

# 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.

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*“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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## CONDEMN THE U.S. INVASION OF PANAMA

by the National Coordinators of the  
Fourth Internationalist Tendency  
December 20, 1989

Early this morning, United States military forces invaded Panama. In a nationally broadcast speech President George Bush claimed that the operation was justified on the basis of international law, protecting the lives of U.S. citizens, defense of democracy, and bringing Manuel Noriega to justice for his role in drug trafficking.

This is a hypocritical fraud. The U.S. government has no business in Panama; *none whatsoever*. Its criminal action should be condemned, and people all over the world need to make their voices heard in opposition.

The drug problem in the U.S. is hardly caused by the likes of Manuel Noriega. If Bush really wanted to do something about it he would take the hundreds of billions of dollars spent every year on supporting the U.S. military apparatus in countries like Panama, and use it instead on programs to create jobs, housing, decent schools, and a life for the youth of this country which could provide a real alternative to the world of drugs.

It is a bizarre logic that claims to be "defending lives" through a military operation that has in fact cost the lives of at least dozens of innocent Panamanian civilians and soldiers, and of U.S. GIs. If U.S. lives were at risk in Panama, they could have been protected far more effectively by simply withdrawing all personnel—military and civilian—from the country and returning the Canal Zone to Panamanian jurisdiction.

Manuel Noriega is no friend of the Panamanian people. He is a petty dictator who was originally installed with the aid and support of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (which was his partner at the time in the drug business). But only the Panamanian people can deal adequately with this problem. And they can do so only if there is no interference in their internal affairs by the United States. That is a prerequisite to democracy in Panama.

The U.S. government's role in Central America and the Caribbean over the past decade—in particular its invasion of Grenada, its support for the bloody contra war against the Nicaraguan people and for the right-wing terrorist regime in El Salvador—demonstrates that it is no friend of national sovereignty for the region. In fact, the revolutions in Nicaragua and Cuba (where the people have already achieved a genuine national sovereignty) and in El Salvador (where they are presently fighting to do so) are the longer-term targets of Bush's military action this morning. George Bush knows full well that real national independence for the Central American countries would be a mortal danger to U.S. corporate profits there.

The mass media and government of this country have been on a propaganda offensive against Noriega's regime for many months. George Bush took advantage of the public sentiment this has created to justify his military invasion. But Bush's posturing as a friend of Panamanian democracy should fool no one. If he is allowed to get away with his military attack in that country, if there is no massive public outcry of protest, it will only embolden those elements in the U.S. ruling class who would like to return to the days, before the Vietnam war, when Washington felt free to invade other countries, or use covert methods against them, wherever there were governments which didn't conform to U.S. policies.

Demonstrations over the past decade in the streets of this country, demanding that the White House respect the right of self-determination for the peoples of Central America, have severely limited Washington's policy options. Bush's latest attack cries out for a renewed campaign of action by the people of this country to demand:

**U.S. Hands Off Panama!**  
**No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean!**



# November 12: One Million Rally For Abortion Rights

*The largest mobilization for abortion rights in U.S. history took place on November 12. One million participated in events in 150 cities and in each of the 50 states. It began with a sunrise candlelight march in front of President Bush's vacation home in Maine and ended with a sunset action in San Francisco. The largest rallies were 300,000 in Washington, D.C., and 100,000 in Los Angeles. Cities reporting the biggest ever abortion rights demonstrations included: 20,000 in Austin, Texas; 14,000 in Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri; 6,000 in Seattle, Washington; 2,000 in Boise, Idaho. In Alaska 400 rallied in 25-degree-below-zero weather. Demonstrations in solidarity with this mobilization were held in Australia and New Zealand, in Stockholm, Paris, London, Warsaw, Tel Aviv, São Paulo, and—in what is described as the first women's demonstration ever held there—in San Juan, Puerto Rico.*

*The massive outpouring on November 12 was a powerful proof of the strength of the abortion rights movement and another sign of the militant role being played by the National Organization for Women (NOW). Immediately after the July 3 Supreme Court ruling upholding restrictive abortion laws in Missouri, NOW called for a national protest action in Washington, D.C. Leaders of other national organizations within the pro-choice movement, who favor state-focused lobbying efforts to influence legislators, opposed calling for a mass action with a national focus. But NOW's refusal to call off the national demonstration compelled other groups within the women's rights movement to organize events in cities across the country in what became a coordinated project entitled "Mobilize for Women's Lives—Across the USA & Washington, D.C."*

## National Focus on Washington, D.C.

by **Melanie Benson**

They couldn't have been more than eight or nine years old. They might have been sisters—or maybe best friends. They stood untiringly for hours at the edge of the reflecting pool between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. They smiled, posed for an untold number of photographs—and they inspired everyone who passed by. Their shirts were covered with buttons and ribbons and the name of their county's pro-choice coalition. Their signs read, simply, "Future Feminists, Here by Choice." These two young women were among the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who rallied in Washington, D.C., to demand continued access to safe, legal, and affordable abortions for women in the United States and around the world.

Sisters and brothers from Canada, Mexico, and a large contingent from France traveled to D.C. to lend their support. Messages were received from France, Japan, Austria,

the European Commonwealth, Feminists International, and a coalition of 94 progressive Belgian organizations. (On November 7 the Belgian Senate had voted to decriminalize abortion.) One speaker from Canada, asserting that the U.S. struggle for abortion rights has been an inspiration to *all* women, noted that there are finally no laws forbidding abortion in Canada and reported that the recent period has seen abortion rights organizations and demonstrations in 33 Canadian towns and cities.

The November 12 mobilization came only seven months after what had previously been the largest women's rights demonstration in U.S. history. Last April 9 600,000 men, women, and children of all ages, religions, and ethnic groups marched on the nation's capital to demand that the Supreme Court uphold its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. Yet despite this massive and powerful display of pro-choice sentiment, on July 3 the Supreme Court rendered a decision in the Webster case that granted individual states

### Coming Next Month:

Late last summer an 11-page letter written by Barry Sheppard—a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party for more than a decade—began to circulate within the SWP and its milieu. The letter was addressed to the party Political Committee, and explained some of the events that led to Sheppard's resignation from the SWP in 1988.

Steve Bloom, managing editor of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, drafted an Open Letter in response to Sheppard, which was sent to him with an invitation to reply. He has agreed to do so. In our next issue we will publish the Open Letter. We will publish the reply as soon as we receive it.



the authority to restrict access to abortion. The outcry from supporters of women's rights was instantaneous. NOW immediately called for the November 12 march. Its smaller size in relation to April 9 was more than compensated for by the breadth of the actions which took place all across the country.

### Unknown Women's Memorial

On Sunday morning, prior to the start of the rally, hundreds attended the dedication of an Unknown Women's Memorial, commissioned by NOW and developed by the Fund for a Feminist Majority. The event specifically commemorated the lives of six U.S. women who had died from illegal abortions between 1929 and 1988. The first of these, Clara Bell Duvall, 33, mother of five children ranging in age from 18 months to 13 years, had attempted a self-abortion with a knitting needle and died after weeks of agony. In 1977, Rosie Jimenez, 27, mother of a small daughter, was the first known victim of the Hyde amendment which blocked funding for legal abortion for poor women reliant on government funding (Medicaid). In 1988, Cathy, 17, was the victim of a state law in Indiana requiring parental notification for abortions for teenagers. She self-aborted and died of the resulting complications rather than "disappoint" her parents by telling them about her pregnancy.

### Theme of the Rally

"Freedom of Choice" was the overriding theme of the nearly five-hour rally that followed, and of the hundreds of signs, buttons, and banners carried by those attending. There were nurses, social workers, psychotherapists, and emergency-room personnel for choice. There were trade unionists, artists, television personalities, and musicians for choice. There were politicians, mountaineers, organic farmers, and "MIT Nerds for Choice." There were Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, Methodists, and "A Baptist Grandmother for Choice." There were fathers, children, toddlers, infants, and "Loving Mothers for Choice."

There were students, and more students, from almost four hundred large and small high schools and college campuses across the U.S. The *Daily Bruin*, student newspaper at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), reported on November 13 that "almost 20,000 students registered with NOW for the demonstration. The largest groups came from the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University, which each registered 850 students." The contingent from UCLA was part of a 400-member NOW delegation from Los Angeles.

Some demonstrators marched and chanted in small groups. Some performed street theater. Some stretched blankets out on the grass. Some stood packed closely

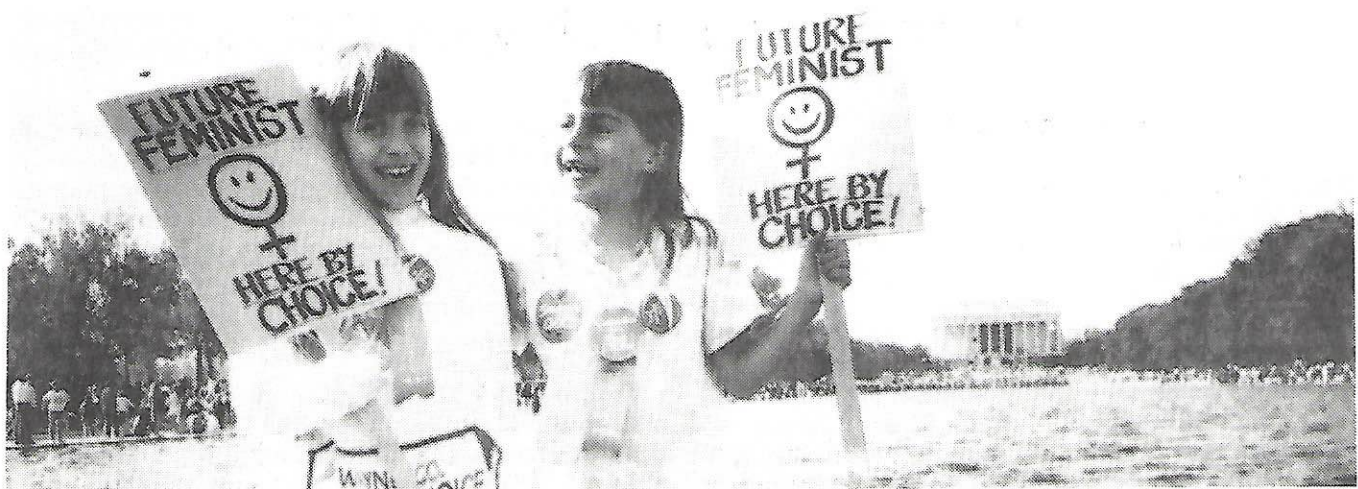


Photo by Melanie Benson

Two speakers at the ceremony were daughters of women whose lives were being remembered. Another speaker, from the United Church of Christ, represented the hundreds of church leaders who had helped provide a safe underground network for abortion services before the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. A brochure distributed to participants noted that prior to the legalization of abortion in the U.S., 10,000 women died yearly of illegal abortions; and today, 200,000 women worldwide die annually from illegal, botched abortions. The brochure stated in part, "This project is undertaken with the belief that if the names and faces of all the women who suffered and died were known, the current debate on abortion would end." The monument itself read: "In memory of the courageous women who died from illegal, unsafe abortions because they had no choice."

together near the speakers' platform, singing along with the well-known folk songs of Peter, Paul, and Mary; Ronnie Gilbert; and Pete Seeger. They sang, "I Am Woman" with Helen Reddy and cheered "Take the Power" by Kay Weaver.

The mood was jubilant and celebratory at times, angry and defiant at others—the outrage directed at U.S. president George Bush, the Supreme Court, and elected officials who vote against a woman's right to choose. Bush, who had just vetoed a bill that would have allowed Medicaid funding of abortions for poor women who were victims of rape and incest, came under heavy fire. As NOW president Molly Yard observed in her opening remarks, "How ironic that . . . as the Berlin Wall comes tumbling down, President Bush would enslave the people of this country by denying reproductive rights. We say, 'No! We will not obey your



dictates!" We will work with our sisters everywhere to make abortion a right all over this world. Let freedom ring here and around the world for women and for individual rights!"

### Problem of Electoral Politics

Yard pledged that the movement would help build a "political army on behalf of freedom for women" by electing women and pro-choice politicians. Several elected officials and political candidates spoke at the rally, with the loudest applause given to David Dinkins, the first Black mayor-elect of New York City, whose victory at the polls five days earlier was still fresh in everyone's minds. His victory, along with those of pro-choice governors of Virginia and New Jersey, had rally participants flushed with a feeling of power. A huge banner hanging across the front of the speakers' platform boasted: "Score: Pro-Choice—3, Bush—0." Sheri O'Dell, NOW vice president and rally coordinator for both April 9 and November 12, administered a pledge for feminist voters that was enthusiastically received: "I pledge not to vote for nor to support with my money or my time any candidate for any public office who does not fully support and work for women's equality and the right to safe, legal, and accessible abortion."

Several rally speakers referred to the "feminization of power" in our lifetimes. This theme was featured in much of the press coverage of the rally: in the *New York Times*—"celebrating recent political victories and vowing to redouble their efforts in battles to come"; *USA Today*—"Theme: Power at the Polls"; *Baltimore Sun*—"Tens of thousands of youthful voters massed at the Lincoln Memorial here yesterday, cheering passionately as speaker after speaker threatened Bush and other politicians with defeat unless they come out firmly for abortion rights"; and the *Washington Post*—"Abortion rights demonstrators around the nation served notice yesterday that they will take revenge at the ballot box against candidates who oppose freedom of choice in reproductive decisions."

Along with "Freedom of Choice," the political (electoral) response was a major theme of the placards, banners, and buttons throughout the crowd: "I'm Pro-Choice and I Vote," "Play politics with my body—You lose," and "Dear Politician—Listen loud and clear/It's choice we want/Or your career—Love, The Majority."

This focus by rally speakers and participants on the question of electoral politics points to one of the key problems that faces the women's movement today. The fact is that *none* of the politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties will be able to meet the criteria set forth in the voter's pledge (i.e., to "fully support and work for women's equality and the right to safe, legal, and accessible abortion")—not even those whose electoral victories were hailed on November 12. These two parties cannot be made to serve a feminist agenda. Their first loyalty is to the profits of the big corporations that rule America, and that loyalty is, in the final analysis, incompatible with equality for women.

Certain individual politicians can, on certain key issues like abortion, be forced to take a correct stand at times due to mass public pressure. But if feminists want a real political alternative which can actually help *lead* the fight for women's

rights—and not simply react to the fight which is being waged by the women's movement—it will have to be one that finds a way to aid the formation of a new political party, one based on the labor movement and the struggles of Blacks, Hispanics, and other oppressed sectors of the U.S. population. At its convention last summer NOW discussed this issue and a resolution raising the idea of a new party was adopted. (See "In Support of NOW's Call for a New Party," by Carol McAllister, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 68.) Unfortunately, little has been done so far to actually put that perspective into practice.

### Keeping the Fight in the Streets

Other speakers stressed the multipronged nature of the struggle, promising that it would be fought not only at the ballot box, but also at the clinics and in the streets. They spoke of the need for forging or strengthening alliances with more African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, men, gays and lesbians; of the need for education on the abortion issue; of the need to maintain an international focus. Robin Morgan, author of *Sisterhood Is Global*, reported that 340 million women in 65 countries are affected by the U.S. administration's refusal to contribute to International Planned Parenthood and other international family planning agencies.

A resounding ovation was given to Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu from France, medical researcher and developer of RU 486 (a pill that induces safe abortion in the early weeks of pregnancy), who spoke of the role of science in giving choices and relieving suffering. He pledged the support of the biomedical community to the current struggle. Although the pill's availability is now severely restricted, easier access to and proper use of this pill, he said, "will defuse the abortion issue . . . [the] societal impact will be lessened with earlier intervention and a narrower circle of persons involved."

Representing thousands of women in the organized labor movement, Joyce Miller, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) explained that the question of abortion is a health, civil rights, privacy, family, *and* work issue; and that there can be no decency, justice, or equality for working women if women have no reproductive rights. She expanded the concept of choice to include the need for choices in health care, family planning, quality child care, parental and family leave, livable and affordable housing, and "schools that educate." At the AFL-CIO 18th Constitutional Convention later that week, she and other CLUW delegates were going to present a resolution to put the AFL-CIO on record for freedom of choice and reproductive rights.

Dr. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, speaking on behalf of Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Women), explained that "[Black Americans] have tasted the bitter fruit of the denial of our rights. We have fought too hard, come too far, wept too bitterly, bled too profusely, and died too young . . . to allow turning back."

Warren Hern, author and doctor from Boulder, Colorado, who had helped to successfully defend his abortion clinic



against a serious assault by "Operation Rescue" (zealous anti-abortionists), called illegal abortion "barbaric, like the bubonic plague, slavery, and public flogging," and claimed that the pro-choice movement is "on the side of history, truth, mercy, justice, and freedom," avowing, "We will prevail!"

Finally, Rabbi Lynne Lansberg in closing the rally defended religious liberty, reminding those assembled that, despite fundamentalists' assertions to the contrary, religious

people, "people of faith," are overwhelmingly pro-choice. Her eloquent speech, ending with, "As God is our witness, pro-choice is pro-life!" brought a huge response from the crowd.

After five hours of speeches on every aspect of the issue, one sign perhaps conveyed the message most clearly and most simply: "No one knows better. No one else should decide." ●

## Los Angeles Rally Draws 100,000

by Evelyn Sell

The largest abortion rights rally ever held on the West Coast took place in Los Angeles as part of the November 12 demonstrations to "Mobilize for Women's Lives." Sponsored by the Greater Los Angeles Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, the event gathered 100,000 Southern Californians in Rancho Park, the same site used in 1986 when 30,000 came from all West Coast areas to demonstrate in the "March for Women's Lives" called by the National Organization for Women.

The massive November 12 rally included young and old, families, members of all major religious groups, and a large percentage of males. Banners proclaimed the presence of student groups while T-shirts, caps, and buttons gave evidence of labor participation. There were more Black celebrities and politicians on the stage than in the audience, which was almost completely Anglo with a sprinkling of Latinos and Asians.

The tremendous turnout, after less than two weeks of publicity, surprised those who called the rally. John Hoyt, who organized the event, said "We're overwhelmed." Although the media downplayed the size of the rally, a local TV reporter explained that the demonstration was the largest held in Los Angeles on *any* issue in many years. In fact, it was the largest such event since the Vietnam war protests.

Rally speakers included *Roe v. Wade* plaintiff Norma McCorvey, Jesse Jackson, a large number of film and television

stars, and national, state, and local politicians. Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League, crossed the country to participate in both the day's first East Coast event and the Los Angeles rally.

Almost all of the speakers stressed the need to fight for abortion funding and accessibility for women lacking personal resources. Many speakers pointed out the parallel between the freedom of choice won by East Germans and the threat to U.S. women's right to choose posed by the Supreme Court's July 3 decision, attacks by anti-abortion extremists, and the actions of President Bush and his administration. The struggle for women's rights in this country was connected with other struggles for democratic rights in Eastern Europe, the USSR, China, and Central America.

Rally participants were urged to keep up the fight for reproductive rights by defending women's health clinics, repeatedly engaging in public actions, voting for pro-choice candidates, and pressuring state and national legislators.

The breadth of support for abortion rights was shown by the range of organizations sponsoring the rally. The Greater Los Angeles Coalition for Reproductive Freedom is made up of more than 150 groups including: Catholics for Free Choice, California Republicans for Choice, B'nai B'rith Women, Chicana Service Action Center, American Civil Liberties Union, American Association of University Women, Planned Parenthood, California Abortion Rights Action League, and National Organization for Women. ●

## 'Women of Color' Contingent Mobilized in Pittsburgh

by Claire Cohen

In Pittsburgh, Pa., as in many cities in the U.S., women of color—African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian—have been underrepresented in the pro-choice movement. Yet restrictions on abortion and other reproductive rights have always had a disproportionate impact on these women. In 1972, the year before the *Roe v. Wade* decision, 64 percent of those dying from illegal abortions were women of color, although they comprise only 16 per-

cent of women of reproductive age in this country. Even more troubling is the fact that since that Supreme Court decision, approximately 80 percent of women dying from illegal abortions have been women of color—one-third of whom turned to a butcher abortionist because they were unable to pay for the proper medical procedure.

In other areas of reproductive rights a similar situation exists. Eighty-one percent of forced cesarian sections are

(Continued on page 31)



# The Revolutionary Offensive in El Salvador

by Tom Barrett

Though by conventional military standards the November offensive by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) has not yet resulted in victory, it is very likely that in political terms it may prove to be an important success for the Salvadoran revolution, regardless of the military outcome. While Washington's attention has been focused on Eastern Europe — and while the entire pretext for the U.S. war machine is rapidly eroding — the Salvadoran revolutionaries struck boldly throughout the country, including within the capital, San Salvador. They proved that they have considerable support among workers and peasants in all sections of El Salvador and that the Salvadoran armed forces are incapable of inflicting a decisive military defeat on them.

The most important gain which the revolutionaries could make will depend partially on activities in the United States. That would be to force the Bush administration and Congress to cut off aid completely to the Salvadoran government. Without U.S. aid that government could not survive. Anti-intervention activists in the United States have their best opportunity in ten years to force Washington to stop aiding the violent reactionaries who hold power in that country.

Besides the FMLN's military offensive, two acts of terrorism and repression by the Salvadoran army have further undercut whatever remaining support the Cristiani regime may have had in the United States: the murder of six Jesuit priests by the army and the arrest of an American church volunteer. Though kidnapping, torture, and murder are carried on every day against the Salvadoran workers and peasants, their names are, unfortunately, not headline news in the United States — or even in El Salvador. However, these two prominent cases have shown clearly the character of the Salvadoran military and their civilian puppets who hold actual political power.

## In Response to ARENA Terrorism

Even before the elections which brought Alfredo Cristiani and his Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) to power, the FMLN had been demanding that the government negotiate with it and threatening to step up military action if the government refused. ARENA's response was increased military activity of its own, directed against civilian targets in working class and peasant areas. A wave of aerial bombing, arrests, and "disappearances" culminated on October 31 in the bombing of the National Trade Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers' (FENASTRAS) office in San Salvador. The blast killed ten people, including Febe Elizabeth Velasquez, one of FENASTRAS's central leaders, and injured thirty others. Earlier in the day, a smaller explosion occurred at the headquarters of the Committee of Mothers

of Political Prisoners, the Disappeared, and Assassinated of El Salvador (COMADRES), which injured six. A witness to the COMADRES bombing reported uniformed soldiers running from the scene.

The FMLN response to the FENASTRAS and COMADRES bombings was to end its dialogue with the government and to withdraw its offer of a negotiated settlement. On November 11 it launched a nationwide military offensive, with the stated objective of achieving "total control of the country." It struck at government targets in every sector of El Salvador. The following day, the Cristiani government imposed a state of siege, including a dusk-to-dawn curfew and total press censorship. (Cristiani's press censorship, combined with "self-censorship" by the bourgeois news media in the United States, has made information from El Salvador difficult to get.) On November 13, the FMLN called for a transportation strike, which has successfully frozen traffic throughout the country. On November 14 a coalition of trade unions and peasant groups called for a general strike.

In a departure from past practices, revolutionary forces have been digging in where they have attacked, rather than striking quickly and withdrawing. The army has been forced to counterattack to dislodge them, street by street, from the country's largest cities, Santa Ana, San Miguel, and San Salvador itself.

As it launched its offensive, the FMLN broadcast a "Manifesto to the Nation" (reprinted in the November 27, 1989, issue of *International Viewpoint*) on its radio frequency. It explained that ARENA's refusal to negotiate reforms to end the decade-long civil war had led to its decision to step up military activity. It declared as "liberated territories" the areas it has controlled for most of the past ten years, and it stated that "our organization and the people will organize popular governments in these places." On November 17 the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) called for the formation of a provisional government, which "should include the opposition political parties, the popular movement, members of the military not implicated in massacres, and the FMLN."

## The Threat of U.S. Intervention

On November 21 the Bush administration took an ominous step towards deeper U.S. military involvement with the dispatching of the elite "counterterrorist" Delta Force to San Salvador. Its mission was to "rescue" a group of U.S. Army Special Forces personnel billeted at the Sheraton Hotel. FMLN forces had surrounded the hotel as part of the ongoing offensive, but there was never any plan to take the American soldiers as "hostages," as Bush claimed. It is



reported that U.S. pilots have been flying bombing missions against both guerrilla and civilian targets from bases in Honduras. And, of course, the Green Berets's presence in San Salvador raises the obvious question of what they were doing there.

Though a few members of Congress have called for a cutoff of U.S. aid, there is wide bipartisan support in Congress for Bush's policies. Liberals and conservatives alike have shown conclusively that their support for democracy does not apply to the U.S.'s "captive nations." While they hypocritically applaud genuine victories for democracy in Eastern Europe they continue to provide aid for a dictatorship in El Salvador whose repression has been, on the whole, far more violent than that of the Soviet Union and its proxies. They hypocritically denounce Nicaragua of providing aid to the FMLN while they consistently vote to send millions of dollars and advanced weapons to the Salvadoran army, and continue to aid the Nicaraguan contra murderers. George Bush has promised to continue U.S. intervention in Central America, at least at this level.

### Death-Squad Murder

It is ironic indeed that the United States government's outcry over "international terrorism" becomes far less shrill when such terrorism is carried out by "friendly" governments. On November 16, six Jesuit priests and their two housekeepers, among them Ignacio Ellacuria and Ignacio Martin-Baro, the rector and vice rector, respectively, of the University of Central America, were brutally murdered at their residence. Though Cristiani denies government involvement — and even lamely tried to accuse the FMLN — the facts are these: the murders took place during curfew hours in a section of San Salvador under army control. Shortly afterwards, church officials report hearing a sound truck announcing, "Ignacio Ellacuria and Ignacio Martin-Baro have already fallen, and we'll continue killing communists. We are the First Brigade." In addition, Attorney General Mauricio Colorado sent a letter to the pope calling on him to recall several bishops for "questionable ideology," and warning that the government "could not guarantee their safety."

In public, at least, Bush is accepting Cristiani's denials as genuine; it is highly doubtful, however, that the president of the United States is so shortsighted that he does not see the overwhelming evidence of the Salvadoran military's guilt. He has publicly accepted Cristiani's assurances that the government will arrest and punish the guilty parties. Considering that the murders of Archbishop Romero and the Maryknoll sisters have never been solved, though they occurred in the early years of the civil war, his assurances are questionable, to say the least.

Bush's concern about the safety of American citizens is also hypocritical. Though he dispatched the Delta Force to rescue the Green Berets — who were packing M-16s — he has stood by as the Salvadoran government arrested a civilian church volunteer, Jennifer Jean Casolo. The police claim to have discovered a cache of weapons for the FMLN at her residence. Those familiar with the church group's and Casolo's pacifist views have labeled the charges absurd and

have accused the army of planting the weapons. Though Washington has sent Marine divisions to invade other countries on far less pretext, its response this time has essentially been to blame the victim.

### Outlook for the Salvadoran Revolution

Whether the FMLN will succeed in its drive for "total control" of El Salvador remains an open question. The Cristiani regime is well armed and well financed by the United States, which has made a firm commitment to Cristiani to prevent FMLN victory. That's a commitment which was not made to Somoza in 1979, even though covert activities were carried out by the CIA against the Sandinistas during the Carter administration. On the other hand, the Salvadoran workers and peasants know that the government represents only the wealthy oligarchy and that its continuation in power will mean continuing poverty and violence. The independent trade unions, peasant organizations, and anti-repression groups (such as COMADRES) are united in support of the revolutionary forces against the government. The army would have mopped up the FMLN within a day or two of the uprising if the revolutionaries had no mass support.

Revolutionary victory will depend on essentially four factors: first, the FMLN's ability and willingness to sustain a long conflict; second, its recognition that only the oligarchy's total overthrow can put a final end to the civil war; third, whether and when the masses of Salvadorans are ready to get actively involved in the struggle themselves, alongside of and in support of the guerrillas — as the Nicaraguan people did in 1979; and, finally, a strong international campaign to stop the United States from intervening on the side of the Salvadoran government, or limit the extent of that intervention.

With its advanced weaponry and U.S. aid the Salvadoran army is not going to collapse immediately as a result simply of the military pressure of the guerrillas. The revolutionary forces must be prepared to combine military activity with political mobilization of the worker and peasant communities so that it can seize territory and hold it. It will need to recruit fresh volunteers who understand that the revolution is *their own fight*, and it will need to maintain secure bases for supply and regroupment of forces. It was clear as the current offensive began that, though the FMLN has wide support among the Salvadoran poor, it has not kept in close touch with them. Most of the guerrilla leaders have been isolated in their remote hideouts in the countryside. Meanwhile, thousands of peasants have fled to the major cities as the army has poisoned wells, burned villages, and used aerial bombing against civilian targets in rural areas. The political situation has thus changed after ten years of civil war, and the FMLN leadership will have to make the necessary adjustments.

The FMLN has, up until November, demanded that the government negotiate in good faith in order to end the civil war and institute democratic reforms. ARENA's terrorism should have conclusively demonstrated that the Salvadoran ruling class has no intention even of sharing power, let alone giving it up, and that they are prepared to use any amount of



violence to keep it. Negotiating with them may be tactically advisable in order to buy time or to demonstrate a genuine desire for peace — and thus politically prevent outside intervention. However, the only thing which will really bring lasting peace to El Salvador is total revolutionary victory.

In 1968, the Vietnamese National Liberation Front launched a nationwide offensive against the combined U.S. and Saigon-puppet forces, known ever since as the Tet offensive. It was not a victory by the usual military standards, but in political terms it was the turning point of the war in favor of the revolution. By demonstrating conclusively that the United States could not defeat them quickly, the NLF gained the opportunity to destroy all remaining domestic support for the U.S. war effort. The Tet offensive alone did not accomplish that: rather, the Vietnamese followed up on it politically for the next five years, encouraging unified mass action in the streets of the United States (and other advanced capitalist countries as well) demanding “U.S. Out Now!” The Vietnamese intervention was a decisive factor in keeping the fractious antiwar forces sufficiently united to stage the massive protests which prevented the United States from raining even more destruction on the Vietnamese people in the effort to subjugate them.

Up to now the Salvadoran revolutionaries have not understood the lessons of the Vietnam experience. They have not encouraged the same kind of massive, united action against U.S. intervention which could play a key role in ensuring their victory. The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), which is in close communication with the FMLN, has been inconsistent in its strategy, sometimes organizing successful mass actions, but at other times focusing on “more militant” civil disobedience actions to the exclusion of reaching out to the U.S. population as a whole. In addition, its objectives have not been clear. At some times and in some places CISPES has focused its activity around stopping U.S. intervention in Central America. In others, however, it has involved itself in Democratic Party election campaigns and activities unrelated to El Salvador in any direct way.

To be sure, the problems of the U.S. anti-intervention movement are not all the responsibility of CISPES or the FMLN by any means. The failure of the Socialist Workers Party, for example, to play the leadership role it played 20

years ago is a negative factor — and the subject of an entirely different discussion. The absence of a military draft and of a direct U.S. role in combat — both of which are results of the anti-Vietnam war movement’s victory — also limit the sense of urgency amongst many in this country who might otherwise be in the forefront of mass action against U.S. intervention in Central America.

The important thing, however, is that activists not concentrate on what is wrong but on what needs to be done. If the Salvadoran freedom fighters are able to drive forward towards victory, there will be intense pressure on the U.S. government to intervene actively. The ruling class may be willing to risk committing U.S. troops to combat, and we must take that threat seriously.

The first thing is to make sure the truth about El Salvador is known as widely as possible: that the United States is supporting a brutal dictatorship which bombs villages, poisons wells, tortures civilians, and even murders respected priests. The Salvadoran people have every right to overthrow it by military means, and the people of the United States have no interest in defending the dictatorship. The second thing is to organize visible actions to demand that U.S. aid to the Cristiani regime be cut off, and that the U.S. take no further steps to defend it. It is obviously impossible to mobilize 100,000 people every weekend, but consistent actions built around the basic democratic demand of Salvadoran self-determination will serve notice on Bush and his gang that any attempt to commit the United States to saving Cristiani will carry serious risks. It is important to recognize that with all its weaknesses the anti-intervention movement has thus far played a significant role in holding Washington back.

As has been said here before, in the age of imperialism all revolutions are ultimately international. They cannot be either won or lost within the confines of a single country. The people of El Salvador have begun what could be the final offensive in their struggle for power. A united, militant campaign throughout the world in their defense could stay the imperialists’ hands, demoralize the reactionaries, and encourage the revolutionaries so that victory could be won in less time with fewer lives lost.

●  
December 3, 1989



# Overturn Conviction of Michel Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center

*After the following fact sheet was prepared, word was received that, due to extensive protests in Israel and internationally, Michel Warshawsky will be allowed to remain free pending appeal of his case. Continued protests are still urgently needed, however, to assure the reversal of his conviction.*

## Fact Sheet on the Case of Michel Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center

November 15, 1989

Almost three years ago, on February 16, 1987, Israeli police invaded the offices of the Alternative Information Center (AIC) in Jerusalem, Israel, ordered it closed for six months, arrested the center's director Michel Warshawsky along with other staff, and confiscated printing equipment and supplies. Though two of the staff were released quickly and three others—including two Palestinian women—48 hours later, Warshawsky remained in an Israeli prison for a month, the first two weeks in solitary confinement. On March 2, 1987, formal charges were brought in the case. They included "service to an illegal organization," "identification with an illegal organization," and "possession of publications of an illegal organization." The "illegal organization" in question was allegedly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Warshawsky and the AIC denied all of the charges.

On November 7 a three-judge panel presided over by Judge Zvi Tal passed sentence. Most of the charges were dropped. The decision of the court was based entirely on a single booklet which, according to the prosecution, was intended to give guidelines to Palestinian activists on how to "resist" during interrogation and torture by the secret service, and on the refusal of Warshawsky to provide the names of the people who supplied this material to the AIC. Warshawsky was sentenced to 30 months in prison, with 10 months suspended and 20 months to be served without the possibility of parole. The AIC was fined U.S. \$5,000.

The AIC became a target of Israeli authorities because of its consistent work to get out the truth about the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Its activities were aimed at providing factual information about Israeli government abuses of human rights. To do this it published a journal, *News from Within*, which was closed down for a period after the raid but has since resumed publication. Those who utilized its typesetting services on a commercial basis included Peace Now, Yesh Gvul (an organization of

Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in Lebanon), the Jewish Student Organization, Citizens Against Racism, the Organization of Impoverished Neighbors, and the Black Panthers (a group of Oriental Jews).

Raids similar to the one on the AIC had previously been carried out against Palestinian organizations in the occupied territories. But this was the first time emergency laws were used against Jewish critics of the Israeli government, and it caused a considerable stir. Protests came from prominent groups and individuals within Israel itself, including *Hamish Mar* (daily newspaper of the Mapam labor federation), the Association of Journalists of Jerusalem, the Association for Civil Rights, the Israeli Journalists Association, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. An international campaign of protest gained support from political and cultural figures around the world. In the U.S. the list included Noam Chomsky, Professor Filippa Strum and Rabbi Balfour Brickner (president and vice-president of the American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition), the Palestinian Human Rights Coalition, Professor Gordon Sellman (cochair of the New Jewish Agenda), Clergy and Laity Concerned, Nat Hentoff, and writer Jose Yglesias, as well as many others.

As a direct result of this wave of protest and publicity about the case Warshawsky was released on bail and the AIC was able to resume its former activity. Today, a renewed campaign is needed to condemn the discriminatory sentence which has been handed down. Funds are also being requested to help the AIC cover its fine and the legal costs. Defense lawyer Lea Tsemel presented the court with many examples of decisions concerning similar cases in East Jerusalem and the occupied territories in which defendants were given very light sentences, most of them suspended. The severe prison term and fine in this one is clearly intended by the government as a warning to Jews. Those who are bold enough to collaborate with Palestinians will be singled out for special victimization.

### Send Your Messages of Protest to:

- Ministry of Justice, 29 Salah-Al-Din, Jerusalem, 91010, Israel.
- Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Drive, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

### Copies of Protests and Financial Contributions to:

- Alternative Information Center, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem, Israel.



# Revolution and Counterrevolution In Eastern Europe

by Steve Bloom

**December 4, 1989**—As 1989 draws to a close, events that no one would have even imagined at its beginning have broken onto the scene in dramatic fashion in Eastern Europe. Everyone wants to know: What does it all mean? One radio commentator I heard suggested that it was the “domino theory” in reverse—one country after another falling to capitalism. This is what the imperialist ruling classes in the U.S. and around the world would like to have us believe, and certainly what they would like to believe themselves. Is it true? Has communism failed? Has capitalism won the cold war?

No, that is very far from the reality today. Communism is not in crisis. Quite to the contrary it is, perhaps, at the dawn of the 1990s, just at the beginning of a new opportunity to remake the world. The crisis that exists is one of Stalinism, of bureaucratic rule in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

It started in August when the Polish United Workers Party (Communist Party) was displaced as the governing power by the once-outlawed Solidarity movement. Then in Hungary the ruling Stalinist party changed its name, renouncing “Marxism-Leninism” (as perceived by them) in favor of a new orientation that they call “social democratic.” In East Germany the mass exodus of discontented individuals, followed by an even more massive wave of demonstrations by those determined to stay and fight for change, brought the old regime tumbling down along with the Berlin Wall. And in Czechoslovakia, in a matter of days toward the end of November and beginning of December, the spirit of Prague in 1968, when masses took to the streets in a movement for democratic rights, reasserted itself as millions demonstrated and the workers staged a general strike that paralyzed the country. The ruling party in Czechoslovakia has been forced to implement broad democratic reforms and, as of this writing, is tottering on the brink of oblivion.

In one country after another, constitutional provisions that enshrined the “leading role” of the Communist Party have been eliminated or modified. Only Rumania and Albania have, at least for now, been left untouched by the crisis.

There is certainly an opportunity for imperialism here—for substantive inroads into the gains of these workers’ states, to make profits and create new markets, as well as to score propaganda points. But that opportunity is fraught with dangers. General strikes and demonstrations of millions of working people and students are not the stuff of which capitalist restorations are easily made.

The more immediate and important reality is the bold new opportunity which has opened up for advancing the proletarian revolution in these countries—for the Eastern

European masses to take matters into their own hands, permanently and dramatically altering the political weight of the working class movement for social change in international politics today. Such a shift, far from constituting a victory for the imperialists, would threaten the relative stability that the international bourgeoisie has been able to impose—at least in Europe and North America—since the end of the Second World War.

## For All Democratic Reforms

Revolutionary Marxists are in favor of all of the democratic reforms that have been won over the past months by the masses of the USSR and Eastern Europe. We are for the opening of borders and the freedom to travel; for free elections; for freedom of association through a multitude of political organizations, parties, and debates; for the freedom to publish newspapers, magazines, leaflets, books, and pamphlets; for access by all points of view to the mass media; for the independent organization of workers, farmers, oppressed nationalities, students, and others. We are for all of these things without reservation, even if we may disagree at times with the way individuals, or groups, or even the majority choose to exercise their newfound democratic rights. A commitment to democracy cannot be predicated on political agreement with the decisions that result from it. Otherwise it would be meaningless.

Genuine socialism can only be built by the participation of the masses of people in deciding their own future. This right to decide implies the right to make mistakes, to learn from them, and to move forward. Any revolutionary current which is intolerant of such a process will never be able to win the leadership of the masses. It is absolutely true that, from an ideological point of view, there is little clarity among workers, students, or intellectuals in Eastern Europe today. But that is almost always true at the beginning of a genuinely revolutionary upheaval. A correct programmatic perspective is something that can be achieved as a result of experience, thought, and discussion. Revolutionaries who are impatient, who are inclined to spend their time denouncing the masses for lacking ideological clarity rather than participating in the movement in a way that can help to bring it about, will find themselves forever on the sidelines.

## Market Vs. Bureaucratic Planning

Unlike the mass movement, the reform wing of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe today does have a consistent



ideological approach, even if it is not completely thought through. Like Gorbachev in the USSR it wants to substitute market mechanisms for centralized planning in an effort to stimulate economic production. The most extreme expression of this is in Hungary where the new ruling party even raises the specter of “a return to capitalism” by implementing substantial privatizations and declaring itself in favor of a Scandinavian ideological model of social democracy, rather than bureaucratic-style “communism.”

In taking such an approach, the old Communist parties in Eastern Europe reveal their complete programmatic bankruptcy. Their previous dogma of supercentralized control over all aspects of economic, political, and social life is rejected. But they now ask the workers to exchange the new domination of market forces for the old domination of bureaucratic planning. What is involved here is not a crisis of Marxism because Marxism was never the guiding ideology in these countries. It is, as previously stated, a profound crisis of *Stalinist* ideology, and of bureaucratic rule—in a transitional society still dominated by global capitalism. The old CPs are incapable of coming to grips with the crisis, or of offering any viable alternative. But only those who—like the CPs and the bourgeoisie—equate Marxism with bureaucratic rule can claim that this is a crisis of Marxism or socialism.

At the same time, this crisis of perspective is not limited to the bureaucracy. The inability to pose a genuine alternative is also true of other sectors, even those which have been militant opponents of the old regimes. A prime case is the new Solidarity government in Poland which, in its programmatic statements, has also talked about the restoration of capitalism and has made a substantial effort to find foreign capital willing to invest in the country.

This ideological crisis is what lays the basis for the imperialist propaganda campaign about its own “victory” in the cold war and “the death of communism” in Eastern Europe—as if this were already an established fact. The international bourgeoisie wants to do everything it can to reinforce the present, false, ideological dichotomy—either bureaucratic planning or unregulated market control and private investment. This dichotomy, to the extent that it gains credibility, serves in and of itself to limit the choices facing the people of these countries, and makes it that much more difficult for them to find a genuine revolutionary working class solution to their crisis.

But such a solution does exist. It calls for a democratic, worker-controlled economic plan, supplemented if necessary by a market which is kept entirely subordinate to the needs of the people. This is an alternative that the majority of Eastern Europeans are certainly capable of discovering and fighting for, in massive numbers. In fact, in those countries where the struggle has been most advanced—East Germany and Czechoslovakia—there are significant wings of the opposition movement advocating precisely this kind of approach. The same general concept was also prominent in Poland in the early days of Solidarity, and remains the program of at least a portion of the Polish movement today. (See “The Political Revolution—and the Dangers That Threaten It,” by Ernest Mandel, on page 13 of this issue and “Declaration of the Wrocław Regional Workers’ Committee

of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution” in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No 69.)

### The Danger of Counterrevolution

However, the question remains: Is the restoration of capitalism—i.e., a counterrevolution—possible in these countries? We would have to answer this even if it weren’t for the gleeful pronouncements of the capitalist ideologues and the openly pro-capitalist statements of certain political leaders, such as Lech Walesa, in Eastern Europe. And our answer certainly has to be a qualified one. Of course, in a long-term sense, capitalist restoration cannot be ruled out. But as an immediate prospect, the current crisis does not point in that direction—certainly not in East Germany and Czechoslovakia where the mobilized masses stand as a gigantic obstacle in its path, but also not in Poland or Hungary. Because the factors at work here are not only, or even primarily, subjective or ideological ones. The ideas of the bureaucrats or of the reformist wing of the Solidarity movement exist in a material context—the objective facts of economic and social life in these countries where workers’ states were established after World War II. These states will not be returned to capitalist control without a profound social struggle and a major defeat of the working class movement now in revolt against bureaucratic management and corruption.

There is a big difference between the implementation of market reforms in a bureaucratized workers’ state, on the one hand, and the introduction of capitalism on the other—though these things are often mixed up. A trend toward the use of the market rather than a bureaucratically centralized plan as the main regulating mechanism of production in such a situation does not imply the restoration of capitalism, or even the reintroduction of capitalist modes of production on a significant scale. State enterprises linked to the market still remain state enterprises. The bureaucracy’s objective is simply to allow the market to regulate the availability of goods and services, rather than a central plan.

Of course, and this is the problem from the workers’ point of view, the organization of production in this fashion, in the context of bureaucratic society, will inevitably begin to introduce many of the evils which the theoretically “free” operation of the capitalist market visits on the working class of the bourgeois countries—the reinforcement and expansion of material inequality, the closing of “unprofitable” plants and layoffs leading to unemployment, competition between different industries or different factories within the same industry, pressure to speed up production and work longer hours, etc. But none of this inherently challenges the idea of socialized ownership of production, as long as the profits generated by the individual plants (over and above bonuses and reinvestments in productive capital) remain state property.

Another question is raised, however, by the idea of introducing *privately owned* enterprises (either foreign or domestic), with the right to exploit labor and make profits for *private* reinvestment. As noted, this is also part of the economic plan of many of the reform-minded elements in the USSR and Eastern Europe today. In a sense, any such



# NY Moscow Trials Campaign Holds Successful Rally

by Ben Stone

More than 160 people attended a rally on Friday evening, November 10, at the New School for Social Research in New York City, sponsored by the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee. Nadezhda Joffe, the featured speaker of the evening, had recently completed a successful tour across the U.S. She is the daughter of Adolf Joffe—a close friend and comrade of Leon Trotsky—who committed suicide in 1927 in protest against the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. Nadezhda gave a moving speech about the personal qualities of Trotsky, whom she had known as a young woman.

Nadezhda, now 82, spent many years in the prison camps of Siberia because of her support for the ideas of the Left Opposition, and because of Stalin's policy to retaliate against the families of his political opponents. (For example, Bukharin's wife was sent to the

camps while Bukharin was still a member of the Politburo, as a way of humiliating him.) Nadezhda was rehabilitated after the Khrushchev revelations, and lived to see her father posthumously rehabilitated. Nadezhda was one of the founders of the Moscow group known as Memorial, which is dedicated to erecting a monument to honor the victims of Stalin's terror. It has been actively gathering, and publicizing, historical material about this period of Soviet history.

Other speakers at the rally concentrated on the fight for historic truth in the USSR, and the importance which this has for people in the U.S. and around the world. They included: Professor Paul Siegel, who chaired the event; Art Maglin, representing the New York Marxist School; Richard Greeman, translator of the works of Victor Serge; Jin Xiao Chang, Chinese graduate student; Jutta Scherrer,

professor of Russian history at the New School; Morris Stein, founding member of the American Trotskyist movement; and Marilyn Vogt-Downey, translator of the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky (currently being serialized in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*). The fund appeal and door raised over \$1,000 to help continue the work of the committee.

The Moscow Trials Campaign Committee was formed in 1987 in response to the wave of revelations in the USSR about the period of Stalinist terror. Its objective has been the *complete* legal rehabilitation of *all* those convicted in the frame-up Moscow show trials of 1936-38. The main defendant in those trials was Leon Trotsky, although he was in exile from the USSR at the time. And as of now, Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, have not yet been formally cleared of the charges against them. ●

experiment represents a *genuine* reinforcement of capitalist tendencies within the workers' state. But here, again, this simple act is certainly not decisive by itself.

The economy of every workers' state is a mixture of different kinds of production and investment. The *dominant* form in Eastern Europe and the USSR has been nationalized production and planning. But there has always been, in each of these countries, side by side with the nationalized sector, at least some petty commodity production (especially in agriculture), and even the opportunity for a limited expropriation of labor power for private profit (even if this is mostly realized through the black market). There is no preset blueprint for the proportion of these different modes of production within a workers' state. In fact, one of the criticisms made by Trotsky and the Left Opposition against the Stalinist policy of superindustrialization and forced collectivization of the peasantry in the USSR in the 1930s was precisely that Stalin went too far in trying to impose "proletarian" modes of production in a situation that did not have the technological or cultural base to support them.

## Class Interests Key

The key here, as in many other situations, is the problem of what class interests are represented by the state power.

As long as the ability to produce for profit remains a concession, granted and regulated by the state—and not an inherent right of property as it is in bourgeois societies—then any increased weight it might gain in the economies of Eastern Europe and the USSR cannot be considered a qualitative transformation of property relations. Concessions that are granted as a result of state decisions can also be taken away by that same state.

An analogy with bourgeois society might help to further clarify the question. The economy of every bourgeois society is a mixture of different kinds of production and investment. Side by side with the major corporations that produce for profit, there are state-owned and state-operated industries that produce for social needs. Many transportation and most educational systems are an example of this, as is public housing for low-income families. In some bourgeois economies—Egypt under Nasser, Britain at times under Labor Party administrations, Scandinavian-style welfare states—these state-owned and state-run sectors have been quite substantial. But this does not challenge the bourgeois character of these societies, even though this is a popular misconception.

So we see that the introduction of the market and even limited concessions to production of commodities for private profit do not in and of themselves constitute a



counterrevolution. They can, however, lay the groundwork for it, and this can become a real and present danger in any of these countries if a *significant* layer is permitted to develop which has a personal interest in the *institutionalization* of production for profit as a right, rather than as a limited and controlled concession granted by the workers' state. Under such circumstances we could well see an attempt to impose a qualitatively new kind of government in these countries, a government that would be able to establish the capitalist mode of production as the *dominant* one, privatize the state enterprises, permit the generalized buying and selling of productive property (stock market), and institutionalize the exploitation of labor for private profit.

Such a scenario, the only reasonable one for counter-revolution, clearly excludes the idea of a cold process, one simply engineered from above by the bureaucracy, or by the reformist wing of Solidarity in Poland, without big fissures opening up in the existing parties and a major social upheaval. The bureaucrats in Hungary remain tied to the state-run and state-controlled economy. Only a minority are in a position to transform themselves into the kind of social layer just described, which would profit from a generalized return to capitalist production. And in Poland, the social base of Solidarity is still an independent, organized working class which has been mobilized—to a greater or lesser degree—for almost a decade. If things should take a turn toward a genuine threat of counterrevolution in these countries, it will without doubt have to conquer power by force, overcoming both the working class and the majority of the bureaucrats who will find their own interests immediately and sharply endangered. There can be little question that long before such a stage is reached major clashes between the rising bourgeois counterrevolutionary forces, and those of the old bureaucratic state, and most decisively the masses themselves, are inevitable.

The one thing that is excluded at the present time is a return to the old stability of the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe. The situation there has clearly been transformed. The question which remains open is: What will the new reality be like?

What is necessary now, and what is clearly taking place, is a deepening of revolutionary consciousness on the part of the working masses. Their actions must ultimately go beyond the present fight for democracy and reforms, as important as this is, to a program of action which can completely subordinate the bureaucracy to the will of the people, eliminate every vestige of its privileged position in society, and establish a democratically organized economy and government. This is what we call a political revolution. The perspective of a political revolution against bureaucratic tyranny was first explained by Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition in the USSR after the decisive victory of Stalin in the late 1920s. The legacy of their struggle remains as an essential programmatic and ideological resource which the people of Eastern Europe and the USSR can draw on today.

It should be obvious that the developments in East Germany and Czechoslovakia are pushing strongly in the direction of political revolution. There is a wide-ranging discussion taking place and every indication that an overwhelming majority reject any idea of a capitalist solution with its institutionalization of private privilege and control. They want socialism *and* democracy, which is a profoundly simple, yet profoundly revolutionary, idea.

And there is a real prospect for a genuine, mass revolutionary alternative to develop, which can formulate a coherent program for the extension of proletarian control over society in the Eastern European countries. That is the key element in this situation—as it is in every revolutionary situation—since it can guarantee a decisive victory for the working masses. Should such a breakthrough occur in any one of these states it could quickly spread its influence to all of the others and beyond—to the USSR, to Western Europe, to the U.S., and even to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And this, in turn, would open a dramatic new stage in the decades-long struggle of the working class to forge an international revolutionary vanguard that can lead to the final *defeat* of imperialism and bureaucratic tyranny, and a final *victory* of *real* socialism on a world scale. ●

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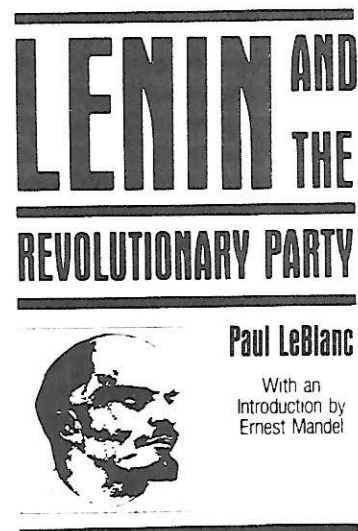
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# The political revolution — and the dangers that threaten it

**THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION** in East Germany is also a spectacular rebirth of workers' democracy and excited and exciting debates about the perspectives for the revolution and for socialism. At the beginning of November, our comrade Ernest Mandel was invited by the Humboldt University to give two lectures. The opposition took advantage of this to organize a public discussion on social democracy between Mandel and several representatives of the East German Communist Party (SED). In these debates, Mandel spoke as a representative of the Fourth International and was able to present the general program of our current. He also had the opportunity to attend the mass demonstrations that preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall.

## ERNEST MANDEL

**T**HE UPSURGE of the mass movement rocking the GDR has assumed the dimensions of a real revolution. This movement exceeds anything that has been seen in Europe since 1968, if not since the Spanish revolution. The language of numbers is clear. On November 4, 5 and 6, nearly 2 million people came into the street. On November 4, in East Berlin, between 750,000 and a million people came out in the biggest demonstration in the history of the German workers' movement.

At the same time, there were 350,000 in Leipzig, 300,000 in Dresden, 70,000 in Karl Marx Stadt (Chemnitz), 60,000 in Halle, 50,000 in Zwickau, 25,000 in Schwerin, tens of thousands in several other cities, thousands in many smaller cities. In proportion to the overall population, this is equivalent to 7 to 8 million demonstrators in France or Italy, or 5 to 6 million in the Spanish state. It is something that has never been seen in the space of three days.

There cannot be the slightest doubt about the predominance of workers in these demonstrations. Their size alone makes this clear. How in a city like Leipzig, East Germany's industrial center, could you have 350,000 demonstrators out of a population of 500,000, if virtually the entire working class had not come into the street? Are there 750,000 to a million intellectuals, housewives and high-school students in East Berlin, a city of a million and a half people?

The proletarian character of the revolution that has begun in East Germany is attested to most of all by the vast ferment in the enterprises. It is true that, unlike May 1968 and the Italian hot fall of 1969, there have not yet been strikes in the formal sense. But in most of the big enterprises, workers' assemblies are constantly engaged in discussions. In several workers' "bastions," notably in the Leuna chemical plant, the country's biggest factory, such assemblies discussed draft resolutions calling for a three-day general strike if the Political Bureau failed to resign. It had to step down.

### Spontaneous explosion of demands

The November 4 demonstration in East Berlin was distinguished, besides the number of demonstrators, by an unprecedented spontaneous explosion of demands. An entire working people that had been regimented, gagged and oppressed for decades suddenly woke up, like a giant breaking its chains. This is a feature of every genuine revolution.

The humble, the downtrodden, rose to their feet, marched upright, and began to shout about everything that was wrong, about all the wrongs they suffered. This people occupied the center of East Berlin on November 4. And something never before seen happened. They did not just shout. They did not leave the formulation

### The end of socialism?

**IMPRESSIONISM**, a tendency to take appearances for reality, an inability to understand the underlying movements of history, even when they are glaringly obvious, has always characterized the ideology of the ruling class. At unexpected turning points, this does not fail to put a strong pressure on the workers' movement, including its revolutionary wing.

Never has the uproar over "the end of socialism," "the end of the revolution," "the end of communism" been as loud as it is today. Could the fall of the Berlin Wall be the final proof of the triumph of capitalism or reformist social democracy integrated into capitalism? All these charming people seem not to notice that the Berlin Wall was not overthrown by the capitalists but by the risen masses in the GDR. How long can the racket from these editorial offices drown out the roar of the streets occupied by millions of East German workers?

What is dying is not socialism or the revolution. What is dying is Stalinism and post-Stalinism, which as most Soviets themselves say today are incompatible with socialism. Socialism's time can come precisely at such a moment in the GDR, in the USSR, as well as in many imperialist and third-world countries. The revolution, which in 1967 had been prematurely buried, can raise its head again proudly in East Germany, as it will do tomorrow in other places.

Still better, the cause of freedom can come over to our camp, and this combination of socialism-communism and freedom is invincible. It is not hard to imagine the consequences of a situation where, in East Germany, the freedom to demonstrate is more extensive than in West Germany; the electoral laws more liberal, the daily press and TV more critical of the authorities and more open to the people, where there are people's inspection committees for protecting the environment with more powers; where there is a more deepgoing elimination of poverty; greater equality between men and women; a more thoroughgoing elimination of militarism; and above all more advanced trade-union rights in the factories (self-management and not co-management). All the bourgeoisie's hypocritical talk about democracy would rebound against it.

If the East German revolution triumphs, this will be an important stage in the advance of the world socialist revolution.★

*International Viewpoint*



of written demands to the notables, as was the case of the Cahiers de doléances ["List of Complaints"] at the time of the French Revolution. They did their own writing.

The demonstrators carried at least 7,000 placards and banners that they had made themselves. Thus, more than 90% did not come from any organization or any grouping. They came straight from the brains and hearts of the masses of working people. Rosa Luxemburg's descendents proved themselves worthy of her. Today, history has proclaimed that she did not fight in vain; that she did not die in vain.

I obviously cannot cite all these slogans here. (See box). Their general tone reflected a mixture of hope and skepticism, of humor and cheekiness, a mixture that reflects the present level of consciousness of the masses quite well. Another indication of the demonstrators' political sense was that instead of taking their placards back to their homes after the march broke up, they pasted them up by the hundreds on the parliament building.

The demands that set the tone were "We are the people," "We are staying," "Free elections," "Down with repression," "Legalize Neues Forum," "Free trade unions," "Freedom to travel."

### Cooperation between workers and Intellectuals

The demonstration was organized by the trade-union locals at the four big theaters in East Berlin. It was marked by exemplary cooperation between intellectuals and workers, reminiscent of the Prague Spring and radically different from what is happening in the USSR, to say nothing of Hungary and Poland.

Twenty-seven speakers represented all the opposition currents except the far left. There were also two speakers from the reform wing of the SED, and they got a fair bit of whistling from the crowd. One speaker specified the demands drawn up by an initiative group for independent unions — higher wages, reduction of the differentials in pensions, popular control over supplies; no increase in norms without higher wages.

On the platform, as well as in the crowd, the demonstration had a heart-warming internationalist aspect. The rally started with a song for Nicaragua, performed by two young singers who had been beaten up by cops only a few weeks before. The crowd gave them prolonged applause.

An appeal was launched for solidarity with the persecuted opposition in Czechoslovakia. Placards expressing solidarity with South Africa were waved. There were signs proclaiming solidarity with the Chinese students. There was a poster reflecting a cheerful Berliner cheekiness: "Gorbi, thank you. You helped us. Now we are going to help you." A Soviet poem was read from the platform, "Letter from an unknown political prisoner to Comrade Stalin."



All this was not fortuitous, just as the crowd's unanimous rejection of nationalism and militarism was not. Today, the GDR is the only state in the world defined exclusively by its social identity. There is no national identity. The popular masses in the GDR reject every militarist tradition, including the abortion combining Stalinist and Prussian militarism that the SED bureaucracy has been trying unsuccessfully to graft into the youth. This is bringing about a real opening to internationalism among working class, the intelligentsia and the youth in the GDR, at least for the moment. Its future is linked to the future of the political revolution itself and its repercussions in the rest of Europe and the world.

### Many gains already accumulated

In the space of a month, the upsurge of the working masses has already accumulated a great number of gains. The political and social situation in the GDR has changed with the rapidity that characterizes real revolutionary explosions.

The opposition has won acceptance. All groupings, including the far left, are working in the open. Representatives of the main opposition group, Neues Forum, speak on radio and TV, are interviewed on West German TV; and the NF is recruiting hand over fist, at least in its bastion of Leipzig. It is now fighting to be able to participate in the coming elections. Unless there is such participation by the opposition, in fact these elections will lose all legitimacy. This was accepted in principle at the SED Central Committee meeting of November 8-10. It is hard to see how it can be prevented at the

last minute.

The repression has virtually ceased. The East Berlin chief of police apologized from a balcony of the "Red City Hall" for the misdeeds of his police. The hated secret police, the Stasi, is lying low. Its chief, Mielke, has been eliminated from the Political Bureau. He will doubtless also be removed from the Central Committee.

The right to emigrate and freedom of travel have been accepted. The government resigned, in accordance with the demand of the demonstrations. The new head of government, Modrow, leader of the Dresden SED, is the chief of the Gorbachevite reformers. His lieutenant, Schabowski, is trying to project a reform image in Berlin. A part (not all) of the conservatives have been eliminated from the PB, under the pressure of the crowds in the streets.

### Tendencies and factions forming in SED

The media have opened up, not as much as in the USSR today, but much more than in the first phase of the Gorbachev era. In the party press, especially the papers of base organizations and the daily of the Communist Youth, *Junge Welt*, nonconformist and frankly oppositionist documents are being widely disseminated. In fact, tendencies and factions are forming openly within the SED. (This goes much further than in the USSR.) An unprecedented spectacle could be seen in the evening of November 8 in front of the Central Committee building, where the CC had just started a three-day meeting: More than 10 thousand oppositionist SED members were gathered there, carrying hundreds of slogans, calling above all for a



special party congress before the end of the year. On November 10, the party leadership gave in. A special congress has been accepted.

All the opposition groupings, including those within the SED, are preparing to launch independent publications with big print runs.

In the plants, exciting discussions are underway about replacing the organizational structures. (See box) Renewal of the official unions? Forming new unions? Reelection of all delegations by free multi-candidate elections? A new role for the factory councillors (*Betriebsräte*), who have a glorious tradition in central Germany? The decisions will doubtless be made in the very near future.

Teachers are spontaneously taking steps to give new life to an educational system that was admired throughout the world but which the bureaucracy totally undermined by its fear of "dissident thinking." Doctors and nurses are getting ready to take similar actions in the hospital system.

All these initiatives are occurring throughout the country, down to the small provincial cities, involving hundreds of thousands of people in the most various spheres of activity. For the moment, they are totally uncontrollable. In any event, their effects will be long lasting.

To cite one moving example: On Krenz's personal intervention, kids at Ossietzky high school in Frankfurt-ander-Oder were expelled and denied the right to matriculate in any other high school in the GDR. Their "crime"? In a hand-written document, they had proposed a small reduction in military spending for the benefit of spending on education, since there was a détente in central Europe. Today, they are being feted as national heroes throughout the country.

However, no one should be carried away by spontanéist euphoria, and think that this magnificent revolutionary movement is going to endure and triumph just because of its breadth. This revolutionary explosion is marked by two grave weaknesses that could condemn it in time to failure.

First of all, there are only embryos of real self-organization. Demonstrations,

even the broadest ones, cannot in the long run substitute for such structures. The more perceptive opposition currents — both inside and outside the SED — are perfectly aware of this. They are multiplying all sorts of initiatives to promote self-organization. They are also formulating such proposals in their writings (a large number of leaflets and circulars are being

general, and with certain qualifications, it can be said that there are five major currents among the political forces on the scene:

● The mass opposition current embodied by the New Forum, the Democracy Today organization, Christians for Socialism (Protestants) and the reconstituted Social Democratic Party (SPD). All these organizations say clearly that they are in favor of democratic socialism based on collective ownership of the major means of production and political pluralism. (See the "Böhlen Appeal" that they signed in common, *International Viewpoint*, No. 172, October 30, 1989.) But they have no clear ideas on the institutions and government of a workers and people's state. Some "bloc parties", especially Gerlach's Democratic Liberal Party (PLD) line up with this current, but on the basis of still less clear ideas.

Together, these currents could undoubtedly get a majority in free elections. But a differentiation seems inevitable. The right-wing of Neues Forum and some of the "Bloc Parties" are doubtless going to evolve to the right, others more to the left. The SPD is a left social democratic party (see box), which has declared itself in favor of maintaining collective ownership, except in retail trade. Will this last? It is hard to make prognostications about this.

● The left current that seeks a democratized workers' state based on political pluralism, democratic freedoms, collective ownership of the major means of production and banks, democratic and decentralized planning and workers' self-management. This current is in the majority within the opposition in the SED but very much in the minority outside it. It has the sympathy of many workers, but it is difficult to gauge its overall influence.

● The conservative post-Stalinist current that wants to maintain the status quo with a few cosmetic changes. It is in a majority in the apparatus, in a minority in the SED and practically nonexistent

### **Slogans at the East Berlin demonstration**

"Deceived police, turn against Stalinism"

"The left against those on top."

"No neo-Nazis here."

"Chemical industry, introduce filters."

"Workers, use your gray matter, be on the alert to the dogs who only bark." (A rhyming phrase in German.)

"All power to the editors."

"No more lies."

(Slogans carried by journalists.)

"Only dead fish go with the current."

"Instead of co-management, self-management."

"For the right of conscientious objection."

"Demilitarized schools."

"A monopoly of power produces abuse of power, even under socialism."

"Equal pensions for all."

"The coach is too deep in the mud, all those who have been guiding the team of horses have to be removed."

"The streets are the platform of the people."

"A proposal for May Day, let the leaders parade in front of the people."

"Use your power. Form workers' councils."

"The same rights for all the parties."

"Monitoring of the state and the police by elected popular bodies."

"Rehabilitate the victims of Stalinism."

"Without truth about the past, there can be no truth about the present."

"Found political parties."

"The October 1989 Revolution."

"Put the security police to work in the factories."

"Krenz zu tisch."

(A play on words, "tisch" means "table" in German, but it is also the name of the general secretary of the trade-union confederation, the FDGB, who had just resigned under pressure from the workers. So, this slogan called for Krenz's resignation.)

disseminated in the GDR).

However, for the moment, the masses seem to be hesitating, if not abstaining. Perhaps this will change with the emergence of new forms of self-organization in the factories. That would undoubtedly be a new qualitative leap in the revolution.

### **Exceptional situation in Leipzig**

In Leipzig, there is an exceptional situation. Neues Forum has become effectively a mass organization. It has established a veritable regime of dual power. But its leadership, while able to lead vast marches every Monday and organize an exemplary corps of stewards, is not elected.

Moreover, the mass movement and the opposition have no precise political aim or any clear idea of the institutions that should be created to exercise power. In

1. The group of official "non-Communist" parties maintained as a figleaf of pluralism in the one-party "People's Democracies."



among the unorganized masses.

● The "reform" current in the apparatus. This current has a big majority in the SED but is (still) in a minority in the apparatus. For the moment, it is not striking much of a cord among the non-party population. But this could change, if it carries through substantial reforms. It is subdivided into a technocratic wing, which tends toward a neo free-enterprisism, on the Hungarian and Polish model, strongly attracted by a Swedish-style "market economy"; and a wing more sensitive to working-class pressure and the socialist tradition.

A split of the SED into three or four parties seems possible in time, or even probable.

● A current that could be termed pro-capitalist, favorable to unconditional reunification with West Germany, which in present conditions would mean the absorption of East Germany by imperialist West Germany. The smallest of the Bloc Parties, the National Democratic Party (NDP), seems for the moment to be the culture medium for pro-capitalist tendencies. It has struck virtually no cord in the mass movement. During the big demonstrations of November 4-6, not a single placard called for reunification. Only two placards out of 7,000 in East Berlin called for a "social market economy." A few placards called for freedom for craftsmen, which, moreover, is not something that need be rejected a priori.

### Politically capable vanguard needed

However, a lot more time and a lot more work will be necessary, and especially a vanguard capable politically of applying a united-front tactic toward all the working-class masses involved, in order to define definite institutional objectives, in the political as well as economic spheres, in order to open the way for the victory and consolidation of the political revolution.

For several weeks, the population of the GDR and especially the opposition circles have taken seriously the threat of violent repression, or even a "German Tiananmen." The very fact that the demonstrations have continued despite this worry demonstrates the extent to which the masses have become conscious of their power and have thrown off the burden of fear and resignation. Once again, these are the signs of a real revolution. Especially so, because this worry was not without foundation.

The decisive day undoubtedly was October 9. Tanks took up positions in Leipzig, with the order to fire. Whole rooms were cleared in the schools and hospitals to care for the wounded. The nurses immediately warned the trade-union locals in the big plants.

It is rumored that the order to fire was cancelled only two hours, or even a half

## Appeal for building independent unions

**Fellow workers!**

**WHAT has the FDGB [the single official confederation] done for us in 40 years?**

**Has it raised the question the question of the shorter work-week as a fundamental demand on the enterprise managements? Why has it not fought with us to win a 40-hour week? Has it been concerned about our wages, which are often falling behind inflation? Why are charges not set in accordance with wage levels?**

**Where were the FDGB leaders when new work norms were introduced in the enterprises. Were they on our side? Did they oppose the norms that were not in our interest?**

**Can we consider the FDGB to be a real representative of our interests, when our fellow workers in the West get, on the average, ten more paid days of vacation a year than we do? Has the FDGB done anything to reduce the power of nonworkers? Has the union leadership ever rejected state plans opposed to the interests of the workers? Have we yet seen the unions go against the party and the state?**

**For 40 years, no one has been defending our interests. That's enough!**

**We must not let ourselves be organized anymore, even by the "new men." We must organize ourselves. The coming years are not going to be a picnic for us. The fetters have to be denounced. Prices will go up; wages will go up much less. The task of the state is to govern the society, but it threatens to abdicate in short order. We have to get the coach out of the mud!**

**To prevent a drop in the standard of living of many of us, we need our own representatives.**

**— General assemblies have to be called and present the bill to the union leaderships.**

**— The workers have to be able to express themselves.**

**— They have to present their own demands to the plant managements.**

**— They have to be supported, when they run into difficulties.**

**— The results of the struggles have to be made public immediately, so as to prevent reprisals.**

**— Contacts have to be established with workers in other enterprises.**

**— Independent unions have to be built! ★**

**Contact Bureau  
"Initiative Group for Independent Unions"  
Berlin**

hour, before the start of the mass demonstration. The decision came from the Political Bureau, and was transmitted by Krenz. Undoubtedly, this was the result of strong pressure from Moscow.

Gorbachev is supposed to have warned Honecker that if he opened fire on the people, the Kremlin's whole foreign policy would collapse. They would find themselves again in a Cold War climate worse than when the Berlin Wall was built, with disastrous economic consequences for the USSR and for all the East European countries. It is important to verify this report. But it seems plausible, since it represents a realistic judgement of the international repercussions of such a crime.

The very breadth of the demonstrations, however, also influenced the Political Bureau's decision. This makes a crackdown unlikely in this stage, even if there were a change in leadership in the Kremlin. A police provocation certainly cannot be excluded. But the opposition is trying to reduce this threat as much as possible, by correctly stressing the non-violent character of the movement, apply-

ing a rule of self-control among the demonstrators and surrounding the police stations with lines of stewards in order to avert any direct confrontation.

This question has to be put in a broader geographical and historical context. Since 1917, all revolutionists have hoped for a linkup between the German revolution and the Russian revolution. This would represent a decisive breakthrough for the world revolution. Conversely, the international bourgeoisie (and subsequently both the bourgeoisie and the Kremlin bureaucracy) have left no stone unturned to find gendarmes to nip the possibility of a victorious revolution in Germany in the bud. Noske and his Freikorps; the Reichswehr; the SS and the Wehrmacht; the victorious armies of World War II; and NATO and the Warsaw Pact have successively fulfilled this function.

Today, for the first time since 1918, the political revolution in the GDR is beginning in an international situation in which no one, in the immediate future, can play this gendarme's role. This is the result of a great number of changes that have occurred on the world scale and that have



occurred in the USSR after Gorbachev's rise to power, such as the abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty.

It is necessary to recognize the repercussions that a victory of the political revolution in the GDR, a seizure of power by the working class of the GDR (which is possible, although neither certain nor probable) could have for the world revolution. A spark from the GDR could set all Europe, even the USSR and China alight.

### Kremlin leaders face insoluble dilemma

This points up the real dilemma facing the Kremlin and Washington/Bonn/NATO. If the USSR intervenes again, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Gorbachev's entire policy will collapse. At the same time, a formidable wave of protest, equal to, if not greater than, that of the American people against the Vietnam war would be unleashed in the USSR. But if Moscow lets a democratic workers' power become established in East Berlin, this will quickly have repercussions in the USSR, East Europe and West Germany, with the "destabilizing" effects that Gorbachev fears like the plague.

Likewise, if Washington and Bonn intervene against the East German workers, a formidable mass protest would explode in West Germany, with the possibility of a general strike, and incalculable repercussions in the rest of Europe, or even in the United States. But if they got away with it, the perspectives for the stability of capitalist Europe would not be any better.



Already on November 9, a representative of NATO drew the paradoxical conclusion that today the Warsaw Pact is an essential factor of stability in capitalist Europe. But for the moment the Warsaw Pact is virtually powerless to intervene against the workers in East Germany.

The conclusion, from the standpoint of the workers' and revolutionary movement, follows logically.

### Sovereignty of East German workers must be defended

We have to defend the unlimited sovereignty of the workers of East Germany. We have to oppose any diversion, any provocation, that would permit the governments in either the East or the West to prevent the workers of East Germany from freely determining their own fate, which would facilitate the intervention of any gendarmes against these workers.

The bureaucracy at bay is maneuvering today to regain control of the rebellion by announcing and carrying out real, but limited reforms. In view of the masses' distrust and the breadth of the upsurge, coopting it through mere promises is absolutely impossible. Neither the appointment of Krenz as general secretary nor the resignation of the government and the formation of a new Political Bureau on November 8 are more than rearguard battles by "conservatives." These "transitional solutions" will prove only ephemeral.

More serious would be an attempt at a "Gorbachev-style" reform, based on a coalition that would include, along with the reform wing of the apparatus around Modrow, a section of the more moderate opposition leaders.

The latter, out of opportunist *Realpolitik* considerations at the same time as fear of intervention by the Kremlin "if it goes too far" (a fear that persists despite everything), and undoubtedly also out of the fear of a "leap into the dark" that overlaps with fear of a genuine workers' revolution, are probably prepared for a "Polish-style" solution, at least in the political sphere. (That is, a solution that would involve sharing or even heading the government along with the SED reformers, while the control of the armed apparatus remained in the hands of the nomenklatura.)

The election victory that the opposition can expect in the event of free elections would favor such an option. Even the SPD, with the direct support of the West German SPD, could take that road.

Can such a reform succeed? In the short term, yes; purely in the constitutional sphere. But it will not stop the flowering of the mass movement. It will not choke off their thousand-faceted self-activity. To the contrary, it could even stimulate this. This is the great difference from the Polish situation.

In these conditions, such reform would also stimulate political differentiation. Hybrid political institutions would have little chance of stabilizing. In the medium term, it seems probable that the "reformers" will fail.

Experience shows that a mass movement, not even the most spontaneous and the broadest, cannot last indefinitely. It must win a decisive victory, if not it will start to ebb. No one can determine the time limits in advance.

If the mass movement begins to ebb; if skepticism begins to set in and if hope evaporates, if in those conditions the number of East German citizens emigrating to West Germany increases qualitatively, if the economic situation gets much worse (for example because of such a massive exodus and unsolved problems of currency convertibility), then at a certain moment that political situation could turn.

### Population ready to defend social gains

The majority of the population remaining in East Germany could come to consider that joining West Germany in one form or another would be a lesser evil by comparison with deepening poverty. Even then, the population would remain ready to defend its social gains (full employment, social security, the elimination of poverty) in the framework of a united capitalist Germany.

The West German bourgeoisie, for its part, may calculate that economic advantages of reunification and its repercussions on the rest of East Europe can cancel out the financial costs and the politico-social risks of the operation (which in any case would be considerable).

The political revolution would then be defeated through attrition and the lack of political solutions. The East German working class would fall back into a defensive position, with immense disillusionment but without having lost its potential for struggle. In the long run, this potential could even boost that of the West German working class.

However, opting for this hypothesis today is assuming defeat before the decisive battle is waged.

To the contrary, in the present conditions, the task of revolutionists is to go against the current and help the East German workers, to defend, protect and aid, with all their strength, the political revolution that is beginning in East Germany, so that it can triumph as rapidly as possible. ★



# New York City Election Poses Challenge for Black and Working Class Movements

by Lloyd D'Aguilar

The people of New York City, the financial capital of the world, made history when they recently elected the first African American to the office of mayor. At first glance this historic event might give the impression that racial divisions are declining in this hothouse of nationalities, but a more sober assessment of the election campaign, and the actual pattern of voting, suggests that such a conclusion might be premature.

In the first place, the new mayor, David Dinkins, won by only 2 percent of the votes cast. The narrowness of victory was due in large part to the fact that only 26 percent of whites voted for him, while it required 97 percent and 70 percent of the African-American and Latino votes, respectively, to secure victory. In other words, the white and nonwhite communities were worlds apart in the reasoning that informed their decision as to who should become the mayor.

The racial split in the voting is reflective of racial polarization in the United States. Political power is still regarded as the preserve of rich white males. And the prospect of a Black man (or more rare a Black woman) getting elected to high office drives fear into the hearts of white America pretty much like the concept of "one man one vote" does in South Africa.

The mayoral campaign thus had all the overtones of an appeal to race. The media was obligingly used by Dinkins's white Republican opponent, and former federal prosecutor, Rudolph Giuliani, to play on the racial fears and prejudices of the white electorate.

The tactic almost worked. It put Dinkins on the defensive throughout the campaign trying to show how nonthreatening he is to whites. That he was able to get 26 percent of the white vote (more than what Jesse Jackson got in the 1988 Democratic primary) is testimony to the "moderate" image he had cultivated over a long period of time.

Described as a "clubhouse" Democrat, Dinkins came up through the ranks of the Harlem Democratic club, where he underwent a "grooming" process, waiting on the opportune moment to make his move for the right office. Appointed a deputy mayor in the 1970s, he had to forfeit the post when it was discovered that he hadn't paid his taxes for four years. But he rebounded on the political scene, and on his second try in 1985 won the office of Manhattan borough president, which he now vacates for the mayoralty.

As a supporter of Jesse Jackson, Dinkins is well versed in the art of "coalition" politics, which is considered to be a prerequisite for challenging the white power structure in a city where Blacks constitute only 26 percent of the electorate. Jesse Jackson calls it the Rainbow Coalition.

But Rainbow politics is not about the uniting of the Black and white working class, which the political left seeks to build, but is primarily the cultivation first and foremost of relations between Black politicians and progressive whites who are prepared to support the election of Black candidates to local and national office.

David Dinkins, the "clubhouse" politician, had thus developed over a period of time relationships with prominent white, Jewish, Hispanic, and trade union leaders. These relationships served as a sort of stamp of approval without which he would probably have been branded as a "radical" for his support to such causes as a woman's right to choose to have an abortion; his opposition to the death penalty and to the use of Staten Island in New York as a port for U.S. nuclear ships; his criticisms of police brutality in New York City; or his support to a city council bill to exclude all companies which do business in South Africa from doing business with the city government.

Dinkins's position on Jewish issues did not hurt either. It helped to put distance between himself and Jesse Jackson and other more militant Black leaders. In 1984 he publicly disassociated himself from a derisive Jackson reference to New York City as "Hymietown" (which Jackson later apologized for); does not share Jackson's call for the establishment of a Palestinian state and for negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (which is particularly irksome to conservative Jews); took exception to a United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism; denounced President Reagan for going to Bitburg (the site in Germany where Nazi officers were buried); and took Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam to task over a reference to Judaism as a "gutter religion." In New York politics there is no better litmus test for a Black politician to prove that he or she is in fact a moderate than the Jewish question. It doesn't hurt either in terms of being able to raise funds for campaigning.

Another contributing factor to the timeliness of Dinkins's candidacy was the fact that the electorate had become disillusioned with their incumbent Jewish mayor, Ed Koch, who has served for three successive terms (12 years). Koch's administration was rocked with allegations of corruption during its last term and several of his most prominent appointees were sent to jail on charges of corruption.

Koch has a very abrasive style of leadership, and is regarded as racially insensitive to the feelings of Black people. During the 1988 New York Democratic presidential primary, for example, Koch made headlines when he declared that Jews would be "crazy" to vote for Jesse Jackson.



The mayor's insensitive attitude to racial feelings, as well as the general racist sentiments emanating from the national government since 1980, seemed to serve as a fuel for a rash of attacks by white gangs on unarmed Blacks cornered in white neighborhoods. The latest was the shooting of a 16-year-old Black youth, Yusef Hawkins, who had gone with friends into a white neighborhood in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn to buy a car. Enraged Black community activists organized marches through this neighborhood, where many such attacks had taken place in the past, to demonstrate that they would not be intimidated by racist thugs.

With his eye on the upcoming elections, the mayor, true to form, reproached the demonstrators for their actions, accusing them of unfairly tainting the whole Bensonhurst community with racism. In this way he focused his criticism on the demonstrators rather than on white racist violence.

On this occasion even white conservative politicians were forced to publicly disagree with the mayor, pointing out that rather than rising in defense of Black people's constitutional right to freedom of speech and movement, he was acting more like Alabama's notorious sheriff, Bull Connor, who beat and set dogs on Black demonstrators during the civil rights struggles of the '60s.

This brazen act of insensitivity might very well have been the most damaging, and inopportune, indiscretion on the part of the mayor, convincing some whites that it was not only time for him to go, but that it might be well to put a Black man in office who had the capacity to stem the tide of increasing racial polarization.

Dinkins, trying to play up his image as healer of racial divisions, campaigned almost exclusively for the Jewish vote, which was also considered pivotal for a "coalition" victory. He constantly referred to his record of having stood up to Minister Farrakhan on behalf of Jews, and having his life threatened as a result. That Dinkins would go to such extremes to win Jewish votes raised many eyebrows in the Black community where Farrakhan is as highly regarded as Jesse Jackson.

The Jewish constituency remained unmoved by this kind of groveling, demanding instead that Dinkins totally disassociate himself from Jesse Jackson, whom they dislike not only for his "Hymietown" remark, but especially because he supports the call for a Palestinian state and for negotiations with the PLO. These Jews argued that the relationship between the two men was too close for comfort and they feared that Jackson would have excessive influence over the policies of His Worship, the mayor.

In the process of trying to win the Jewish constituency Dinkins did very little campaigning in the Black community, and was accused in some quarters of taking the Black vote for granted. He made no promises which can be considered specific to the needs of that community. The same can be said for the Latino community, which was also considered crucial for a Dinkins victory. Latinos had good reason, after all, to be distrustful of Black politicians, who in the last mayoral election foiled the chances of a Latino getting the Democratic nomination.

With the white voter having stereotypical ideas and fears about the Black politician and the Black agenda, the Republican candidate hammered away at Dinkins's associa-

tion with Jackson; his familiarity with the trade unions (whose leaders endorsed him), implying that Dinkins would be unable to firmly negotiate with the municipal unions (which have upcoming contract negotiations with the city). Perhaps most damaging was his concentration on Dinkins's "integrity," pointing to his failure to pay taxes for four consecutive years (some 20 years ago), and to a questionable transfer of stock by Dinkins to his son.

The "integrity" issue, valid in itself (now being investigated by law enforcement agencies) and perhaps helping to erode some of Dinkins's tenuous support amongst white voters, also helped to expose Giuliani to the charge that he had no political program outside of his veiled appeal to race voting. What was most important—homelessness, the AIDS epidemic, or the fact that 20 years ago Dinkins "forgot" to pay his taxes?

The answer is that Giuliani came very close to succeeding because of attacks like this on Dinkins. Still, it was not enough to overcome Dinkins who got nearly 30 percent of the white votes. His moderate image and less strident approach obviously paid off. And depending how one looks at it, Jews, who usually vote Democratic as a bloc, gave Dinkins only 40 percent of their votes. Dinkins was, of course, most grateful for those votes he did receive from that quarter. (An interesting sidelight of the election is the fact that whereas most polls were predicting a Dinkins victory of as much as 12 percent, in some cases, the actual margin was only 2 percent. Explanation? The pollsters claim that whites lied about whom they would vote for because they feared being labeled as racist.)

From the perspective of the Black community the most disturbing aspect of the election has been the way in which "coalition" politics seemed to make it impossible to get a full hearing on the issues affecting their community. Candidates who are dependent on "coalition" politics usually adopt the "soft" approach in order not to alienate white voters. This is certainly a graphic example of how deeply divided American society is along race lines. (Jesse Jackson was also accused of doing this during the presidential campaign. In New York City, for example, so confident was his campaign staff that they had the Black vote all wrapped up, there was never any attempt to accord the Black media the same kind of accessibility given to the white media. There was no feeling of urgency about the need for a special airing of his program for Black America inside the community itself. This was certainly unlike the situation with the farmers in the Midwest who received a lot of special attention. And equally revealing was the fact that no apology was forthcoming when the Black media complained.)

This dilemma facing the Black voter extends to the white politicians as well, especially Republicans. They all feed off this complacency about the Black vote by never bothering to campaign for it, especially if they are running against a Black candidate; or feel complacent as Michael Dukakis did during the presidential elections, because they feel that the Democratic Party has their votes all locked up anyway.

With such a small winning percentage it is highly questionable that the new mayor will be able to count on any lengthy honeymoon period from New Yorkers, certainly not if the aggressive behavior of the press during the campaign



is to be used as any yardstick. And if the mayor fails to respond to the needs of the people in his natural constituency for fear of being accused of pandering, then his political decline is likely to be that much more precipitous.

New York has one of the nation's most serious housing problem. It is estimated that there are over 60,000 to 100,000 homeless people in New York. A sad sight it is in the most affluent city of the richest nation on earth to see men and women (sometimes pregnant), white and Black, but mostly Black (and who by no means in all cases appear mentally unbalanced, an explanation the incumbent mayor has tried to use in the past for people sleeping in the streets), huddled together for warmth in subway stations; sleeping in trains; begging in such numbers that it sometimes makes passersby feel as if they were in some poor underdeveloped country. And yet it does not appear that government at any level has any solution to this problem.

Real estate developers are daily constructing huge skyscrapers for office use and luxury apartments for the superrich. In the poor neighborhoods hundreds of buildings are allowed to fall into disrepair by unscrupulous landlords. Then they are boarded up ("warehoused"), awaiting the appropriate time when developer and landlord can work a deal to build middle-income dwellings ("gentrification"), which the poor can't afford. The resulting housing shortage has inflated rentals to such a degree that the working poor who fall behind in their rent are themselves just one step away from joining the homeless on the streets.

The incoming mayor faces a city budget that is estimated to be nearly a billion dollars in deficit. He thus has to decide whether to increase taxes or implement budget cutbacks. Raising taxes is problematic. The Republican Party since Ronald Reagan has successfully been able to make it stick in people's consciousness that only Democrats raise taxes because they are natural "big spenders," or worse, are unable to face up to the task of eliminating waste and corruption from the budget.

In New York City the big corporations threaten to move to other states—in the South and even nearby New Jersey—whenever there is any talk of raising taxes.

Dinkins's job is, therefore, laid out for him. He must institute further budget cutbacks which will mean less services for the poor (he has already hinted that he is going to lay off public sector workers); he must also defend the "store" against the public sector unions which endorsed him in the campaign and who expect sympathy for their plight.

With very little money to play around with it is questionable that he will be able to address the social side of the drug epidemic, the AIDS crisis, and the problem of homelessness. As a liberal politician Dinkins knows very well the role that these unsolved social problems play in promoting crime. But like all politicians who have no solution to poverty and other social problems Dinkins has already made it clear that he intends to resort to being a "law and order" mayor.

In trying to outdo his prosecutor opponent, and to show how much tougher he is on crime, Dinkins promised to "punish every crime, first offenses included, with penalties ranging from community service and house arrest to boot

camp and prison." This should be read as a signal in a city where there is more intolerance and hysteria towards Black criminal offenders that Dinkins will not flinch from using draconian measures against his own kind.

We ought not to forget that it was a Black mayor, Wilson Goode, in Philadelphia, 1985, who gave the police the fatal order to drop a bomb on a Black radical group that resulted in the burning down of an entire neighborhood of Black people's homes, and the killing of 13 people. Put under pressure to prove their credentials Black politicians are prone to show their law and order mettle. One would certainly hope that Mayor Dinkins never has to go to such extremes.

And now that Black New Yorkers have seen that having a Black police commissioner (who resigned just before the election of Dinkins) is not a restraining influence on the brutality of white police officers towards Black people, no one expects Mayor Dinkins to be able to do much about this problem, aside from making pronouncements that he will not tolerate police brutality. This is a problem which goes to the heart of the judicial system where grand juries as a matter of routine never indict white police officers for acts of brutality committed against Black people.

Finally, the '89 elections witnessed a first not only in New York City but also in Virginia, where a Black man, Douglas Wilder, was elected for the first time as governor. (Pollsters there had predicted a 10 percent victory margin but Wilder ended up winning by less than 1 percent of the votes for the same reasons that the pollsters were wrong in New York!) And in Virginia, as in New York, the Black candidate did not enlist the campaign support of Jesse Jackson because of fear that he would alienate white voters. Does this mean as the political pundits are now saying that Black politics have moved into the mainstream, that Jesse Jackson's star has been eclipsed by the march of events?

Such an assessment is based more on wishful thinking than on a correct reading of the situation. It assumes that a Black getting elected to high office will automatically change the dismal and shocking social statistics regarding the plight of Black people. Secondly, it ignores the fact that there is more political activity taking place at the grass roots level in the Black communities, outside of the control of the Democratic Party, which a Jesse Jackson merely taps into every four years in his runs for president. It is the self-activity of this community that inevitably determines the extent to which it is possible for any Black politician to remain "successful" as a "mainstream" politician.

The coming period of struggle in New York City will do much to heighten the contradiction between the instinctive national response to racism, which the Latino and African communities expressed in voting for Dinkins, and the consciousness which will develop as Dinkins, trapped within the logic of private property, is unable to effect change. Greater openings will thus be presented for socialist and revolutionary nationalists to play a role in the people's struggles. The extent to which they take advantage of that situation will speak volumes about their politics. ●



*We reprint below two papers written by Shafik Abu-Tahir on the question of drugs and the current "war" being waged by the Bush administration. The first, entitled "The Drug Epidemic," was circulated by the Community Awareness Network, and is dated June 1989. "The War on Drugs," September 1989, appeared on the letterhead of the New African Voices Alliance. Both of these organizations are based in Philadelphia, where the author lives and is active in Black community and political affairs. Though the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism would not agree with the author's implied call for the strengthening of Coast Guard and border patrols to better intercept illegal drugs entering the United States, we believe that the articles pose the fundamental questions involved; and provide some important answers. Their overall approach represents an extremely positive alternative to the present hysteria around this question being whipped up by the capitalist government and the media.*

## The Drug Epidemic

by Shafik Abu-Tahir

I.—Members of our organization have attended various anti-drug rallies, conferences, forums, etc. Most of them we find somewhat discouraging. The most recent one we attended was held at the YMCA at 52nd and Chestnut Streets, Saturday, May 6, 1989. This meeting was sponsored by State Representative Vincent Hughes.

There were about twenty speakers (which means the community mostly played the role of spectator) almost all of whom told us how bad the problem had become (as if we didn't know). Almost all of them left us their "hotline" numbers and asked for the community's support. Hardly any of these speakers put forward any solutions, as Mr. Hughes had asked them, even though this was the main reason why many in the audience had come.

We commend Representative Hughes for holding the meeting but we believe the discussion of this issue needs to be deepened. We need to address how this "war against drugs" is more and more becoming a war against Black and Latino youth. It's becoming a war on our constitutional rights. This "war" is being used to unjustly evict family members who have no criminal record or criminal intentions from public housing units if any member of the family is accused of drug activity. The fact is that most of our young people neither use nor sell drugs. Yet our members report how every night we see innocent youths being stopped by the police and searched for no apparent reason. This is dangerous, and it is not a solution.

Community Awareness Network (CAN) members in no way condone illegal drug trafficking. We just believe that the Bush administration's commitment to this "war" is lacking. We've read any number of news journals which state that roughly 85 percent of illegal drug imports take place via the southern coast of Florida, yet Coast Guard funds have been cut by one million dollars. This certainly is not showing any commitment to the "war" at the federal level, so how effective can we really be at a neighborhood level, and why isn't this being addressed? Our concern is that there is no real effort towards prevention but rather repression, i.e., non-binding arrests, illegal search and seizures, harassment of youth of color, etc. There needs to be an emphasis on anti-drug education, youth employment at decent wages, job training, and other preventive measures. Anti-drug rallies, while of some value in terms of visibility and information sharing, are not working in any long-term way and will not

be a solution. Closing drug houses down only leads to the opening of new ones, often in the same block. This is no solution.

Communities will have to start coming together more and instead of just sharing space; we need to start sharing our thoughts, our resources, and our energies. We do have to reclaim our neighborhoods but it won't be with baseball bats, bullhorns, and a bunch of anti-drug commissions and task forces. We have to start with a more accurate analysis of this problem and not just an emotional response. The truth is that we are still losing the "war on drugs." To win we must start at the national borders. If we don't start at the beginning, we can only lose in the end. In part II of this paper, we'll discuss "Causes of the Problem."

\* \* \*

II. Causes of the Problem—In our view, drug addiction and the new drug culture are symptoms of a larger problem in our society, the same way a cough or a sneeze is a symptom of some disturbance within the body. We can either treat the cough or the sneeze, or seek out the cause of the cough or sneeze. We identify our society's disturbance as one in which antagonisms dominate interhuman relationships. Ours is a society in which alienation, frustration, and poverty are reflected in many anti-social ways, i.e., high levels of crime, drug abuse, etc. Our view, then, is that today's drug epidemic is a direct reflection of alienation, frustration, and poverty.

Today's youth are caught in a terrible bind, particularly youth of color. Many of today's youth have lost all social sense of themselves, feel no real connection to one another or to other generations, i.e., seniors. Many of our youth today, instead of being supportive of our often weaker elders, see our elders as people they can rob or otherwise abuse. Feeling no sense of connection to society, these youth often participate in what they perceive to be beneficial to them, drug trafficking. We are not saying that all of our youth, or even most of our youth, are doing this. In fact, most don't, but too many do! We see therefore the danger of the "war against drugs" as becoming a war on our youth, particularly our African-American youth. This must not be.

### Jobs and Frustration

One problem that leads to drug trafficking has to do with the question of jobs and unemployment. The fact is that many of our youth work in low-paying, unskilled positions.



Today, McDonald's employs more people than U.S. Steel does. But these jobs don't offer any real economic security, i.e., decent wages that can really help sustain a family. People find themselves working hard yet still can't "make ends meet," i.e., pay their bills, heat their homes, buy groceries. This is what leads to so much frustration. When frustrated, people often turn to drugs to help them deal with their frustration. Years ago we could turn to our families, neighbors, or our friends for support, but not today. This growing frustration, particularly with our youth, often turns to violence, thus homicide is a major cause of death amongst African-American males.

Another problem is that our youth have been allowed to see the drug culture as positive. TV programs such as *Miami Vice* and others show the drug world as a "get-rich-quick" world, a world of entertainment and excitement. This glorification has permitted our youth to see and believe that dealing in drugs automatically leads to success. Success is defined as having fancy cars, money, and women.

### Neighborhood Groups Underfunded

With cuts in funding to, and the destruction of, so many community organizations, a community's ability to effectively intervene in the life of its youth is absent, or at best limited. Federal cutbacks, and in Philadelphia the mayor and his administration being servants of big business and its agenda, have made neighborhood organizations ineffective and often, to our youth, irrelevant. With little money being spent in the neighborhoods on anti-drug education and prevention, with little being spent on treatment (in Washington, D.C., the murder capital, only 5 percent of city budget funds are spent on treatment), the "war on drugs" will be a long one, and one filled with many losses.

### Their Solutions

Federal, state, and local leaders call for the better arming of the police, i.e., better, more deadly weapons, curfews, more arrests, and more imprisonment. In some cases there will be public housing units in which residents will have to show identification when going to and from in their communities. Helicopter surveillance is being proposed in certain areas. Furthermore, we are hearing of proposals to do phone taps (illegal?), indiscriminate searches and seizures, and unjust evictions of public housing families (often the last housing some people can get) if any members of such families are involved in any criminal activity.

In CAN, we believe that this emphasis on repression of the drug problem only addresses the symptoms, the cough or sneeze. In part III of this paper we will explore what we see as solutions to this present-day dilemma.

\* \* \*

**III. A Look at Solutions** — We want to state right up front that there are no real short-term solutions to the drug epidemic. This epidemic took time to develop to where it is today, and it will take time for this problem to be put under control. We start here, though, with an analysis that much of what is done has to include an ideological aspect. We have

to start confronting a lot of the negative views people are upholding, especially our youth.

In part II of this statement, we asserted that we felt the short-term resolutions put forward by federal, state, and local leaders to control this drug epidemic have already demonstrated ineffectiveness. This is because their focus is wrong. They only want to deal with the cough, but not the cold, so they focus on better fightback weaponry, more arrests and imprisonment, more evictions—in effect, more repression. Repression never ends a crisis; therefore, repression must not be the focus. The focus must be on winning back the hearts and minds of our youth, attempting to win back their respect. The focus must be on education, on anti-drug information, on job training as well as job creation (employment), and on counseling. In other words, the focus must be on meeting human needs instead of leaving people in misery due to poverty, homelessness, unemployment, etc., making drug trafficking an appealing source of income.

As we stated in part I, we are afraid that the war on drugs is more and more becoming a war against our youth, particularly our youth of color. Why do our youth use drugs in the first place? Why do they become pushers? The fact is that in our society today, the \$200 billion advertisement industry has all of us believing that we need so many things—fancy homes, fancy cars, expensive rings and other such jewelry, stylish clothes, and expensive sneakers. This is all ideological because none of us needs these things. We, especially our youth, are made to believe these are our needs, as opposed to our wants. Hollywood (run by rich, white males) has won this ideological battle against us. Therefore, today, we measure our success by what things we have instead of by what contributions we can make to our society. To feel good about themselves our youth seek out fast money so as to buy more and more of these things. We must confront our youth to reject this kind of Hollywood thinking. We must confront them ideologically.

Further, we need to expose the role that our national leadership (the White House) is playing in terms of drug trafficking. The Oliver North trial suggested that there was definitely some high level involvement in allowing drugs into the country. The Christic Institute (a research/study institute) as well has some airtight evidence that our national leadership has a record of drug involvement in Central America. Whatever the situation, the role of the White House must not be left out. Cutting back Coast Guard funding by one million, as the Bush administration has already done, certainly doesn't show any real commitment to securing U.S. borders against the drug trade. Bush must be investigated on these matters.

Again, in terms of the ideological battle, we need to be clear on what is pushing masses of people into hopelessness and despair, often leading people into the drug culture. Eight years of Ronald Reagan certainly caused economic setbacks, but we need to be clear that his victory was also ideological. He convinced more than enough white Americans that too much money was being spent on the poor, and especially on people of color. Thus, Reagan cut funding for social services tremendously. These cuts made life even more intolerable for our society's downtrodden, many of whom are people of color, forcing many out of their



already low-paying jobs, and again forcing some into the drug culture. For the last fifteen years in our country, many decisions made have not been to the benefit of our country's majority (i.e., people who have to work for a living). These decisions (e.g., increases in military spending) only benefit the rich who seek world domination. Certainly, the majority of us could care less about world domination.

However, most of us do care about our youth. If we were to call for a target group to focus on in our hopes of improving the hurtful and inhuman conditions under which too many people are forced to live, it would be our youth. We need to help our youth develop a new social sense of themselves. We need to develop new concepts of what it means to be a community, wherein we share more than just space. We need to start consistently discussing who exactly has power in this country and how that power is being used or misused. We have to examine who is really benefiting from this drug epidemic. It's definitely not our youth.

We need to rebuild our powerful African-American movement for economic democracy and social justice. We must show our youth of color their beauty and value as human beings, and their roots. We must confront those decisions, and decision-makers, that operate against our collective interests—those policies that impose homelessness, unemployment, and other destructive measures upon us. The drug epidemic must be attacked at its roots. This epidemic is caused by the alienation, frustration, and poverty we feel from not having any real power over our lives. Our ultimate goal, then, must be for us to empower ourselves. We need to

start having a real say in those decisions which affect our lives.

Finally, we raise the debated question: Should cocaine be decriminalized, thus taking away from this epidemic its profit motive that sellers depend on? Once, alcohol was viewed as an epidemic leading to a lot of violence concerning who would control sales. After concerted attempts at repression (i.e. more sophisticated police weaponry, more arrests, more imprisonment), the federal authorities decided it needed to step in and legalize alcohol with intelligent restrictions. The question for us today is the same. Should the federal government seek legalization with intelligent restrictions? Does the federal government even want to stop this epidemic? We, as a society, must strengthen and deepen this debate.

In conclusion, we need to notice something. When the African-American community was leading the struggle for social change (i.e., for new relations between whites and people of color, for jobs, for decent housing, and decent health care) our society moved forward in the greatest of ways. Now, we who have shown the greatest leadership in this country, and who have suffered great losses, sit and watch our youth defeated and drug-filled. As African-Americans have been pushed back, so has our society fallen back. We represented progress with our movement. Now we experience degeneration due to the lack of our movement. We need to win our youth back to opposing materialism. African-Americans particularly need to begin once again taking the lead in terms of saving our youth and moving society forward. If we don't, no one else will. ●

## The War on Drugs

by Shafik Abu-Tahir

In Atlanta, African youth are not allowed to carry book bags inside their schools. School officials have banned these book bags because "drugs can be hidden inside of them." A recent national poll showed that a majority of respondents would support homes being searched without search warrants. Already we know that in some cities public housing residents can be evicted if any family member in their house is arrested for illegal drug activity. Also, in some cities public housing residents must carry identification passes to go in and out of their homes.

All of these practices are being proposed and implemented in the name of the "War on Drugs." What much of these policies amount to, whether intended or not, is a dangerous call for military rule over our communities. When such rule occurred in Germany and in Spain, it was known as fascism. Such rule is dangerous. We understand the fear people have of the drug problem in our society; it's definitely a legitimate fear, but military rule, police occupation of our communities, or suspending individual constitutional rights is not going to be a solution.

We have to address this problem at its roots. First we must ask, why is there such a high demand for drugs in the first

place? Why have so many people given up hope for any decent future for themselves (i.e., no hope for a job, getting a decent wage, or for a decent home, etc.)? Are people turning to drugs so as to "feel" better even if only for a little while or selling drugs so as to get more material things (i.e., fancy cars, homes, prestige, etc.) as a way of feeling better about themselves?

The Ronald Reagan era brought about massive cutbacks in spending for neighborhood improvement, job training, educational grants as well as for health education programs and other vitally important life support systems. Now more youth are unable to attend college, get a decent job, or get job training. As a result, their options have become more limited. They can join the armed forces (possibly even get to kill other poor youth of color somewhere) or roam the streets. Locked out of decent job opportunities that pay a family-sustaining wage, these youth see the drug world as enticing, as attractive.

Then, on top of all of this, all kinds of TV programs are telling our youth that they aren't successful or valuable unless they are wearing piles of gold on their necks, certain brand-name \$100 sneakers, or expensive brand-name pants, etc.

*(Continued on page 36)*



# Notes on a Thermidorian Bicentennial

by Keith Mann

The two-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the French Revolution of 1789 certainly did not go unmarked either in France or elsewhere. Movies, books, postcards, T-shirts, and gadgets of every sort were issued and reissued, and were readily available. Plays have been staged and academic conferences have been held. It's been a big and profitable business.

In a fancy boutique next to where that symbol of old regime repression, the Bastille, once stood, nine-hundred-dollar French Revolution chess sets were available. On one side, the king and queen were naturally Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Their rooks were miniature bastilles. They faced off against Robespierre and Marat whose rooks were represented by guillotines! As might be expected, some of the commercial exploitation of the bicentennial has been strikingly crude. A fast-food joint several blocks away renamed their hamburgers and cheeseburgers with the names of prominent actors of the revolution. One could have a "Robespierre," "Danton," or "Marat" with a coke and fries. The marketing agents played no favorites, however. Those of a more conservative bent could have a "Louis XVI" or "Marie Antoinette" with their milkshakes.

The degradation and depoliticization of the bicentennial also occurred on the more serious level of intellectual discourse and the official commemorations of the revolution. The bourgeois media promoted the work of contemporary scholars and historians who have played down many of the fundamental gains of the revolution, questioned its long established class character, and in some cases have even disputed whether a revolution took place at all. This hasn't of course been merely a dry, academic debate divorced from current political and ideological realities. The bicentennial served as a convenient platform for a generalized attack on revolution in general, and on Marxism in particular. The social democratic government of François Mitterrand and Michel Rocard has been a partner and collaborator in these efforts.

The overall mood generated by this discussion has encouraged some of the most reactionary segments of French society to push their own version of the revolution. In Lyon, where many of the struggles were played out with particular ferocity, an organization of people claiming to be descendants of those guillotined during the radical phase of the revolution has been founded. Several of its leaders have stood as candidates of the racist political party, the National Front. Similar efforts have been initiated elsewhere in the country. All told it was a most unrevolutionary celebration of one of history's most classic revolutions.

While conservative and bourgeois-liberal opinion has definitely succeeded in leaving its overall stamp on the com-

memorations of the revolution, those who wish to *celebrate* the revolution, to critically assess both its conquests and limitations, to probe both its unique character and timeless relevance, have nevertheless been able to make their voices heard. One of the more noteworthy of these efforts is Daniel Bensaïd's new book *Moi, La Révolution*. Bensaïd, a leader of the French section of the Fourth International—the Revolutionary Communist League—employs a creative literary device by which the revolution appears as a woman and speaks indignantly to President Mitterrand, his prime minister Michel Rocard, and all the officials connected with the bicentennial.

She is indignant that these leaders have opportunistically sought to play down her revolutionary essence. Addressing Mitterrand with the informal *tu* form as in the radical phase of the revolution when the formal *vous* was actually outlawed (only to be reinstated during the period leading up to the Napoleonic era), the Revolution objects that Mitterrand has "resolved to put me in the closet, to grind me down, to smooth me out, to strip me of my color." "You are" she says "nothing but a thermidorian functionary." Bensaïd's book has received wide press attention. Last June he was one of several authors invited to appear on France's leading intellectual television talk show *Apostrophe*.

Another interesting book that defends the revolution from the thermidorian depoliticization currently in vogue is a collection of essays entitled *Permanences de la Révolution*. The 20 essays in this collection take up a variety of themes approached from various disciplines within the social sciences. Most of the contributors, like Bensaïd who writes the introductory essay and the author of the present article, are also militant revolutionary socialists.

## A Bourgeois Democratic Revolution?

As the ideological struggle is an important arena of the class struggle it is absolutely necessary for Marxists to defend our rich analysis of the revolution and these books are an important part of that effort. Though Marx himself warned that the socialist revolution "cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future," the French Revolution is a useful area for study because beyond its specific class nature the revolution saw many classic features of revolution that have reoccurred in subsequent revolutions of widely different character. These include dual power and permanent revolution. Some, like Thermidor and Bonapartism, have even lent their names to the language we use in speaking about revolution.

The chief ideologue of the current attack on long accepted notions of the revolution — particularly the conception of the



revolution as bourgeois democratic—is the historian François Furet. Though Furet has been publishing works on the subject for some time, he has recently been promoted to a sort of intellectual superstar by those who find his broadsides against historical materialism useful for their own ideological purposes. His approach was perfectly suited to the needs of those charged with organizing the bicentennial commemorations. As Furet explains, one can “understand an epoch without liking it.”

Though Furet is prolific and his arguments often quite sophisticated, much of his thinking can be summed up in his claim that “nothing more resembled French society under Louis XVI than French society under Louis Philippe.” Louis XVI was the Bourbon king who was deposed during the revolution. Louis Philippe, who was dubbed “the bourgeois king” by contemporaries, was from the Orleansist branch of the royal family and acceded to the throne following the revolution of 1830. By denying any long-lasting influence of the revolution on French society, Furet questions both the profundity of the revolution as a watershed in French and world history and its specific class nature. Such a statement runs together and obfuscates the distinction between the political forms of regimes and their class nature; or in Marxist terms, the difference between state and civil society.

The French Revolution was bourgeois because it was the bourgeoisie which inspired and led the revolutionary convulsion which destroyed the feudal barriers barring its full development. French society was thoroughly and irrevocably transformed by the bourgeois social character of the revolution, despite the fact that the direct *political* rule of that class, in the form of a stable bourgeois republic, was not firmly established until nearly one hundred years later. To cite this contradiction between social content and political form in order to deny the importance of the revolution itself is pure sophistry.

The key role of the bourgeois democratic revolution in destroying the feudal barriers to the full development of industrial capitalism is a cornerstone of the materialist conception of history. Karl Marx, like many young German radicals of his time, was fascinated by the French Revolution. His writings—including the *Communist Manifesto*—are sprinkled with references to and insights about it. His interests in France were not limited to the revolution of 1789. Throughout his life Marx was a keen observer of French politics and society. His works on the French revolution of 1848, Louis Bonaparte’s coup against the Second Republic in 1851, and the Paris Commune of 1871 remain amongst the most important Marxist classics.

For Marx, the French Revolution represented not only a triumph of the bourgeoisie as a class, henceforth hegemonic in France, but also “the triumph of a new social system, the victory of bourgeois property over feudal property, of national sentiment over provincialism, of competition over corporatism . . . of enlightenment over superstition, of the family over titles, of industry over heroic laziness, of bourgeois rights over medieval privileges.”<sup>1</sup>

It must be pointed out, however, that the concept of the French revolution as a bourgeois revolution did not originate with Marx. Nor has it been limited to Marxists. Many historians credit the radical bourgeois revolutionary Antoine

Barnave, who served on the famous Committee of Public Safety, with being the first to articulate the concept. Throughout the nineteenth century many non-Marxist and non-socialist historians including the great liberal historian Jules Michelet also accepted the idea.

### Was Feudalism Overthrown?

One strand of the critique of the revolution as bourgeois holds that the feudal system—supposedly overthrown by the bourgeoisie—had in fact not been present in France for several centuries. But this can be argued only if one accepts a very narrow definition of feudalism, involving the legal attachment of landless serfs to the estates of their lords, to whom the serfs owed a series of taxes—both in kind and in labor. This system hadn’t been dominant in France for centuries. In fact, most French peasants by the eighteenth century owned at least some of the land which they worked, and the vast majority were legally if not practically free to leave the estates of the nobles.

They were, however, still burdened down by a series of holdovers from the classic feudal system. These included arbitrary local courts controlled by the nobility, labor taxes such as the *corvée*, which obliged peasants to devote several days a year to free labor for the lord, taxes on daily necessities such as wine (the *banvin*) and salt (the *gabelle*), and the odious church tax—the *tithe*—which claimed ten percent of the peasants’ meager earnings. Hunting and fishing rights were reserved for the noble proprietors. Right down to the revolutionary era then, French social relations in the countryside were characterized by the direct expropriation by the landed nobility (who were themselves exempt from taxes) of the surplus produced by the peasants. And this situation affected the vast majority of the nation’s population.

On August 4, 1789, in the context of a widespread rural revolt and popular urban agitation (the Bastille had fallen on July 14), the representatives of the main forces of French society, the States General, who now called themselves the Constituent Assembly, voted to abolish feudalism at a meeting at Versailles. Privileges such as noble exemption from taxation were abolished; the sale of offices was prohibited; the remaining elements of medieval feudal constraints on individual liberty such as the *corvée* tax were abolished as were feudal courts and laws restricting hunting rights to the nobles.

It soon became clear, however, that the events of August 4 were in fact only a very partial victory for the peasantry. To their cruel disappointment much of the land remained in noble hands. Only as the revolution unfolded and the balance of forces shifted further against the aristocracy were the peasants able to obtain more favorable terms to acquire land. Nevertheless, the August 4 events constituted an important step towards the liberation of the peasantry from noble oppression and the elimination of the remnants of French feudalism and the social barriers to the individual freedom necessary for the development of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century.

The feudal characteristics of French society were not limited to the relations between lords and peasants. Though



as far back as Colbert's reforms under Louis XIII attempts had been made to abolish the countless barriers to internal trade and the full development of modern capitalism, such features as local tariffs and a bewildering array of weights and measures were still present in eighteenth century France. These were resented not so much by the peasants as by a commercial bourgeoisie which had been present in France since the revival of European trade at the end of the Middle Ages.

### Weight of the Bourgeoisie

One of the arguments used by present-day opponents of the bourgeois revolution theory is that an industrial bourgeoisie was not present in sufficient numbers in prerevolutionary France to pose a threat to royal absolutism, and in any event postrevolutionary France did not experience large scale industrialization for decades after the revolution. In fact, the small commercial and industrial bourgeoisie present in old regime France were only strong enough and conscious enough of their interests to realize and protest against the conditions of their oppression. They were certainly not strong enough to carry out a revolution on their own. That was why they had to forge an alliance with the largest class in French society—the peasantry—as well as with the urban artisans and poor.

The Marxist theory of the bourgeois revolution doesn't claim that the bourgeoisie did it on its own, or that the revolution led directly to industrialization. Rather, it simply declares that by removing the feudal obstacles to trade and industry, the revolution allowed the free movement of labor and the accumulation of capital that would later become the basis for large-scale industry.

Another of the obstacles to capitalist development in pre-revolutionary France was the negative social stigma attached to commercial and industrial pursuits. Laws against "derogation"—the prohibition of those holding noble titles to engage in commercial activity upon pain of being stripped of their titles—reflected the values of a precapitalist society in which a parasitic life of idleness was a mark of good breeding and social distinction. It had drastic consequences for the development of French industry. For example, much of the land that could have been used for mining was in the hands of nobles, and consequently could not be exploited. The nobility likewise shunned experimenting with modern capitalist farming methods. At the same time wealthy bourgeois individuals were painfully aware of the social stigma attached to their commercial pursuits. They often paid extraordinary sums to the crown in order to acquire noble titles, removing themselves from commercial and industrial activity.

Aristocratic hostility to the "vile bourgeoisie" (which, by the eighteenth century was mingled with envy on the part of impoverished nobles struggling to keep up appearances) pointed to one of the main differences between the English bourgeois revolution of the seventeenth century and the French Revolution. In England the nobility enthusiastically concerned themselves with the latest farming techniques and experimented with novel methods of stock breeding. There was in England a fusion, to some extent, between a nascent

bourgeoisie and the nobility. This took the edge off the fuller social struggles that were present in the French Revolution and served to isolate the English crown to a far greater degree than was the case in France.

Another, closely linked, idea raised by those who reject the French Revolution as bourgeois asserts that a bourgeoisie would not even be able to exist in the hostile environment of feudal society, much less develop and slowly "rise." And if it did, why couldn't it continue to do so without a revolution? A Marxist reply to this is that in any given society more than one mode of production typically exists at any given time. What gives a particular social formation its overall character is the dominance of one of these forms of production and the class that benefits from it. We can easily see this if we look at the United States after the bourgeois revolution of 1776. Slavery remained the major mode of production in the southern states, in the context of an overall bourgeois society. So why should it be difficult to accept a nascent capitalism coexisting uneasily within the framework of a predominantly feudal society like in old regime France?

Though the conservative arsenal of arguments against the bourgeois revolution theory is quite extensive I will conclude this part of our discussion with just one more. Alfred Cobban has been arguing against the bourgeois revolution theory for many years. One of his arguments is that the bourgeois parliaments during the revolutionary period and the First Republic—the National Assembly, the Constituent Assembly, the National Convention, and so on—had very few members who were either merchants or industrialists. In fact only about 14 percent fell into this category. Most were lawyers.

But even a cursory examination of this argument reveals its weakness. Under feudalism little or no separation of state and civil society existed. The noble expropriator of the surplus product of the peasantry was also the dispenser of manorial justice. The differentiation of state and civil society is precisely a child of bourgeois society where the capitalists themselves are only rarely involved in the day-to-day running of the state. For this they recruit professional politicians and lawyers who are steeped in bourgeois ideology. This remains the primary method of bourgeois rule to the present day.

The initial political system of revolutionary France was a constitutional monarchy. Political rights, including voting rights, were tied to stringent property qualifications and substantial power remained in the hands of the king. This system represented a compromise between the upper layers of the bourgeoisie and the more forward-looking nobility. This compromise gradually became untenable as a result of several factors: pressure from the urban poor and the peasantry, counterrevolutionary activity both from abroad and within France, and the intransigence of the king and his entourage. This created the momentum which led to the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a Republic in September 1792. The Republic was based on an alliance between the radical petty bourgeoisie and the urban poor known as the *sans-culottes*, and was characterized by a wide range of political liberties including universal suffrage, freedom of assembly, of the press and of speech, etc.

These democratic rights represented political gains of the popular movement won through struggle, as well as rights more or less willingly granted by radical petty bourgeois



revolutionaries looking to the popular masses for support against the revolution's internal and external enemies. But as the urban poor, armed with such freedoms, pressed their demands for affordable prices for bread and other daily necessities, the contradictions between popular aspirations and bourgeois notions of private property intensified. With the end of the radical phase of the Jacobin Republic, marked by the fall of Maximilien Robespierre in July 1794, the more conservative bourgeois leaders of the revolution moved quickly to restrict popular liberty—especially the right of assembly. Property qualifications for voting were also reintroduced. Robespierre himself had begun this process before his downfall, and the attack on the democratic rights of the *sans-culottes* was intensified after he was deposed. All of this paved the way for the eighteenth of Brumaire<sup>2</sup> in the year VIII (November 1799), when Napoleon Bonaparte led a coup against the remaining vestiges of the First Republic.

The title of Karl Marx's classic work of historical materialism, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, represents an historical analogy between Bonaparte's coup in 1799 and the coup led by his nephew Louis Bonaparte against the Second Republic in December 1851. The analogy is a good one. The Second Republic was established following the revolution which deposed Louis Philippe in February 1848. Over the next several months a heterogeneous class coalition of liberal monarchists, bankers, radical petty bourgeois democrats, and socialist workers—which constituted the provisional government—came apart at the seams. It became apparent that workers sought to push the revolution and republic forward to serve their own interests, while other elements sought to sharply limit its progressive character.

These conflicts came to a head in late June 1848, when the conservative republican bourgeoisie provoked a working class uprising and slaughtered thousands in the three days of bitter street fighting in Paris known to history as the "June days." Following these events many democratic rights instituted by the Republic were curtailed. Throughout the period from June 1848 to December 1851, the remaining freedoms were gradually eliminated before they were completely suppressed by Louis Bonaparte's group of conspirators known as "the society of December 10."

Though the French bourgeoisie of the 1790s and the mid-nineteenth century was unable to countenance the spectacle of popular mobilization conducted under a regime of wide democratic liberties and steer it into safe channels, the history of bourgeois society has since shown that bourgeois republican democracy is the most efficient political system for the smooth functioning and reproduction of capitalist social relations. When skillfully employed as it is today in most advanced industrialized countries, bourgeois democracy plays an important ideological role in promoting the myth that the institutions of the state are above narrow class interests. The basic bourgeois democratic right of civil equality, for example, is not only indispensable for the free flow of goods and labor; it also serves the ideological role of apparently supporting the claim that the law applies equally to all regardless of social station.

It is only when the working class threatens the rule of capital that bourgeois democracy becomes an unaffordable luxury that must be replaced by a political regime shorn of

all democratic rights. Under such circumstances the bourgeoisie often engineers the demise of bourgeois democracy in favor of a fascist or military dictatorship which guarantees their overall class rule but at the expense of the direct political rule which they enjoy in periods of stability. Of course even in such periods of relative stability when their rule is not directly threatened, the scope of democratic rights is continuously being contested.

### Bonapartism and Thermidor

The phenomenon of the scrapping of bourgeois democratic rights in favor of a naked dictatorship points to another enduring theme of the French Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte's coup against the First Republic in 1799 represented such a classic example of this phenomenon that subsequent dictatorships of this kind have been referred to as Bonapartist.

Leon Trotsky found the concept of Bonapartism to be useful in his analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. "Caesarism," he wrote, "or its bourgeois form, Bonapartism, enters the scene in those moments of history when the sharp struggle of two camps raises the state power, so to speak, above the nation, and guarantees it, in appearance, a complete independence of classes—in reality, only the freedom necessary for a defense of the privileged. . . . Caesarism arose upon the basis of a slave society shaken by inward strife. Bonapartism is one of the political weapons of the capitalist regime in its critical period. Stalinism is a variety of the same system, but upon the basis of a workers' state torn by the antagonism between an organized and armed Soviet aristocracy and the unarmed toiling masses."<sup>3</sup>

Louis Bonaparte's Second Empire, which lasted until September 1870, resembled the First Empire of his uncle in that both were strong rulers, apparently independent of society. In reality, however, bourgeois society not only survived but prospered under their reigns. Trotsky's analogy of Stalin as a Bonapartist figure applies on a number of deeper levels. Napoleon reinstated some of the outward manifestations of royal society—including titles of nobility. He even reinstated slavery in the colonies in 1802. Yet feudal society as it existed in France before the revolution could not be re-created (a point overlooked by Furet in his focus on political forms), and the Napoleonic legal code marked, in many respects, a rationalization of bourgeois society. Likewise, while the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy represented a political counterrevolution, since the direct rule of the workers through the Soviets was overthrown, the fundamental social gains of the revolution including state property, a monopoly of foreign trade, and a planned economy remained intact.

Furthermore, in spite of the character of the Napoleonic wars as wars of conquest, the rule of the nobility was cast aside and anti-feudal bourgeois republics erected wherever the French armies were victorious. Likewise, the presence of the Red Army in Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War led to the overturn of capitalist property relations in those countries.

If the concept and term "Bonapartism" is the contribution of the French Revolution to the phenomenon of political, as



opposed to social counterrevolution, the term “Thermidor” describes a stage in the revolution that, in the case of the France of the 1790s, marked a way station on the road to the eighteenth Brumaire. Like Bonapartism, Thermidor represents a more generalized phenomenon that we have seen in other revolutions. Trotsky also found this concept useful in explaining the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union: “It is sufficiently well known that every revolution up to this time has been followed by a reaction, or even a counterrevolution. This, to be sure, has never thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point, but it has always taken from the people the lion’s share of their conquests.”<sup>4</sup>

The revolutionary dictatorship of Robespierre and the famous Committee of Public Safety represented an alliance between the radical petty bourgeoisie and the *sans-culottes* in the context of domestic and foreign military threats to the revolution and widespread popular urban misery. But the establishment of the Committee of Public Safety was not only a means of combating aristocratic and moderate bourgeois opposition, it was also an attempt to insulate these radical bourgeois revolutionaries from the increasing threat to bourgeois property represented by the *sans-culottes* themselves. Under the guise of radical moves, including the terror in the fall of 1793, the political freedoms of the popular movement were gradually rescinded. Having thus isolated themselves from their popular base, Robespierre and his collaborators were defenseless against the remnants of moderate bourgeois opinion that survived the earlier purges. Thus on the ninth of Thermidor in the year II (July 27, 1794), Robespierre, his brother, Saint-Just, and others were easily defeated. They were guillotined the next day.

### Permanent Revolution

One of the main though unspoken themes of the official commemorations of the bicentennial in France was a counterposing of the bourgeois Republic to the revolution from which it issued. In true parvenu spirit Mitterrand and his advisers have sought to glorify the Republic and forget the revolution. “It has always been the Republic that you have celebrated. It is in her, not in me, that you recognize yourself” Bensaïd’s *Révolution* tells Mitterrand and his advisers. “If I had been bourgeois, bourgeoisly bourgeois, and only bourgeois, I would have stopped on July 14 or August 4 . . . to catch my breath, to take advantage of my riches, to rest as on the seventh day of my lazy predecessor. But, a flea bit me. To get rid of all that accumulated feudal rubbish I needed the peasants and the *bras-nus* [urban workers].”

Though the role of the popular elements as the indispensable shock troops of the revolutionary bourgeoisie has been noted by most historians, the actual study of this phenomenon has been largely dominated by left-wing historians. Much of the scholarship devoted to the popular movement has been conducted by historians within the orbit of the French Communist Party or otherwise influenced by Stalinism. Most of their work has tended to view the popular movement more or less as a simple appendage of the radical Jacobin clubs. This harmonizes well with efforts to defend the bourgeois revolution thesis. But in approaching things

this way the independent character of the popular movement has been largely ignored, especially when it sought to push beyond the logic of a bourgeois revolution.

In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky briefly sketched how the struggles between the revolutionary bourgeoisie and the popular elements in France led to sharp anti-capitalist struggles, eventually including the establishment of dual power. The French revolutionary socialist and scholar Daniel Guerin took these few paragraphs by Trotsky as a starting point for his important study *Class Struggles of the First Republic: Bourgeois and Bras-Nus*.

The dynamics of these struggles can only be properly understood in the context of eighteenth century France. The small-scale craft character of French industry was reflected in its social structure. A clear opposition between labor and capital was obscured by numerous and subtle gradations between owners of capital and propertyless proletarians.

In urban industrial trades, for example, master craftsmen might be the employers of journeymen and apprentice wage laborers, the owners of raw material and tools, but they often were themselves highly skilled craftsmen who worked alongside, often ate at the same table with, and lived under the same roof as their workers. The journeymen had reason to believe that they too would become masters in their turn — though by the late eighteenth century this was becoming increasingly difficult. Masters as well as journeymen felt that they had a joint interest, and formed the backbone of the popular movement that pushed the revolution forward at every decisive moment. Master and journeyman were also held together by their common status as consumers. They needed affordable prices for bread and other daily necessities. Prices, not wages, were the primary source of urban and village social strife under the old regime, and the bread riot, not the strike, was the classic form of protest.

Only in exceptional cases did the opposition between capital and labor become the main axis. One of these was in the silk-producing center of Lyon where parasitic merchants, who provided work in the form of orders and raw materials and set the prices for finished products, stood in clear opposition to both master and journeymen silk workers.

The general ideological and social views of the urban craftsmen reflected their positions as small property owners, or as those who aspired to this status. Private property per se was not questioned, but it was also not considered an absolute right as it was by the bourgeoisie. Rather, it was seen as something which should be subordinate to the right of society as a whole. Owners of agricultural property should have an obligation to make food available and the interests of grain merchants and others in seeking profits were held to be subordinate to the right of the masses to obtain affordable prices and full access to daily necessities.

This is why the popular movement of the time demanded the famous *maximum* on food prices, pushed for stringent laws against hoarding and speculation, and called for guillotines to be erected on public squares as a permanent threat and reminder to unscrupulous merchants and financiers. This was not an anti-capitalist program, but only one to limit the rapaciousness of the capitalists. Only *after* the defeat of this popular movement would Gracchus Babeuf and his



collaborators begin to sketch out a fully anti-capitalist "primitive" communist program.

Part of the novelty of Guérin's work was that he identified a small layer of the urban working class that represented a nascent proletariat. This layer gradually differentiated itself from the petty bourgeois craft workers, with their concerns about acquiring their own property, and constituted an advanced socialist vanguard of the popular movement. This actually anticipated some of the features of the proletarian socialist revolution of the twentieth century.

The popular urban mobilization during the revolution took place through sections, popular societies, and political clubs. Paris was divided into 60 districts for the elections to the States General on the eve of the revolution. These were later replaced by 48 administrative sections in which a series of radical political clubs and societies arose. In August 1792 these organizations, which had previously been permitted to assemble rather infrequently, won the right to meet *en permanence*. As the popular movement asserted itself, these organizations became increasingly democratic. For example, the original distinction between *active* citizens (those who paid a certain sum in taxes and were therefore granted political rights) and *passive* citizens (those who fell into a lower tax bracket and were denied political rights) was abolished during the radical phase of the revolution, 1792-1794.

The work of such historians as Albert Soboul, as well as surviving popular accounts of the period, have caught the imagination of generations of writers, playwrights, and filmmakers who have left us with an image of a dynamic, colorful, popular, and democratic movement that embraced extraordinarily large sections of an extremely politicized population in working class neighborhoods. Women were admitted into the sections and clubs at this time and played important roles as leaders and orators of the popular movement.

From these sections, societies, and clubs a popular revolutionary vanguard emerged. This vanguard did not take the form of a political party such as we know today, but was a loose collection of popular orators and clubbists. The best known and most radical of these were the so-called *Enragés*. Their leaders were Jacques Roux, Theophile Leclerc, and, notably, two women — Claire Lacombe and Pauline Leon. A perhaps slightly less well known and less radical group was the *Hébertists*, who formed around the popular revolutionary Hébert. They occupied important positions in the Paris municipal government — the Paris Commune. These revolutionaries were frequent speakers in the clubs and were often at the head of the angry crowds that burst into and interrupted the National Convention demanding that their demands be heard and addressed.

On two important occasions — August 10, 1792, and May 31, 1793 — radical popular elements seized full control of the Paris Commune and posed a direct challenge to the bourgeois-controlled national government. These two dual power situations were brutally defeated by the bourgeoisie, which did not fail to note the serious threat that the popular movement represented. Having been served notice of this danger on their left, all wings of the revolutionary bourgeoisie participated in the attacks against the popular mass-

es. The withdrawal of democratic rights discussed above began with those of association. The clubs and popular political societies were gradually closed down. Because of the important role of women in the popular societies, they were singled out for particular repression. A decree publicly posted on the 4th of Prarial in the year III read "Women will retire to their respective residences until otherwise decreed. Those who one hour after the posting of this decree are found in the streets in groups of five or more will be dispersed by armed force and remain arrested until public order is reestablished." The popular movement has been considered such an integral part of the revolution that many historians end their narratives with its demise.

### Down with Thermidor! Viva la Révolution!

The revolutionary legacy of 1793 inspired generations of revolutionaries in France and internationally. But that same legacy has haunted the ruling class, which explains the ambivalent nature of the official responses to the bicentennial. That's why they have commemorated rather than celebrated the revolution. "If you really wanted to honor me, to give me a birthday present," the *Révolution* tells Mitterrand, "you would proclaim, in my honor, the right for everyone to live, to have a job at a decent wage. You would recognize, in remembrance of old Toussaint, the independence of Kanaky and the Antilles. To make up for the restricted male suffrage of the Republic, you would immediately grant the right to vote for immigrants."

Of course, none of this has been done. Rather, in addition to the profoundly nonpolitical and highly militarized parade on July 14, Mitterrand arranged a summit meeting of the seven richest capitalist countries. But this affront to all those in the world who see the French Revolution as an important step toward the abolition of oppression did not go unanswered. On July 8 tens of thousands responded to a call initially put out by the Revolutionary Communist League and supported by a wide range of progressive organizations — including the French Communist Party — to march against the summit and demand the cancellation of the crushing debt owed to these countries by third world nations, as well as an end to apartheid in South Africa. Many sported buttons and waved flags which proclaimed: "1789 third estate, 1989 third world."

The legacy of 1789 — Mitterrand and Furet notwithstanding — remains infused with the spirit of liberation and a hatred of oppression. That spirit is present whenever the bastilles of this world are attacked. ●

### Notes

1. Extract of article by Marx from the *New Rhenish Gazette* of 1848. Quoted in Michael Löwy's "La poésie du passé: Marx et la Révolution française," in *Permanences de la Révolution*, La Brèche, 1989.

2. The terms "Brumaire" and "Thermidor" refer to months of the revolutionary calendar which replaced the old calendar of "kings and superstition." Year I of the "free" French nation began in September 1792 with the birth of the First Republic.

3. Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, 1972. pp. 277-78.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 88.



# Notebooks for the Grandchildren

by Mikhail Baitalsky

## 35. A Credo in the Area of Wages

All Lieutenant Ramensky's convictions were carved in stone, including—the wage register, on which he was entered. It was made up on the basis of the principle, “To each according to his work.” I asked:

“Tell me, Volodya, do you know the reasons—mind you, I'm not disputing them—why you rank higher than an engineer of a heavy freight train?”

“No, I don't know the reason, but if it is higher, then it's necessary.”

I smiled. Volodya was stung to the quick and continued.

“There are many things that I cannot justify in Marxist terms but which my Communist instinct tells me are necessary. Communist intuition, do you know what that is?”

“But don't you think, Volodya, that Communist intuition obliges one to be an example of selfless service?”

“Aha!” Volodya interrupts. “That means you think they are paying us unfairly?”

“No,” I said. “They are paying you very fairly, but I still remember. . . .”

I never got to finish. The guard opened the peephole and said: “Retire!” After the signal to “retire,” all conversations were prohibited. And before “retire,” they weren't much use.

Fearing that Volodya might have been one of their brood hens, I was extremely cautious, but all the same saw that some things had never occurred to him. The problem of the need to have a means to exist was among those about which he could never seem to take a worker's point of view.

Volodya talked about his salary with an embarrassed look on his face, and pretended to be indifferent, as if trying to show: “Oh no, I am not looking for any advantages for myself; and I'm not going to raise a fuss about money. Whatever they pay me is OK with me.”

But among the workers, in the factory, we heard a great

many conversations precisely about wages. No worker is ever embarrassed to talk for all to hear about the piecework wage rates at a shop meeting and to argue about them with the foreman. This theme is considered commonplace, legal, and not disgraceful. But only in oral conversation and not beyond the shop walls. However, no essayists unctuously lionizing workers, much less writers in general, will ever take up this question.

Arguing with foremen and normsetters, the worker always refers to the formula “according to work”: You make your valuation of my work not on the basis of the labor I have expended, but more cheaply. Give it its correct value! And the normsetter answers: I set norms not according to the labor you personally expend, but according to the labor socially necessary at today's technological level. And the normsetter is right in principle. If you are to set norms, that is the only way it can be done.

The root of the problem is in something else not generally touched upon in the argument: the monetary value of one hour of labor. It was set from above and neither the factory, nor even the ministry heading it, can change it. Why does one hour of skilled labor by an engineer have less value than one hour's labor of Lieutenant Ramensky? This is the essence of the matter. The argument that the lieutenant's workday is not paid according to a norm clouds rather than clarifies the issue.

What has it proven? That he is more productive than a worker paid according to an established norm and consequently is worth a higher salary? Doesn't it make you stop and think about why your average Russian textile city has gradually become a city with a female workforce? Weavers in the old times were men—remember the weaver Petro Alekseev? But women workers are paid less in capitalist

*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.*



societies. And that began the process of the transformation of the textile industry into one that was predominantly women. When I worked at the Dzutov plant in Odessa, there was not a single male weaver, the weavers were all women. And on the basis for this lowered level of wages—women's wages—the pay scale for work done in our Soviet textile industry was established.

The workers have nothing to say about this scale. This is a dark matter and light is never shed on it. Meanwhile, the integrity of a worker lies precisely in this arena—in a just relationship between the value of the labor expended by industrial workers and the value of the labor of high-level state employees. The gradual increase of the wage rates in the lower-paid categories of workers is itself evidence that when they were established these wage rates were based on arbitrary considerations. And later, these considerations formed the basis for theories, books, reference works, etc., to back it up. After more than 40 years, an impenetrable factual-theoretical forest has grown up which it is awesome even to approach. But it did not grow up “according to work” but according to the idea that “it's necessary,” which my lieutenant friend was unable, by his own admission, to justify in Marxist terms. But that is, in fact, the explanation that most accurately reflects reality. The dissertation writers can search all they want to for appropriate quotations. But Volodya and I know the root cause: “It's necessary.”

If Volodya, after being in the camp, worked for even three or four years in a factory, I hope he got a better understanding of things. He saw how piecework nourished in the worker a narrowly personal attitude toward pay. What pieceworker stops to think even for an instant about the concept of a “wage fund”? The only ones who think about

this are the manager of the shop and the foreman, who are forced to administer without going beyond their budget.

The entire psychological effect of piecework was established so that the workers themselves would not think about the wage fund. If this month I receive 200 rubles instead of the usual 150 rubles, the additional money will be paid to me at the expense of other workers and in no other way. But I *must not* think about this. I must think only of myself.

The correct combination of material interest and moral motivation lies not in piecework, introduced in the 1920s and intended as a temporary measure, but in regular pay based on time put in, differentiation being based on how conscientious and (for a specified historically limited period) how skilled you are. The moral factor in the equation is conscientiousness!

And conscientiousness cannot be “introduced.” This is the crux of the difficulty. No campaigns can help it and no propagandists or agitators can teach it. It is instilled in the working class through the centuries, although it can be destroyed over two or three decades. It is intertwined with an inherited respect for work and an absolute displeasure with the saying: “Perhaps, most likely, it'll somehow get done.” And it is inseparable from individual self-awareness. It rejects servility, self-abasement, and respect for the iron rod. In a word, it is a whole social-psychological complex, where everything is linked together and fully contradicts the customs and psychological qualities that were cultivated in us through labor camp, through the system of piecework, through privileges to the servants of the workers' state, through “the plan at any cost,” and in many, many other ways.

[Next Month: “A Woman's Scream in the Corridor”]

## November 12 (Continued from page 4)

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performed on Black women, treated in teaching hospitals or on public assistance. Within this decade, Latino and Native American women have been victims of forced sterilization. And pregnant women threatened with jail sentences “to protect the rights of the fetus” have almost exclusively been women of color.

In mid-October, several African-American women from Pittsburgh came together to form a group we called “Women of Color for Reproductive Freedom.” Its objective is to educate and mobilize the Black community (approximately 25 percent of the city's population) around the issues of reproductive rights. We came from varied backgrounds and political persuasions. But we all felt that the reproductive rights movement in the Pittsburgh area, as well as nationally, was not adequately addressing the concerns of women of color. Since the leadership of the movement was overwhelmingly white and upper-middle class, it did not have the class consciousness and cultural sensitivity necessary to successfully address the economic and racial aspects of the issue. As a result, the movement has had trouble recruiting women of color. We felt it was necessary to form an organization that Black women in Pittsburgh could relate to—and one that could also relate to them.

We decided to organize women of color to attend the national rally in Washington, D.C., on November 12 and to solicit funds from local and national pro-choice organiza-

tions, Black physicians, and other members of the Black community so that anyone would be able to go regardless of ability to pay. We targeted unions, low-income housing projects, and Black college students. Through these efforts our committee grew, and even came to include one Black man—an organizer for the hospital workers' union. In less than four weeks we were able to sign up and finance three busloads of Blacks and others for the trip to the November 12 rally.

We found an overwhelmingly pro-choice sentiment in the Black community. Many Blacks said that they were personally against abortion. But we were able to appeal to them successfully on what was commonly referred to as “the civil rights” of the issue. They were upset by the idea that government should control people's reproductive activities—especially those of Black people. Some even related the question to the history of Black women being bred during slavery.

Although this was a small local effort to mobilize women in one Black community it was undoubtedly a success. And it had a significant impact within that Black community, raising consciousness around the issue of reproductive rights. Some of the activists who participated in the work leading up to November 12, as well as a number of new people whom we met during the effort, are presently discussing plans for ongoing activities by Women of Color for Reproductive Freedom. ●



# Leonard Boudin

*Leonard Boudin, the famous New York civil liberties attorney, died suddenly of a chronic heart condition at St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan on November 24, 1989. He was 77 years old. During his illustrious career he defended such prominent individuals as Paul Robeson, Julian Bond, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Daniel Ellsberg, and Jimmy Hoffa. He won a crucial Supreme Court decision in 1958 (Kent vs. Dulles) that passports cannot be withheld by the State Department for political reasons. He was the legal representative of Cuba's interests in this country from the early days of the Cuban revolution. He also represented the Central Bank of Iran when assets of the Iranian government were seized by the U.S. He is best known by most members of the Trotskyist movement and many sympathizers as the attorney who initiated court action by the Socialist Workers Party against the attorney general of the U.S. in 1973, charging illegal spying and other invasions of privacy by the FBI. When that case was won in 1986 Boudin hailed the decision as a "contribution to constitutional law, extending important new protection to the rights of all politically active individuals and organizations." His last intervention in defense of a harassed radical group was in the case against the Freedom Socialist Party in Seattle, still in the courts.*

*Boudin was a founder of the National Lawyers Guild, always on the side of the victims of oppression. Following is a remembrance of him by a fellow Guild member.*

## The Time I Met Leonard Boudin

by Michael Steven Smith

I met Leonard 20 years ago during the height of the antiwar movement on an army base near Columbia, South Carolina — Fort Jackson. He was there to represent the Fort Jackson Nine and I was there to help.

The nine men, mostly Black and Puerto Rican, had just been placed in the stockade for organizing an antiwar rally of 250 men in uniform on the base. The Pentagon had flipped out.

I had just gotten out of law school and was with a Lawyers Guild firm in Detroit. Leonard was a 57-year-old veteran of the good fight and deeply admired for his legal skill. He was too utterly charming and gentle and witty and wonderful to be around. We met in town and I drove him out to the base.

Fort Jackson's main street was an extension of a main street in Columbia, a city which had twice won the All-American City award. You could drive about it freely. The base had a grotesque resemblance to a small American town. There were railroad tracks, bus stops, taxis, grocery stores, and women with children in tow. *The Green Berets* was playing at the base theater.

A platoon of men taking bayonet practice was marched past our car. "What are you here to do?" the sergeant yelled. "To kill!" "How?" "Without mercy!!"

"I used to be for dismantling all foreign bases," said Leonard, "but now I think I'm for dismantling all domestic ones as well."

The men in the stockade had organized, with Leonard's advice, a group they named GI's United Against the War in Vietnam. To join you had to agree with two things: That ordinary GIs had the same rights as other citizens to make their opinions known to their elected representatives, and that there were a lot of racist practices in the army.

How did a New York lawyer come to represent GIs in South Carolina? Leonard was counsel to the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee (GICLDC). Bertrand Russell was the group's honorary chairman and the committee had wide support throughout the peace movement. But it was initiated and staffed by members of the Socialist Workers Party and its youth affiliate, the Young Socialist Alliance. There was a sectarian aversion towards these two groups in the Guild and in and around the Communist Party. This didn't faze Leonard.

He understood the potential of organizing GIs around first amendment rights to speak out and act out against the war. After all, who had more at stake? And who was in a more strategic position to end the war than the GIs themselves? Leonard met with leaders of the GICLDC. They agreed to counsel GIs to do everything legal that the army commanded. But — and this was the genius of the tactic — they projected a group that would petition their congressmen, put out newspapers and leaflets, and march and urge others to march in the giant antiwar demonstrations of the time.

The men were, in this conception, citizen-soldiers, whose first amendment rights couldn't be abridged simply because they had been drafted or enlisted in the army.

Leonard was miles ahead of most of the antiwar movement on this. Where much of the movement was urging draft resistance and disdained the ordinary "killer" GI, Leonard understood precisely where power lay and how to organize it. And that's how he got to South Carolina representing GIs 40 years his junior who were in and around a political tendency he by no means agreed with.

I asked him once if he was a socialist. He demurred, smiling, and said no but that a lot of the most interesting people to be around were. I didn't believe him. Later a friend told me she saw him reading a book about the history of the



First International. A pretty esoteric interest for someone who wasn't a socialist.

I also asked him how he came to set his legal fees. We were eating in a diner. He thought about it for a second and answered: "I think of what a fair fee would be, look the client straight in the eye, double it, and say it." Of course he wasn't in it for the money, but I always remembered that advice. Leonard knew how to run a movement practice without running it into the ground.

What happened to the Fort Jackson Nine? First it was disclosed that one of the nine was a military police informer. That caused a big stink—denial of the right to counsel—and got lots more publicity, even the front page of the *New York Times*.

So it became the Fort Jackson Eight. Free the Fort Jackson Eight rallies were held on campuses and in cities around the country. Publicity snowballed. Even *Playboy* had an article about the plight of the citizen-soldier who obeyed orders but reserved the right to make his opinion known.

The trial of the eight began. Leonard took sick—even then he had heart problems—and Guild attorney David Rein

came down from D.C. to take on the army. Meanwhile the prosecution began to be directed from the Pentagon.

They couldn't logically refute the formulation of citizen-soldier. Antiwar feeling mounted in the country. A message was smuggled out of the stockade from the eight and read to a mass rally in Atlanta. Hundreds of thousands rallied around the country against the war. GIs United groups started in North Carolina and their literature was being passed around in Vietnam.

The cover story by muckraker journalist Robert Sherrill entitled "Military Music Is to Music as Military Justice Is to Justice" appeared in the Sunday *New York Times* magazine section. And finally the Pentagon folded.

They dropped the charges against the remaining prisoners and let them out of the army. Then the Pentagon in one of the most significant victories of the antiwar movement passed a new set of regulations allowing GIs to possess antiwar literature and to march in antiwar demonstrations.

It was the beginning of the end of American intervention into the Vietnamese revolution. And Leonard Boudin was there at the start. ●

## Mary McCarthy

Mary McCarthy, the provocative American social and literary critic, died of cancer November 25, 1989, at age 77. She was best known for her semiautobiographical novels: *The Company She Keeps*, *A Charmed Life*, *The Groves of Academe*, *The Group*, *The Oasis*; and for her memoir, *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*. Her literary career began in 1933 when she and three other talented students at Vassar College published "a rebel literary magazine," *Con Spirito*. She later recalled that "It caused a great sort of scandal . . . lasted for only a few numbers." But from that time on Mary McCarthy was definitely part of the literary and intellectual life of this country. Her writing was contentious and provocative, and she soon became the subject both of harsh criticism and extravagant praise. Throughout her long career she remained a rebel, always the champion of "facts and reality" and a merciless opponent of hypocrisy and pretense.

In the early 1930s McCarthy was introduced to radical politics, first as a contributor of book reviews to the *Nation* and *New Republic* magazines. For a brief time she was drawn into the orbit of the Communist Party and found herself attending fund-raisers for the *New Masses*, the party's main literary publication. She soon sensed the pervasive disingenuousness of this milieu. Her instinct put her in the company of the novelist James T. Farrell and others like him in and around Stalinist literary circles who were politically more sophisticated and who were breaking all ties with Stalinism.

This was 1936. The murderous Moscow show trials had opened to the consternation and shock of serious intellectuals everywhere. A deep division developed between the Stalinist defenders of the trials and their opponents. The specific form this took in New York literary circles is

described by Alan Wald in his book, *The New York Intellectuals*:

Before the June 1937 American Writers' Congress, the ever-cautious (William) Phillips and (Philip) Rahv had not publicly revealed any disaffection from the Communist Party, let alone sympathy for Trotsky. They attended the party's literary criticism workshop together with (Dwight) Macdonald, (Mary) McCarthy, (Frederick) Dupee, and (Eleanor) Clark. Granville Hicks, the leading Communist Party critic who was chairing the session, stood helplessly by as Rahv delivered an eloquent discourse on the history of freedom and human thought. Macdonald discussed Trotsky's prose style, emphasizing that its brilliance must be acknowledged even by those who did not agree with Trotsky's politics.

When the left-wing literary quarterly *Partisan Review* resumed publication in 1937 after a lapse of three years its new editorial staff included Mary McCarthy. She later said that "the story that we on *Partisan Review* were Trotskyites" was an exaggeration. Under the Rahv/Phillips/Macdonald editorship the magazine published devastating critiques of Stalinism and exposed its practitioners in the literary world. It expressed agreement with much that Trotsky had written on art and literature, but it was not a Trotskyist publication and its editors (except for Macdonald briefly) were never members of the Trotskyist movement. They earned their "Trotskyite" reputation as members or supporters of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, the organization formed to secure asylum for Trotsky and enable him to have a hearing on the charges against him in the Moscow trials. James T. Farrell was chairman of that com-



mittee and recruited Mary McCarthy to membership in it. Pressure by Stalinist sympathizers and others to force her to resign and denounce the committee served to strengthen her conviction that she had enlisted in a worthy cause. Characteristically she turned to the source for reassurance of her judgment. After reading some of Trotsky's writings she never doubted her endorsement of his defense. She later wrote that he "possessed those intellectual traits of wit, lucidity, and imagination which I regarded, and still regard, as a touchstone."

Unlike nearly all the other intellectuals of the 1930s with whom she associated in those times, Mary McCarthy never abandoned the fundamental rebelliousness of her youth. Nor did her hatred of hypocrisy and perfidious Stalinism soften. This deep-seated hatred was aroused by Lillian Hellman's Stalinist connections and cover-ups in the 1940s, and that was behind her denunciation of Hellman as a literary con artist. "Every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the'," she said. Hellman sued for libel in 1980, but died before the case came to trial. McCarthy said she was sorry because she was anxious to prove the charge. She made honesty a matter of principle that could never be turned to the service of dishonest manipulators, even those who exercise the power of government. Consequently her anti-Stalinism was never converted to rabid chauvinism as in the case of so many other radical intellectuals of her generation.

McCarthy's most effective political writing was her reportage of the U.S. invasion of Vietnam and Cambodia.

She visited both Saigon and Hanoi during the war, and published three small books: *Vietnam*, *Hanoi*, and *Media*. They are mainly polemics against the war and exposés of the Johnson and Nixon administrations' war policies. Most of this material appeared first in *The New York Review of Books* and in *The New Yorker* magazine, and was subsequently reprinted in a much larger volume with additional essays under the title *The Seventeenth Degree*. The first essay in this larger work is autobiographical in which McCarthy tells of the troubles she had and the total absence of publicity she encountered. Her closing essay is an act of revenge against the publishing establishment, in which she demolishes the then popular (and highly publicized and most favorably reviewed) apologia of the Vietnam war by David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*.

In 1973 and 1974 McCarthy reported from Washington on the Watergate cover-up for the London publication *The Observer* and for *The New York Review of Books*. These reports appeared in book form titled *The Mask of State: Watergate Portraits*. It is a savage attack on official legerdemain in Washington in the so-called Nixon era. McCarthy shows that this is endemic to the Washington political scene in all seasons and from one "era" to the next.

One of her last political acts was to endorse the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee. When asked to speak at a public meeting in New York in 1988, she declined to speak but endorsed the work of the committee. The world today badly needs intellectuals like her. ●

## Christy C. Moustakis

Christy C. Moustakis, 78, known to many as Chris Andrews, died October 20, 1989, from complications of heart trouble and cancer. With his death only a handful of Americans remain among those who served as armed guards of Leon Trotsky at Coyoacán, Mexico.

Moustakis was born February 11, 1911, in Salem, Massachusetts, son of a Greek immigrant father and New England mother. He was graduated at Bowdoin College in Maine and received his master's degree in history at Harvard.

In his twenties he traveled from New York City to Mexico City, arriving June 15, 1938. One month later he was recruited to the Socialist Workers Party by Joseph Hansen and became a guard at the Trotsky Avenida Loudres house (the "blue house") made available to Leon and Natalia Trotsky by Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, the internationally known artists.

Early in 1939 Moustakis drove to New York with Joe and Reba Hansen and later that year returned to Mexico to serve as a guard for three months at 19 Avenida Viena, Coyoacán, where the Trotsky household had moved following serious political differences with Diego Rivera.

During the 11 months he was a guard at Coyoacán Moustakis took still and 8 mm motion pictures of the Trotsky household and visitors. After the assassination of Leon Trotsky by a Stalinist agent of the Soviet government in 1940, Moustakis moved to New York City. There he became an active member of the SWP and toured the midwestern states showing his films of Trotsky and the Trotsky household at party branch meetings and to other audiences. Much of this film remains intact and is expected to be incorporated in a forthcoming documentary about Trotsky.

During most of the war years (1941-45) Moustakis worked for the *Militant*, weekly newspaper of the SWP. He became associated with the late Frank Graves, editor of that publication at the time.

Following World War II, Moustakis ceased political activity and in 1953 severed his relationship with the SWP. But not with its members. Those of his generation remember him for his warm personality, generosity, and devotion to the movement.

He was an employee of the *New York Times* for many years, in the composing room, and retired in 1970. He leaves his widow, Elizabeth, at their home in Willseyville, New York. ●



## The Erratic Career of Karl Radek

*Engine of Mischief: An Analytical Biography of Karl Radek*, by Jim Tuck. Greenwood Press, 1988. 200 pp.

Reviewed by Ben Stone

This is not an easy book to review, as is immediately indicated by its title, "Engine of Mischief." But as the author Jim Tuck explains, the word mischief is used in an historical sense. While Karl Radek, the subject of this biography, did not play at revolution, he mocked it as he mocked himself, until his whole life became a mockery, ending in inevitable tragedy.

There has been an abundance of literature written about Karl Radek, and his life is fairly well known to Marxists and students of Russian history. But Jim Tuck provides a provocative addition to our knowledge of Karl Radek with this work.

Karl Radek (born Karl Sobelsohn in 1885) was, in Tuck's words, "a Pole, a Jew, a West European social democrat, a Soviet official, a Trotskyist, a Stalinist, and simultaneously a stage manager and victim of the Moscow purge trials." His career spanned the years of World War I, the Bolshevik revolution, the civil war in Russia, the German revolution, the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the great purges in the Soviet Union. Throughout his career he displayed exceptional skills as a journalist and in this capacity he served the revolution during Lenin's regime and later served the degeneration of the revolution under Stalin.

On or about the year 1937, already imprisoned (but not condemned to death) as a result of the Moscow purge trials, he suddenly disappeared. The consensus is that he either received the customary shot in the back of the head in the infamous Lubyanka prison or, as is more likely, he perished in the void of the gulag. Tuck recounts a story that made the rounds at the time of the puny Radek getting into a heated argument with a cellmate who picked him up and dashed him against the concrete floor, killing him. The exact truth about Radek's fate, like that of so many others, still lies buried in the archives of the Kremlin.

There were, of course, some positive features in Radek's career, although it seemed that every time he hit a high point he would self-destruct and hit a new low. Most notable in his positive accomplishments were his journalistic and polemical skills, which Lenin prized very highly and caused him to overlook Radek's vices. When Lenin was allowed to go from Germany to Russia aboard a "sealed" train, Radek was one of those who accompanied him. Radek then joined the Bolshevik party and during Lenin's lifetime performed yeoman service to the revolution. He was elected to the Central Committee and under the rules at that time was allowed to attend meetings of the Politburo. Even so, Lenin was frequently exasperated by Radek's babbling tongue and schemed to hold Politburo meetings when Radek could not be present.

Trotsky also relied on Radek's talents, which included linguistic skills, since Radek was fluent in Polish, Russian, German, and English. This was a major reason why Trotsky, who headed the Soviet delegation to the Brest Litovsk peace treaty negotiations with Germany, requested Radek to be a part of the delegation. The Brest Litovsk treaty cost the Soviet Union a heavy price, exacting one-third of its territory in addition to heavy reparations. Radek played his part well at the negotiations. But typical of his behavior, he later became one of the sharpest opponents of the treaty and berated Lenin to his face (something no one dared to do to Stalin during his regime). Radek then took another flip-flop when he concluded that Brest Litovsk was necessary after all. He then coined the phrase, "Lenin yields ground to save time." On another occasion Lenin remarked, "I will return to comrade Radek, but here I must observe that he has accidentally spoken a serious phrase." Even Stalin chimed in, "Most men's heads control their tongues. Radek's tongue controls his head."

Nevertheless, while Lenin was alive, Radek was part of the Bolshevik leadership. After Lenin's death he was with the Left Opposition until Stalin gave him a taste of Siberia, as a result of which he totally capitulated and began his long descent into the Stalinist gutter. At the Dewey Commission hearings Trotsky called Radek, "the most perfidious of all my enemies."

In spite of the overall excellence of the book, it is marred by some obvious faults. One glaring example has to do with the Blumkin affair. Jacob Blumkin was an agent of the GPU in 1929 at the time Trotsky had been exiled to Constantinople. Blumkin, who had served on Trotsky's military staff during the civil war in Russia, happened to be in Constantinople on an official mission and one day ran into Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, on the street. He persuaded Sedov to arrange a meeting with Trotsky where it was agreed that Blumkin would smuggle anti-Stalin literature into the Soviet Union. As soon as Blumkin returned to the Soviet Union, he visited Radek, naively telling him of what had transpired during his meeting with Trotsky. Radek, who had capitulated to Stalin in 1929 and sought to further ingratiate himself with the dictator, immediately denounced Blumkin to the GPU and Blumkin was shot without a trial.

Tuck casts doubt on this straightforward account in particular and Blumkin's career in general. He says, "Though Radek may or may not have traduced him, a look at Blumkin's brutal career inclines one to the view that he rather got what he deserved." This is an astonishing statement by Tuck and totally unwarranted. Whatever Blumkin's early career may have been like (he was a Left Social Revolutionary before being converted to Bolshevism by Trotsky), from the time he became a follower of Trotsky his life was exemplary. He went to his death with the cry, "Long live Trotsky," on his lips.



Moreover, as Trotsky testified before the Dewey Commission, when asked what proof he had that Radek had betrayed Blumkin, Trotsky cited substantial correspondence he had received from sympathizers in the Soviet Union. All of Trotsky's documents were submitted to the commission.\* This was not only Trotsky's testimony but virtually the opinion held universally by all the Opposition in the Soviet Union, including many who had capitulated.

This reviewer has no way of knowing why Tuck did not accept this evidence as conclusive.

Another example of the author's forbearing treatment of Radek is the interpretation he puts on what was probably one of the most odious pieces of writing that ever came from Radek's prolific pen (the worst was yet to come in 1936 when he wrote an article captioned, "The Zinovievite-Trotskyite Fascist Gang and Its Hetman Trotsky"). This was an article written by Radek in 1934 and entitled, "The Architect of Socialist Society." The architect, of course, was Stalin. In this article Radek ushered in the era of Stalin worship which many other literary prostitutes subsequently imitated. In the words of Tuck, ". . . the 'Architect' was a long, fulsome,

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\*The Dewey Commission of Inquiry was held April 10 to 17, 1937, at Coyoacán, Mexico. The purpose of the commission, which was headed by Professor John Dewey, the famous American philosopher, was to inquire into the charges made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow trials. The commission returned the verdict of not guilty.

cloyingly obsequious eulogy of Stalin. In rapturous reference to the dictator, Radek abandoned all restraint.

"Lauding 'the greatness of the period,' he extolled his master as an inspired theoretician, a frontline hero of the revolution and civil war, a stalwart builder of socialism, and a figure so wildly adored that his presence on a May Day reviewing stand inspired 'waves of love and confidence from the masses marching by.'"

Here Tuck becomes a psychohistorian. What was Radek really up to when he wrote "Architect"? Did he reach the ultimate in debasement, as Trotsky and the Oppositionists contended, or was he engaged in some kind of Machiavellian plot, intending to show by the exaggeration of his praise that he was mocking his master? Tuck inclines to the latter view. Since there is no way of delving into Radek's mind, especially since he has been dead for about half a century, Tuck's view is sheer hypothesis and speculation. Furthermore, Radek's whole pattern of behavior from the time he capitulated in 1929 to his disappearance in 1937 was consistent in its baseness and servility. His sole motivation was to save his skin and regain his former status. No other conclusion is possible.

Apart from its unfortunate psychological slant, Jim Tuck's book refreshes our memory about an important slice of Russian history and provides some new insight into Karl Radek's life. It is a useful addition to the library of any Marxist. ●

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## Drugs (Continued from page 23)

What do we do about this type of bombardment? We must not start viewing our youth as enemies to us, as "wolf packs," etc. They are real human beings with real human needs. To change their behavior we have to change their thinking. We have to give them a new sense of self-worth. Anti-drug education, job training, drug treatment, and other programs

of this nature will be major to any solution to the present drug crisis. Changing our national priorities from war initiatives (we have a \$300 billion war budget) to funding public life support systems (social services) will determine our final victory. ●



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