that was suffocating workers' democracy; opposition to the "autonomization" plan of Stalin on how the Soviet Union should be organized;² maintaining the state monopoly of foreign trade; and the need to rationalize production through a strengthened State Planning Commission.

And, as has been gradually revealed in the Soviet press, on all the key issues Lenin turned to none other than Leon Trotsky as an ally to form a bloc against Stalin and the Politburo of the party.

Discussion of Trotsky's Role

In mid-1987, the government mass daily *Izvestia*, in a long article on the composition of the first Soviet government, admitted that Trotsky had a post in it, a long suppressed fact. By early 1988, when the government was preparing to rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow trials, the worst political slanders emanating from the trials were replaced by more subtle character assassinations and distortions of Trotsky's ideas to make him appear ultraleft, an adventurer, or perhaps an egomaniac, "shifty," anything but a serious political opponent.³ Official historians, while finally admitting the disastrous human and economic consequences of Stalin's forced collectivization of the farmland, 1929-33, shifted to a line that *Stalin* was really implementing *Trotsky's* policies, thereby enabling them to blame Trotsky instead of Stalin for all the associated horrors and suffering.⁴ Or they slipped in remarks questioning Trotsky's political integrity or commitment to Bolshevism — warmed-over attacks from the 1920s against the Opposition in its early days, when the serious falsification and slander were beginning. In certain respects, the process now in motion is like running the film of history in reverse.

However, by mid-1988, prominent figures like historian Yuri Afanasyev and party editor Otto Latsis had publicly spoken out for Trotsky's rehabilitation and the publication of his writings; and playwright Mikhail Shatrov in such works as "Onward . . . Onward . . . Onward," published and widely performed, brought into the popular culture an image of Trotsky as an honest ideological opponent of Stalin, who was assassinated by him. Other historians were writing articles that simply reported factually on documents that disproved the regime's attacks against Trotsky, though not explicitly defending him.

A prime example was a long article by Soviet historian Vitaly I. Startsev in *Istoriya SSSR*, November 1988. Startsev is a doctor of historical science, a professor and the head of the faculty at the Herten Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad. After discussing in detail the intrigues by Stalin and the other Politburo members to isolate Lenin during the final months of his life, Startsev concludes "it is impossible

not to see that during these months, February and March 1923, Trotsky tried to help Lenin in upholding his points of view on a number of questions of inner-party policy."⁵

In early 1989, one of the Kremlin's chief anti-Trotsky hacks Nikolai Vasetsky admitted that Stalin had been responsible for Trotsky's assassination (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Jan. 4, 1989; see also *International Viewpoint*, No. 155, Jan. 23, 1989). But what followed in various journals were lengthy and sympathetic portraits of his assassin, Ramón Mercader, and of David Siqueiros who had engineered an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him (*Neva*, March 1989 and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, March 22, 1989). These articles were obviously directed toward convincing the readers that these men and their cohorts acted out of a deep commitment to the revolution and from a "conviction that Trotsky was an enemy," "an ally of fascism," "a worse enemy than the fascists," all charges echoing those fabricated by the Stalinists for the Moscow show trials. No such lengthy or sympathetic portrait appeared of the victim, nor were there any refutations of these charges.

The journals on the "cutting edge" of glasnost in general — like *Ogonyok* and *Moscow News* — have tended to lead the way in leaking the truth about Trotsky. *Ogonyok* actually ran a short excerpt from Trotsky's autobiography and notes on Lenin in its April 1989 issue. However, the process of unfolding truth — dialectical in its essence — has involved a variety of journals and writers. It has been a process that could not have been anything except a gradual but unavoidable response by the ruling caste to the knock of history at its door. And this process is still unfolding.

Since early 1989, the truth has begun escaping from many quarters. From the "cutting edge" newspapers and limited-run journals, articles on Trotsky moved into the "mainstream" press.

In an attempt to keep the waters muddy, the mass daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Young Communist League newspaper, published an interview on May 19, 1989, with the Stalinist hack Vasetsky. It had the charming title: "I will not be in second place.' Steps Toward a Portrait of Trotsky." While accusing Trotsky of everything from vanity, cruelty, and overweening ambition, to being the "patriarch of the bureaucracy" rather than the bureaucracy's arch-opponent, it featured a photograph of him during the civil war years and gave him some credit for his activities during the revolution and the civil war. It even included several quotes from Lenin praising Trotsky.⁶

In June 1989, *Voprosi Istorii* began printing excerpts from Trotsky's *Stalin School of Falsification*. First issued in 1931, this is a collection of documents and speeches by Trotsky and others, as well as "lost documents," that establish the truth about what actually happened during the Russian Revolution, an early focus of the Stalinist falsification campaign. It was accompanied by a two-and-one-half page introduction by Vitaly Startsev, author of the *Istoriya SSSR* article referred to earlier.

Although the mere admission that these documents exist, let alone their actual publication, is a major milestone for historic truth, Startsev explained without fanfare the key events surrounding the rise of the opposition to Stalinism and its repression and how falsification came to be used by

Stalin and the apparatus to enhance their own role and eliminate mention of those Stalin sought to discredit. "The contemporary reader will easily notice that many of today's publicists, authors of sensational publications, have used this work by Trotsky (and not only this work), borrowing many facts that expose Stalin. We have no intention of embarrassing them for this. But it is time the primary source be published," Startsev says in his introduction.

The first excerpt is accompanied by Trotsky's introduction to the Russian edition written in Turkey, September 13, 1931, that provides Trotsky's own historic and political background, a significant achievement for glasnost. However, Startsev almost apologizes for including this document, since "today the narrow circle of specialists on the history and historiography of Great October do not need, of course, any introduction to the given publication, being interested above all in the text itself that has been concealed from us for over 60 years," as if Trotsky's introduction has not been concealed in the very same way for nearly as long! But even though Trotsky's letter might be old news, he implies, he chose to include it for the benefit of the wider reading public. The first excerpt the journal printed included the first 27 points of his "Letter to the Bureau of Party History" of October 21, 1927.⁷

In July 1989, the journal *Sociological Investigations* No. 3 featured an extremely peculiar article by L.A. Radzikhovsky, listed as a candidate in psychological science and a senior fellow at the Academy of Psychological Science. If this article is not, in reality, the product of a team of writers well trained in the Stalin school of falsification, it is at least evidence of the crippled intellectual capacities left in the wake of this school's disintegrating hegemony. While the article has to be read to be believed, some "high points" can provide its flavor.

It contains an account of Trotsky as "Leader No. 2" of the Bolshevik revolution and "Leader No. 1" of the Opposition to Stalinism. It explains the social and economic roots of the bureaucracy and the bureaucracy's stake in abandoning revolutionary internationalism in favor of socialism in one country; it explains the social and economic roots of "Thermidor" and quotes Trotsky appropriately, justifying his uncompromising struggle against Stalinism. "Trotsky to the end of his life unconditionally supported the October revolution and considered himself a student of Lenin." The article includes numerous substantial and brilliant quotations from Trotsky's writings that are used by the author approvingly, and to which the author adds his "own" assessment of events, many of which are lifted from Trotsky's writings.

However, despite all this, the article is a direct assault on Trotsky. For example, according to Radzikhovsky, Trotsky was full of contradictions which, along with his unbridled egoism and incurable romanticism, were the cause of his downfall. Trotsky, Radzikhovsky explains, opposed the dictatorship of the Stalinist apparatus but at the same time wanted a dictatorship himself. (Radzikhovsky appears to have never heard of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is, of course, the dictatorship Trotsky had in mind.) Since Trotsky, therefore, supported dictatorship, Radzikhovsky reasons, he must have opposed and feared workers' democracy, even though he claimed to be a proponent of workers' democracy. That explains why Trotsky's only alter-

native to Stalinism was restoration of "war communism," a solution that was nothing more than Trotsky's inability to recognize that the revolutionary elan of the immediate postrevolutionary years was no more. Radzikhovsky even found a quotation from Trotsky condemning Stalin's policies of forced collectivization and superindustrialization of the 1929-33 period that makes Trotsky out as a proponent of self-accounting (*khozraschet*) and market mechanisms, i.e., Gorbachev's and the bureaucracy's economic reforms! And this despite the fact that forced collectivization and superindustrialization were Trotsky's "own ideas being brought to life."

In opposing Stalinism, the article goes on, Trotsky was doing the apparatus a favor by giving it an excuse to repress all opposition in the interest of party unity. While recognizing the tremendous persecution experienced by Trotsky and Opposition supporters—he even mentions the murder of Trotsky's son Sedov (whose name, however, is not given)—the article has a startling conclusion: Trotsky was responsible for all the repression of the 1920s and the mass murders carried out by the apparatus because he gave the apparatus an excuse to become a dictatorship (which Radzikhovsky claims is what Trotsky wanted all along anyway). These mass murders and this dictatorship "was the only effect of Trotsky's writings."

While only ten or so pages in length, the article speaks volumes about the vital need for the swift publication in the USSR of massive quantities of all Trotsky's and the Opposition's writings so they can be available for everyone to read. Trotsky's own writings will expose readers to the Marxist method of assessing and analyzing historic developments, the greatest "deficit" among the many deficits in the USSR today.

Trotsky's role as a leading Bolshevik and upholder of Leninism, not an "attacker" of Leninism, as Gorbachev had proclaimed only two years before, is now being acknowledged. Other facts are being admitted as well. For example, *Moscow News*, No. 36, Sept. 3, 1989, discusses U.S. radical Max Eastman's efforts in 1925-26 to publicize abroad the inner-party differences and the suppression of Lenin's testament in 1923-4. In the course of providing some historic background to what Eastman said, the account almost casually reports a history that so many were killed to suppress:

The author [Max Eastman] describes events that were taking place in our party in 1926 and earlier. A struggle was occurring between two groups of Bolsheviks. In the group that then held power, the ruling position was occupied by Stalin and in his general staff were Bukharin, Rykov, Kalinin, and Tomsky. The deceased Dzerzhinsky was the second in command after Stalin in this group. They were united around one idea, that the victory of the revolution and its future development could be upheld only if they were to hold the reins of power strongly in their own hands, using all feasible means to prevent the free exchange of opinions among the rank-and-file members of the party and the genuinely democratic election of functionaries. The ruling figure in the opposition was Trotsky and behind him stood a solid bloc which included Radek, Rakovsky,

Sokolnikov, Pyatakov, Preobrazhensky, Krestinsky, and Krupskaya—Lenin's wife; and also Zinoviev and Kamenev who just two years before had been vicious opponents of Trotsky.

The opposition group proclaimed its absolute commitment to party unity but decisively demanded that the dictatorship of the bureaucracy that had been established by Stalin be removed and that a regime of genuine democracy in the party be restored. (*Moscow News*, No. 36, Sept. 3, 1989. The article did not appear in the English-language *Moscow News*.)

In the November issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* an interview was published which appeared in the August 1989 issue of *Cobesednik*, "the weekly illustrated supplement" of the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. That interview represents a significantly different point of view, a heartening verification of Trotsky's closing words before the Dewey Commission convened in Mexico in 1937 to examine the charges raised against Trotsky at the Moscow trials: "Be it even over our bleaching bones, the truth will triumph." Professor Vladimir I. Billik in his answers to a skeptical interviewer defends Trotsky without reservation against some of the most prevalent Stalinist slanders.

Trotsky's Own Words

In August, at about the same time as the Billik interview was published, another youth publication called *Molodoi Kommunist* published Trotsky's "The New Course." Originally printed in 1923 in *Pravda*, this article was the first public political criticism by Trotsky of the bureaucracy's policies and methods and allowed Trotsky to correct many misconceptions the bureaucracy had fostered.

Such discussions in the official press reflect the explosions coming from below. A friend from Leningrad said the following in a letter written in early October: "Recently in our press there has been an extraordinary amount written about the activities of the Left Opposition, about Trotsky, excerpts from the works of Trotsky himself and also of Rakovsky. De facto the Old Man has already been rehabilitated. At first I had kept a record of all these publications but later I gave up because they began to pour with such a mighty torrent that it was impossible to follow it!" He cites in addition to the *Cobesednik* interview with Billik and *Molodoi Kommunist* publication of the "New Course" articles in two issues of "Soviet Trade Unions," articles in three issues of "Argumenty i Fauty," and a work of Trotsky's in *Hedelya*, the weekly supplement of the government daily *Izvestia* in September. "But," he said, "this list is clearly not a complete one."

Moskovskiy Novosti, No. 45, dated November 5, 1989, commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the October revolution reflected how much times have changed since Gorbachev defended Stalin's attacks on Trotsky just two short years before. Entitled "Russia. October, 1917," the article featured four "sketches" about the Bolshevik revolution. One written by the same Vitaly Startsev was entitled "Lenin and Trotsky," and was accompanied with an actual photo of Trotsky with Lenin and Kamenev taken May 5, 1920. Startsev, it seems, is not being fully honest here: while admit-

ting that Trotsky played an important role in the October insurrection, Startsev had to state "without Trotsky, the revolution would have taken place all the same." He restores the truth of Trotsky's collaboration and political agreement with Lenin upon his return from exile in May 1917. While he does just barely manage to give Trotsky credit for his role in October, Startsev falsely refers to Trotsky as a "centrist" against Lenin on the question of whether or not to plan an insurrection.

The *MN* article is accompanied by an explanation that the work of the party Central Committee's Commission to prepare "Sketches of History of the CPSU" is nearing completion. Headed by Gorbachev himself, the commission included 30 "well-known scholars" from Moscow and Leningrad and a number of "young investigators." The commission's task was not, we are told, to write another definitive history like the "Short Course."⁶ The history books they are producing will reflect various points of view and hypotheses, which are intended as a starting point for a potential student of history.

At the disposal of the scholars were many unpublished documents of the Central Party Archives, the Archives of the KGB, the Ministry of Defense, and others. Materials from several foreign archival collections have also been used. "Along with 'Sketches' will be published all the documents which the authors relied upon in their work. This goal is already being completed—documents have been published in the journal 'News from the CC of the CPSU.' The first chapters of 'Sketches'—all dealing with the pre-October period—are ready for publication for wide discussion by society. At the beginning of next year, they will be printed by Politizdat."

This is undoubtedly a major tributary feeding the "mighty torrent" of articles about Trotsky and the Opposition referred to by my Leningrad friend. The products of these two years of work are helping break the ice of the long winter of Stalinism. Defenders of Trotsky are beginning to be heard, not only in connection with the "pre-October period," but in connection with the post-October period as well. However, the higher party organs have not officially rehabilitated Trotsky, even though all the other Bolshevik defendants have been cleared of the charges and the charges have been admitted to have been false. But Trotsky's role as the key leader with Lenin of the October revolution and as the leader of the Marxist opposition to Stalinism are now being recognized in official organs. And the implications of this truth is something with which the heirs of Stalin must reckon.

Continued Problems for Bureaucratic Falsifiers

In July 1989, Leningrad's largest bookstore began selling textbooks for middle school students of the ninth grade for their fall studies. History exams had been cancelled in the spring of 1988 for middle school students (but not for students in the universities). It was acknowledged that what the history students have been taught in the past was false. Yet their fall history textbook is the old, pre-1987, admittedly false one. A 65-page supplement, or revised history "workbook," published in 1989, was issued as a companion volume.

The goal of the supplement is to make it appear that the bureaucracy's policies of perestroika and peaceful coexistence are a continuation of Leninism. This means that the old methods of historical distortion and lies prevail. While it includes many "returned names" and previously banned events (some "blank spots" have been filled), it continues to cover up and falsify Trotsky's role, as well as leave out a great many important historical facts. By the time the school term started on September 1, the book was already obsolete in terms of the information which was becoming available to citizens of the USSR through the official mass media.

The contradictions facing the bureaucracy are increasingly coming into sharp relief. Having now lost considerable credibility as a result of the continuing historical revelations, and as a result of the failure of the perestroika economic reforms to improve the living standard of the masses (in fact the situation is worsening), Gorbachev and the Communist Party will have to move with alacrity if they want to maintain even a small measure of popular confidence. But whither are they able to go?

There is a growing body of evidence: revelations due to the work of the Memorial Society;⁹ the emergence of more and more individuals who are coming forward to tell the truth based on their own experiences; increased contacts by Soviet people with the world of bourgeois scholarship abroad which, while riddled with its own distortions at least shows that he played a role in the revolutionary period and waged a tenacious battle against Stalinism; and various domestic and international efforts urging Trotsky's rehabilitation and the research of dozens of scholars who now have access to archives long tightly sealed. To continue to slander Trotsky and lie about the part he played in the revolution has become an increasingly untenable option for the bureaucracy. Yet to tell the truth about him, or allow the truth to be told by others, means undermining any justification for the bureaucracy's right to rule. ●

NOTES

1. For example, *Moscow News*, Issue No. 6, dated Feb. 12, 1989, discussed the Bukhovnya massacres of 200-300,000 in the late 1930s and the Orel Prison executions; an official commission confirmed the data in early 1989. See *MN* No. 21, May 21, 1989, for a chilling admission of the Interior Ministry's responsibility for the Katyn Forest massacre of thousands of officers of the Polish army June 2-6, 1940, including names of NKVD commanding officers. *MN*, in issue No. 39, Sept. 24, 1989, documented the secret pacts between Stalin and Hitler of August 23 and September 28,

1939, including surrounding events and incriminating texts of secret governmental communiques. *Ogonyok*, No. 27, 1989, documents the artificially created famine in Ukraine, which even to mention in Stalin's time was considered a serious crime against the state, as Mikhail Baitalsky has discussed in his *Notebooks for the Grandchildren* (see serialization in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*).

2. In the fall of 1922, the Central Committee's commission empowered to draft a constitution for the new revolutionary state adopted the plan proposed by Stalin, the commission's head. Stalin's plan, the "Project of a Resolution Concerning the Relations Between the RSFSR and the Independent Republics," referred to as the "Autonomization" plan, called for the five non-Russian republics to become part of the Russian Republic as autonomous units. Lenin was totally opposed to this plan as a pseudo-federal structure in which non-Russians would quickly come under the dominion of Russians, making a fiction of the Bolshevik's opposition to the Great Russian chauvinism of the tsarist times. He countered Stalin's plan with a plan for a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which the non-Russian republics would enter on an equal footing with the Russian Republic. This plan was adopted by the commission. However, in late December 1922, having learned of the brutality Stalin and his apparatus in the Caucasus had used against the Georgian Communists, Lenin revised his thinking. He proposed that the next party congress consider guaranteeing unity with the non-Russian republics in only military and diplomatic spheres, with non-Russians being free in all other areas to chart their own course. Lenin wanted to eclipse the possible damage that could result from the Great Russian bully attitudes displayed by some prominent party leaders. Lenin's proposals were part of his suppressed "testament."

3. A prime example of this school was General D. Volkogonov's article in *Pravda* Sept. 9, 1988. See *International Viewpoint*, No. 148, Oct. 3, 1988.

4. Soviet historian Poel Parp contradicted such a historian—Vasily Belov—in *Knizhnoye Obozreniye*, No. 22, May 27, 1988.

5. That major documents have not yet been made available to public scrutiny despite glasnost was evident from Startsev's remark on the limitations of his account: "Unfortunately, the real authoritative archives of the material of the plenums of the Central Committee of the party from 1922-23, the minutes of the Politburo and its circulars, were not accessible to the author."

6. See V. Ulanov's article, in *Leningrad Pravda*, July 23, 1989, "Vainglorious Talent—Trotsky: Toward a Political Biography." This article contains objective material. However, its introductory material is in the same malicious vein as the title.

7. In 1927, the Bureau of Party History issued a questionnaire to allegedly get a better record of the events of the revolution. It was a cynical act because Stalin's official falsifiers had already been hard at work for over three years. Trotsky took the occasion to cite specific deliberate falsifications of known events and documents and self-contradictory statements by leading party figures who were trying to accommodate to each new turn of Stalin's intrigues. See *The Stalin School of Falsification*, Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, Inc. New York, 1972.

8. "History of the CPSU—A Short Course," which appeared in 1938 at the height of the purges, was the official full-fledged falsified history with all the "blank spots" that Stalin's heirs must now try to fill in.

9. The Memorial is the "All-Union Voluntary Historical and Educational Society," established officially in mid-1988 to collect and preserve documents and testimony of all the victims of the Stalinist repression of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

Correction:

In the article "TROTSKY: On the Road to the Truth About Him," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 68, p. 23, 'By' should be 'Vy'; page 24, the formulation of Trotsky's position at Brest Litovsk should read "we are ending the war and we are not concluding a peace, we are demobilizing the army."

Lech Walesa, Darling of Reactionary Forces

by Samuel Adams

The growing disintegration of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe is obviously a development of momentous importance. However, the question arises: What will take the place of these regimes and what kind of economic, social, and political programs will the new governments that come to power advance?

In Poland, Solidarity's leaders have called for the restoration of capitalism. Their program states, "The economic goal is to set up a market economy whose features resemble the proven systems of highly developed economies." This program calls for extensive sales of state property and removal of restrictions on land and real estate ownership to restore private property as a permanent feature of the economy.

No one should be surprised that Solidarity is pushing such a program. Its leadership reflects the influence and ideology of imperialism, clericalism, reactionary nationalism, and reformist social democracy.

Steve Bloom omits all mention of this in his article, "Jaruzelski's Big Gamble" (*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, October 1989). Bloom tends to make light of Solidarity's rightward thrust, attributing it primarily to "confusion."

But Solidarity's leader, Walesa, knows what he is doing. He is the darling of reactionary forces around the world for

a good reason. Walesa is consciously attempting to sap the revolutionary spirit of Polish workers as he tries to orient Poland toward U.S. capitalism. That is why he is a Bush favorite and has been invited to address the U.S. Congress.

Nor should we gloss over the fact that the AFL-CIO's top hierarchy has close ties with Solidarity and helps fund it. Years ago the AFL-CIO's representative, Irving Brown, a CIA agent, was invited by Solidarity to address the group's conference.

Speaking of the call by Solidarity leaders for a capitalist economy, Bloom writes, "It will not be at all clear what such statements really mean until we can evaluate the program of action put into practice by the new Polish government." Is he suggesting we should withhold judgment on Solidarity's pro-capitalist program until we see whether the leadership is successful in ramming it through?

To be sure, there are different wings and currents within Solidarity, and the masses of Polish workers could intervene to thwart the government's pro-capitalist program. But that is no reason not to criticize that program. Marxists should support a revolutionary socialist program for Poland in contrast to what both Jaruzelski and Solidarity leaders propose. ●

Let's Not Forget the Role of the Masses

by Steve Bloom

I certainly agree with Samuel Adams when he says that "Marxists should support a revolutionary socialist program for Poland in contrast to what both Jaruzelski and Solidarity leaders propose." The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* has carried articles along such lines frequently in the past, and will continue to do so. And certainly no one reading my characterization of the program put forward by Lech Walesa and Tadeusz Mazowiecki as "reformist" could entertain any idea that I endorse their outlook for resolving Poland's economic crisis, or that I believe we should "withhold judgment" about it.

But the purpose of my October article was different, and Samuel Adams seems to have missed the point. Many people, including honest militants, have been confused by recent events in Poland. Both the bourgeois media and much of the left press, with their typical idea that politics is conducted by "leaders," have been writing as if the parliamentary maneuvering between Jaruzelski and the reformist wing

of Solidarity is likely to be decisive in deciding Poland's future. Unfortunately, Adams also seems to approach the question from this point of view. But that framework is incorrect. It is *the masses of the Polish people who will have the final say*, and the main goal of my brief article was simply to refocus our attention on this essential idea.

I do not agree with Adams that "Walesa knows what he is doing." Rather, as I suggested in my article, he does not seem to have a thought-through ideology at this point. He is acting empirically, floundering around, looking for a solution wherever he might be able to find one. Since he has no real understanding of socialism, and accepts the claim of the bureaucrats to speak in the name of that ideology, he is presently looking to the West, to capitalism.

But it is one thing for the new government to decide that their "economic goal is to set up a market economy whose features resemble the proven systems of highly developed economies" and quite another to actually bring such a system

into being. To implement that approach will require a *counterrevolution in Poland*—and it seems unlikely that Walesa and Mazowiecki have really come to terms with that fact. Even if this is their conscious objective, counterrevolution will not be achieved by passing resolutions in the Polish parliament.

Adams doesn't discuss the parts of my article where I explain all of this. He speaks as if the one point he quotes ("it will not be at all clear what such statements really mean until we can evaluate the program of action put into practice by the new Polish government") is the sum total of my evaluation of the new regime's economic perspectives. But I also discussed "the basic social question involved. Poland cannot be transformed into a capitalist country by the declarations of the present Solidarity government, any more than England can be transformed into a socialist country by resolutions of the Labor Party. Far more profound social forces must be unleashed in either case."

Adams acknowledges that "the masses of Polish workers could intervene to thwart the government's pro-capitalist program." But such a statement is a bit on the mild side. The working class that forged Solidarity, that maintained its militancy and resistance even in the face of Jaruzelski's martial law and ultimately forced a dramatic transformation of political life in Poland, is not now going to roll over and let a new class of exploiters take over without a struggle. Remember that when we talk about capitalist restoration we are not talking simply about economic reforms—reprivatization and a market system. *We are talking about a new government run and controlled by the exploiters.*

Resistance from the workers is inevitable should the *genuine* possibility arise of such a thing coming into being—as opposed to a purely abstract possibility raised by Mazowiecki in his public pronouncements. And workers'

resistance is one of the factors that is certain to severely limit the options of the reformist leadership of Solidarity in implementing its present economic program. It is not at all clear that the Walesa-Mazowiecki leadership will be willing to push things to the point of a severe clash with the workers, whom they still rely on for their social base. That is why we will have to wait and see what unfolds before assessing how much weight to give the government's present programmatic pronouncements.

Of course, and on this I'm sure Adams and I agree, the real solution is the development of an alternative leadership. Even though Walesa and Mazowiecki might be compelled, for empirical reasons, to change their "pro-capitalist program" it is exceedingly unlikely that they will ever manage to stumble upon a genuinely proletarian, revolutionary one. On page 11 we are reprinting a "Declaration of the Wroclaw Regional Workers' Committee of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution" which demonstrates the kind of alternative perspectives that *are* in fact being discussed on the Polish left and amongst the Polish masses.

Finally, Walesa's role as the "darling of reactionary forces" should not be exaggerated. It tells us very little about the real social dynamics of what is going on in Poland, or even about Walesa's own policies. Of course the imperialists will try to exploit the crisis in Poland for all the propaganda value it has, and they will try to manipulate any forces they can in order to push toward a *genuine* capitalist restoration. But we should remember that the democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square were also "the darlings of reactionary forces around the world." That did not settle a single important question for genuine proletarian militants. We have to base our own assessment on a more profound appreciation of the actual social dynamics of what is going on in Poland today. ●

Anti-intervention (Continued from page 2)

Mobilization for Survival, SANE/Freeze, CoMadres, and the Central America Refugee Center. More than half were from local labor, community, and other Central America committees, networks, coalitions, and unions.

Eighteen trade unionists present were from the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; American Federation of Government Employees; American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; American Federation of Teachers; Communications Workers of America; Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union; International Union of Electrical Workers; Service Employees International Union; United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America; United Food and Commercial Workers; as well as the Labor Committee on Central America and the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. Other trade unionists, including several local Black labor leaders, signed the call for the meeting but were unable to attend.

Organized labor's potential for mobilizing masses of people had been impressively demonstrated the day before the conference during the national homeless march on Washington, where two hundred thousand marched with

banners calling for "Housing Now!" "Funds for Homes, Not Bombs!" and a host of other social demands. That action left its mark on the anti-intervention meeting.

October 8 was an important step forward for the anti-intervention movement in this country. But in order to realize the potential for a unified movement embodied in that meeting, all of the forces involved—both national and community based—will have to implement the Action Program agreed to.

We need to report back to our constituencies and we need to act. We need to organize united support for the local events on the calendar of actions, linking the religious, labor, and student forces capable of mobilizing for massive, national actions like the one projected for March 24 to protest the U.S. government's devastating interventionist policies in Central America. Those policies violate the democratic right of self-determination of the peoples of the region, and they do it at the expense of human needs at home and abroad. That is why persistence in building a powerful, united anti-intervention movement in the U.S. can end the U.S. war in Central America as it did in Vietnam. ●

November 1, 1989

Declaration of the Wroclaw Regional Workers' Committee of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution

THE NOMINATION of Tadeusz Mazowiecki for the post of prime minister of the Polish People's Republic is an expression of the deepening crisis of the nomenklatura's system of domination. This result of social emancipation has its origins in the birth of Solidarnosc — a workers' movement independent of the bureaucracy — in August 1980. Eight years of attempts by General Jaruzelski's regime to try and crush the self-organized society have ended in failure.

The establishment of Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government, however, does not mean that the society has taken power. This government is based on "35% democracy" and on a guarantee that the foundations of the system will not be questioned, in spite of the fact that the electorate came out clearly on June 4, 1989 for the liquidation of the nomenklatura. The main ruling structures — the office of the president of the republic, the ministries of the interior and of defence and the national bank — not only escape any control by the society, but even by the prime minister. By accepting such conditions the leading opposition groups, represented by the new prime minister, have not made the most of the pressure of the strikes and the bankruptcy of the PUWP. Nevertheless, the establishment of this government opens up the possibility of realizing social aspirations:

I. Getting rid of all the vestiges of the totalitarian regimes

● *Abolishing the mechanisms of the state's domination over the society, and primarily the dissolution of the SB (political police), the ZOMO (anti-riot police) and the ORMO (auxiliary police), as well as revising the penal code with the objective of guaranteeing democratic freedoms. This also implies suppressing the privileged status of the PUWP and of all the groups linked to it, such as SD (Democratic Party), ZSL (United People's Party), ZSMP (Union of Polish Socialist Youth), ZSP (Union of Polish Students) and so on, and guaranteeing that everyone fulfilling leadership functions in both the*

administration and in the economy should be elected. Finally, the subjection of territorial administration to the structures of self-management elected in free, equal, secret, proportional and direct elections.

● *Guaranteeing freedom of political and social activity; that is the unlimited right to strike and to set up unions, likewise in the police and the army (including among conscripts).*

This is in accord with the second and seventh of the 21 demands put forward by the Gdansk inter-enterprise strike committee in 1980, for "a guarantee of the security of strikers and those who support them" and for "all strikers to be paid for strike days in relation to the rates for paid leave". The activity of political parties, who constitute the basis of modern democracy and the condition for the society to be the subject of history, cannot be limited by law.

● *Guaranteeing total freedom of the press and of information by abolishing censorship and ending the material and judicial guarantees of the monopolies in these areas, and in particular sharing out the material means disposed of by RSW "Prasa-Ksiazka-Ruch" among all the political, social and cultural groups. Putting radio and television under the control of representative bodies at the corresponding levels, and guaranteeing access to them by all political and social groups.*

II. Submitting the economy to social needs

The aim of economic policy on the eve of the 21st century must be to guarantee decent living conditions, that is, at least the right to healthy and sufficient food, to decent housing, to health care, to social services accessible to everyone (creches and nurseries, for example), as well as to education and culture to all members of the society.

Putting the economy under the direct

control of the producers is the indispensable condition for realizing these goals. Only such a model of social life can guarantee to each human being the possibility of realizing their aspirations and constitute the basis for the emancipation of the society.

Up until the last moment, Mieczyslaw Rakowski's government — following the path of its predecessors and acting in the optic of *faits accomplis* — has resolutely oriented the Polish economy in the opposite direction. It widened the possibilities for private appropriation by the nomenklatura and for the development of speculative-corrupt capital, and created conditions for the sale of the national means of production to foreign capital. In addition, it allowed an unlimited rise in prices for consumer goods by introducing market mechanisms in a situation of grave food shortage. Having done this, it continued the process of linking the whole of the bureaucratic economy with market mechanisms, thus worsening the material situation of the majority of the society.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government has to break radically with its predecessor's policy.

III. Link up the plan, self-management and the market

It is necessary to understand that the fate of the economy rests in the first instance in the collective hands of the workers themselves. Only self-organization and workers' initiative can break the resistance of the old party-state apparatus and lead to a situation in which the new government could make economic changes beneficial to the majority.

As stipulated in the first point of Solidarnosc's programme, adopted at its first national congress in 1981: "We demand the introduction of a self-management and democratic reform at all levels of management, of a new social-economic order that will link up the plan, self-management and the market... The basis of the economy must be the social enterprise, managed by the workers' collective represented by their Council and led from day-to-day by a director, appointed after a competition

by the Council and recallable by it... The reform must socialize planning."

The realization of such a reform demands the setting up of social control over production exercised by self-managing councils of workers, agricultural workers and artisans organized in self-managing chambers regionally and nationally. Conditions for such control are the following:

- Guaranteeing the same possibilities for action to self-management councils, to unions and to other workers' agents in all the sectors of ownership, and the unification of the legal system in relation to production, jobs, trade and wages and working conditions.

- Transforming work relations in the workplace, in the sense of liberating work, in particular by radically limiting the number of supervisors and administrators and ensuring that these posts are elective.

- Opening the books. Workers' control over the means and goals of production is an indispensable step on the road towards the society taking total responsibility for economic management. The verification of production and cooperative links by self-management councils and the self-management chambers (reports on the state of the enterprises and on the economy as a whole) would permit a democratic national discussion on the principles of centralizing the allocation of the economic surplus in a way that could increasingly guarantee the satisfaction of the needs expressed by the society. Although the use of market mechanisms in distribution cannot be abolished, insofar as economic development cannot ensure the total satisfaction of needs for different products, in conditions of serious shortage the decision to use market mechanisms must be subject to the choices of a society conscious of its needs.

IV. Workers' self-defence in the face of the effects of the crisis

The gravity of the economic crisis means that the workers' collectives should immediately undertake acts of self-defence.

Workers' control of prices

The regional structures of Solidarnosc, notably in cooperation with the union commissions in trade and the service sector, should ensure that rises in the cost of living are calculated and published every week. On this basis, a weekly cost-of-living bonus should be established. The government must take measures to block price rises.

Social control over food distribution

Following on from Point 7 in the Solidarnosc programme adopted by its first national congress in 1981, in conditions of serious food shortages the rank-and-file structures of Solidarnosc must take the initiative in creating workers' commissions on the market and food supplies, coordinated nationally and cooperating with Solidarnosc's links with individual farmers. Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government should give such commissions the absolute right of control over all the shops selling consumer goods, including those shops under the control of the ministries of the interior and of defence.

Revalorizing labour

Previous governments have undertaken the process of aligning prices in the internal market to the level of the world market. Labour costs have been drastically reduced as a proportion of total production costs. Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government, in agreement with Solidarnosc, must undertake a radical reform of the wage system, and above all increase wages in relation to total costs up to the average world level.

Guaranteeing the right to work

As Point 9 of Solidarnosc's programme adopted by the first delegate congress in 1981 puts it: "We declare ourselves for the general right to work and against unemployment... In workplaces where reductions are foreseen, the union commissions must envisage the possibility of changing job descriptions or reducing working hours without loss of wages." Like the unions in Western Europe, we demand a 35-hour working week.

Denouncing the debt

As the new prime minister correctly remarked in his speech before the Diet [Polish parliament]: "the economy has been strangled by the foreign debt". Since 1971, \$49 billion in loans have been taken on. \$44bn have been repaid, but a debt of \$39bn remains even so.

The society cannot be responsible for debts contracted either by the nomenklatura or because of the waste caused by its rule.

Regaining economic and political sovereignty

1. Rejecting the IMF's conditions, the implementation of which would certainly lead to a drastic reduction in living standards and to the submission of Polish economic policy to foreign capital.

2. Revising the military and economic accords which, for Poland, derive from its membership of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon.

V. The self-managed republic

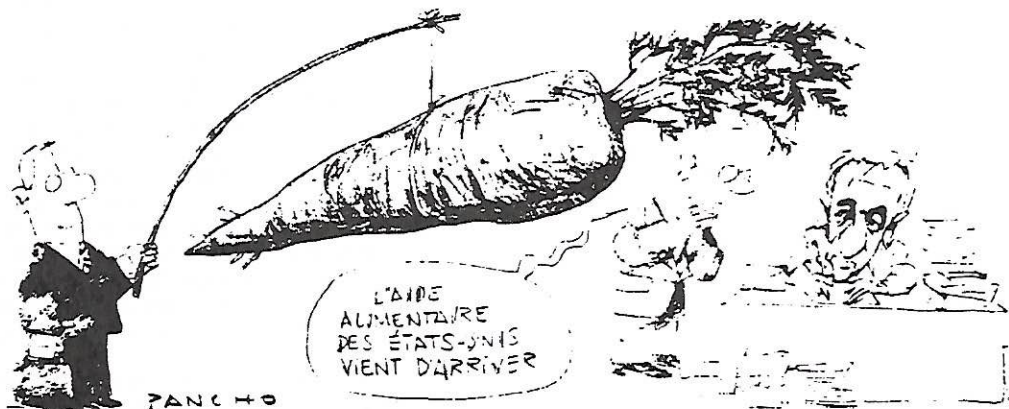
In line with Solidarnosc's programme adopted at its first congress in 1981, "we want real socialization of the system of management and of the economy. This is why we are working towards a self-managed Poland".

Free elections to a Constituent Assembly

The basic law must be the expression of a conscious and free choice by the society. The new government must organize free, equal, proportional, direct and secret elections to the Constituent [Assembly], in particular ensuring that all the candidates have the same material conditions for their electoral campaigns.

The question of power

The road towards the self-managed republic implies the total abolition of the nomenklatura's power. This task can only be fulfilled by the self-organized workers' movement, enriched by its experience under martial law and clandestine activity, struggling for workplace, regional and state power. ★



For the Beijing Commune For the Political Revolution in China

by Ernest Mandel

This is the edited text of a talk presented by Ernest Mandel on July 11, 1989, at a New York City public meeting to protest the military crackdown on democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

There are objective economic causes to the Beijing Commune and there are subjective origins. Of the objective origins the Chinese speaker has already given most of what is necessary. In order to save time I will not go into the analysis of all the contradictions of the subsequent stages of the economic reforms, its initial successes, and its later failures.

Today the situation as it is felt by the mass of Chinese people is a bad situation, as the Chinese comrade explained, it is a situation of inflation, stagnating and receding standard of living, huge unemployment, huge imbalances, and especially corruption and bureaucratic material privileges, which are in the eyes of the broad masses of the Chinese people a tremendous scandal. Inequality in the Soviet Union is graphically expressed by the fact that in a luxury restaurant the price of one meal equals the monthly wage of a worker. In China the price of one meal equals the annual wage of a worker. Imagine what ordinary people think about such a situation.

From the subjective point of view, the eruption of the student movement, which triggered a big mass upheaval of workers of the metropolitan area of Beijing, which we call I think correctly the Beijing Commune, has historical roots. It is the third stage of a democratic movement launched by the Chinese students and intellectuals as the historical heirs of the initial democratic movement of 1919, the beginning of the second Chinese revolution.

The first stage of that movement came in 1978-79 with the famous Democracy Wall in Beijing, where the students and intellectuals expressed their democratic demands. It is very little known that that democratic movement produced an analysis of the need for political revolution of the highest theoretical standard, written by a comrade called Chen Erjin in 1979 and entitled, "On the Proletarian Democratic Revolution." It has been published by Verso Press in Britain. It is a remarkable work. I do not agree with all the vocabulary but essentially it is a chart of the political antibureaucratic revolution, demanding, as we do, to institutionalize people's power, that is to say, workers' councils, popular councils, a multiparty system, and full enjoyment of all democratic rights: the right to strike, the right to assembly, the right to organize, the right to demonstrate, a free press—requests which are the key demands, which the students also took up during the Beijing Commune.

The second stage of this movement came in December '86 to January '87, in the period following the dismissal of the

party leader Hu Yaobang, whose funeral triggered the present student uprising. Then we come to the third stage, which started with the funeral of Hu Yaobang.

Each time students, teachers, and intellectuals were in the forefront of the movement. But we have to understand that their objective function was to articulate and detonate mass movements of a much broader scope. Already, before the student movement erupted, we had workers' strikes, peasants' strikes, local uprisings in different parts of the country which, however, as a result of their disparity and fragmentation, could not express in a concentrated way political demands. Here is where the students and intellectuals came in. They were obviously capable of doing just that.

If we look at the demands of the students and the demands of the workers, we will find an amazing parallel. The seven key demands of the students as they were published by the students' organizational committee of Beijing University, on April 21, start with an inner-party quarrel: reevaluate the action of Hu Yaobang and approve his point of view, that which is called the reform wing of the Communist Party of China, standing for internal party democracy and more democracy in the country. Second, punish those who have started to attack the students and the masses, that is, oppose repression. Third, publish a law on the press authorizing free publication of journals, guaranteeing the freedom of the press. Fourth, force the leaders of the state to give an accounting to the country on the state of their income, their fortune and that of their families, that is to say, denounce corruption and private wealth accumulation by the bureaucracy. Fifth, ask that the leaders of the state publicly admit the errors of their educational policy and increase the credits to education and the salaries of the teachers. You must know that the teachers in China, not to speak of students living on scholarships, are amongst the lowest paid people of that country. There is a systematic underinvestment in education, which is a real scandal from the point of view of the objective needs of development and modernization in an underdeveloped country like China. Sixth, reevaluate the campaign against "bourgeois liberalization" with total rehabilitation for those who have suffered unwarranted injustice. The last point is to ask that the press report objectively about the problems and the reality of the democratic and patriotic student movement.

If we look at the seven demands there is not the slightest attack against socialism in them, there is not the slightest call

or appeal for capitalism. These were demands for the democratization of a bureaucratized workers' state.

More impressive, more significant, are the central demands of the Beijing Independent Workers Association, the first independent trade union created by the Beijing workers, which was published on May 21, a month after the students started their struggle, and you see immediately the way in which there was a real capacity to help articulate the workers through the initiative of the students.

First, the workers ask that their organization must be totally independent and must be set up as the result of a democratic process in which workers take part of their own free will. It must not be under the control of any other organization. And it must have equal status with other mass organizations. Secondly, the basic aim of this organization must be to put forward the views of the greatest number of workers on political and economic questions and never be a simple welfare organization, as is the case with the present state unions. Thirdly, this organization must have a monitoring role over the Communist Party in firms and businesses that are the property of the whole people, that are under collective ownership. This organization must have the right to use all appropriate and legal means to monitor the legal representatives and to insure that the workers are really the masters of the firms. You cannot be clearer in the expression of a revolutionary socialist purpose, which has absolutely nothing to do with the restoration of capitalism.

They did not ask that the firms be sold to capitalist owners. No, they said that the workers must be the real masters of the collective factories. This is clearly a revolutionary socialist demand. It gives you clearly the content of this Beijing Commune as it developed.

There is a lot of evidence that after the initial stage of the student general strike in Beijing, and the extension of the student strikes to some of the key provincial university cities, there was a massive influx of working people into the Beijing mass movement. At the height of the movement, immediately before and immediately after the proclamation of martial law, that is to say from May 17 to May 22, there were between one and two million people that came to the streets of Beijing and to Tiananmen Square. In Beijing you have at the maximum a few hundred thousand students. If you have two million people in the streets, obviously the great majority of these people are not students. They are workers and ordinary people of the metropolitan area.

There are detailed reports made by foreign liberal journalists from the British, the German, the Italian, and the French press, some of them social democrats and people more to the left who give many details. The big steel plant of Beijing was completely on strike. The postal workers were completely on strike. The bus drivers completely on strike. I can give you a long list. It is not necessary to go into details. A huge working class solidarity developed with the student movement.

One can discuss the motivation of the workers. Probably this is what most experienced socialists would think, workers did not only take part in support of the student demands,

although they were in total solidarity with them; they also came out for their own demands. That is absolutely legitimate, it does not in any way reduce the worker-student unity of action, which developed in the streets of Beijing and which developed around Tiananmen Square in these crucial days.

Comrades who were on the spot give detailed descriptions of what happened in that huge city (the Beijing metropolitan area is one of the greatest urban areas in the world) immediately after the proclamation of martial law.

When the threat of military repression of the people assembled on Tiananmen Square became visible, there occurred a degree of self-organization of the masses of Beijing as we have rarely seen in history. You have to go to the highest points of past communes, the Paris Commune, the Petrograd Commune of 1917-1919, the Barcelona Commune of 1936, the Budapest Commune of 1956, to see something similar. Practically in every neighborhood an organization was set up in order to be able to immediately mobilize hundreds of thousands of people to block the army, to block the tanks, to agitate the soldiers. This happened day after day, mobilizing a large part of the population of this metropolitan area. If you take the whole metropolitan area there are many more than ten million inhabitants, including also peasants of the suburbs and the fields around Beijing.

So, you have there an extremely developed revolutionary mass movement of peasants, workers, students, intellectuals, writers, state functionaries, who not only solidarized with the students but expressed their own demands,

which all run in the direction of a political, antibureaucratic revolution.

This opinion, that we were at the beginning of such a revolution, was not something that was peculiar to revolutionary Marxists, as we are. It was shared by most of the observers who were on the spot. I have a whole series of quotes available, from newspapers and weekly papers like *The Guardian*, *The Independent* in Britain, like *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel* in Germany, and many other papers in France and in Italy, that said in as many words including headlines: this is the beginning of a revolution. I am not talking about the whole period, from April to June, but of the high points. One can discuss if it lasted 20, 30, 40 days, but this was obvious to all honest observers, everybody who looked at these events objectively without being prejudiced and ideologically motivated to deny reality.

We can ask ourselves a question: Why was that powerful commune defeated by the military intervention? There are two main reasons for this: first the uneven development of the workers' and the students' movement; and secondly, the uneven development between town and countryside in China.

There was a large workers' solidarity movement, but there was no workers' total general strike. If there had been a workers' total general strike, the crushing of the Beijing Commune would have been, if not impossible, at least not possible in one night. The Budapest precedent of November 1956 confirms this. There was still a gap between the general

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student movement and the partial workers' movement, which involved several millions of people probably on the national scale, but not enough to make an instantaneous repression impossible.

Secondly, the uneven development between town and countryside. Some of you know the history of the Russian Revolution and the writings of comrade Trotsky on the subject. I will remind you of the explanation Trotsky gave for the defeat of the revolution of 1905: the revolution was defeated by the peasant soldiers. We notice likewise a significant part of the army, the army stationed around Beijing, the army stationed around Shanghai, those who were the most closely linked to the working class, were not ready to crush the uprising of the students and the workers in Beijing. Deng had to take a plane to go to look around China to find some division which would be ready to undertake the crack-down. He could find one. The general level of decomposition in the army was still not the one you had in the Russian Revolution of 1917. China is a subcontinent with a tremendous unevenness of development both between town and countryside and between different provinces. So they could still find some instrument for repression.

There might be a third reason for the defeat of the commune, but I do not want to go into that question. The degree of organization of the student movement was very high. It was sufficient for the upsurge of the movement, but it was not sufficient for a confrontation with a counterrevolutionary armed force. The students by their whole preparation, their whole ideology, were not prepared for it. They were discussing, in the last final days, the merits and demerits of withdrawing. They were not sure enough, not capable enough, of confronting the military.

It must be said, in passing, that the cynicism of the Deng counterrevolutionary faction was beyond belief. When they tried to trick the students into retreat by maneuvers, by political means, that was the first form of their intervention. They made statements which were blatant lies. The marshal, who is president of the republic, said — and it was printed in the official daily of the Communist Party of China: "If one student is killed, we will pay the price for it for a thousand years." It was the same person who, two weeks later, coolly lets the army kill several thousands of students! The day he made that statement, he knew exactly that he was preparing that repression.

Deng accuses the students of having been conscious or unconscious tools of the CIA and American imperialism. But during the whole period of the Beijing uprising, including of course the period of repression, the Deng government had not stopped for a single day its collaboration with the CIA. You have in China, for several years, a listening post that tries to listen to signals from the Soviet Union, commonly administered by the Chinese secret police and by the CIA. This had not stopped for one moment when these assassins accused the students of being tools of the CIA.

What general conclusions can we draw from this grandiose and tragic historical event which unfolded in the months of April, May, and June?

The first lesson we have to draw is that the thesis of the liberal intelligentsia in both Eastern and Western Europe, that economic liberalization leads to or is even a precondition for political democratization, has been utterly contradicted by historical evidence. There is no identity or logical link between perestroika and glasnost, to put it in Russian terms. On the contrary, economic liberalization increases social tensions. Under conditions of increased social tensions, inequality, and differentiation, political democracy becomes a luxury which the largest part of the bureaucracy will try to severely restrict or do away with. The opposite is also true. Precisely for the same reason, workers, students, intellectuals, all have an interest in supporting and extending every step in the direction of more democratic institutions. It is not by accident that the students on Tiananmen Square came out with the slogan, "Long Live Glasnost." For them it meant more democracy, more possibility of self-expression, of self-organization, more elimination of censorship and all institutions of that same kind.

A second lesson we have to draw is to denounce the hypocrisy of the imperialist ideological and political onslaught following the Chinese events. They make a lot of noise in favor of democracy and against repression. But simultaneously there is the preparation of continuous economic and financial collaboration. Profits count more for

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these gentlemen than lofty ideas. The Chinese market is a huge market. They are not going to forgo that market because thousands of students and workers have been killed.

We have also to ask them, including some of our social democratic friends: you protest the massacre in Tiananmen Square. But what about the massacre in Caracas? Venezuela is a very small country. Caracas has 10 percent of the inhabitants of Beijing. When the people of Caracas rose against price increases and misery, the army under a social democratic president of the republic shot into workers' homes and killed one thousand people. That is proportionally much, much more than the people who have been killed in Beijing. You have not heard any great public scandal about the massacre in Caracas or of even greater massacres which have happened in El Salvador and Guatemala. So these gentlemen should be considered hypocrites when they shed crocodile tears about the massacre in Beijing. We should not give them one ounce of political or moral credit. They do not merit it.

This leads me also to a political conclusion. We should not call upon bourgeois governments to apply economic sanctions against China. First, because it is not our task to ask anything in that field from bourgeois governments. Secondly, because it could be very profoundly counterproductive. It would help Deng get a new legitimacy.

The Chinese people have been treated as a semicolonial people for a long historical period. They have been humiliated, oppressed, overexploited by imperialist governments. To create a situation in which Deng could present himself now as a Chinese patriot, defending China against economic sanctions from the West, would help him obtain a new legitimacy.

We should direct our requests not to the Western governments, but to the international labor movement, to the trade unions, to the communist parties, to the social democratic parties, to the scientific organizations. We should ask them to stop collaborating with the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as long as a certain number of demands are not fulfilled. We should demand, for example, that an international jury composed of representatives of the labor movement reexamine every single trial that has been conducted against the Chinese students' and workers' leaders. We should request that scientists and activists not go to any conference with any Chinese delegation as long as they are not allowed to send a delegation to the Chinese jails to see how the political prisoners are treated there, if they have been beaten, if they have been tortured. That type of pressure exercised on the Soviet authorities, in the years before and after Gorbachev, has had results, has had effects. We should not consider that it is impossible with the strength of the international labor movement and the scientific organizations to get such results also today.

The third lesson we have to draw is that the international bourgeoisie and social democracy can indeed make gains from Deng's blows against the Chinese people. They translate the insupportable pictures of the tanks crushing the bones of young workers, of students, even of children in Tiananmen Square into the formula: "Look at the ugly picture of communism." "This is the end of communism."

Of course, for us it is obvious that these Stalinist crimes have nothing to do with communism. But our voice is still very weak against the concentrated power of the bourgeois-controlled mass media and their reformist echoes. So, the immediate consequence of the crushing of the Beijing Commune is a big blow against the left, against the labor movement, against socialism and communism everywhere in the world. One of the leading ideologues of the Soviet Communist Party told me, and I think he is right, that Deng Xiaoping in one hour has destroyed five years of efforts to give communism again a human face before international public opinion.

That is true. We all suffer from that. We will continue to suffer from it for a certain time. But this is not the total balance sheet of the effects of the Beijing Commune, of its rise and of its temporary defeat, on the international class struggle scene. It is only part of it.

The fourth lesson of the Beijing events tells us that there is another part of that balance sheet, which is in favor of socialism, in favor of revolution, and which will continue to operate in that sense in the coming months and years.

Before television brought to the homes of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world the pictures of the army crushing the Beijing Commune, it had already brought to the same homes the pictures of the commune itself. The participants in the Beijing Commune were the first ones in the history of revolution to enjoy the privilege of having all their actions instantaneously seen and assimilated by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. We have to try to retain and reproduce these pictures on

videotapes and play them over and over and over again. We have to try and write them down in pamphlets and books, lest they be forgotten. They tell a wonderful story. They reveal a heartening truth.

Here you had day after day hundreds of thousands and later more than a million people assembled, supported by the great majority of the inhabitants of the Beijing metropolitan area. These people were bound together not by selfishness, but by altruism and sympathy; not by the pursuit of material rewards, but by collective solidarity; not by competition, but by cooperation. They did not need any Jesus to drive the merchants out of the temple. The merchants themselves brought in food, drink, medicine, blankets, books, paper for printing the news, typewriters, mimeographs, free of charge from all over the metropolis. And thanks to these common goals you have had that unbelievable spectacle in the terrible world in which we are living. This million assembled without a single murder, without a single act of violence, without a single rape, without a single case of drug addiction, day after day after day.

This picture hammers home that elementary truth which all the skeptics and all the renegades and all the opponents have to face. This was the rise of a new socialist man and woman, embodying a new civilization superior to the civilization of capitalism based on selfishness, shallow values, striving towards self-destruction.

Gentlemen on the other side of the barricades: here you see these new socialist men and women coming alive; they were one million. Here is the real picture of socialism, not that of the gulag or of the corrupt

bureaucrat. You could not eliminate it from the television screens. People all over the world spontaneously sympathized and solidarized with it. You won't erase it from people's memory. As time goes on and as the Chinese people will do away with their oppressors and the Beijing Commune will rise again triumphantly, this image will stay and outlast any image of repression by the murderers.

This is not just an unfounded dream, a utopia. This is the way in which history in the long run is restoring truth and justice. It is already unfolding on that course in the Soviet Union where all of Stalin's crimes are today being revealed and condemned. All his victims are being rehabilitated. The names of our dearest comrades of the Left Opposition and of their great spokesman Leon Trotsky did not remain buried under the permafrost of the tundras as their murderers expected. They are alive again, as is alive the voice of our dear and great Rosa Luxemburg, of our dear and great Ernesto Che Guevara, and of all the murdered martyrs of the international labor movement.

Two weeks ago 250,000 people assembled in the streets of Budapest to give a solemn funeral to the communist prime minister of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, comrade Imre Nagy. We had to wait 50 years until the Soviet people imposed the juridical rehabilitation of the victims of the Moscow trials. We had to wait 30 years until the Hungarian people imposed the rehabilitation of comrade Imre Nagy and all the martyrs of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. We won't have to wait 10 years until the Chinese people will

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impose the rehabilitation of the martyrs of Tiananmen Square. There will be a solemn meeting on Tiananmen Square in front of a million people. Every one of these martyrs will come alive again.

What has happened in the USSR, what is happening in Hungary, is a great vindication, a great historical victory for our movement. For a long time we were nearly alone in denouncing the Moscow trials, solidarizing with the Hungarian revolution. Now millions of people take up these causes and lead them to final success.

Two other historical victories following closely upon that initial one should be noted. We are just witnessing a revival of proletarian internationalism. It is still modest and limited but nonetheless significant. As I said before, we were practically alone in condemning the crushing of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. We were likewise isolated in struggling against, not only condemning, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Today, powerful forces of the international labor and revolutionary movement condemn and fight against the crushing of the Beijing Commune as we do. The Brazilian Workers Party does so. The Sandinista comrades do so. The left wing of the Labor Party of Britain does so. We have had solidarity demonstrations with the Chinese students in several Eastern European cities, in Budapest, in Warsaw, in Wroclaw, in Ljubljana, in Prague, and elsewhere.

It warms our hearts to know that one of the largest demonstrations anywhere in the world in solidarity with the Chinese students took place in Moscow. We have to salute the

political courage of comrade Boris Yeltsin, who publicly broke the discipline of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on that issue, and the line of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union of which he is a member, extending support to the students and condemning their murderers.

In the Soviet Union the struggle for proletarian internationalism is an uphill struggle. The overwhelming majority of the Soviet people mistakenly identify the costly and reactionary bureaucratic adventures, like the invasion of Hungary, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the invasion of Afghanistan, with proletarian internationalism. But now growing political awareness makes them ready to rediscover the simple truth which is at the basis of working class internationalism: an injury to one anywhere in the world is an injury to all.

If you apologize for anti-working class repression anywhere, or even keep silent about it, you will be much weakened in defending yourself against similar repression. This the vanguard of the Moscow working class begins to understand. In the crowd which assembled to solidarize with the Chinese students and which comrade Boris Yeltsin addressed, there were banners saying "Yesterday Tbilisi, Today Beijing, Tomorrow Moscow?" How right they were to raise the question in that precise form!

The second historical breakthrough which we are achieving concerns the reconquest of proletarian democracy combined with unity of action: the freedom to debate frankly but

the readiness to struggle together for common goals against the common enemy. This traditional framework of labor democracy, which was a great source of self-confidence and strength during half a century, was first shattered by social democracy in 1914, before it was destroyed by Stalinism in the '30s. Now it is slowly being restored in the new labor movement arising in countries like Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, the Soviet Union, several Eastern European countries, as well as some countries of Western Europe.

A few weeks ago I visited Hungary and gave a public lecture on the Fourth International in Budapest University. The conference was faithfully reported in the two daily papers of that country. I gave two radio interviews to the Hungarian radio on the same subject, "The Fourth International yesterday, today, and tomorrow." People did not agree with me, but there was not the slightest hesitation of objectively reporting what I was saying.

On July 8 in Paris, a big mass demonstration and mass festival for a just and legitimate cause took place. Twenty-five thousand people assembled in mass demonstration. Between 150,000 and 200,000 assembled in the evening festival. The objective was a struggle for the annulment of all third-world countries' debts, to which we added the additional demand of annulling the debts of all Eastern European

countries. This demonstration was initiated by our comrades of the Revolutionary Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International. The main daily papers of France, in the first place *Le Monde* and

Liberation, gave us all due credit for it. But it grew into a powerful united front action with more than sixty organizations joining together, with the Communist Youth and the Communist Party and significant parts of the Socialist Youth joining together with our comrades in the preparation and the organization of this demonstration.

Who could have imagined that these events were possible — I do not say five years ago, I say five months ago? They show us how the world in which we live is starting to change. Behind that change is one decisive factor: big sections of the international working class which have been absent from the political scene for nearly half a century or more as an independent force are awakening and beginning to move. This is the case for Brazil. This is the case for the Soviet Union. This is the case for China. This is the case for South Africa. We have never lost for one minute our faith and our certainty that such an awakening is unavoidable. Sooner or later, other big sectors of the international working class which are still by and large politically inactive, in the first place the Japanese, the Indian, and the American working class, will follow on the road on which the Brazilian, the Soviet, and the Chinese workers have now started.

We do not know when it will be. It might take three years. It might take five years. It might take ten years or more. But it will come. The train of history, which Hitler, Stalin, and U.S. imperialism have caused to derail, is back on its rail

(Continued on page 24)

The U.S. Union Movement Today

by Dave Riehle

This is an edited text of the trade union report approved, July 2, 1989, by the delegates to the fifth F.I.T. national conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

In a conference discussion article Frank Lovell wrote: "We have sensed for the past year or so that a change in consciousness is taking place within some sectors of the working class, and most recently among union members in particular—a new social awareness, a new sense of the complications and ramifications of their problems, a new political consciousness." I think this is correct, and I will try to address it in my report.

Trade unions, by their very nature as mass organizations of the working class, incorporate and give expression to many aspects of capitalist society beyond the direct economic relations between the employers and the organized workers.

Haskell Berman reminds us of the dual nature of trade unions under capitalism in his contribution to our conference discussion. "Trade unions in capitalist society are defensive institutions of the working class," he says. "We must remember that they are also institutions of capitalist society. . . . They may and do often serve two contradictory sets of class interests . . . the workers and the bosses."

This contradictory nature finds its fullest expression among those who, as James P. Cannon said, "work neither with hand nor brain, but only with the larynx"—the union bureaucracy. This element of the trade unions "doesn't know much about the anatomy of social systems, their origins, development, decline, and replacements by others. But they do know that a system which makes it possible for a man to simply open his mouth, lean back on his haunches, and bellow at regular intervals that 'all is well,' and then find an annual check for considerably more than an ordinary worker gets—well, that is a first-class system no matter what you call it."

Or as Frank Souza, an official of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 190 which represents Greyhound mechanics said recently: "Though everybody is underpaid, our relationship with the company has never been better." Eastern Airlines' Machinist union leader Charles Bryan put it this way in November 1987, after an announcement that the airline was laying off 3,500 workers: "This is a typical union-busting move and we're not going to react to it."

Sociologically, we know the union bureaucracy is a secondary element in class society, one which has no productive role, unlike social classes. But politically this layer is far more important, acting as an agent for the employing class in the unions, a transmitter of the ideology of the bosses, as Berman says, disciplining the workers, binding the union and the workers to production and tying them to the job and to the

entire social system by the dominant ideology of the ruling class. "The workers are taught," he says, "to accept the wage and profit system, the hierarchical structure of their union and of society, and their subordinate position therein."

In looking back on what is now a decade of sustained antiunion offensive by the ruling class, if we date it approximately from the time that the United Auto Workers (UAW) granted concessions to the Chrysler Corporation in 1979, we see that there has been no lack of willingness by the workers to struggle, but that each attempt has been crippled by the treachery, cowardice, and incompetence of the bureaucrats. Seeing this, workers have reluctantly accepted the imposition of concessions where it was clear that their leaders would not carry out a fight. Where the leaders did want to fight, notably Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota, the workers were willing to give their all.

Even where halfhearted or incomplete efforts are made by the leaders to resist the employers' offensive, such as the International Paper strike, the *Chicago Tribune* strike, the Morrell strike in Sioux Falls, the Phelps Dodge strike, and many others, the workers invariably show a willingness to make great sacrifices, and only give up the fight when it is clear their leaders have thrown in the towel.

The inability thus far of the workers to break decisively from their misleadership is undoubtedly the single biggest factor in holding back effective mass struggle. Only in the fight against the Geo. A Hormel Co. did the workers throw up a genuinely independent, struggle-oriented leadership, one that relied on mass mobilization and the broadest forms of democracy. We saw three years ago how the Austin strike was crushed by the bureaucracy, the courts, the labor boards, the politicians, the armed forces of the state, and even the Stalinists, all acting in tandem. This is certainly a negative confirmation of the fact that Local P-9 had come close to the answer. The other essential element in the development of a real class struggle tendency in the unions, the programmatic one, is being grappled with, especially via the publication *Labor Notes* and its conferences, the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and New Directions groupings in the Teamsters and the UAW, and the various attempts to raise the idea of a labor party, notably by Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union. And there are others as well, some of which we know little or nothing about.

We don't find the answers so far forthcoming from these sources to be fully satisfactory. But it would be sterile sectarianism and abstentionism not to recognize that this is where these questions are being taken up in a serious way,

and by those who exert a not insignificant influence among thinking workers.

Although it is acceptable to take the more or less arbitrary date of 1979 as the beginning of the antilabor offensive, it is clear the real turning point was almost twenty years ago, when the post-World War II expansion really came to a close. A signpost of that change was the Nixon wage-price freeze of 1971, which of course could only be, and was only intended to be, a wage freeze. Following that, the recession of 1974-75 really propelled the cutback drive into motion. These initial cuts were mostly imposed on social gains such as low cost or free public higher education, medical care, housing, and other programs whose most significant scope was in the major cities, especially those with large populations of national minorities.

Although the employers felt emboldened to move more aggressively against the unions during the 1981-82 recession, keep in mind that underlying these were an even more far-reaching, cruel, coldblooded, and class conscious attack on the lives and living standards of the working class as a whole.

Attacks on Social Gains

The gains of the labor rebellion of the 1930s were registered in the establishment of industrial unions, but also, and at least equally significant, in social gains for the entire people—Social Security, unemployment insurance, food programs, the Federal Home Administration home-buying program, and other deliberate and significant concessions to the whole working class. It is necessary to attack these—sometimes referred to as a social safety net—in order to make the threat of unemployment even more devastating to the employed worker. These have been more vulnerable to attack because they can only be defended *politically*, and labor has no party to represent its class interests.

As of May of this year there were, nationally, in official figures, 6,156,000 unemployed, and only 1,960,000 receiving any unemployment benefits. Nearly 70 percent of the unemployed do not receive benefits. The 30 percent who do are receiving an average of \$143 a week, or 35 percent of the average weekly wage. According to the AFL-CIO, even a moderate recession will bankrupt many state benefit trust funds.

We are aware of the many sneaking cutbacks imposed on Social Security benefits. In addition, since 1980, U.S. businesses have scrapped pension plans covering two million workers, pocketing twenty billion dollars in the process. Almost 2,000 pension plans have been terminated since 1980, and 600 other employer requests are pending. Due to a provision in the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act, when a pension plan is terminated, the employer becomes liable only for the benefits accrued until the date of termination—not for promised future benefits. Forty billion dollars in annual tax breaks are available to employers who established so-called “permanent pension plans.”

● Now that the great mass of WW II veterans is reaching retirement age, the vaunted VA programs are being

repudiated en masse. Many VA hospitals refuse to accept any more patients.

● A recent article reported on a major corporation that had secretly set up a computer program to track workers nearing retirement age and to manipulate layoffs and dismissals to deny them their pensions.

● The high cost of nursing home care forces many elderly patients into poverty a few months after they enter the homes, according to a congressional study. Seventy percent of single elderly patients reach the poverty level after only 13 weeks in a nursing home. Elderly persons must impoverish themselves, and probably their spouses, before they are covered by Medicaid.

● Social Security is increasingly represented as a case of the elderly taking too much at the expense of the young. A fraudulent Social Security crisis was created in 1983 to justify cutbacks. In reality, Social Security has never cost the U.S. Treasury a dime. In 1987, its pension trust funds took in \$20 billion more than it paid out. Its estimated surplus in 1988 was \$39 to \$45 billion.

Workers compensation systems in state after state are coming under relentless attack by the employers and a bipartisan coalition of Democratic and Republican politicians. A workers compensation “reform” bill passed by the Minnesota legislature this year, although vetoed by Governor Rudy Perpich, provided that minors under age 18 and apprentices who suffered crippling injury or illness would receive *nothing* for dismemberment unless they were permanently and totally disabled.

These attacks on the rights of injured workers comes at a time when, as none other than the *Wall Street Journal* reported on June 16, “Workplace injuries are proliferating with efforts by employers to speed up production.” Workers are becoming victims of smaller work crews, overtime, and faster assembly lines. National injury rates have been going up steadily since 1983, when the industrial recovery began. Just from 1986 to 1987 permanent work-related disabilities jumped 16 percent, from 60,000 to 70,000. In the steel industry, where union employment is half its 1980 level, overtime has become the norm. The steel bosses acknowledge the connection between overtime and injuries, but say they are hamstrung by labor contracts that prevent contracting out work to nonunion personnel.

There has been a 57 percent jump in injuries per hundred in underground coal mining in the past four years. Meat-packing disassembly lines are literally maiming and crippling workers in a matter of months. At the Sioux Falls, S.D., John Morrell plant, line speed increased by as much as 84 percent in the 1980s, with no significant increase in employment.

Only now coming to light are many cases of long-term workplace environmental exposures to materials that cause cancer and other diseases. In many cases the employers knew full well decades ago what the effect of these materials was and concealed it from the workers. The *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* reported this year on hundreds of present and former workers at a Conwed plant in Northeastern Minnesota with lung abnormalities contracted from breathing asbestos dust at the plant over a period of decades. Many of the workers now have mesothelioma, lung cancer, and asbestosis, all of which were known to asbestos manufacturers

since at least the forties. Northeast Minnesota is also the location of the Mesabi Iron Range, where tens of thousands of miners have worked in the steel companies' captive mines since the early 20th century.

Yet this is what *Fortune* magazine had to say about cancer patterns in the U.S. Commenting on a map which shows patterns of cancer mortality, it says, "While some high incidence areas are heavily industrialized, others, like North-eastern Minnesota, are not. Scientists hypothesize that Minnesota's rate may have ethnic origins—but nobody really knows" (*Fortune*—7/3/78).

Two million children and eight million adults in the U.S. are malnourished, about 9 percent of the population. In 1981 the Reagan administration began reducing and modifying school lunch programs, supplemental feeding programs for pregnant women, and other food programs. By 1982, signs of hunger were widespread. Physicians began reporting increasing numbers of patients with illnesses associated with hunger— anemia, tuberculosis, poor growth in children, and osteoporosis in adults. In nearly half the states poor families with children are denied assistance if both parents are present. So much for the pro-family Reaganites!! Nearly half of those Americans in poverty receive no food stamps. Those who do receive an average of 49 cents per meal.

Economic Exploitation

Except for the Great Depression of the 1890s and 1930s, only in 1908, 1914-15, and 1921 did unemployment rates match those of the late 1970s and 1980s. This has been the third worst jobless period in 100 years. All of this taken together is the price the American workers have had to pay for low productivity, according to the capitalist propaganda which is not only mouthed by the employers themselves but by so-called experts, journalists, government, and not a few union officials. In reality productivity, as an objective measure, and not as a code word for austerity and speedup, has been rising steadily all through the 1980s. From 1981 to 1986, industrial productivity rose 4 percent, that is, during the period of deep-going losses in wages and jobs. In basic industry it rose 6 percent. This was the highest rise in the major industrial countries.

This productivity and the antiunion offensive result in, *Fortune* magazine reports with unrestrained exultation, the best year for profits for the *Fortune* 500 corporations since 1955, the year this report was initiated. Profits of the *Fortune* 500 in 1988 were \$115 billion, a 27 percent increase over 1987. Exports have risen a near record 26 percent, steel, aluminum, and lumber are especially successful. Some examples—Profits at Phelps Dodge more than doubled last year. Pennzoil's profits increased 3,233.9 percent. General Motors' profits were \$4,856,300,000, an increase of 36.8 percent.

Ford's were \$5,300,200,000, up 36.8 percent. International Papers' were \$754,000,000, up 85.3 percent. Geo. A. Hormel's were \$60,000,000, up 31 percent. Thorn Apple Valley's, a meatpacking concern which was struck at the same time as P-9, profits were \$5,400,000, up 414.8 percent. In the steel industry, officially referred to as "the troubled steel industry" by the lapdog press, Bethlehem's were up 131

percent, Inland's up 80.8 percent, Armco's up 23.6 percent, and Timken Bearing's of Canton, Ohio, home local of I.W. Abel, former international president of the Steelworkers Union, and author of the Experimental Negotiating Agreement of 1973, were \$65,900,000, up 538.7 percent.

What all the information previously given taken together means is a deep and profound crisis of capitalist society, one rooted in overproduction, where commodity production has outstripped the world market, and where, exactly as Marx said, and *Fortune* magazine confirms, "accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore, at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole, that is, on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital" (*Capital*, Vol. I). This is the future for the working class, and the unprecedented explosion of profits will provide no relief, but only sharpen the crisis. The employers are absolutely determined that it is the workers, and not they, who will bear the burden of this crisis.

To shift it even further, they are steadily revising the nation's tax laws in their favor. While the cost of taking a bus, taxi, subway, or operating a car between your home and job is not deductible, Donald Trump's yacht, the *Trump Princess*, is. Trump can save \$7.3 to \$8.2 million dollars over the next ten years in federal income taxes by taking depreciation on the 40-million-dollar boat. Trump has also informed New Jersey state tax officials that he does not intend to pay the state's 6 percent use tax on the yacht, about \$2.4 million.

Forty years ago one in four tax dollars came from tax on profits; today it is one in ten and falling. The rate has dropped 50 percent since 1950. Corporate income tax raised only 12 percent of all federal tax receipts in 1980, half of what it was in 1960—24 percent. It is fairly common knowledge that many corporations pay no taxes whatsoever, and through the so-called "negative income tax" even receive money from the Treasury.

The devastating success of taking back the social gains of the working class as a whole in the 1980s, gains primarily a result of the labor upsurge of the '30s and the Black struggle of the '60s, means that the gains retained by the unions must come under even more severe attack in the '90s. There is no doubt that much has been lost already, but it is still union contracts, and more and more union contracts alone, that preserve any semblance of adequate income for the working class.

The eighties has also seen a steep decline in the number of strikes, reaching an almost all-time low. In 1947 there were 270 strikes of more than 1,000 workers involving 1,629,000 workers. In 1987 there were 46, involving 174,200. In December 1987 there were four strikes involving 1,000 workers or more—International Paper in Mobile, Alabama, IP in Jay, Maine, Guilford Transportation in New England, and Jersey Central Power and Light. I know at least three of those were defeats.

In 1953 42 percent of manufacturing was unionized, in 1985 25 percent. In mining the figures were 65 percent in 1953 and 15 percent in 1985. Remember those Phelps Dodge profits? Transportation was 80 percent unionized in 1953 and 37 percent in 1985, and construction was 84 percent in '53 and 22 percent in '85.

Southern Workers Announce Plans for Midwest Tour

by Theresa El-Amin

Saladin Muhammad of the Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ) spoke at a program in Cleveland, Ohio, on September 28, 1989, to announce plans for the BWFJ "Organize the South" Solidarity Tour. The Cleveland event, cosponsored by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and the Greater Cleveland Labor History Society (GCLHS), was attended by activists in the area representing unions and community groups, including the Cleveland Coalition Against Plant Closings.

"The oppression of workers in the South affects the wages and working conditions of workers in the Midwest and other parts of the country. We must view the South as another part of the underdeveloped third world," said Brother Muhammad. With the help of a video on the Keysville, Georgia, struggle to elect a government—in a town with no running water, no fire or sewer protections, and general economic depression—the audience received a capsule of life in the rural South. Saladin Muhammad explained how the struggle for democratic control of the communities is central to organizing in the South.

Tour Plans Sparked by Workers School

It was at the BWFJ Workers School held in July that discussions began on how significant it would be to have Southern workers describe

their conditions to workers in more unionized cities in the North. In the area around Rocky Mount, North Carolina, where the BWFJ is developing strategies for in-plant committees at several industrial worksites, exploitation of workers and the community is all too prevalent. It is from this area that 10-15 volunteers plan to make a tour of the Midwest in June/July of 1990, during the scheduled plant shutdowns in their area.

The primary focus of the 1990 tour is to build a coalition in the Midwest to support union organizing in the Black Belt South and address the problem of runaway shops locating in rural communities and other non-union towns in the South. The cities picked for the tour include Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee.

Subscription Drive Under Way

After hearing about other needs to make the tour possible, it was decided that a fund-raising project to assist with transportation and perhaps some lost time by workers should begin as soon as possible. A suggestion to solicit subscriptions for the BWFJ newspaper, *Justice Speaks*, was put in motion and has already begun to bear fruit. Several bookstores in Cleveland have taken bundles of *Justice Speaks*, and expressed willingness to help with sales of buttons and published reports on the

BWFJ work in the South such as the "Workers Want Fairness" campaign currently under way.

Support Committees Forming

At the Cleveland meeting an appeal was made for volunteers to provide housing and to form a city-wide support committee to build for the tour. From that group—comprised of union members from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the Cleveland Teachers Union; Communications Workers of America; Graphics Communications International Union; National Association of Letter Carriers; Service Employees International Union (SEIU); United Auto Workers (UAW); and the Steelworkers—housing commitments were made for the 15 volunteers when they arrive from the South. Also, the core group of the Cleveland support committee was formed to further plan activities for the Cleveland lap of the tour.

In Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee, local planning committees were also formed in November.

If you would like to assist in building the tour, for more information about Black Workers for Justice, or for a \$6.00 subscription to their newspaper, *Justice Speaks*, contact: BWFJ, P.O. Box 1863, Rocky Mount, NC 27802. Phone: 919-977-8162. ●

Theresa El-Amin is Midwest Tour Coordinator

Strike Actions

What has the response of the unions been, and what has the response of the workers been? These are not necessarily the same. There were some important events from the mid-'70s to early '80s. There have, of course, been important struggles throughout the eighties. We have discussed many of them at previous conferences, and I won't repeat them here. I'll assume that they are familiar to most of you. There are right now two important major strikes in progress—the Eastern Airlines strike and the United Mine Workers (UMW) strike against the Pittston coal company. The Pittston strike has been receiving a lot of publicity, not at all uniformly negative. The television program "48 Hours" recently carried a report on the strike, which reached millions. The miners were generally portrayed in a favorable light, carrying out nonviolent civil disobedience, Ray Rogers style, including grandmothers and schoolchildren, all dressed, for some reason, in combat fatigues. This has not succeeded in shutting down the mines, but it has nevertheless called down draconian daily fines upon the union. Other miners have responded with solidarity strikes across Appalachia. Federal marshals have been unleashed across the

coalfields to break up the solidarity strikes. UMW president Richard Trumka told a rally in early June that the strike would expand, but the union has responded to the antistrike injunctions with formal compliance, sending out telegrams to the locals ordering them back to work, but presumably covertly supporting them. This, however, is not how to build a mass struggle.

Trumka might be better off imitating John L. Lewis rather than Martin Luther King. In 1943, Lewis led successful strikes by the UMW defying the wartime no-strike pledge made by other unions. Trumka introduced the no-strike pledge into national agreements, as well as attempting to carry out the so-called selective strike strategy, the strategy pioneered by Walter Reuther, which assumes the employers have no class consciousness or class solidarity. In fact, in many industries they are pushing for the breakup of national bargaining and pattern agreements.

The UMW is now at about 80,000 members, half of what it was in 1980. Productivity is skyrocketing. At the Island Creek mine near Rowe, Virginia, 12 tons of coal per worker was produced in 1982; in 1987 it was 19.8 tons per worker. Most Western coal is nonunion, and nationwide only 35 percent of coal is mined by union miners. At least half of the

operators in the Bituminous Coal Operators Association have dropped out of industry-wide bargaining. It ought to be obvious that selective strikes can only work, if anywhere, in the context of industry-wide standards and agreements. By the way, the company president who was interviewed on the "48 Hours" program explained that half of Pittston's production, or more, was exported, primarily to Japan. This puts the *Buy American* campaigns in an interesting light. Stopping the import of Japanese steel would mean the elimination of many coal mining jobs in the U.S., another example of the fact that capitalism operates in an integrated world market.

The Eastern and Pittston strikes are taking place in a new context. The Eastern strike in particular began to crystallize a deep uneasiness in public opinion about the increasingly open irrationality of the capitalist system, exemplified in the frenzied pursuit of profits through corporate raids and takeovers. This has been dissipated a good deal by the unraveling of the whole situation through the pathetic pursuit by the IAM of a capitalist angel to take over the airline, and the piecemeal dismemberment and selling off of its component parts, as well as the Machinists' attempt to reduce the whole problem to the evil persona of Frank Lorenzo.

The Pittston strike marks a turn by the UMW toward seeking active support and solidarity from the union rank and file and the working class public. The attractive, and expensive, material put out by the UMW on the Pittston strike includes an open call for active support, with an invitation to join the UMW's Citizen Support Committee, and includes phone numbers to call to offer aid to the strikers. This is clearly influenced in part by the example of the Hormel strike, the IP strike, and others. Where it is possible, we should urge unions and others to do what the UMW suggests. In many cases, there will be no nearby affiliate of the UMW, and the initiative should spark interest and a sympathetic response among many in the unions.

The Eastern strike has been remarkably uncontroversial. Everybody thinks Frank Lorenzo is a rat, and the cause of the Eastern workers is almost as popular among the labor skates as that of the Polish workers, who have the virtue of being further away and not striking against real capitalists. Among the workers, which is what counts, the Eastern strike has really struck a chord because of the fact that the solidarity of the pilots has meant that the strike has been almost 100 percent effective, an unusual and pleasant exception. Nevertheless, the fact that it relies almost solely on that factor for its effectiveness means that the IAM was only bluffing about shutting down transportation on the East Coast. That would have been an entirely different matter.

There is no way the employing class is going to meekly accept a challenge of that sort simply because there is no prohibition in the Railway Labor Act against so-called secondary boycotts, which would have made such an action technically legal. Any effective transportation shutdown is going to be enjoined by some federal judge somewhere, if not by an expedited congressional session, such as ended the strike on the Chicago Northwestern (CNW) by the United Transportation Union (UTU) last September after only a few hours. Interestingly, the congressional strikebreaking

operation was led by Senator Paul Simon, Illinois, labor's favorite son in the 1988 presidential primaries.

The IAM's threat in the Eastern strike gave an additional impetus to those among the ruling class who think that the exemption should be repealed. The transportation union bureaucrats defend the provision, but caution members that if it is used effectively it will definitely be repealed. They think it has some value as a stimulant to government intervention, as was their objective in the Eastern strike. They are firmly convinced that only the intervention of some governmental third party can affect the outcome of a dispute in the union's favor.

One outcome of the Eastern strike was the exposure of the "chunks" memo, which proved explicitly what should have been known through political logic in any case. The "chunks" memo, prepared by Eastern's planning department, breaks the company into units that could be sold off, with each "chunk" rated for its "shock value" on the Machinists union. Components of the company were also evaluated by workers' militancy.

Railroad workers just recently received back-to-back setbacks from the U.S. Supreme Court. In court rulings announced just a few days apart, railroads (and airlines) were given permission to administer drug tests to employees without first negotiating the issue with the unions. The court also ruled that railroads have broad leeway to sell assets and restructure their business without having to bargain with the unions.

The national rail labor agreements for the most part expired on July 1, 1988. The national negotiating committee reports that there is nothing to report. The carriers are obviously stalling. Apparently, a majority of the Class I railroads will withdraw from national industry-wide bargaining. The UTU, by fiat of the international president, has withdrawn from the AFL-CIO as well as the Railway Labor Executives Association, the rail unions coordinating body, in order to attempt to carry out raiding operations on the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. A key test of this attempt is a vote in June on the CSX by the engineers over whether the UTU should be given exclusive bargaining rights there. (Note: A majority of the CSX engineers voted for the Brotherhood, and in August the UTU reaffiliated with the AFL-CIO.)

The rank-and-file railworkers' newspaper, *Straight Track*, carried several articles on the CNW fiasco by the UTU last fall in its March 1989 issue, including an article by Alan Thompson, a local UTU official from Clinton, Iowa, who went to Washington in September 1988 to lobby against congressional intervention in the strike. He got a friendly reception from Jim Bruenkenhoefer, the UTU's national legislative director, who gave Thompson his best wishes and even got together with him daily to see how things were going. Thompson eventually figured out that the reason they were so happy to talk to him about his congressional visits was that they were going back to the same people he had met with and telling them — "don't pay any attention to this Iowa yokel — the UTU really does not oppose the settlement," *Straight Track* reports.

Similar attacks are being carried out in the maritime industry. Crew size is being cut drastically on ocean-going

ships. Large vessels are now run with a dozen or so crew members. The Japanese are developing technology to run several ships with no crew at all from a "mother ship" by radio and computer.

The Seafarers International Union and District 2 of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association have started a new union — a wholly owned subsidiary, in effect. This new outfit, the Seafarers Maritime Union, covers unlicensed workers such as deckhands, cooks, and stewards, all at cut-rate wages.

In March, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) came to an agreement with federal prosecutors to avoid going to court and trial under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. The government won agreement that the court would appoint officers to oversee many union operations. The rank-and-file pro-democracy organization, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, has been in existence for ten years, and has a reported membership of 10,000, quite a significant accomplishment considering the conditions they have had to work under. Much of their original reform program appears to have been won, mainly through concessions the IBT has made to the government, but, underlying that, to the pressure of the membership, now that the leadership cannot negotiate any gains. The right to elect delegates to national conventions has been established for the first time, as well as the ratification of agreements by simple majority vote rather than two-thirds.

A lot has been happening in the UAW recently. The national convention just concluded left Solidarity House in control, but New Directions will hold its founding national convention this fall. Jerry Tucker and Don Douglas ran for and lost regional director posts (every UAW staffer had to contribute \$500 to the anti-Tucker campaign), but as Tucker said at *Labor Notes*, it takes more than electoral setbacks to stop the movement, and there is reason to think this is true for New Directions. Unlike Ed Sadlowski and Steelworkers Fightback in the mid-1970s, which did fall apart because of Sadlowski's defeat in his run for international president of the United Steelworkers, New Directions seems likely to continue. One advantage they have over the Sadlowski forces is that the auto industry is booming, new plants are being built, and some older ones have been hiring to keep up with demand, unlike the steel industry in the mid-70's.

The UAW leaders, and the auto companies, were especially shocked to see New Directions gain at the Mazda plant in Flat Rock, Michigan, and at the Van Nuys, California, GM plant, where a majority of the rank-and-file delegates to the convention opposed the so-called "team concept." Workers are angry that GM has announced that they will lay off 20 percent of the plant's workforce this summer in spite of the Japanese-style labor agreement. One worker said "they took the worst of the Japanese and American systems and put them together."

Meatpacking and rubber seem to remain in the vanguard of the destruction of the remaining gains of industrial unionism. The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Packinghouse Division has received setback after setback after crushing the Hormel strike. The strikes at Cudahy, Morrell, and Iowa Beef, greeted with relief by much

of the left including the Socialist Workers Party as "real" strikes, that is, endorsed by the bureaucracy, have, with the exception of Iowa Beef where they more or less stayed even, been miserable losses.

The so-called base rate in packing that the UFCW tries to establish as some sort of norm has fallen from \$8.75 to \$8.00 an hour since the Hormel strike, according to a recent report by the new Packinghouse Division director, Phil Immesote. The big sympathy strike at Morrell's Sioux Fall plant in support of another Morrell strike ended in an unconditional surrender by the union. The plant now operates with no union contract, although the union still is formally the collective bargaining agent, and the majority of the workers in the plant are scabs. A jury in Rapid City, South Dakota, recently awarded Morrell \$24 million in damages against the UFCW.

Local 9 of the UFCW at the Austin Hormel plant just agreed to accept the opening of the cut and kill department in the plant operated by a fake corporation called Quality Pork, which will pay wage rates well below those in the current agreement at Hormel. This sparked some heated opposition from the leaders of the local unions at Farmstead/Wilson, which were negotiating their new agreement at a plant in Albert Lea, Minnesota, 20 miles away, and at a plant in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Lewie Anderson, the Packinghouse Division director who helped crush the Hormel strike and then got religion in the Morrell and IBP strikes, was summarily fired by UFCW international president Bill Wynn, as he said, "after reflection." If you have ever seen Bill Wynn, notorious for wearing gold chains, cuff links, and other paraphernalia, you might say reflection is definitely an attribute of his.

Some of these local leaders, who went along with Anderson when he was attacking P-9, voiced objections when he was fired by Wynn, and formed an organization called "REAP." This was supposed to oppose further concessions in the industry, and tried to put the blame for the situation on Bill Ollwel, Wynn's chief assistant. Leaflets were soon forthcoming attacking Anderson and his sellout record. In this case, I think you have to say they were both right. The blows against the packinghouse workers have been brutal and show no sign of abating. As far as we know, there is no rank-and-file opposition organization functioning, other than the group in Austin. However, there does seem to be some polarization occurring with REAP functioning as an opposition pole for some local packinghouse officers.

The Labor Party Idea

I want to conclude by saying something about two interrelated subjects — the new discussions on the labor party and the *Labor Notes* group, and radicals in the unions in general. All proportions guarded, there are signs of a new political consciousness germinating in the working class, and a new resolution to struggle.

Seeing the openly rightward and antilabor shift of the Democratic Party, experiences like the CNW-UTU situation, where not one member of Congress would stand up for the workers, the attacks on workers compensation and other basic trade union issues in state legislatures, often led by

Democrats, the use of the National Guard against strikes, such as in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Arizona, all this and the steady deterioration of unions, wages, and prospects for the future, and the failure of any capitalist elected officials to champion, even verbally, the cause of labor, have led to a deepening alienation from conventional politics. This was, of course, expressed both in the low voter turnout in the 1988 election, as well as the tremendous enthusiasm for the Jackson campaign.

This is fertile ground for the advocacy of a labor party, and Tony Mazzocchi, a long-time advocate of a labor party, as well as the *Labor Notes* organization, which centered the 1989 conference around discussion of the labor party proposal, have responded to this. The idea was clearly and effectively advocated both by Mazzocchi and Amy Newell, secretary-treasurer of the United Electrical Workers, at the *Labor Notes* conference this May. Mazzocchi, in particular, is effectively popularizing the labor party idea.

A further indication of the new possibilities in the unions — and here we mean those based on the mood and thinking of the workers, not the self-reform of the union officialdom, liberal or conservative — is that the initiatives of radicals are prospering. *Labor Notes*, TDU, *Straight Track*, and even, to a not insignificant extent, New Directions, are all based on initiatives by political radicals. These are all phenomena of the eighties, and the bureaucracy, weakened in power and self-confidence by the capitalist crisis of the '80s, has not been able to stifle them, or even tried very hard in some cases.

What we see in this regard is a certain transition. The radicals in the unions are not only able to make viable initiatives, but these, although still modest, are beginning to reach a size where they are more than simply exemplary efforts. They are reaching the threshold of having an impact on large numbers. *Straight Track* is circulated to about 15,000 railworkers each issue. TDU enrolls 10,000 members. New

Directions had 15 or 20 percent of the delegates at the auto workers' convention. *Labor Notes* is widely circulated in the labor movement, and the conference in May, which had 1,000 in attendance, was itself in effect a caucus of the political radicals in the unions. Another phenomenon of the post-WW II radicalism is that no left group dominates the radical movement. And organizations which at least have the potential to make an impact, like the SWP, abstain from most of these activities, since they cut across their orientation to the existing leadership of the unions.

We find that we are able to collaborate fruitfully with many activists in the trade union movement and we should expect that developments in the class struggle will provide even more convergence. Even events in the Soviet Union and China, which are having an impact on the thinking of radicals as well as others, offer openings for discussion, including members of the SWP whom we associate with in the unions.

The general conclusion we should reach here, I believe, is that the continuing crisis of the capitalist system is providing opportunities for political work in the unions, in the mass organizations themselves, and among the radicals who are participating in them. These will, we can expect, reinforce and react upon each other. What we can observe over the past year or so reaffirms the general approach we have had up to now, of participating in the unions as genuine union builders and at the same time seeking out, in the course of this work, those who are open to radical and socialist ideas. If we pursue these dual aspects of trade union work consistently we can expect these very processes will indicate direction and opportunity for our fundamental goal, the reconstruction and regroupment of a proletarian revolutionary socialist vanguard party in the United States. Only the construction of such an organization, centered among the workers in basic industry, can stop the drive of capitalist anarchy toward the extinction of our planet. ●

China (Continued from page 17)

again. Sooner or later it will reach the U.S. When it does, that will sound the death knell of capitalism everywhere in the world. These developments we patiently struggle for and prepare for from now on, and not only when they are around the corner.

Never before were there so many reasons to be confident in our class and in our organization, dear brothers and sisters. I call upon you, comrades, to build the party, to help us build the International, for without the International no problem of humankind can be cured. The future is ours. Because the future is with the international working class

and its allies. The future is with the rule of the freely associated producers. The future is with a multiparty socialist democracy. The future is with a socialist world federation.

***Glory to the Martyrs of Tiananmen Square!
Shame and Disgust for Their Vile Murderers!
Long Live the Political Revolution in China!
Long Live the Fourth International!
Long Live the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism!
Long Live World Revolution!
Venceremos! We Shall Win!!***

Notebooks for the Grandchildren

by Mikhail Baitalsky

34. You Don't Get Something for Nothing

Isn't it striking that Lenin, who carefully investigated the laws of history, in his last letter (which he knew could be his last) spoke about the personality features of two people—but more precisely about the character of none other than Stalin, as something that could determine the historic fate of an enormous state?¹ He wrote about the “immense power” of Stalin, thus in effect admitting that in the course of the revolution such power had become possible: one man over 150 million people.

We distributed Lenin's testament as a document about Stalin's character and not as a document about the character of state power in Russia. And we did not stop to think, how did it happen that in the first country where the proletariat had taken power it had become objectively possible after only five years for immense personal power to be in the hands of one individual?

In a country with an overwhelming majority of peasants, a large portion of whom still remembered serfdom; in a country of autocracy and landed feudalism; in a country where the people kept silent not only under Boris Godunov, but three hundred years later—traditions have been historically developed in a way that is much different from, say, those of England with its early capitalist development and its workers' movement and its parliamentarianism and its bourgeois freedom of the press. Yes, a bourgeois parliament is far from ideal, but it nevertheless nurtures in the consciousness of workers a view about themselves as electors, on whom the state somehow depends. If the workers did not have such a conception, why would we have to expose the hypocrisy of the parliamentary system? The autocracy has for centuries educated people in an opposite way: in the psychology of servility, timidity toward those endowed with power, and a lack of confidence in one's self-worth.

The situation is similar with respect to the press. Let us grant that the bourgeois press represents the views of the highest bidder. And it chases after the most sensational stories. But precisely in this competitive pursuit at least some sort of openness is attained (often against the overall interest of capitalism).

But what kind of openness can there be when a defendant is convicted without even being allowed to speak to the people in his own defense? If this is openness, then the bonfires of the Middle Ages on which witches were burned can also be examples of openness. All the residents of the town gathered to watch the execution. But those being punished were not only unable to defend themselves; they had already confessed to everything beforehand, having been unable to endure the torture. And the people watching firmly believed that the witch had a relationship with the devil.

The purpose of an open trial is to help society examine the essence of a case. It forces the accuser to be precise and conscientious. It punishes an iniquitous judge with disgrace. If the level of public consciousness is such that it allows a witch-hunt, the crowd could be shown a mop and it would believe even the mop was guilty of the charge. But where people are accustomed to openness, they will not believe the accuser until he has publicly proven that the accused really committed the acts he is charged with. Let us compare the cases of Dreyfus and Tukhachevsky.² How are they different? In the quality of openness, even though Dreyfus's case was also tried by a military tribunal. But more precisely, the difference was in the extent to which society was accustomed to openness.

Our society never had this custom. And its absence helped Stalin attain such immense power; he attained it by conspir-

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.

ing against the party. But the very fact that his power had become so immense did not make an impact on us, the people of the 1920s. His leadership seemed unacceptable to us only because of his personal shortcomings, some of his personal views, and his personal inability to use his authority carefully. That he became omnipotent was not all Stalin's fault; we were all also to blame.

All measures to keep power from becoming omnipotence depend to an enormous degree on the culture, traditions, and psychology of the people, developed over many centuries. The revolution can and must dismantle the old state machine. However, it builds the new machine not in a vacuum but on the historical soil prepared by all previous developments.

For slipshod publication work done on the brochure "Third International," Lenin proposed that those responsible be locked up and forced to glue in the corrected pages (see vol. 51, pp. 70-71). In what civilized country is there a political need to imprison cultural workers to teach them how to work in a cultured way? Apparently, the very character of the new power being built was closely linked with the historical soil under the structure and with the native material from which it was being constructed.

The easier it was under the Russian conditions to destroy the vile, rotten autocracy, the more complicated it was to build a self-governing society on the soil poisoned by it. And it is not very surprising that it didn't take Stalin long to teach his underlings the principles of feudal loyalty. They were lying just below the surface.

You don't get something for nothing. And what if this was in fact our heavy but compulsory tuition for the course? It was the price paid for the victory of the proletariat in a country where the political instability characteristic of the peasantry (and the entire petty bourgeoisie) was combined in its own way with firmly rooted habits of strict obedience, submission, and caution inculcated for centuries, of rule by the iron fist. A person who has been raised by the rod does not simply submit to it, but upon attaining the slightest power anywhere within reach will hasten to pick up that rod himself, convinced that there is no other way to straighten people out.

"Your every step, even a simple move, is regulated by the activity of the all-powerful bureaucracy. You cannot live or die or get married or write a letter or think or print anything or open up a business or study or teach or convene a meeting or build a factory or emigrate or do anything whatsoever without the permission of the authorities." Thus wrote Marx about the Prussian bureaucracy more than one hundred years ago. But that was Prussia and over one hundred years have passed. But under Stalin in revolutionary Russia could you travel from the village to the city without the permission of the authorities? Or invite your aged parents to live with you? Or do the most elementary thing: get young people together in a circle for political self-education, as we gathered in the summer of 1917, six or seven of us boys and girls from a remote settlement in Ukraine to read Lafargue, Plekhanov, or A.N. Bach? What kind of voluntary circles can there be? What kind of independent study?

It would be natural here to tell about our study circle in Chernova, which preceded my joining the Komsomol. But we have strayed too far from Cell 358 in Butyrka prison. We

will consider the lyrical and all other digressions as a short stroll; but look — the hour glass shows that it is time to return.

Volodya Ramensky considered himself politically well shod on all four feet and ready to kick anybody in the teeth who doubted the truths he held indisputable. Having intimate knowledge of the camps, he believed that such was freedom; and socialism would not be built in any other way. He remembered a quotation that freedom is realized necessity; but he never stopped to think, for example, of a logical problem like this one: If person A realized that for a higher goal it is necessary to terrorize thoroughly for their entire lives persons B, C, D, E, F, G, etc., with the possibility of ending up in a corrective labor camp for incorrectly interpreting a given quotation, then shouldn't he simultaneously strive to see to it that B, C, D, E, F, G clearly realize why they need their corrective labor? And then camp (threatened or already existing, it doesn't matter which) for them will be freedom.

And Volodya understood why his rectification was necessary. But he clearly did not want to be in the camp. Apparently, to really understand the meaning of quotations, he had to know, in addition to them, the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Yes, he had only leafed through them; but on the other hand, he had learned the works of Stalin by heart and he believed every line, as all school kids did, and like them many old people as well who once, before studying in another kind of political circle, had known history without lies in it. But they quickly forgot, captivated as they were by the merits of Stalin in the merciless struggle against deviationism.

Besides the history of the party and the dozens of popular quotations from the classics, Volodya was familiar with the history of science. Everyone who was educated during the early postwar years will remember the main textbook truth of that time: Russian science has unchallenged supremacy in all areas.

Volodya did not have the slightest understanding of cybernetics or genetics, nor did he want to have, because there was no use wasting time on bourgeois pseudoscience through which the vile Western ideology could infiltrate our society. Of course, it did not infiltrate through cocktails. Alcohol disinfects everything.

No one could have convinced Volodya that Stalinist autarchy in science was reactionary delirium. Repeating the phrase "there is no apolitical science," Volodya was overlooking the problem of creating proletarian mathematics. His point of departure was another contention, even more important to the state: People's minds are unstable. They must not be tempted. They will be easily seduced!

Volodya was not a poorly educated blockhead. On the contrary, he was a well-educated and well-read youth. He knew the modern literary figures especially well. "Cavalier of the Golden Star," "The White Birch Tree," "Kindling," and "Far From Moscow" he had read before I had. Exchanging with me views about "Kindling," tears came to his eyes and his voice trembled when he recalled the episode when yesterday's landowner turns around his horses hauling the cart with grain gathered from a whole day's work and heads back toward the communal barn. He knew the collective farms only from the books by Stalin's laureates, and he hurried to read every such book. He could easily recall what

he had read; he had an exceptional memory. But just like Kostya Goroshko's sister-in-law — "a hard party woman" — he was able to erase from his memory what was written yesterday if today the opposite was written.

* * *

Terror takes many forms. You can fight at the front like a lion and in a prison cell act like a jackrabbit, propping yourself up, shaking all over, and nevertheless, walk straight into the open jaws of a boa, responding to the hypnotic power of his round, glistening, and unblinking eyes.

The hypnotic power of the words Volodya had memorized were unexpectedly out of harmony with his own arrest. If everyone in prison belongs there, how could they have mistakenly imprisoned him? That is the first mistake he had noticed. What of it? The Revolution is entitled to one mistake. But in this regard, my lieutenant was able to convince himself that his arrest was somehow objectively justifiable; it was his duty to the Fatherland to walk straight into the boa's mouth, obeying the command of those round, unblinking eyes and the guiding slogan "the truth, the whole truth."

He propped himself up and trembled, but he walked straight in. We all trembled; but we walked straight in.

The fearless intelligence agent Volodya Ramensky was at a loss before the prison warden. He smiled ingratiatingly at him and sought to carry out to the last detail his every order, to overdo it and try to present this to me as valor, his customary discipline — as he said — reflecting his soldier nature, coming as he did from a long line of soldiers.

Observing the prison rules with conviction, he did not wish to know who was in the next cell. More than once, the neighboring prisoners knocked on our wall. He would cast a skittish glance toward the peephole in the door and quickly strike a pose that clearly showed Mr. Fidget [the guard] that it was not us who knocked but those on the other side of the wall.

Only one little time, despite this, Volodya earned a reprimand: He was doing his morning exercises. Suddenly, the slot opened and the guard whispered: "As you were!"

Volodya ceased and timidly asked my opinion.

"Do you think that for this they'll take away my store privileges? What do you think?"

Deprivation of store privileges he considered the worst deprivation. His wife transferred to his prison account the maximum sum allowed, and he ordered from the store everything they had: Kielbasa, white bread, butter, baked goods. Orders were taken once a week. They would bring Ramensky a load of ordered comestibles. He would eat and generously treat his cellmates. But butter and kielbasa soon spoil and with a grimace of disgust he would go back to the prison gruel which, to be honest, I always ate to the last drop.

One store day, Volodya grabbed his stomach and beseeched the guard to let him go there before the appointed time. But he humiliated himself in vain. If Mr. Fidget made an exception for one, then tomorrow others will want the same. Not a chance!

In the mornings, at the same time as morning call, the guard pushed to us through the hole in the door a piece of wax, a rag, and a brush. We took turns wiping the dust from the bars and polishing the floor till it shined. Volodya worked with the utmost diligence, trying to get his cellmates to shine the floor as hard as he did. It seemed as if he intended to advance Cell 358 into the vanguard in prison bar hygienics and prison floor luster. But no guard ever once praised us for it. Apparently in the other cells there were prisoners who were even more determined to earn the red badge of merit.

[Next Month: "A Credo in the Area of Wages"]

Notes

1. Lenin wrote about Trotsky and Stalin in his "testament," actually his letter to the Twelfth Congress of the Bolshevik party, scheduled for April 1923. His widow, N. Krupskaya, revealed it only after Lenin's death. The text was not published in the Soviet Union until 1956. For the complete text and Trotsky's analytical article about it, see *Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism*, edited with an introduction by Russell Block, Pathfinder Press, 1975.

2. Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) was a Jewish officer in the French army convicted of treason for espionage during an anti-Semitic campaign in 1894. His conviction was overturned after a long campaign in his defense by Emile Zola and others. By contrast, Mikhail Tukhachevsky (1893-1937), a Red Army general and a marshal of the USSR, was accused of treason and shot after the second Moscow trial.

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Let the Soviet Workers Judge

Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism, by Roy Medvedev. Edited and translated by George Shriver. Revised and expanded edition, 1989. Columbia University Press, New York. 903 pp. \$60.

Reviewed by Frank Lovell

I

This new edition of Roy Medvedev's history of Stalin's crimes has a history of its own. When the first edition of *Let History Judge* was published in 1971 it was almost universally acclaimed as a serious work by an accredited Soviet historian. Since then Medvedev has been generally recognized in the academic world as an authority on the Stalinist terror. His book was published first in English by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, and subsequently in several other languages, including Japanese and Chinese. A Russian-language edition has been available since 1974, but only in 1988 was the first part published and distributed in the Soviet Union.

Now comes this revised and expanded edition more than 20 years after Medvedev completed work on the first in 1968, an achievement initially made possible by Khrushchev's 1956 revelations at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the political changes that ensued.

During the early years of Khrushchev's control Medvedev was able to interview many survivors of Stalin's torture chambers and labor camps, and gain access to previously guarded materials. But Khrushchev was ousted in 1964. By 1968 reaction was back in full sway. From then on persistent efforts were made by influential groups in the Soviet government to restore the idealized image of Stalin.

When Medvedev decided to publish his work abroad he had already been expelled from the Communist Party and fired from his prestigious academic job. He was placed under KGB surveillance, at times denied a telephone, and on several occasions files and manuscripts in his possession were seized. Under these conditions he continued for two decades to gather additional material on the crimes of Stalin. He now reports that as late as 1985—in Chernenko's last days—"new and extremely stubborn attempts were made to rehabilitate Stalin."

The struggle within the Soviet bureaucracy over the question of historical accuracy and factual reporting was resolved at the Soviet CP's Central Committee plenum of January 1987. Glasnost then became official policy.

In October 1988 Medvedev wrote the introduction to this second edition, "Introductory Essay: Perestroika and Stalinism," in which he says he has learned much from writing this book and hopes sometime to tell the details of his many encounters. In this connection he raises an interesting question having to do with the heritage of Stalinism. "Many people in the Soviet Union today are talking and writing about the need to fill in the numerous gaps in our

history," he says. "But who prevented Soviet historians from filling in these gaps earlier, before they received 'permission from above?'"

In retrospect Medvedev says he has "modified his views in many respects to make them more precise, but he has maintained his adherence to socialist ideals." This is in response to bourgeois historians who are critical of his contention that Stalinism is the opposite of Bolshevism. Changes in Soviet society in recent years have vastly altered his conditions of work and his personal relationship to the Soviet bureaucracy, and this in turn has made possible a more open discussion, within the Soviet Union and throughout the world, of those socialist ideals to which he refers.

II

The extent that Medvedev has modified his views since 1968 cannot be judged by the great amount of new evidence accumulated against the scheming and deceitful Stalin, unless this is interpreted to mean that Stalin is now exposed as more villainous than originally thought. The editor and translator, George Shriver, estimates that over 100,000 words have been added to the second edition of *Let History Judge*. However, there is little evidence that Medvedev has changed his view of Stalinism in any respect. Nor is there solid evidence that he has a different view of the role of Stalin's political opponents, Trotsky and the Left Opposition in particular. Probably he has a somewhat different appreciation of Trotsky's contributions to a better understanding of Soviet history because he has been able to read a great deal more by and about Trotsky, duly noted in the second edition.

This does not mean that the great mass of new material in this second edition is of little consequence. On the contrary, it serves to bring into sharper focus the class character and social impact of the purges which began in the mid-1920s, accelerated in the 1930s, and continued into the 1950s. In fact, they never ended until after Stalin died on March 1, 1953. Medvedev says that even Stalin's corpse caused deaths. Hundreds were trampled in the crowds that came to view the remains, a tragic result of incompetent organization by the authorities. Hundreds of others were arrested at the time by the NKVD under Stalin's "mobilization plan" of preventive arrests, drafted initially for such emergencies as war and revolution.

One of the worst crimes of Stalinism was the famine in the countryside, 1932-33, which all Soviet officials were ordered to deny in an attempt to hide it from the world. It was the direct result of punitive measures against the peasantry in the Southern Ukraine, the middle Volga, the Northern Caucasus, and Kazakhstan. In these areas the rich and middle peasants had been hoarding grain for higher prices and had refused to voluntarily join collective farms. Their grain

was seized by the government, thousands were arrested, livestock herds died, the land lay fallow. Medvedev reports that "hundreds of thousands and even millions of starving people fled to the cities and more prosperous regions, but few managed to reach their goals since military barricades and checkpoints were set up on highways and at railway stations to halt and turn back peasants from the famine-stricken regions." This can now be verified. But at the time these operations were conducted in strictest secrecy. Rumors of famine were denounced as slanders, those repeating them arrested as "enemies of the people." An estimated five to eight million died of starvation at this time. Meanwhile Stalin insisted on exporting great quantities of grain.

The most widely publicized of Stalin's crimes were the infamous Moscow show trials, 1936-1938, in which prominent leaders of the Bolshevik party were tried and executed. They included such world-famous associates of Lenin in the 1917 October revolution as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Bukharin, and many others. Trotsky was condemned in absentia. All the defendants (except Trotsky, of course) confessed to the worst conceivable crimes, everything from poisoning wells and wrecking trains to collaborating with German fascists. The world was shocked and mystified. Medvedev reports that the mystery of the fantastic charges was soon solved by an international commission of inquiry headed by the American philosopher John Dewey. In 1937 the Dewey Commission took testimony and received voluminous documents from Trotsky in Mexico, and found that the trials were frame-ups and the confessions false. But, as Medvedev notes, "the Western press paid little attention."

And part of the mystery seemed to remain unsolved. The question persisted, "Why did they confess?"

In his 1956 revelations to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet CP, Khrushchev answered this question directly: beatings and more beatings. The accumulated evidence of repression under the Stalinist regime reveals a refined system of torture, employing all the barbaric techniques of the Middle Ages. Stalin's torture chambers and Beria's inquisition developed more sadistic methods as the terror continued in the years leading up to the Stalin-Hitler Pact and the Second World War.

Many victims were spared torture and shot immediately without ever knowing why they were arrested. Others who had passed through the torture mills and confessed to crimes they did not commit were subsequently shot while serving time in labor camps. Lists of those to be shot were sent regularly from Moscow. Officials in charge of the camps carried out the orders without question, and in many instances those officials and the executioners under their command were in turn shot.

All branches of government (including the secret police) and all social institutions were affected by the terror which swept through these institutions in waves regulated by sharp turns in the government's foreign or domestic policy. The social fabric in all the Soviet republics was ripped apart. The number of victims (tortured, imprisoned, deported, shot) is estimated at no less than 20 million. The actual count of those executed is not complete. Medvedev says that in three years, 1936-1938, "no less than five million persons were arrested

for political reasons." He says, "there were days when up to a thousand people were shot in Moscow alone."

In 1940 several thousand Red Army commanders were rehabilitated because of the poor showing in the invasion of Finland due to lack of trained officers. Medvedev tells the story of one such officer who happened to meet (on a street in Kiev) one of his prison inquisitors who had subjected him to severe torture. The officer shot the inquisitor on the spot.

Medvedev attributes the high casualty figures during World War II to Stalin's military ignorance and indifference to human life. "The enormous official figure of 20 million dead proves to be greatly understated," he says. "Together with those who died in combat the number of victims probably exceeds 30 million, both soldiers and civilians."

Stalin's crimes have long been known and widely publicized in the United States and Europe but the shock effect of their enormity remains. This is only now being felt in the Soviet Union because there they have not until very recently been widely known in their full scope, and are still not understood. Medvedev provides material that is helpful in understanding them.

The additions to *Let History Judge*, incorporated in this second edition, include references and citations from correspondence, journals, and memoirs of many politically experienced and talented victims of the terror. These firsthand accounts bring a new dimension to the history of the Stalinist repression. They describe and analyze the circumstances of imprisonment and the fate of many prominent individuals. Through these sources and others available to him Medvedev is able to expose the almost total annihilation of foreign communists who sought refuge in the Soviet Union or migrated there to help build socialism. Jewish refugees were turned over to Hitler. Members of the International Brigade who had fought in Spain were shot. Medvedev says of the foreign volunteers who fought for Loyalist Spain against Franco, probably more were shot in the Soviet Union than in Spain. Many leaders of the Communist International and others long in the foreign service of the Kremlin were summarily shot. Mikhail Borodin, the Comintern's chief representative in China in the 1920s and 1930s, was shot in 1949. Anna Louise Strong, the American journalist in China and "friend of the Soviet Union," was accused of espionage while working in the Soviet Union and expelled from the country. She later wrote a book, *The Stalin Era*, a curiously contrived excuse for Stalin and all his crimes. But this is typical of Stalin's servitors to try and hide their own complicity behind the "progressive features" of the Stalin myth.

Readers of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* will be interested to learn that Mikhail Baitalsky's memoir, *Notebooks for the Grandchildren* (serialized in this publication), is one of the very insightful sources frequently quoted by Medvedev.

For those who think they know a great deal about the crimes of Stalin and are familiar with some of the most notorious (the Kirov assassination for example), this book provides a great deal more than additional incidents and horrible examples. It describes in detail economic conditions and political struggles in the country at the time. In this respect the book is a comprehensive history of the period, a valuable source reference. But it is more. It attempts to

discover the causes of the terror, as the title indicates: the origins and consequences of Stalinism.

III

What were the origins of Stalinism? How did such a monstrous system get started? How could it sustain itself for three decades (1923-1953), arguably the most fateful decades in human history, during which the whole world was shattered by war and revolution? Furthermore, did Stalinism fall when Stalin died? These are not new questions. And Medvedev is not the first to address them. He is mindful of the standard answers from Sovietologists in the capitalist world that Stalinism was simply the logical extension of Leninism, that Stalin was Lenin's natural heir, etc. They argue that the suppression of political parties, the use of police force against political opponents, even the elimination of minority factions in the Bolshevik party began in Lenin's time. Stalin continued these practices and extended the system. Medvedev reminds his bourgeois critics that measures taken against opposition parties occurred during civil war and were directed against those who, arms in hand, sought to overthrow the newly established government of workers and peasants. Lenin sought to bring the mass of working people into the decision-making process of government, through the soviets and especially through independent trade unions. Stalin maneuvered through Bolshevik party channels to concentrate power in the committees of the government apparatus, thus depriving the working class of any control over the institutions of government. Soviet history demonstrates that Leninism and Stalinism are polar opposites, that Stalin destroyed what the Bolsheviks tried to create.

Medvedev also chides the anti-socialist ideologues with the fact that Stalinist historians, long after Stalin died, continued to repeat official Soviet dogma which ignores Stalin's crimes while identifying his murderous bureaucratic system with Leninism. He cites the following example from a Soviet textbook: "The cult of personality . . . could not alter the nature of the socialist system, could not shake the party's Leninist foundations." Apologists for both capitalism and Stalinism, for different reasons, identify socialist ideals with bureaucratic corruption in the Soviet Union today. Medvedev argues that both camps are hostile to socialism, one openly so and the other covertly. It is precisely this devious and deceitful aspect of Stalinism which epitomized Stalin's personality, he says. He successfully demonstrates that the facts of Soviet history, long suppressed, destroy the myth that Leninism and Stalinism are identical twins.

The first signs of Stalin's pernicious control within the Bolshevik party coincided with Lenin's last illness. At that time the defeat of the 1923 proletarian uprising in Germany had dashed the hopes among the leaders of Russian Bolshevism that the revolution would soon spread to the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe. They were also plagued with social and political problems on the home front, created in part by the initial successes of the New Economic Policy which had been introduced in 1921. With the death of Lenin in January 1924 a new problem was

added — the problem of succession. Who would become the leader of the Bolshevik party?

At this moment in Soviet history Stalin proved his mastery in the art of deception, according to Medvedev's account of the struggle over policy and for power among the top leaders of the Soviet CP in the crucial 1923-25 years. Medvedev draws on the research of other historians who have studied this period, including Trotsky's biographer Isaac Deutscher.

The principal figures in the power struggle at this juncture were Trotsky, Stalin, Bukharin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. All were deeply involved and each in his own way recognized that the future of the Soviet Union was at stake. Only Stalin among them was primarily interested in the power struggle and its outcome. The others, in Medvedev's judgment, were more genuinely concerned about the threatening economic crisis and the deepening social cleavage between town and country, between the proletariat and the peasantry. They came to different conclusions about what needed to be done, Trotsky calling for more rapid industrialization and the others opposing this course. Meanwhile Stalin was maneuvering between the two contending positions to promote his own personal interests, pretending to play the modest role of a conciliator.

In 1923 Trotsky published his *New Course*, proposing more careful planning in the production system and better balancing between industrial and agricultural output. He dealt with the division between town and country, the social composition of the party, and the generational gap. He warned against the growing uncontrolled power of the bureaucracy in the governmental structure and in the party apparatus, noting the sluggish effects of "functionarism" which he identified as "closely related to bureaucratism." This was interpreted as an attack on the party leadership and Zinoviev and Kamenev led the counterattack against Trotsky. In this initial struggle Stalin was identified with Trotsky's two most vocal opponents as part of the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Stalin triumvirate which was the ruling group in the party at the time. Stalin had managed to retain his position as organizational secretary (despite Lenin's warning that he should be removed) with power to make assignments of party and government personnel, and to shift his own personal followers into positions of authority.

Trotsky's warnings were rejected by majority votes in major units of the party in Moscow and Leningrad. And soon thereafter Stalin began distancing himself from his partners in the triumvirate, seeking new allies.

After the Thirteenth Party Congress in May 1924, following Lenin's death, a new Politburo was elected, consisting of Bukharin, Kamenev, Rykov, Stalin, Tomsky, Trotsky, and Zinoviev. This governing body was clearly split along political and organizational lines. Medvedev says that on all domestic and foreign policy issues, "Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin supported Stalin."

Zinoviev and Kamenev had demanded the expulsion of Trotsky and his close associates from the party. Stalin disagreed. Medvedev quotes Stalin's rationale:

"We did not agree with comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev because we knew that a policy of cutting off members was fraught with great dangers for the party, that the method of cutting off, the method of bloodletting — and they were ask-

ing for blood—is dangerous and contagious. Today one person is cut off, tomorrow another, the next a third—but what will remain of the party?”

This is how Stalin explained the action of the Central Committee, but Medvedev says that Stalin, foreseeing a clash with Zinoviev and Kamenev, sought to neutralize the Trotskyists.

That clash was not long in coming, provoked by Stalin. Soon after the Thirteenth Congress, *Pravda*, the party's daily newspaper, published Stalin's report of it in which he accused Kamenev of "carelessness regarding questions of theory..." Zinoviev and Kamenev reacted sharply, demanding an immediate conference of the core leadership of the party. A meeting of twenty-five Central Committee members was convened, including all members of the Politburo, which voted to reject Stalin's arguments against "dictatorship of the party" and ordered the publication of an article by Zinoviev on the question. At this point Stalin demonstratively offered to resign, but the offer was rejected. Medvedev seems to imply that if Stalin's offer had been accepted the course of history might have been different. He makes the following observation of the 1926 Trotsky-Kamenev-Zinoviev bloc: "Had it been formed in 1923 or even 1924 Stalin probably could not have overcome it. In 1926 the opposition's fight for power was doomed."

From this it seems that the die was cast in 1924, if not sooner. It then followed that any opposition to Stalin within the ruling circles would certainly bring swift retribution, demonstrated most dramatically a decade later by the Kirov assassination in December 1934. In this case it was not a matter of factional opposition to Stalin. At the time Kirov, a loyal supporter of Stalin, was a member of the Politburo, secretary of the Central Committee, and first secretary of the Leningrad party organization. He was a popular leader and there was speculation in upper circles of the party that he could replace Stalin. Stalin had him shot as a potential rival.

Soon after this bloodletting, hardly the first, the macabre Moscow show trials of 1936-1938 were staged. While Stalin spoke hypocritically of the dangers of "bloodletting" back in 1924, his agents and thugs were engaged in frame-ups and physical repression in Soviet Georgia.

The Moscow trials signaled the Stalinist reign of terror in which millions were victimized and tens of thousands murdered. What brought this on? Was the terror inevitable? Is this a necessary consequence of all fundamental social and economic upheavals, involving the overthrow of an oppressor class by the oppressed masses?

A superficial review of history tends to confirm the impression that terror necessarily follows revolution: as in the bourgeois revolution in England under Cromwell in 1653; again in the bourgeois revolution in France under the Jacobins and Bonapartists in 1794 and 1799; and in the case of the proletarian revolution in Russia under Stalinism.

The Bolsheviks were schooled in the lessons of history. Lenin and Trotsky, as prominent exponents of Marxism, were students of the French Revolution, as were all leading socialists of the early 20th century. They tried to apply the Marxist concept of historical materialism to the prospect of a revolutionary overthrow of tsardom in the semifeudal Rus-

sian empire. Trotsky explained and demonstrated this side of Marxism in his *History of the Russian Revolution*.

Medvedev says that, of course, the leaders of the Bolshevik party after Lenin reminded themselves of their early history lessons, and feared the degeneration of the revolution and the rise of Bonapartist reaction. But they failed to recognize the reaction when it arose in their midst and enveloped them. He quotes the British historian E.H. Carr on this historical paradox: "The Bolsheviks knew that the French Revolution had ended in a Napoleon, and feared that their revolution might end in the same way. They therefore did not trust Trotsky, who among their leaders looked most like a Napoleon, and trusted Stalin, who looked least like a Napoleon."

Medvedev tries to dispose of the argument that Stalinism was inevitable. He offers the following assertion: "For the young Soviet state the road of development was not determined in such a way that it necessarily had to grow into the Stalinist system. Various possibilities existed, and Stalinism was not the only one or even the main one." But this remains to be demonstrated.

What course could the young workers' state have taken? This is an important question in the debate today around perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union. The thrust of Medvedev's argumentation is that if the sharp turn to rapid development of heavy industry in the metropolitan centers and forced collectivization on the countryside could have been averted or postponed in 1928, then economic and social development in the Soviet Union could have been "more natural," less frenetic, and certainly more humane. This was the course urged by Bukharin and Rykov in the 1924-1928 debates in the Politburo, a course similar to Gorbachev's perestroika today under vastly different conditions.

What the outcome would have been if in 1928 Bukharin's line had continued to prevail (development of industry at a "snail's pace" and enrichment of the peasantry) is today speculative. History decreed otherwise. And that makes the investigation into the causes and consequences of Stalinism extremely relevant to current political struggles in the Soviet Union. Medvedev has contributed massive factual material on the crimes of Stalinism, but his analysis consists mostly of systematically sorting through this material to discover what prominent politicians and leaders in the arts and in science were doing and saying in the Stalin era. Economic and social forces undoubtedly exerted a profound influence on all the principal actors in the Stalinist regime, and Medvedev is alert to this. The supporting roles shifted from one set of characters to another, but in due course nearly all fell victim to the executioner's bullet. Stalin is the directing force in this tragic drama.

It is undisputed that Soviet society was transformed in those years, to the advantage of the great majority. Giant strides were made in literacy, public health, science, and industry. The Soviet Union survived World War II and emerged in the postwar period as the second most powerful nation, militarily and industrially. This was possible only because of the system of planned economy, protected against the countervailing market forces of world imperialism. Apologists for Stalin have contrasted these social and economic gains of the Soviet Union since the 1917

revolution with the appalling crimes of Stalin, and tried to "calculate" a balance between the two. Medvedev rejects this. He says, "... the items placed on the scale to counter-balance Stalin's crimes are usually victories gained by the Soviet people, and often *in spite* of Stalin's mistakes and crimes." There is weighty evidence to substantiate this conclusion.

But none of this answers the more fundamental questions. What made Stalin's ascension to power possible? And how can the consequences of Stalinism be overcome today?

Medvedev tackles the first question and largely ignores the second. He is hobbled by his acceptance of the "personality cult" theory, advanced first by Khrushchev's party ideologues in 1956 to try and explain what was known at the time of Stalin's crimes. It explained nothing. If there was a Stalin cult, it remains to be explained how this cult arose. This is what Medvedev has tried to do. His extensive research disproves the theory.

Another of Medvedev's self-imposed limitations is his acceptance of the theory of "socialism in one country," a Stalinist invention designed to rationalize the extremely difficult international situation in which the Soviet Union found itself after the disastrous outcome of the working class uprising in Germany in 1923. Soon after those tragic events Stalin published this "theory," a half-formulated idea borrowed from Bukharin. It appeared in an introduction to a collection of Stalin's 1924 speeches and writings. The practical intent at the time was to reassure the ranks of the party that the Soviet Union could survive the German events. But Stalin had another purpose in mind: to counterpose the course of history to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. This became the major theoretical difference between counter-revolutionary Stalinism and revolutionary Marxism. Medvedev is fully aware of this theoretical struggle, but he proceeds in his historical analysis as if the past and future fate of the Soviet Union was and will forever be determined by political struggles within that country, independent of the class struggle worldwide. This narrow "one country" focus limits and distorts Medvedev's view of the Stalin era.

Readers will need to look to the voluminous writings of Trotsky for a clearer view and more comprehensive understanding of this historic period in general and Stalinism in particular.

IV

Let us look now at some of Trotsky's contributions on this subject by way of contrast, counter to Medvedev's approach. Trotsky explained more clearly than anyone else the formation of the bureaucratic strata in Soviet society, the rise of a privileged caste. He described its instability and predicted its degeneration. His analysis does not deal with post-World War II developments.

Medvedev has certain advantages in writing the history of bureaucratic degeneration in that he lives in this later time, the post-World War II period, which in many respects is a world removed from that of the prewar years. Consequently, he is able to look back on the Stalin era with a certain detachment in time as well as having a close-up view of the bureaucracy in its present agony. We might all be well served

if he would turn his attention to the rise and fall of the Soviet bureaucracy.

But first he will need to develop greater awareness that this privileged social stratum exists and warrants careful investigation. It includes the ruling elite and oppressive administrative structure, and direct beneficiaries of official corruption. In Trotsky's time this was about 15 percent of the population, numbering perhaps 35 million. He said it was difficult to estimate the numbers of the bureaucracy and harder to determine their income because of deceptive government data, or lack of data. But he concluded that "15 percent, or, say 20 percent of the population enjoys not much less of the wealth than is enjoyed by the remaining 80 to 85 percent." This is the dividing line in Soviet society between the haves and have-nots, between bosses and workers, parasites and producers.

Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy is limited almost entirely to the prewar years, although he engaged in extensive debate on the class nature of the Soviet Union and its defense in the imperialist war in the final year of his life, until the day of his assassination. Of course, he had the advantage of being a major participant in twentieth-century history from 1905 on. And his most valuable assets in all this were those indispensable analytical tools bequeathed by Marx and Engels: historical materialism and the dialectic method. That is, he began with Marx's discovery that the history of civilization is the history of class struggles, the oppressed against their oppressors.

Since Trotsky was the major player in the struggle against Stalinist oppression, Medvedev necessarily devotes considerable attention to his activities. Trotsky made mistakes. Trotsky failed to take advantage of the opportunities that developed. In the last year of Lenin's life, when Lenin sought Trotsky's collaboration in the struggle against Stalin, "Trotsky displayed complete passivity and in so doing condemned himself to defeat." All this is frequently repeated by those who wish the course of history had been different and rely heavily on the role of the individual in the historic process. Trotsky answered those criticisms in 1929, immediately after his expulsion from the Soviet Union, explaining that at the time he considered the resurgence of the working class more vital than the clique struggles in the party hierarchy. "There are victories that lead into blind alleys, and there are defeats that open up new avenues," he said.

What, in fact, was Trotsky doing in the years 1922-1924? Among other things he wrote four major works. All four were directed against the emerging Soviet bureaucracy and against the dereliction of the top leadership in the party for its failure to recognize and combat this ever-present danger. All four were addressed to the Soviet working class, calling for vigilance against the bureaucracy.

- In the summers of 1922 and 1923 Trotsky completed work on his book *Literature and Revolution*, a summation of views on cultural policy which he shared with Lenin in total rejection of the crude "proletarian culture" theories then in vogue among upstart bureaucrats and mediocre artists.

- Also in 1923 Trotsky wrote a series of articles for *Pravda* on the conditions of life and manners and morals of Soviet citizens in the transitional society, published as a book titled *Problems of Everyday Life*.

● At the same time in a separate series of *Pravda* articles Trotsky took up the problems of the country that were developing under NEP. These articles, with some additional material, were soon published as a pamphlet, *The New Course*.

● *Lessons of October*, probably Trotsky's most important work in those years, took final form in September 1924 as an introduction to a collection of his 1917 speeches and writings. This dealt with the dynamics of the 1917 revolution in Russia and the failure to understand and take advantage of the dynamics of the 1923 uprising in Germany.

Trotsky was tireless, his war on bureaucratism ceaseless. He and Lenin worked in close accord during Lenin's last year. At first Lenin was worried mostly about the growing influence of the self-seeking bureaucracy in the institutions of government, but he soon reached agreement with Trotsky that the most immediate danger of bureaucratic degeneration was in the party committees. Lenin traced it to the office of the organizational secretary, Stalin. He demanded Stalin's removal.

Trotsky was more aware of the situation in the party leadership at that time than Lenin. At the beginning of 1923, when Lenin's illness forced him to withdraw from party activity for the last time, the triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin organized a secret faction. This faction (Trotsky called it the "secret Politburo") consisted of every member of the Politburo except Trotsky (Bukharin, Kamenev, Rykov, Stalin, Tomskey, Zinoviev). They met secretly and confronted Trotsky with ready-made decisions at formal meetings of the Politburo. This was a flagrant bureaucratic departure from the creative work of the Politburo when Lenin was able to participate. It then fulfilled its intended function of considering and attempting to resolve the almost insuperable problems of the new society and the role of the vanguard party in the new government that had been created. The secret faction destroyed this essential purpose of the Politburo and converted it into a mutual support agency working to satisfy the special needs of the faction members.

Under these circumstances Trotsky necessarily appealed to the Soviet working class and to the ranks of the Bolshevik party for support of his domestic policies designed to nurture the new society in its transition period, with the prospect of extending the revolution to major industrial countries of Europe, especially Germany. He organized the Left Opposition in the Soviet CP and in the Communist International to expose and turn back the bureaucratic trend. He failed to curb the rapidly growing bureaucracy, but he succeeded in slowing the drift toward capitalist restoration.

In the initial stage of this long struggle he was allied with Lenin and together they seemed to score a quick and easy victory. At the beginning of October 1922, the Central Committee, in Lenin's and Trotsky's absence, passed measures designed to weaken the state monopoly of foreign trade. Lenin demanded that the decision be postponed and the matter reconsidered. He asked Trotsky to present their common position at the Central Committee meeting in December. Lenin expected a serious debate, but Bukharin and Stalin withdrew their proposals. In a letter to Trotsky on December 22, Lenin observed that they had won "without a

single shot." But he knew the battle was far from over. He proposed, in a private meeting with Trotsky at that time, "a bloc against the bureaucracy in general and against the Organizational Bureau (headed by Stalin) in particular," according to Trotsky.

That aborted dispute anticipated the lines of difference that would be drawn later, after Lenin's death. At that early date Stalin and Bukharin were seeking to strengthen the private sector of the economy against the state sector. They would later be emboldened to advocate "socialism at a snail's pace," as opposed to state planning and industrialization, and to support rich peasants against poor peasants, and private farms over gradual collectivization.

A serious examination of those debates in the 1920s will produce rich lessons for the future course of perestroika, under present-day conditions of industrialization and the world market.

Those who deplore the crimes of Stalin and seek the source of Stalinism will find it in the rise of the hydra-headed bureaucracy. Stalin suited the needs of the avaricious, uncouth, self-seeking bureaucrats better than anyone else available to them in the top circles of government. They became dependent on Stalin and he in turn depended on them in his struggle to control the party and institutions of government. Stalin was in charge of the appointments bureau, and he appointed the most ambitious provided they were prepared to return favors.

In his struggle for power he had to contend with the political factions that formed within the party. The Left Opposition headed by Trotsky, the right wing headed by Bukharin and Rykov, and the centrist faction of Stalin and his shifting supporters were the political lines along which the party divided in its very early post-Lenin period, and this division remained until the Left Opposition was crushed and expelled in 1927. By that time the Bolshevik party, as it had existed at the time of the revolutionary victory in 1917, was completely destroyed. From then on Stalin served as an arbiter within the parasitic bureaucracy, like a gang boss adjusting rival claims and issuing death sentences, maintaining some semblance of order among the mob of mean-spirited, self-centered lieutenants and their subalterns who ruled over the complex Soviet society. Eventually broad social purges were organized in the guise of building socialism. It appeared to be a one-man operation run by a cult figure. It was, in reality, the government of a newly arisen, completely amoral, social stratum devoid of ideological principles. Under this government millions of innocent subjects were sentenced to death.

Where did this bureaucracy come from? How did it penetrate the pores of society? Partly it was the heritage of the tsarist past: ignorance, misery, brutality. Mainly it was the product of scarcity resulting from the devastation of World War I, followed by four years of civil war. And this can be charged against the imperialist powers who waged the war and financed the counterrevolution. (Much in the same way as the U.S. finances the counterrevolution in Nicaragua, Angola, etc. today.) And finally it was the exhaustion and demoralization of the working class that allowed, and in some ways encouraged, this untutored bureaucracy to ravage Soviet society. The Left Opposition succeeded in

rallying broad sectors of the working class against the oppressive Stalinist system, but the continued isolation of the Soviet Union (prolonged by major working class defeats in the capitalist world: in Germany, 1923 and 1933; in Britain, 1926; in China, 1925-27; in Spain, 1936-38; in France, 1936) enabled the bureaucracy to gain the upper hand. Trotsky was exiled in 1927. His most prominent collaborators were also exiled and scattered to widely separated places of isolation in remote regions of the Soviet Union. Even in defeat Trotsky continued his uncompromising battle against the bureaucracy. In 1928 at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, Trotsky's critique of the Soviet CP's Draft Program (adopted at that congress to become the Comintern credo for the next seven years) managed to find its way from Trotsky's exile in far off Alma Alta in Central Asia into the Program Commission of the congress. This document, *The Draft Program of the Communist International—a criticism of fundamentals* (Trotsky's analysis of "socialism in one country" in which he predicted the demise of the Comintern), never got officially beyond the Program Commission where it was suppressed. But some delegates (James P. Cannon from the U.S. was one) smuggled copies out of the Soviet Union, and this then became the programmatic basis of the struggle within the Comintern to reaffirm the Marxist principles of international working class solidarity. This struggle in turn led eventually to the formation of the Fourth International, after the collapse in 1933 of the Comintern in face of Hitler's onslaught against the German working class.

It is surely one of the graces of history that the myopic Stalin, thinking in 1929 that he could get rid of Trotsky by deporting him beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, unintentionally spared his life for another decade during which time Trotsky completed what he considered the most important contributions of his life's work in the revolutionary Marxist movement, in the service of humanity, culminating in the founding of the Fourth International.

During his first years of exile Trotsky organized the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) internationally, seeking supporters in the national parties of the Comintern, with the aim of bringing international working class aid to the beleaguered Soviet Union. He also sought to keep the forces of the Left Opposition together inside the Soviet Union and continued the struggle on all fronts against the internal enemy, Stalinism. Because of Trotsky's work within the international working class movement, continuously organizing in defense of the Soviet Union and seeking to extend the initial gains of the victorious Bolshevik revolution throughout the world, the record of perfidious Stalinism was laid bare at every step of the way. When Kirov was assassinated in December 1934 Trotsky responded within weeks with an analysis of the affair, explaining the involvement of Stalin's secret police, and predicting that this "bungled frame-up" would lead to further terroristic acts and repressive measures. It proved to be a forerunner of the Moscow show trials.

While these trials were being staged Trotsky launched an international campaign to expose them and compiled the necessary massive documentary evidence to prove them complete fakes from beginning to end.

On the eve of World War II Trotsky analyzed the diplomatic strategies of the contending capitalist powers within the fractured imperialist structure, explained the extreme isolation of the Soviet Union resulting from the series of working class defeats, and was thus able to predict the possibility of a Stalin-Hitler pact. Trotsky was not surprised when the announcement came.

Contemporary historians who seek to understand Stalinism are indebted to Trotsky for leaving such a clear record of this phenomenon to guide them. But before they can grasp the meaning of that record they must first understand the decisive influence of irrepressible class struggle—between the working class on one side and the employing class on the other—in this modern industrial world.

V

It will be a fortunate historical coincidence if Medvedev's *Let History Judge* is finally published, for the first time in the Soviet Union, simultaneously with the appearance of some of Trotsky's works. This is indicated by prepublication announcements, and by trends in the debates about perestroika and the future of Soviet economy. Medvedev's writings are being published, and his consequent political popularity was demonstrated in recent Soviet elections.

Popular interest in Soviet history, generated by glasnost, has brought on the partial rehabilitation of Trotsky. In mid-August 1989 an official Soviet magazine, *Molodoi Kommunist* (a publication of the Young Communist League), reprinted the *New Course* which first appeared in *Pravda* in 1923. The reappearance of this particular work at this time is indicative of the deep interest in the future course of Soviet society. Trotsky, as we know, argues in this 66-year-old polemic for greater freedom of expression, a more carefully planned economy, and warns against the dangers of uncontrolled market forces.

Medvedev's impressive book on Stalin's crimes carries within it an implied defense of Bukharin's advocacy in the 1920s of a relaxation of the government monopoly of foreign trade and a turn to an open market economy. So at this abstract level it might appear as if a Medvedev-Trotsky debate is in the making. But for such a debate to become meaningful now it will be necessary to translate the opposing positions into the language of contemporary political economy and relate them to the new problems that have developed in the post-World War II world. In other words, the Trotsky-Bukharin debates of the 1923-1928 years require careful examination to determine whether they are relevant to the economic and political conditions of the world today. That, of course, is the purpose of the historian, to discover the lessons of the past that apply to the present.

Medvedev seems to think he is on the right track in pursuit of Bukharin's logic, projecting into the equation his own problematic that if somehow along the line Stalin's evil schemes had been exposed and defeated Soviet society could have developed in a more humane way.

Trotsky, for his part, tried to anticipate the probable course of events at the time. In September 1926 *Pravda* ran a series of articles by him on the condition and direction of Soviet economy. These were soon translated into English in

a book titled *Toward Capitalism or Socialism*. The following brief excerpt from the author's introduction to this book summarizes his approach to the problem: "When the Soviet government, under the leadership of the Communist Party, introduced the New Economic Policy and then extended the field of its operations to the provinces, it had no illusions as to either the inevitable social consequences of the market system or the political dangers it brought with it. We do not regard these dangers, however, as fatal consequences, but as problems which must be studied with attention and solved in practice at every stage of our work."

As these words were written a ferocious anti-Trotsky campaign was underway, engineered by the Bukharin-Stalin alliance, accusing him of "underestimating the peasantry." This was in response to Trotsky's warning that pressures of the market economy had divided the peasantry between rich and poor, had engendered a revival of capitalist property relations between well-off peasants and agricultural wage laborers, and threatened an economic crisis because the rich peasants were demanding higher prices for grain than the state was able to pay.

A decade later, when Trotsky wrote his penetrating analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, *The Revolution Betrayed*, he recalled the 1926 warnings by the Left Opposition of an impending grain shortage. Soon thereafter the rich and middle peasants subjected the cities to a grain blockade. "In January 1928 the working class stood face to face with the shadow of an advancing famine," he wrote. "History knows how to play spiteful jokes. In that very month, when the kulaks were taking the revolution by the throat, the representatives of the Left Opposition were thrown into prison or banished to different parts of Siberia in punishment for their 'panic' before the specter of the kulak."

In one of the concluding chapters of *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky projects three models of possible Soviet development. The first is the model of society after the working class has created its own party, "having all the attributes of the old Bolshevism," and the Soviet bureaucracy is overthrown. Democracy would then prevail in the unions and soviets. Freedom of Soviet political parties would be restored. There would be a "ruthless purgation" of the state apparatus. All privileges, ranks, and decorations would be eliminated. Youth would be free to think independently, learn, criticize, and grow. Changes would be

made in distribution of the national income corresponding to the needs of the masses of people. A series of economic reforms would be necessary. The experiment of planned economy would be retained and developed. No social revolution would be needed.

Trotsky's second model assumes the overthrow of the bureaucracy by a bourgeois party which seeks to reestablish capitalist property relations—a dangerous potential development in China and Poland today. "First of all, it would be necessary to create conditions for the development of strong farmers from the weak collective farms, and for converting of strong collectives into producers' cooperatives of the bourgeois type—into agricultural stock companies. In the sphere of industry, denationalization would begin with the light industries and those producing food. The planning principle would be converted from the transitional period into a series of compromises between state power and individual 'corporations'—potential proprietors, that is, among the Soviet captains of industry, the emigre former proprietors and foreign capitalists." This cannot be done without a social counterrevolution, he said.

The third variant—"that neither a revolutionary nor a counterrevolutionary party seizes power"—was what Trotsky thought least likely. He could not imagine that the Soviet bureaucracy would survive the cataclysm of a second global war, nor did he think the capitalist system could endure the social and economic disruption of such a war. But half a century after the fatal launching of that war the world is divided between the imperialist structure of the capitalist powers and the bureaucratically deformed workers' states where various forms of planned economy prevail. Neither system is healthy.

Trotsky foresaw the eventual struggle between the Soviet working class and the oppressive bureaucracy as the only means of resolving the contradictions of Soviet society. He excluded the possibility of the bureaucracy reforming itself. "One may argue," he said, "that the big bureaucrat cares little what are the prevailing forms of property, provided only that they guarantee him the necessary income. This argument ignores not only the instability of the bureaucrat's own rights, but also the question of his descendants. The new cult of the family has not fallen out of the clouds. Privileges have only half their worth, if they cannot be transmitted to one's children. But the right of testament is inseparable from the

About the Author and His Editor/Translator

Roy Medvedev and his twin brother Zhores were born in 1925, sons of a Soviet philosopher. The father was a victim of the Stalinist terror in the late 1930s, while a professor at the Tolmachev Military-Political Academy, an institution for the education of Red Army officers. The sons were not victimized, as so often happened, and both became scholars and collaborated in efforts to expose and combat the consequences of Stalinism. Zhores, a biologist and author of *The Rise and Fall of T.D. Lysenko*, was exiled from the Soviet Union and resides in London. Roy, schooled in philosophy at Leningrad University, received a graduate degree in education. He taught history, was a

secondary school principal, and became a research assistant at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. Before turning his attention almost exclusively to the study of Soviet history and the Stalinist era, he published two books on vocational training.

After Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin's crimes in 1956, Roy Medvedev joined the Soviet CP and began studying Soviet history. He started work on his book, *Let History Judge*, in 1961, but by the time he finished the first edition in 1968 Stalinism had been revived under Brezhnev. Khrushchev had become a nonperson. Medvedev was expelled from the CP, and until most recently lived and worked under the constant surveillance of the secret police. His books, published abroad during the past eighteen years, besides the two editions of *Let History Judge*, include the following: *The Oc-*

tober Revolution, On Soviet Dissent, All Stalin's Men, A Question of Madness (co-authored by Zhores), and *Khrushchev*.

On April 9, 1989, Roy Medvedev was elected to the lower, larger house of the new Soviet parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies. Three weeks later his CP membership was restored.

George Shriver has translated and edited two of the earlier works by Roy Medvedev, *On Soviet Dissent* and *The October Revolution*. He deserves special credit for his meticulous notes and careful checking of all references. Where references are available in English he gives the source, a gratifying aid to students and careful readers.

right of property. It is not enough to be the director of a trust; it is necessary to be a stockholder. The victory of the bureaucracy in this decisive sphere would mean its conversion into a new possessing class. On the other hand, the victory of the proletariat over the bureaucracy would insure a revival of the socialist revolution.”

This is the issue in dispute in contemporary Soviet society. Medvedev believes the bureaucracy is in the process of transforming itself into a progressive force under Gorbachev's leadership. Recent strikes in the Soviets—especially the mine strikes—indicate that the working class has yet to say the last word. ●

Seattle 1919 Strike Set to Music

Rock Opera, "Seattle 1919." Album by The Fuse is available for \$7.50 from FUSE Music, 6 Yellow Green, Middletown, CT 06457.

Reviewed by Anise Arr

The first general strike in America took place in Seattle, Washington, in 1919. It was the longest general strike in U.S. history. It was the only one where workers moved beyond "shutting it down" to "running it." And it is the only one to have its history written in rock and roll.

"Seattle 1919" is a "rock opera," a series of twenty-one songs that tell the story of one of the most radical events in U.S. labor history. The music was recorded in 1986 on a two-record album and was performed live for the first time on May 1, 1989, in Seattle.

Rob Rosenthal was working on a master's thesis on the general strike when he began to write the songs. "Many of the songs on the album came out of the interviews I did with people who were there," he says. Rock music was a key to understanding the emotions, if not the historical reality, of the strike. It is a way that workers today can see "ancient history" with a new imagination. It works.

In rock and folk music styles, the songs tell the story of the strike and some of its characters. The primary male voice is one of Peter Rinearson, a composite of several real characters. He's a refugee from Midwestern farm country who finds work in Seattle's factories during World War I. The main female voice belongs to Anna Louise Strong, writer, labor activist, and one of the most important voices in American labor history.

Seattle's militant workforce had been pushed to the breaking point during the war, especially the tens of thousands of shipyard workers whose wage demands were put off "for the boys over there." After the war, the workers discovered that the government's mediator of labor disputes was actually requiring the bosses to hold the line against wage demands. The general strike that for years had only been a Wobbly threat became a reality.

"Seattle 1919" steps into the workers' lives and shows the audience how it might have felt to be part of this history. The exhilaration, the sense of power, and even the demoralization and cynicism of some are illustrated as the songs follow the history of the strike. Shutting a whole city down, running it for ourselves, running into the total opposition of the AFL bureaucrats, fighting for the release of imprisoned strike leaders are all brought to life. So are the feelings of power afterward, the challenge of being part of world history, the refusal to load weapons to be used against Russian workers, and the feeling of compromise and digging in for the postwar depression.

The Seattle live performance of this work on May 1 proved how this format could capture an audience. The band, The Fuse, had recorded the album together several years ago but had never performed the work live. With no great theatrics in the production, the music carried the story along and author Rosenthal narrated in a relaxed, informal way. The audience made up a spectrum from top labor officials to rank-and-file activists, to students, to rock fans. They filled the 300-seat auditorium with cheers and applause when Rosenthal's narrative or the songs made a connection with their feelings about government, labor bureaucrats, war, or just plain working.

The performance was funded primarily through donations from labor organizations and coordinated through the Evergreen State College's Labor Education and Research Center. The Pacific Northwest Labor History Association and the state employees' unions at the community college put together a week of educational activities leading up to the concert. The front page editorial from Seattle's 1919 labor daily, *The Union Record*, was reproduced. This editorial called for the strike and the maintenance of essential services by the workers. "WE ARE STARTING ON A ROAD THAT LEADS — NO ONE KNOWS WHERE," it said.

It was clear from the audience reaction to the opera that new eyes were being opened to the drama of labor history and that a connection to present reality was being made. ●

which claims to be "Trotskyist" and adheres to an ultraleft splittoff from the Fourth International associated with the late Nahuel Moreno. Both of these organizations refuse to recognize that the FSLN has led a proletarian revolution establishing the political rule of the country's working masses.

A different kind of challenge to the Sandinistas is being pursued by Moisés Hassan, once a central leader of the FSLN and still considered a prominent supporter of the revolution. He has agreed to run for president under the auspices of the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR). The questions and issues raised by the MUR in its platform speak to the very heart of the problems posed for the Nicaraguan revolution today: To what extent and at what tempo can and should the government move in an anti-capitalist direction, as opposed to the Sandinista policy of concessions to the landowners and capitalists? Within the Sandinista front itself these questions are also under discussion, and various points of view have been expressed.

Any revolutionary leadership in harsh conditions such as the FSLN has faced can make mistakes. The Sandinistas themselves acknowledge that they have made mistakes. But this certainly does not mean that the policy of the FSLN has been mistaken on key policy questions *to such an extent* that the Sandinistas should be removed from power and replaced by the MUR. The FSLN remains Nicaragua's revolutionary

vanguard, acting fundamentally in harmony with the interests of the working masses and trying to find the best way to move the revolution forward. The Nicaraguan people have repeatedly expressed their support for the FSLN. Only the FSLN has both the practical experience and the necessary political base amongst the masses to form an effective popular government at this time.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the views and actions of the various left parties which are running against the Sandinistas in the Nicaraguan elections, the fact of this opposition highlights one of the most positive features of the present situation in that country—the continued commitment to proletarian democracy. The left electoral opposition is part of a process that *should* be able to develop in the context of a healthy revolution. Only through an open debate and discussion of the issues—in which all supporters of the working class and the peasantry feel that they are able to express themselves and organize to fight for their ideas—can the Nicaraguan people truly clarify the complex reality they face and come to an informed decision about how to proceed. The fact that this can take place at all—in a Nicaragua which is still under siege—is a profound testimony to the maturity and revolutionary integrity of the FSLN. ●

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