

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism

No. 77

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U.S. Troops Out of the Middle East War in the Persian Gulf by Tom Barrett	1
The Socialist Workers Party Formalizes Break from the Fourth International	1
A Hero's Welcome Nelson Mandela Tours the United States by Tom Barrett	3
On the Scene Report Class Struggle in Nicaragua Today by John Daniel	5
NOW Confronts the Future A Report on the 1990 National Conference by Carol McAllister	10
The Crisis of the U.S. Union Movement—Part II by Dave Riehle	14
Soviet Communist Party Congress Registers Dramatic Changes by Marilyn Vogt-Downey	18
People's Daily World Reduced to a Weekly Lessons for the Left by Samuel Adams	23
The Capitalist Market and the Workers' State Assessing the Reforms in Eastern Europe and the USSR by Steve Bloom	27
Obituaries Reba Hansen (1909-1990) Louis Sinclair (1909-1990)	33 33
Michael Warshawsky's Conviction Upheld by Israeli High Court	35
Review Yugoslavia and the Market Economy by Doug Buchholz	36
Notebooks for the Grandchildren 41. The Cunning Machine of the Secret Judicial Sessions (Continued) by Mikhail Baitalsky	38

Who We Are

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

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

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

“All members of the party must begin to study, completely dispassionately and with utmost honesty, first the essence of the differences and second the course of the dispute in the party. . . . It is necessary to study both the one and the other, unfailingly demanding the most exact, printed documents, open to verification by all sides. Whoever believes things simply on someone else’s say-so is a hopeless idiot, to be dismissed with a wave of the hand.”—V.I. Lenin, “The Party Crisis,” Jan. 19, 1921.

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War in the Persian Gulf

by Tom Barrett

Due to the importance of events in the Middle East following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we have extended our normal news deadline for this issue so that we can bring you the following report.

Once again, the Middle East is at war. On August 2, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein ordered his troops to invade the oil-rich emirate of Kuwait, which borders Iraq on the southeast and is situated at the head of the Persian Gulf (more accurately known as the Arabian Gulf). On August 6, U.S. president George Bush dispatched American troops to Saudi Arabia in an attempt to force Iraq to retreat. Britain and France have also deployed naval forces in the region. Once again, businessmen and political leaders are demonstrating that they are willing to sacrifice young men's lives on the battlefield in order to safeguard their profits from the world's most important commodity: petroleum.

The working masses of both Iraq and Kuwait have nothing to win and everything to lose in this new Persian Gulf conflict. Saddam Hussein's attack on and—as of August 9—annexation of Kuwait have no progressive or anti-imperialist dimension

whatsoever. However, the concern expressed by George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, and other imperialist leaders for Kuwait's sovereignty is complete hypocrisy. Their economic sanctions and military threats against Iraq can only make a bad situation worse. Consequently, it is the responsibility of all who oppose their interventionist war policies to demand an immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Middle East.

Economics of Oil

The production and trade of petroleum are the most important enterprises in the entire world economy. Every other industry is affected by oil's price and availability. More cash flows into the world's banks from the oil industry than from any other single economic endeavor.

The present glut of crude oil on the world market resulted from the dramatic price increases which followed the Iranian revolution of 1979. The resulting price level made oil production and exploration profitable in regions where it had never been profitable before or where it had not been profitable for decades. British Petroleum invested in offshore rigs in the rough waters of the North Sea. American oil companies went ahead with the environmentally destructive exploitation of the

(Continued on next page)

The Socialist Workers Party Formalizes Break from the Fourth International

The following statement was adopted on July 19 by the National Organizing Committee of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

On June 10, 1990, the leadership of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, together with cothinkers from groups in Australia, Britain, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, and Sweden, sent a letter to the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International stating: "Effective today, each of our organizations terminates its affiliation, fraternal or statutory, to the Fourth International."

The Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution, was founded on the revolutionary Marxist perspectives which inspired the Russian Revolution of 1917 under Lenin and Trotsky. It came into being in response to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin and the failure of the Third International to respond to the threat posed by Nazism to the workers' movement in Germany and throughout the world. Today it

has vital organizations and activists in all three sectors of the world revolution: the advanced capitalist countries, including Western Europe, Japan, and the United States; the imperialist-exploited areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and the workers' states that have degenerated or been deformed under bureaucratic dictatorships. It has endured innumerable blows since it became a force in the struggle for revolutionary socialism, but there are few defections or losses more painful than that of the Socialist Workers Party. In the past the SWP was one of the strongest and most loyal components of our world movement.

Proud History and Tragic Decline

The Socialist Workers Party was founded in 1938 by revolutionaries in the

United States, many of whom had been expelled from the Communist Party for supporting the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition against Stalinism. They continued to defend the revolutionary perspectives that the Communist movement represented when it was led by Lenin and Trotsky. The Trotskyists played a vital role in the class struggle in the United States. Their leadership of the 1934 Minneapolis general strike is probably the best known of many contributions. In addition, they did invaluable work in defending revolutionary Marxism and the workers' movement—in the United States and internationally—from the degeneration and lethal assaults of Stalinism, especially in helping to expose the Moscow trials frame-ups.

(Continued on page 8)

Alaskan North Slope. Oilfields in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana were reopened after being capped since the 1950s.

However, the same forces which created greater productive capacity at the same time created a reduction in demand. Utilities and other large energy consumers began using coal, natural gas, and other alternative fuels as they became cost-competitive with oil. Automobile buyers began switching to smaller, more fuel efficient cars, reducing gasoline demand. Throughout industry, fuel-efficiency became an important consideration—for architects designing buildings, for cities planning mass transit systems, for industries buying less energy-consuming production equipment, and so forth.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), formed in the early 1970s, had managed to keep prices high by putting limits on production. However, in 1980 war broke out between Iran and Iraq, both OPEC members. In order to pay for their war efforts, both Iran and Iraq forgot about OPEC-imposed production limits and produced as much oil as they could. They held prices down in order to compete on the world market with North Sea, Alaskan, and other new oil producers. As the war dragged on, they produced more oil but got less for it.

In the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq has found itself sitting on a mountain of debt. World oil prices remain too low to bring in sufficient revenues to enable Iraq to meet its financial obligations. OPEC agreed on production limits in 1990 in an attempt to raise the price of crude oil to \$25 per barrel; however, three OPEC countries ignored the quotas—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Kuwait, significantly, is one of Iraq's biggest creditors, having put up millions of dollars to finance the Iraqi war effort against Iran.

Saddam Hussein's decision to attack Kuwait was motivated by the Kuwaiti Emir's refusal to abide by OPEC oil quotas. Faced with the impossibility of meeting his debt obligations with oil prices at the July level, he chose to use military power to enforce the OPEC production limits and protect the Iraqi bourgeoisie's economic interests.

Imperialist Hypocrisy

The Iraqi invasion provoked a howl of righteous indignation from George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, and other well-known "defenders of national self-determination." The imperialist leaders mobilized their allies in the region to isolate Iraq economically and militarily, and in this effort they have, for the first time, the cooperation and support of the USSR and China, both of whom have been important military suppliers to Iraq.

Such self-righteous rhetoric from the occupiers of Ireland and the invaders of Grenada and Panama is especially offensive. They have no concern for Kuwait's sovereignty and even less for the rights of its citizens. Their concern is maintaining their control of the Middle East oil industry, and the continuation in power of those traditional monarchs with whom they can do business. They are quick to call for the imposition of economic sanctions when their profits are threatened, but when it comes to a real question of human rights—as in South Africa—they are reluctant to impose such sanctions and eager to lift them.

Regardless of what one may think of Saddam Hussein, the imperialists' call for sanctions and military intervention against Iraq deserve no support from working people anywhere. George Bush is risking young soldiers' lives for the bankers' and oil tycoons' profits, not for democracy, not for world peace, not for the right of nations to self-determination, and most assuredly not for the economic interests of U.S. workers.

The Political Conflicts Among Arab States

After World War I, which resulted in the collapse of the Turkish Empire, most of the Arab world fell under the domination of French and British colonialism. Iraq became a possession of Britain, which installed the Hashemite Abdullah as Iraq's king. (The Hashemites were the traditional rulers in the Hijaz, the region where Mecca is located. They had no connection to either Iraq or to Jordan, where they remain in power, until the British literally handed them those thrones.)

After World War II middle-class intellectuals allied with nationalistic army officers overthrew the traditional monarchies and established anticolonialist republics in a number of the more populous Arab countries. Gamal Abdel Nasser took power in Egypt in 1952; the Arab Socialist (Ba'ath) movement took power in Syria shortly thereafter. The king of Iraq was overthrown in 1958 by Kassem, leading then-president Eisenhower to dispatch American troops to Lebanon.

These nationalist Arab regimes have been in steady conflict since that time with the traditional monarchies, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. These royal houses rule countries with relatively small populations, and in some cases their oil revenues are sufficient to pay all the costs of government. There are no taxes at all, for example, in the United Arab Emirates (leading to a brisk smuggling business between Dubai and Iran on the other side of the Strait of Hormoz). Kuwait has the highest per capita national income on earth. Most of the oilfield laborers in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates are immigrants from Yemen, Egypt, and other poorer Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq.

The monarchies' willingness to collaborate with the U.S., their reluctance to join in the fight against Zionism, and their refusal in recent years to abide by OPEC production quotas have all been causes for conflict between them and the nationalist republics, such as Iraq and Libya. Saudi Arabia figured prominently in the Iran-contra scandal as a source of funds for the Nicaraguan contras. There is no question that the Arab princes, including the Sabah royal house in Kuwait, are an important force for reaction and counterrevolution, not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

Nevertheless, Saddam Hussein's invasion and annexation of Kuwait is unjustifiable. The Iraqi military dictator in no way represents the workers and peasants of Iraq; rather, he rules in the interests of the Iraqi bourgeoisie. His invasion of Kuwait, which could ultimately lead to the deaths of thousands of young Iraqi soldiers (and this only a year after the end of the war with Iran), is motivated entirely by considerations of profit.

The Kuwaiti people were never consulted about being merged into the Iraqi state. Saddam Hussein did not intervene in defense of a popular revolution against the Sabah monarchy. Indeed, his record in suppressing popular revolution in Iraq,

(Continued on page 4)

A Hero's Welcome

Nelson Mandela Tours the United States

by Tom Barrett

When Nelson Mandela was released from prison in February 1990, political leaders of the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States, from President Bush on down, wasted no time inviting him to visit their particular constituencies. These politicians were obviously attempting to score cheap points with African-Americans and others who support human rights, since an elected official can easily applaud Mandela's release without a commitment to any real action against the capitalist and racist apartheid regime in South Africa—or perhaps more significantly to human rights for African-Americans.

Still, regardless of the bourgeois politicians, Mandela's release was a real victory for all oppressed people throughout the world, especially for Africans and those of African descent who have been dispersed to other continents as a result of slavery. Nelson Mandela has for decades personified the struggle against apartheid and, by extension, the struggle against racist oppression in all parts of the world. The courage he demonstrated in standing up to the South African government and enduring 27 years of imprisonment set an example for all those who are trying to create a more just society.

Consequently, Mandela completely deserved the hero's welcome which he received when he came to the United States during the last two weeks of June 1990. Even though George Bush may have had other intentions, Mandela's visit was an occasion to galvanize the African-American community into action—to express unity with the African continent and to rededicate itself to combating racism in the United States. In spite of the politicians' attempt to use Mandela for their own purposes, and in spite of his own attempt to be diplomatic and not offend the capitalist officials who invited him, his visit was a step forward for the movement against apartheid and for the African-American struggle.

U.S. South Africa Policy

It is no secret that George Bush would like to follow British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's lead in dropping economic sanctions against South Africa. Economic sanctions have been one of the means for pressuring the South African government to abolish some of the worst provisions of its apartheid system, and they also played no small role in bringing about Mandela's release. The demand for economic sanctions has been a specific way that the anti-apartheid movement has put pressure on the United States government to stop supporting the racist South African regime. Though economic sanctions are not a universally appropriate demand, in this case they have been. The demand has worked to educate people in the United States about the connection between the government in Washington and the government in Pretoria; it has helped, rather than hindered, building mass action against apartheid, and, most importantly, it has been won—even if only to a limited degree. It is important to keep the pressure on to maintain, extend, and enforce sanctions. It is clear that they have been effective.

Though Mandela made a great effort to be "statesmanlike" and nonconfrontational with his imperialist "hosts," he made his views on sanctions clear and unmistakable: now is not the time to lift

them. In every appearance before the public, before the news media, before elected officials, Mandela stressed that sanctions must remain in place if apartheid is to be defeated—and apartheid has not yet been defeated. All of the fundamental apartheid laws remain in force. The State of Emergency continues in Natal Province, where a civil war rages between those fighting for freedom and the apartheid regime's African agents, led by Zulu Chief Buthelezi. Though Mandela is out of prison, like the rest of South Africa's Black majority he is still not free. Though Mandela would be elected president of South Africa in a free election, he and the rest of the African people do not yet have the right to vote.

Mandela also criticized U.S. support for the UNITA terrorists in Angola and requested U.S. government aid to the ANC as a way of bringing about a resolution to the racial conflict in South Africa.

In the atmosphere of acclaim that this African leader brought with him, therefore, it became difficult or impossible for any U.S. politician to defend the idea of lifting sanctions. The crowds which turned out to greet Mandela in effect turned into mass demonstrations in favor of breaking any and all economic, political, and cultural ties with the apartheid regime and keeping them broken. In the context of the politicians' hypocritical cheering for democracy in Eastern Europe and the USSR, Mandela's visit forced them to make concessions to the struggle of a people whose rights have been trampled by imperialism.

Right-Wing Displeasure

Some less astute capitalist politicians and spokespeople were not comfortable with Bush's attempt to identify himself with Mandela and to solidarize, however hypocritically, with the freedom struggle in South Africa. Most of those who expressed displeasure with Mandela were, as might be expected, reactionary Republicans. However, even some liberal Democrats were unenthusiastic about the visit.

The real reason for their displeasure should be obvious: the apartheid regime has been one of imperialism's best friends. It has enabled multinational corporations to reap enormous profits from the exploitation of South Africa's natural and human resources. It has been an important military ally, both defending imperialist naval interests at the intersection of the Atlantic and Indian oceans and carrying out counterrevolutionary activities in different sections of the African continent. It has also been a staunch ally of the Zionist Israeli regime.

The African National Congress (ANC), of which Mandela is a leading member, has had a close relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP) for many decades. Regardless of the reality that the ANC is in no way controlled by the SACP, let alone by the Soviet Union, reactionary politicians have attempted to red-bait the ANC. Such rhetoric is not very effective in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, so they have attempted to discredit Mandela in other ways, portraying him as "violent" or a "terrorist," in much the same manner that P.W. Botha did during his term as South Africa's president. Representative William Dannemeyer, a California Republican, complained, "Nelson Man-

delaware is no Martin Luther King. He is more like H. Rap Brown [a revolutionary leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in the late 1960s] or Willie Horton!" (Of course, the amalgam of a revolutionary political activist like H. Rap Brown with a common felon like Willie Horton speaks volumes about Dannemeyer's racism.) Even liberal Democrats complained about Mandela's support to the Palestinian struggle against Zionism and his acceptance of aid from Libya.

Bush, in a form of "constructive engagement," quoted Martin Luther King to encourage Mandela to adopt a principle of non-violence. Mandela responded that Bush did not understand the historical context of violence in South Africa. (He should, perhaps, have added that Bush does not understand Martin Luther King's principles, either.) He asserted the South African Black majority's right to defend itself by any means necessary against one of the most violently repressive governments on earth.

Mandela's Diplomacy

Despite the overall positive effect of Mandela's visit, there was a negative side. His diplomatic maneuvering with the imperialist politicians was a clear reflection of his bourgeois nationalist political program. Mandela is not a proletarian internationalist. He does not recognize that the South African struggle is part of a larger world class struggle between the workers and other oppressed people and the small but powerful class of bankers and businessmen who exploit them. Had he been conscious of this truth his visit might have done even more to galvanize a new and militant African-American nationalist movement in the United States.

By making public appearances with Bush, by expressing the view that the present government's policies towards South Africa

are better than those followed by Ronald Reagan, Mandela, even if unintentionally, bolstered Bush's standing among African-Americans. A recently published poll indicates that Bush is the first Republican president, at least since Eisenhower, to have a majority approval rating among Blacks.

Building confidence in George Bush in the U.S. Black communities hurts not only the growth of a militant Black nationalist movement here, but also the struggle in South Africa. Mandela understands that he owes his freedom in large part to the solidarity African-Americans have shown with the people of South Africa. He fails to recognize, however, that Bush and the class he represents are completely opposed to the liberation of both the African majority in South Africa and the African-American minority in the United States. To the extent that Bush follows policies that help Black South Africans, he does so only because he has been forced to do so by the direct mass action by working people and Blacks in both South Africa and the United States. The final victory for both of our peoples will only come about when imperialism is overthrown on a world scale. Promoting the reputation of Bush or any other capitalist politician—whether a Democrat or a Republican—as a "friend" of the anti-apartheid movement hinders that process.

The American and South African ruling classes have been forced to make concessions which lead in the direction of abolishing the apartheid structure. Mandela's U.S. visit was just one aspect of their retreat. What is needed now is continued activity of the kind which has forced Bush and de Klerk to concede as much as they have. The struggle must continue until the foundations of racism are destroyed, both in the United States and in South Africa. □

Middle East (Continued from page 2)

most particularly the Kurdish national struggle, is particularly gruesome. The only real interest the working people of both Iraq and Kuwait have in this war is stopping it.

Iraq's Isolation

How long Iraq can maintain its position in Kuwait remains to be seen, for Baghdad is standing virtually alone against the rest of the Arab world and, indeed, against the rest of the entire world. Even the republic of Yemen, which originally supported his invasion, has now sent delegates to the Arab summit in Cairo, which has been convened to assemble a joint Arab military force against Iraq. The Yemeni delegate in the United Nations Security Council voted in favor of a resolution declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait "null and void."

Iraq is virtually landlocked (and covets Kuwait's access to the Persian Gulf). Its oil must be transported through two pipelines, one across Turkey to the Mediterranean, and the other across Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea. Both of those pipelines have been closed. The Ozal regime in Turkey, one of the U.S.'s best friends in the region, is denying itself access to Iraqi oil so that it can cooperate with the United States. The Saudis, who feel directly threatened, were quick to take steps to cut off the flow of Iraqi oil.

For the first time since the Second World War, the United States and Soviet Union are taking the same side in a military conflict. Gorbachev has refused to make even the mildest criticism of U.S. intervention in the region, and the Soviet U.N. ambassador has indicated that the USSR would participate in a U.N. "peacekeeping" force.

In spite of the rhetoric emanating from Washington, Saddam Hussein is not a madman. He is a realistic bourgeois politician, and he

knows that he will not get away with any attempt to achieve dominance in the Middle East. Some of the nationalistic Arab leaders, including PLO chairman Yassir Arafat, are attempting to work out a compromise in which all sides could save face.

In a war which pits Arab against Arab the only winner will be the imperialists, who continue to dominate the Middle East. The Israelis can scarcely hide their delight that Iraq is in conflict with nearly all of its neighbors. The U.S. now has a land-based military presence in the Gulf region for the first time since the fall of the shah of Iran in 1979. Working people and all who oppose U.S. interventionist military policy must take action to demand that all U.S. forces be withdrawn from the region and that Bush cease and desist from any further military adventures in the Middle East. We must reject Bush's and Thatcher's hypocritical call for economic sanctions against Iraq.

We must at the same time call upon Iraq to remove its troops from Kuwait and restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. There is no doubt that the Sabah ruling family is thoroughly reactionary and deserves to be removed from power, but only the Kuwaiti people have the right to settle accounts with it. If the Kuwaiti people wish to merge their country into Iraq, let them decide to do so freely, without guns at their heads. But if they desire their continued independence, Saddam Hussein has no right to take it away.

This unfortunate inter-Arab conflict has as its root cause imperialist domination of the region and imperialist control over oil production and trade. As long as imperialism retains its dominance over the world economy and world politics, unnecessary conflicts like this new Gulf war will continue to break out. □

Class Struggle in Nicaragua Today

by John Daniel

I arrived at the Augusto César Sandino International Airport in Managua just three days after the end of the nationwide strike actions in July. On the way from the airport to my hotel room near the University of Central America, the driver pointed out the remains of the first of twenty barricades along our route. The barricades were made of the same paving stones (*adoquines*) made famous in the insurrection against the old Somoza dictatorship, and this symbol of the revolution was not lost on anyone.

"This was a big one," said the driver as we came to an intersection. "It covered all four streets and was chest high." Most of the stones by now had been moved to the side, but enough still remained to instantly verify the truth of what the driver had said. Traffic had to slowly wend its way through the openings and ditches made by uprooted paving stones.

Later I learned that over five hundred of these barricades had been constructed in Managua alone in the early morning hours of Monday, July 9th. Such a monumental undertaking in so few hours was in itself a testament to the broad support which the strike received.

Working Class Mobilizations

The first series of strikes broke out in May, shortly after the election of Violeta Chamorro. They were called by a new labor coalition formed on May Day called the National Front of Workers (FNT). As is the case in many countries (France, Italy, etc.), labor unions in Nicaragua are associated with political parties, hence the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), by far the largest labor organization in the country with over 200,000 members, is associated with the Sandinista Front (FSLN). The formation of the FNT was an attempt to include all workers, regardless of union or party affiliation, into a broad coalition to combat the escalating attacks by the Chamorro administration against the working class and campesinos of Nicaragua.

The FNT, now 300,000 strong, immediately presented the government with 21 demands. Prominent among the demands were: an immediate pay raise sufficient to offset the devastating inflation (which was running at 100 percent per month); full funding of state institutions which had been slashed

by 50 percent; repeal of law 1190 which would return confiscated property to former owners; and the inclusion of worker and campesino representatives in economic decision making.

The second strike actually began in late June when it became clear that the Labor Ministry had no intention of honoring the accords agreed to in May. On June 26th the FNT resubmitted to the Labor Ministry 18 of the 21 demands presented on May 3rd. No answer. Days passed and still no answer. The FNT began to build a gradually escalating strike which by the first week in July included over 80,000 workers. On Sunday, July 8th, the government announced on television that those workers still on strike Monday morning would be fired and that those workers occupying workplaces would be removed. The FNT responded by calling on the people to erect barricades to prevent the government from being able to move against the workers.

The strike ended in victory on July 12th with the government agreeing to negotiate all 18 demands. Previously the head of the Ministry of Labor had called the strike illegal and refused even to recognize its existence. This was a difficult line to maintain, considering that the strike had effectively shut down the entire nation: stopping all traffic in the major cities; closing the International Airport (because air traffic controllers walked out); generating worker occupation of all major industrial plants, both public and private, plus student occupation of all educational institutions down to the secondary school level, and worker control of all emergency services, including utilities.

Drawing Class Lines

As with all strikes, certain things once hidden become immediately clear. In the case of this national strike, the whole political reality of Nicaragua was for a brief moment remarkably vivid.

In the first place, the strike was called and organized not by the FSLN but exclusively by the leadership of the trade unions. "As trade union leaders, we had to respond to the needs of the workers, regardless of party affiliation," said René Bonilla, a CST leader and member of the strike negotiating committee. Though the strike was supported by the FSLN, the party took no role in its organization. The FNT's perspective was that the workers' demands would become clouded if it was seen as a struggle between the country's different political parties. They wanted a substantive discussion on workers' conditions, not an ideological debate which they perceived would be the logical outcome if the struggle was seen as one between opposing political parties.

On the other end of the spectrum, the UNO coalition was coming apart at the seams. Virgilio Godoy, the vice president, was making his own power play. During the strike, he called for the formation of "national salvation committees" after meeting with

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*'Rolling
back the
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easy task'*

U.S. embassy officials. It was rumored that the U.S. ambassador Shlaudeman had sent a letter to Violeta Chamorro saying that if she could not handle the situation, she should step down. Testing the waters, these elements attempted to escalate the situation, which quickly became volatile. Some violence, resulting in several deaths, was initiated against the strikers by right-wing thugs committed to "national salvation," and even more dramatic initiatives were attempted.

Confronting Contras In the Barrios

Early on the morning of July 10th, one day after the barricades had gone up, a group of men armed with pipes and sticks entered the building housing "Radio Corporación," a right-wing radio station in Ciudad Jardín, one of the richest neighborhoods in Managua. U.S. Embassy cars were seen entering and then speeding away. Arms appeared as if out of nowhere, and a machine-gun was placed on the roof. The radio station began broadcasting an incredible story: they were under attack by Sandinista commandos, a hospital was being set up at the radio station to care for the wounded, send help.

"My house is on the same block as the radio station," one man told me. "I could see the building from my backyard. As I listened to their broadcast the announcer was frantically calling for help, and you could hear automatic rifle fire in the background. So I turned the radio off and stood up to look at the station. It was quiet, and there were no commandos on the roof. It was all a lie."

From the radio station groups of heavily armed men began sealing off the neighborhood block by block, even confiscating police cars at gunpoint and blocking off the streets. The people of the neighborhood were terrified and began to leave.

"We went to some friends of ours in the next neighborhood," a resident explained to me. "They were already getting organized. Everybody was getting out their guns and counting bullets and hand grenades. Talking about how they couldn't believe it. Contras were at the radio station!"

Under the leadership of the neighborhood FSLN militants, armed residents of the barrio organized and surrounded the radio station. Gunfire began in earnest now, and the people pushed the armed men back into the radio station. Negotiations were started, and Cardinal Obando y Bravo offered to give those inside the radio station sanctuary at the Catholic seminary. They were taken there by U.N. transports.

This interesting episode during the height of the strike in Managua shows that rolling back the gains of the revolution is not an easy task.

The Police, the Army, and the FSLN

The state institutions do not belong to the Chamorro administration or the Godoy faction within it. At one point Chamorro asked the police and military to

intervene in the strike. We don't know her exact orders. We do know how the police and military behaved.

One striker recalled, "The army pulled up [to our barricade] and all the people cheered and applauded, saying come back in an hour." They dismantled the barricade just enough to get the truck through, "and before the last soldier was back on the truck, the *adoquines* were flying back into the gap." It was the same story everywhere: the soldiers would come and take down the barricades, and the people would immediately put them back up. The soldiers knew what was going on, but they obviously had no intention of breaking the strike. They were merely carrying out the letter of an order while neglecting its intent. They arrested no strikers, they stormed no factories, and they refused to fire on any worker.

The FSLN as an organization, while supporting the workers' just demands, took no active part in leading the strike. It seems that its leadership even tried to dampen the fervor of the strike, especially in the critical last week. The United States government had placed several of its military installations on alert, and the white cars of the U.S. Embassy were seen scurrying all over Managua. A major concern was that if the survival of the Chamorro regime was threatened by the escalating struggle, there might be a U.S. invasion to defend "democracy."

In discussions with several "militants" (FSLN party members), I asked why the party did not take a more active role in the strike. I was told that internally the FSLN had not expected the electoral defeat, and that the results were a sobering experience which proved that the masses needed a rest.

The Sandinistas had lost the confidence, they said, of two large sectors of the population, those most directly affected by the war, women and youth. JS19, the Sandinista youth organization, and AMNLAE, the Nicaraguan Women's Association, had not been able to gauge the level of discontent because they were too busy trying to bolster the war effort. Out in the countryside I heard the same thing. "Why did you vote for UNO?" I asked an old campesino, who answered: "Because I did not want to see my son die in the mountains."

I also suspect that another reason for the election results was the devastating economic plight of the campesinos. The relationship between town and country had been strained to the limit during the years of war. Small farmers and agricultural workers were hit hard by the draining of resources for the war effort, and also by the dramatic decline of world prices for agricultural produce. The Sandinistas in power weren't able to carry out a prolonged war effort against the U.S. aggression, compensate for the loss of hard currency due to falling prices for exports, and at the same time provide the goods and prices needed by the small agricultural producer. This would translate into an anti-FSLN vote among the hard-hit rural population. A closer examination of the

election results seems to bear this out. Where the Sandinistas lost were in the countryside and in Managua, which has had a large influx of impoverished campesinos over the last five years.

Economic Chaos Under Chamorro

The present economic situation in Nicaragua is undoubtedly a catastrophe. Since Chamorro won the election, the córdoba has been devalued 24 times in less than 90 days. At the time of this writing, one million córdobas are worth slightly less than two U.S. dollars. The rate of inflation is currently running over 100 percent per month. Those on a pension, such as retired persons, those disabled in the war, mothers who lost children in the war, etc., have not received a reevaluation or readjustment of their incomes by the Chamorro government. Some have not received any money at all. The government has said that the average family needs to earn 130 to 150 dollars a month just to survive, but even professionals only earn the equivalent of 100 dollars per month.

Chamorro's plan to deal with this incredible situation has centered around the creation of a córdoba pegged to the U.S. dollar at a one-to-one ratio—the "Córdoba de Oro" or gold córdoba. The problem with this solution is plainly that it will not work. The same night that she announced the plan, the going rate on the black market was two to one. So far the gold córdoba has only appeared in utility bills, bank loans, and restaurant menus. A rumor is going around that Chamorro has now printed up some 50 and 100 gold córdoba notes but nothing smaller. Immediately the black market set the rate of exchange at 4 to 1, and still the gold córdoba does not exist as an actual currency.

Production in Nicaragua, both industrial and agricultural, is at a standstill. The strikes have crippled private industry. The government has slashed the budgets for state industry. Small agricultural producers have suffered two years of drought, unpayably high interest rates on loans since Chamorro assumed office, and the lowest prices for their produce in ten years.

U.S. aid (\$21 million) in the form of foodstuffs (mostly lard) was given to only three families: the Barrios (Chamorro), the Lacayos (Chamorro's son-in-law), and the Godoys (the vice president). These three families just happen to control the country's cooking oil and soap industries, perhaps the reason why the U.S. sent mostly lard.

The Contra Threat

Another pressing problem is that posed by the contras. As a large military fighting force, the contras were disbanded, and the large majority of the rank and file simply went home to towns all over Nicaragua. But everyone agrees that they did not turn in their arms. These arms and other U.S.-supplied equipment are believed to be hidden in caches in the

mountains, as the U.N. and O.A.S. observers collected a ridiculously low number of weapons.

In the final agreement, the contras were granted 24 "Poles of Development" areas under their control. Each area is allowed 150 "rural police," or contras under arms. True, these areas do not connect, and the national police sometimes accompany the "rural police" on patrol. But the army is not allowed into the areas, and the fact that there are up to 3,600 legally armed "ex-contras" in these areas puts no one's mind at rest.

The problem the contras have at present is keeping themselves together. No one wants to stay in the development poles because there's nothing there. The U.S. had promised to develop these areas but as of yet hasn't spent one dollar on them. Just days after I arrived, a group of armed contras confiscated a large farm demanding land! It seems not even the contras are immune to the Nicaraguan reality, and I suspect that the majority of contra rank and file no longer receive orders from their former commanders.

Dual Power?

The situation in Nicaragua is highly complex (as always), but certain facts remain clear. The army and police are two state institutions which remain outside of Chamorro's control. During the recent strikes, Humberto Ortega in a television broadcast maintained that under no circumstances would the army be used to break the strike. Another state institution, the courts, sided with the strikers in every instance against the wishes of Chamorro and her cabinet. Perhaps this was the frustration that led Vice President Virgilio Godoy to escalate the situation toward civil war, only to find out that his base of support (even in the richest neighborhoods) was lacking. Perhaps it can be said that Nicaragua faces a situation of dual power. [Trotsky described *dual power* as a transitory situation in which two antagonistic social classes each have a substantial degree of political power, with the state apparatus being divided—in this case, part of it reflecting capitalist interests and part of it reflecting working class interests.—Eds.]

But within this contest, for the moment, the FSLN seems to have the upper hand. I heard over and over again, even from UNO supporters, that if the elections were held today, the FSLN would be swept in with the biggest landslide the country has ever seen. It should be remembered that the first striker killed, out of six who died during the strike, had been an UNO activist during the election.

The FSLN has called for its first national convention in February 1991. Internally the discussions center on the nation surviving until 1996, when the Sandinistas can constitutionally resume administration of the state by winning the elections. But as one FSLN militant told me: "The U.S. may not give us that chance. In any case, we are prepared to defend democracy in Nicaragua." □

August 2, 1990

'The army and police are two state institutions which remain outside of Chamorro's control'

SWP (Continued from page 1)

The SWP under the leadership of James P. Cannon closely collaborated with Trotsky in establishing the Fourth International and in drafting its founding document, *The Transitional Program*. When reactionary U.S. legislation, passed in 1940, prevented the SWP from holding membership as a section of the Fourth International, the party continued to play a central role in the world movement as a sympathizing group, particularly during the Second World War and its aftermath. The SWP also played an important role in helping to heal the breach which divided the Fourth International between 1953 and 1963. It sought to offer practical and programmatic contributions based on the distinctive insights gained by its veteran cadres from the rich accumulation of experience in the U.S. class struggle and the world revolutionary movement. In the 1950s, despite the ravages of Cold War anti-communism and the deradicalization of the labor movement, the SWP continued to do important work. The SWP distinguished itself in its defense of the East German, Hungarian, and Polish workers when they rebelled against Stalinist tyranny. At the same time, here in the U.S., the SWP was in the front ranks of support to the fight against racial segregation and white supremacy. It also made an immense contribution to preserving revolutionary Marxism, in part through continued educational and theoretical efforts.

The party enthusiastically supported the Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro, recognizing this as the first successful socialist revolution in the Western hemisphere, with the added worldwide significance that it represented the triumph of a revolutionary, non-Stalinist political current. This was an event (along with common support for the Hungarian uprising of 1956) which helped lead to a reunification of the Fourth International, since Trotskyists around the world sought to learn from the Cuban revolution and also to defend it from the hostile attacks of U.S. imperialism. Another form of defending the revolution involved articulating a balanced analysis of developments in Cuba. For example, the SWP offered critical comments regarding serious limitations on workers' democracy in Cuba, while at the same time supporting the real social reforms and all initiatives which involved the working masses in shaping their own future.

The Socialist Workers Party was intimately involved in U.S. social struggles of the 1960s and '70s. It played a significant role in defending and supporting Black liberation struggles, and it pioneered in popularizing the revolutionary ideas of

Malcolm X. The party was a major force in defense of Vietnam against U.S. aggression, helping to lead an antiwar movement which mobilized hundreds of thousands and had an impact on millions of people throughout the United States. Visible and influential in the youth radicalization of the 1960s, it was also part of the rising wave of feminism, especially in the struggle for abortion rights. And during this entire period, the SWP continued to play an active and important role in the Fourth International.

All of these achievements were possible because of the programmatic traditions and internationalist links of the SWP.

In the 1970s, however, a new leadership, originating from the student movement of the early '60s, became consolidated around Jack Barnes. Unfortunately, it had neither the actual class-struggle experiences nor the political and theoretical maturity of the older generations of the SWP. This undermined the new leadership's ability to continue the programmatic orientation and organizational norms of American Trotskyism. Increasingly, a number of factors combined to shape the party's reaction to events. These included a superficial "orthodoxy," rigidity in theoretical discussions, inflexible organizational norms, and an equally inflexible approach to tactics in practical political struggles. There was a general decrease in party democracy. There was a pattern of making abrupt changes in the functioning of party branches, institutions, and political activities, based on an impressionistic approach to changing realities in the U.S.

The failure of this approach, combined with unrealistic and unrealized expectations that the SWP would quickly gain significant influence in the working class, led to a crisis for the new leadership. This, in turn, generated the greatest crisis ever faced by American Trotskyism. Barnes and his closest circle of cothinkers became demoralized and lost confidence in the perspectives that had been the historic basis for the party.

By the early 1980s—under the influence of the revolutionary upsurge in Central America and the Caribbean—the Barnes leadership concluded that Castroism has greater relevance in the world today than Trotskyism, and that a "New International" led by the Cuban Communist Party should supersede the "semisectarian" Fourth International. More damaging than this shift in orientation was the initial decision of the Barnes leadership to obscure and deny that it believed basic programmatic changes to be necessary. Instead of clearly advancing its new orientation for the democratic consideration of the SWP membership and of the entire world movement, the Barnes leadership resorted to maneuver and

manipulation, with extremely destructive consequences. The policies were decided in secret, then introduced to the membership as a whole in the public press. Critical discussion was suppressed. Those who objected were ostracized, framed-up, and expelled.

This now has culminated in a break from the world Trotskyist movement, ironically at the very moment when great events in the USSR are confirming Trotsky's analysis. Indeed, it is on precisely this question—the political revolution for workers' democracy in the USSR and Eastern Europe—that Fidel Castro has shown little understanding or interest. Although the leaders and members of the SWP claim to continue the party's traditions, the past ten years mark a profound discontinuity in the party's history.

Dimensions of the SWP's Break

The Fourth International can be faulted for a variety of imperfections, but it remains the only vital international revolutionary current, one with active sections throughout the world. Its militants are making important contributions in the struggles of working people, women, oppressed nationalities, peasants, youth, and others striving for a better future in many different countries. It is based on the theory and method of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, Luxemburg, and many other revolutionary leaders of the workers' movement. It is a democratic organization, and it has a World Congress coming up in 1991. It would make far more sense for the SWP—if it aspires to provide serious leadership in the world revolutionary movement—to fight for its position in the Fourth International, instead of walking out with small groups of supporters in a few predominantly English-speaking and mostly imperialist countries.

This separation will only increase the SWP's isolation, rather than lead to a genuine regroupment with larger revolutionary forces. SWP members who recognize the need to reverse the party's trajectory face an immense task, because its effects have been quite far reaching:

- The SWP has broken with the Fourth International programmatically. It has explicitly rejected the theory of permanent revolution, which explains the connections between democratic struggles and the struggle for working class rule and revolutionary internationalism. It has dropped all programmatic reference to the possibility of political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers' states, which involves the working people of the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China fighting for socialist democracy against bureaucratic

tyranny. It has abandoned a consistent Leninist-Trotskyist commitment to socialist democracy—for example, by supporting one-party rule and restrictions on freedom of expression in Cuba. It has drawn back from the view that there are three interrelated sectors of the world revolution (advanced capitalist countries, less developed countries oppressed by imperialism, bureaucratized workers' states). The *transitional method*—through which the revolutionary movement approaches working people with slogans that correspond to their present level of consciousness while leading in the direction of more profound conclusions about the need to change society—has been abandoned, despite schematic references to one or another demand of *The Transitional Program*. This method has been replaced by lectures delivered to workers and activists that they should admire and emulate “the example of revolutionary Cuba.” In place of the Leninist commitment to genuine democratic centralism, the SWP has adopted a Castroist model, with the party's orientation being established from the top down. Questioning, dissent, or debate are

actively discouraged. Of course, at one time or another, pragmatic considerations have caused the Barnes leadership to vacillate or even draw back to what might seem to be traditional perspectives on one or another point. But the general pattern of programmatic divergence from the Fourth International is indisputable.

• **The SWP has broken with the Fourth International methodologically.** The cynical manipulation of theory and program that characterizes the present leadership of the SWP is alien to the approach of Lenin and Trotsky by which our movement seeks to guide itself. The Barnes leadership's dishonesty regarding its actual views and intentions, a dishonesty displayed both toward its own membership and toward the Fourth International as a whole, also has nothing in common with the Bolshevik-Leninist norms which our movement embraced at its very inception. The SWP's supercentralized organizational norms, the tendency toward a leadership cult around Jack Barnes, the systematic isolation, intimidation, and bureaucratic suppression of real or imagined or potential oppositional tendencies—none of this has anything to do with the actual “Leninist strategy of party building” or the historic organizational principles of the Fourth International and SWP.

The political-organizational methodology of the Barnes leadership was utilized to expel and otherwise drive out several oppositional currents from the SWP in the early 1980s, including many comrades now organized in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and the FI Caucus of Solidarity. Its most recent victims were former leaders Barry Shepard, Caroline Lund, and Malik Miah, who embraced Barnes's fundamental programmatic revisions but disagreed on tactical questions and conjunctural political assessments.

Another method foreign to the Leninist-Trotskyist tradition is the use of slander campaigns against other Fourth Internationalists to justify excluding them from party headquarters, bookstores, and public meetings. These dishonest campaigns have prevented SWP members from having contact with critics of the Barnes leadership, and have created a climate of intimidation inside the party in order to protect that leadership from the consequences of open and critical discussion.

• **The SWP has broken with the Fourth International organizationally.** The desire to avoid the risks of clarifying political differences through open and democratic debate also manifested itself in the Barnes leadership's consistent practice of choosing not to advance seriously its revisions of theory and program in the dis-

cussions of the Fourth International, at the 1985 World Congress and since then.

The 1985 World Congress demanded, by an overwhelming majority, that the SWP readmit the loyal Fourth Internationalists who had been purged, yet the SWP blatantly ignored this decision and instead stepped up its hostile campaign to create more splits through pro-SWP factions in Britain, Sweden, and other countries. These proved to be disloyal to their own organizations and to the Fourth International as a whole. Over the past several years, these factions have split away from sections of the Fourth International in their countries, and they have chosen to circulate publications put out by the SWP instead of the publications of the Fourth International. They have adhered to the program of the SWP instead of the program of the Fourth International. The SWP's representatives have for more than a year boycotted international leadership meetings of the Fourth International. The SWP was giving clear signs that it would not participate in the upcoming World Congress of the Fourth International, where it would have had an opportunity to present its perspectives to revolutionary activists from around the world, and where it could try to win class-struggle militants to its ideas through frank and democratic debate. In private conversations and at public meetings since at least 1989, party members and spokespeople were asserting that the SWP was no longer a part of the Fourth International.

The final aspect of the organizational break was the June 10, 1990, letter, signed by the leadership of the SWP and six small “Communist Leagues,” announcing: “incompatible trajectories have been an unambiguous public fact for some time. As expressed through political work, internationalist collaboration, and our place within communist continuity and tradition, our parties have become organizations separate from the Fourth International.”

Build the Fourth International

The fact remains that the SWP still contains cadres who are dedicated to the revolutionary socialist cause, motivated by the highest ideals, capable of critical thought and courageous activism, influenced to a certain degree by the concepts and methodology of scientific socialism, and retaining a residual element of the American Trotskyist tradition. Some of these comrades will find that such qualities are at variance with the orientation of the Barnes leadership.

All of us who are loyal to the traditions and program of American Trotskyism must redouble our efforts to build a strong organization in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International. □

Further background about the SWP, the American Trotskyist movement, and its relationship with the Fourth International can be found in the following books and pamphlets available from the FIT. See back cover ad for price and information on how to order:

• *Platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency*

• *Don't Strangle the Party*, by James P. Cannon

• *Revolutionary Traditions of American Trotskyism*, by Paul Le Blanc

• *Permanent Revolution, Combined Revolution, and Black Liberation in the United States*, by Larry Stewart

• *The Transitional Program—Forging a Revolutionary Agenda for the United States*, by Evelyn Sell, Steve Bloom, Frank Lovell

NOW Confronts the Future

A Report on the 1990 National Conference

by Carol McAllister

The National Organization for Women held its 1990 National Conference in San Francisco on June 29-July 1. The conference was attended by 2,575 people, 927 of whom were certified delegates. The participants were overwhelmingly female and white, representing a variety of ages and geographic regions of the country. Many were attending their first NOW conference, reflecting the doubling of the organization's membership over the past year. A major focus of this year's conference was the issue of abortion and the struggle for reproductive rights. There were also workshops and issue hearings on a number of other topics, including economic issues, global feminism, violence against women, and racial diversity. Invited speakers included Susan Mnumzana of the African National Congress, Petra Kelly of the Green Party in Germany, Charon Asetoyer, a Native American activist, and Sharon Kowalski and Karen Thompson, speaking on the issues of lesbian and disabled rights. This article will focus on four areas of discussion at the 1990 conference: (1) the issue of political independence and the question of a new party, (2) a mass action perspective and proposal for a spring national mobilization, (3) efforts to promote a pro-choice position within the labor movement, and (4) parental consent laws and the threat to young women's rights to abortion.

The Question of a New Party

One of the most significant developments at NOW's 1989 conference was strongly voiced criticism of both the Democratic and Republican parties for their failure to support and promote women's rights and the expression of rank-and-file sentiment for exploring the possibility of a new party—one that could truly represent the interests of women and other oppressed sectors of the population. (See *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 68 for a report and analysis of this development.) In the ensuing year, the national NOW leadership began setting up an exploratory commission to look into the possibility of a new party and making plans to hold hearings on this question in several cities around the U.S. At the same time as these developments were taking place, NOW officers and chapters throughout the country have increasingly thrown their resources and energy into supporting the campaigns of various candidates in both the Democratic and Republican parties. As the November elections draw near, we once again see a tying of the fight for women's rights to the bandwagon of procapitalist politicians and a diversion of attention away from a serious effort to build an independent political alternative. This contradictory dynamic on the question of electoralist politics and political independence likewise characterized NOW's 1990 conference.

There was a strong electoralist orientation stressed repeatedly throughout the conference, with the election of women and

pro-choice candidates being projected as the route to political empowerment. For example, in the opening plenary session, conference participants broke into wild cheering and standing ovations as various gubernatorial and congressional candidates (mostly women, a few men) were introduced and led to the stage. Molly Yard's keynote address focused on the necessity of electing these and other Democratic and Republican pro-choice candidates; her speech was followed by remarks from several of the endorsed politicians. The next day, Barbara Hafer, the Republican candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, was the featured speaker at an enthusiastic and well-attended outdoor rally held in Union Square.

On the final day of the conference, the first resolution on the agenda was entitled "The Feminization of Power." It called for targeting several contests in the upcoming November elections and committing significant time, energy, and resources to these election campaigns. Little opposition was expressed and the resolution passed by a very large majority. This is especially significant given that some of the targeted races involve candidates—e.g., Dianne Feinstein running for governor of California—who do not have consistent records on women's rights and were not supported by NOW in their primary races. Other more action-oriented resolutions, such as a proposal for a Freedom Caravan focusing on the threat to young women's access to abortion and birth control, also became tied to the electoral bandwagon, in this case by proposing mobilization of teenagers to work in the campaigns of various candidates.

At the same time as this orientation toward Democratic and Republican party politics was being promoted a discussion of the possibility of a new party was also in the air. In preparation for the conference, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency had produced a new pamphlet, *Fighting for Women's Rights in the 1990s*, which contained a reprint and update of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* article, referred to above, analyzing NOW's discussion about a new party. We found that this year's conference participants who stopped by our literature table were very interested in this topic and often bought a pamphlet when we pointed out that it contained an article on the new party idea.

A workshop on "The New Party Commission" was scheduled for the second day of the conference. It was very well attended with close to 400 people present, many sitting on the floor or standing tightly packed in the aisles and the back of the room in order to participate in the session. The formal presentations by Molly Yard, Ellie Smeal, and Patricia Ireland were quite encouraging. There was a review of last year's workshop which resulted in the resolution directing the NOW leadership to form an exploratory commission (Commission for Responsive Democracy) to look into the feasibility of a new party. The confirmed members of this newly appointed commission were announced—the complete list will be published in the next issue of the *National NOW Times*—and a definite commitment was made to go ahead with such an exploration through a series

On the New Party Commission

The *National NOW Times*, Summer 1990 reports:

"In addition to National NOW officers and activists, others who have agreed to serve on the commission as individuals include Delores Huerta, vice president of the United Farmworkers; Rose Bird, former California Supreme Court chief justice; John Anderson, former congressman; Sara Nelson, executive director of the Christic Institute; Leon Shull, former executive director of Americans for Democratic Action; Cara Gaziano, a law student at George Washington University and former campus organizer for the April 9 March; Joe Rauh, counsel to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; William Wimpisinger, retired president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Marcus Raskin of the Institute for Policy Studies; Dee Berry of the Greens Party; Maya Miller, peace activist and former congressional candidate in Nevada; Tony Anaya, former governor of New Mexico; Barry Commoner, former presidential candidate of the Citizens Party; Barbara Ehrenreich, writer and national political analyst; Ellie Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority; Janyne Althaus, student government president at Penn State University; Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general; and Arvonne Fraser, the Hubert Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota."

of public hearings. There was also a good statement of NOW's intention to address a broad range of issues, including those concerning economic justice, racism, and the environment—all included in their Bill of Rights for the 21st Century—and a recognition of the necessity to work in collaboration with other social movements in exploring the idea of a new party.

The audience discussion that followed revealed strong support for this direction with some indication that there is already considerable sentiment for actually founding a new party not just for exploring such a possibility. Critical points that were brought up included the lack of sufficient labor representation on the commission and the need for this new party to take an explicitly anticapitalist perspective. The latter suggestion elicited some audible disagreement.

Two members of the FIT were able to speak in the discussion. We emphasized the importance of the proposal for a new party but urged further democratization in the exploratory process—e.g., by developing regional and local committees made up of NOW members and other social movement activists to work with the exploratory commission to set up and conduct hearings, by holding many more hearings around the country (only seven are presently being planned), and by using new technologies such as video satellite hookups to allow participation of more people in more locales. We also spoke about the growing alienation of young women from mainstream electoral politics and NOW's responsibility in providing leadership toward independent political action rather than misleading new activist into the dead-end of Democratic and Republican party politics. Finally, we emphasized that we must not counterpose mass demonstrations and the building of a new party; rather the two activities are linked and mutually supportive. There was general acceptance of our statements—at least there was no expressed opposition—but no specific plans were put forward by the NOW leadership to make the changes we and others were suggesting.

In sum, the conference revealed on-going support by NOW's leadership and general membership for exploring the possibility of a new party. But the *dominant* perspective remains that of working within the Democratic and Republican parties "in the meantime." If anything, the orientation toward electoral

politics within the existing capitalist framework seems stronger in the present period. There were fewer critical comments or opportunities for such critical evaluations and an increased commitment of resources and labor toward upcoming election campaigns.

Mass Action and National Mobilizations

A related issue is the question of mass action and national mobilizations. In 1989, NOW played a very significant role in calling two national mobilizations—one in April and another in November. These highly successful demonstrations were crucial in effectively galvanizing the majority pro-choice sentiment of the American people and in making our voices heard in the legislative and judicial halls of our country. National mobilizations also reenergize local grass-roots organizing around feminist issues and help forge links between women's rights activists and our allies from other movements for justice and equality. Mass actions are an important alternative to politics in the Democratic and Republican parties—they are a way of keeping all the politicians "honest." They are also an answer to the commonly heard question of "but what *can* we do if we aren't going to focus on electing pro-choice Democrats and Republicans?"

Before the recent national conference, members of Socialist Action, another grouping of Fourth Internationalists, initiated a resolution urging NOW to call for a bicoastal demonstration in the spring of 1991 around the issue of abortion rights. FIT and SA comrades in the San Francisco area worked together in trying to gain support for this resolution in their NOW chapters. At the conference, a total of 757 signatures were collected on the resolution which was brought to both an issues hearing and then later to the floor of the conference. In spite of the considerable support for this idea as indicated by the number of signatures on the resolution, the central NOW leadership spoke in opposition to the proposal. It was defeated at the issues hearing and the conference ended before several resolutions—this one among them—could be debated and voted on in the final plenary session.

An assessment of the defeat of this resolution needs to take several considerations into account. On the one hand, NOW's hesitation to call for such mass action at this time, and rather to focus on electoral work, represents a step backward in terms of building a strong, effective pro-choice movement. There was also a tendency to restrict rather than encourage debate on this issue—a form of less-than-democratic functioning that indicates certain weaknesses within the organization itself. On the other hand, the fact that so many NOW members supported the resolution (or at least were in favor of its being considered and debated on the conference floor) indicates a healthy attitude toward mass action among the rank and file. Besides signing the resolution, many conference participants expressed enthusiastic support for a national demonstration in informal conversations between sessions. This indicates that further educational work on the meaning and importance of a mass action perspective is possible and might prove quite worthwhile, especially among newer recruits to NOW. This is the case even though the NOW membership was not yet willing to formally challenge their leadership on this point.

Finally, we need to understand that the defeat of this resolution does not necessarily mean that NOW will not call for a

national demonstration in the near future. Informal promises were made by key national leaders to hold such an action in the next year and a half or whenever a particularly pointed threat to reproductive rights again occurs. There was still a lot of rhetoric of "being out in the streets" and already some state NOW chapters—e.g., Pennsylvania—are organizing for statewide demonstrations in the fall. Part of the problem appears to be a turf battle—i.e., the NOW leadership wants to call the demonstration and not have it come from the ranks. While this represents a further indication of NOW's top-down leadership style, it—along with the sentiment being expressed by the ranks—does leave open the possibility for the reestablishment in the near future of a more positive and central orientation toward mass action.

AFL-CIO Pro-Choice Resolution

In addition to political independence and mass action, one of the key principles in any successful fight for women's rights is the ability to make links with other struggles for justice and liberation. The labor movement is an especially critical arena in which the issue of abortion rights must be discussed and debated. Given the dramatically increased presence of women in the wage workforce and in unions and also the centrality of reproductive freedom to women's ability to exercise control over other aspects of their lives, it is increasingly possible and important to win the support of organized labor for the pro-choice struggle. An important step toward building such links was taken at the recent NOW conference.

For several months before the conference, the Coalition of Labor Union Women had been carrying out a petition campaign supporting passage of a pro-choice resolution at the AFL-CIO Executive Council's meeting to be held in late July (see box on this page). Some of our FIT comrades had been involved in this petitioning drive through work in their unions and local pro-choice coalitions. We found considerable support for this campaign among union women and men. In order to strengthen this effort and to raise the general issue of labor support for reproductive rights, FIT comrades introduced a resolution which called on NOW to support the petition initiated by CLUW. Our intention had been to work with CLUW on this effort but they were not organizationally represented at the conference. We decided to collect the required 250 signatures to take the resolution directly to the floor of the conference, rather than introducing it through an issues hearing. This also gave us an opportunity to talk with more people about the question of labor involvement in the pro-choice movement.

Conference participants were very supportive of this resolution and we collected over 300 signatures in a fairly short period of time. On the final day, the resolution was accepted by acclamation on the floor of the conference. The CLUW petitions were then immediately xeroxed and handed out for people to take home to their local areas. In the course of collecting signatures it was apparent that many NOW members understand the importance of this link to the labor movement. While further discussion on this question is needed—including the responsibility of the feminist movement to lend its support to other struggles of working people and their unions—the passage of this resolution puts NOW on record as supporting a pro-choice initiative by labor activists.

Restrictions on Abortion Rights for Teens

A special aspect of the struggle for reproductive rights taken up at the NOW conference is that of young women fighting to maintain their autonomy in relation to abortion and contraceptive decisions. As a result of the Supreme Court decisions on June 25 upholding state laws requiring parental notification or consent for "minor" women seeking abortions, this became a major focus of the 1990 conference. There was a good workshop on this issue in which special attention was paid to the inadequacy of the judicial by-pass provision of these laws and their disproportionate use by white, upper-middle class, educated teenagers, leaving the majority of young women—especially those who are poor, working class, or members of oppressed nationalities—without adequate redress. It was emphasized that this latest attack on abortion rights is a very serious matter. Nationally, more than a million teenagers become pregnant each year; 80 percent of the pregnancies are unintended. There are already parental consent or notification laws on the books in 35 states. The recent Supreme Court decision opens the way to their active enforcement while it also sets a dangerous precedent for adding other restrictions, such as spousal consent for performing abortions or parental consent for obtaining contraceptives. In states that presently require parental consent or notification for abortions, young women who—for whatever reason—cannot obtain the permission of their parents for ending an unwanted pregnancy (or in many cases even tell their parents about the pregnancy) are likely to seek illegal and unsafe abortions. This has already happened, the most publicized case being that of Becky Bell who died as a result of a hemorrhage from a self-induced abortion because the state in which she lived, Indiana, had recently passed a parental consent statute. In other states that have or will enact such measures, many teenage women are likely to follow this tragic example and once again die or be maimed in the back alleys of our nation. This can happen even while the right to abortion established by *Roe v. Wade* remains on the books.

AFL-CIO Executive Council Rejects Pro-Choice Stand

Six pro-choice union resolutions were presented for vote to the 1989 AFL-CIO convention but were referred to the Executive Council for further consideration. At its July meeting, the Executive Council adopted a statement which abstained from taking a position on the question, that is, rejected the pro-choice resolutions. The August 6 *AFL-CIO News* reports that, according to Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO president, the decision "means that the federation and its state and local bodies are prohibited from working for or against abortion rights. But... encourages affiliated unions to act on the issue in accordance with the wishes of their members." Despite the decision of the council, the airing of the issue may be all to the good for future efforts to win labor's active participation in the pro-choice movement. The newspaper report concludes: "Several unions have adopted pro-choice resolutions, and some Executive Council members argued for abortion rights even as they agreed to support the federation's impartiality on the issue."

There was much discussion in the workshop "Protecting Young Women's Right to Abortion" about organizing educational campaigns around the question of parental consent. A film is being made by NOW in collaboration with Becky Bell's family which should prove especially helpful in these educational efforts. There were also calls for mass actions, on a state-by-state basis, before the November elections, focused on the rights of young women to obtain abortions and other reproductive services. The commitment and passion revealed in this discussion by women of all ages to ensure the reproductive rights of their younger sisters was very impressive and moving. However, there was less clarity in terms of a strategic orientation to effectively fight back and defeat the current attacks.

Educational campaigns are clearly important since the so-called "pro-family" ideology that currently pervades much of American political culture is creating considerable confusion and misconceptions about parental consent laws. For example, many people are for these repressive measures, believing they will help foster closer parent-child communication, support, and trust. A commonly heard statement is "I would want my teenage daughter to tell me if she is pregnant; I would want to support and help her." This understandable and progressive sentiment is, however, not the same as requiring consent or even notification at the force of the law. It is also not the same as denying to the young woman her right to make her own decisions about reproductive matters that will most fundamentally impact on her own life. Such educational programs need, however, to be framed in terms of the concerns of those most likely to be affected by these laws—i.e., young women and their families in working class and poor communities. They also need to be tied to and used to build mass actions that can effectively challenge the state's assumed authority in this matter.

A resolution passed in the final session of the conference directs NOW to organize a campus Freedom Caravan focused on the issue of young women's reproductive rights, with the goal of encouraging and enabling young women and men to become more active in the pro-choice movement. But, once again, this positive development became tied to Democratic and Republican party politics by the inclusion of a proposal to draw such newly activated youth into the election campaigns of pro-choice candidates. How best to mobilize high school and college students as campaign workers also became the focus of the debate on this resolution on the conference floor. The idea for fall demonstrations was essentially forgotten in the final tally. There is, however, a clear understanding among NOW activists of the seriousness of this latest attack on women's reproductive freedoms and an equally clear commitment to fight back. What is needed is a good strategy for developing and then mobilizing majority sentiment in favor of a woman's right to safe, legal, and affordable abortion no matter what her age. A responsibility of revolutionary socialist activists is to help develop such a strategy and to do it before there are more Becky Bells.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The 1990 NOW conference revealed many of the strengths of this organization and the movement it is leading and also

some important weaknesses. On the positive side was the participation of many new activists who have been drawn into the struggle around the recent attacks on abortion rights. Such rank-and-file members seem open to new ideas such as initiatives for mass actions or campaigns organized around particular issues such as young women's access to abortion. This latter effort also increases the possibility for a strengthening of the participation of younger women in the pro-choice movement and ultimately in other feminist issues as well. The passage of the resolution supporting CLUW's petition campaign to the AFL-CIO could likewise lead to new and important links between the feminist and labor movements. And finally we see growing support for the idea of founding a new party and moving in a direction toward political independence and away from reliance on the Democratic and Republican parties. It is very encouraging that the NOW leadership is going ahead with their commitment to explore the idea of a new party that could bring together activists from many movements for social and economic justice and for human liberation.

On the other hand, we need to be clear on some of the weaknesses of NOW's approach. Of particular significance is the continuing support for Democratic and Republican party politicians and the continuing illusion that such electoral politics is the key route to women's political empowerment. We must also not gloss over some of the longstanding problems of this organization such as its lack of racial diversity and inadequate attention to the perspectives and concerns of women of color as well as the absence of any clear class analysis, even though many of the issues NOW is currently raising are of concern to working class women and could easily take on a class struggle character. Particularly problematical is the NOW leadership pattern that inhibits rather than promotes grass-roots initiatives and debate. This was particularly clear at the recent conference in relation to the handling of the proposal for a national spring mobilization. Such a leadership pattern is probably exacerbated by the inexperience of many of the new members of NOW which makes them less willing and less able to challenge central leaders on basic issues of orientation and strategy.

It is, however, the very swelling of the ranks of NOW that also creates a possibility for eventually overcoming these weaknesses and problems. As new activists gain experience they will learn their own lessons and begin to make their own assessments of alternative proposals for organizing and action. It is also likely that these newly activated forces will increasingly represent a diversity of American women in terms of race, ethnicity, class, and age. The recent upsurge in the struggle for women's rights has the potential to be much more inclusive than the earlier waves of feminist struggle in U.S. history. To be realized, this potential must, of course, be consciously built. If we are successful in forging a movement that represents the interests of the broad majority of American women, and that at the same time bases itself on the strategic orientations of political independence, broad-based coalitions, and mass actions, this will represent a force capable of winning significant victories for women's rights and, beyond that, transforming American society toward a more just and humane future for all. □

July 15, 1990

The Crisis of the U.S. Union Movement—Part II

by Dave Riehle

The first part of this article discussed the severe crisis of the union movement today and the employer attack—especially focusing on the default of the labor bureaucracy and the undermining of industry-wide pattern agreements as a key element in the bosses' strategy during the 1980s.

The battle between Boise-Cascade corporation—a giant paper manufacturer—along with the BE&K Construction Co. on the one side, and union construction workers in International Falls, Minnesota, on the other, took place at the site of a \$535 million plant expansion. This was another prominent instance in 1989 of proletarian methods of struggle being applied by the rank and file over the heads of the union leadership.

Like the 1986 Hormel strike, Boise-Cascade erupted into the national news for a few days as workers temporarily had the upper hand. Unlike Hormel, however, news coverage from International Falls on September 9 showed club-wielding workers charging a scab compound and routing the strikebreakers. Although the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* reported that the “mob scene was an ugly assault on the senses,” it soon became evident that for many unionized workers it was a sight for sore eyes.

A rally organized by the Minnesota AFL-CIO a week later at the state capitol in St. Paul to defend the Falls strikers was officially reported to have had 11,000 in attendance. Unfortunately, this did not indicate any intention on the part of the union leaders to mobilize a struggle—quite the opposite. One of the motivations for the St. Paul rally was to divert any effort to mobilize supporters to go to International Falls. Furthermore, the object of the construction trades bureaucrats all along had been to get some agreement with BE&K and Boise which would allow work to continue by setting up a separate entrance gate for the use of union construction workers. The most that the AFL-CIO and construction trades leaders were prepared to do was take out newspaper ads reproaching the state legislature for handing out \$16 million in subsidies to Boise for the project, and to file a lawsuit against the company. Meanwhile, the FBI and local cops continue to review videotapes of the September 9 battle to single out victims for prosecution. Another round of trials began on March 20 in Baudette, Minnesota, for 15 charged with felony riot.

One interesting aspect of the BE&K fight has been that the entire initiative for the struggle came from so-called “wildcat strikers.” Wherever their picket lines were established union workers refused to cross. Construction union bureaucrats have not sanctioned the picket lines and have attempted to convince the “wildcatters” to take them down. But they also have not repudiated the strikers—who are present, along with their supporters, at many official labor events. This partly reflects a different set of relationships between workers and officials in the construction unions, but it also expresses the more combative mood among unionized workers in general. The success so far of the union bureaucracy in containing this mood to episodic

outbursts should not mislead anyone into mistaking it for passivity.

Opposition Caucuses

In a number of national and “international” unions forces attempting to present an alternative to the established leaderships have arisen and enjoyed modest success. The more significant groupings—like Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and New Directions in the UAW—are real factors in the internal life of their unions, although their organized forces remain small minorities with no representation at the national leadership level and only limited programs for democratic reforms. The one exception to this is the National Mail Handlers Union, an affiliate of the gangster-dominated Laborers International, where a Black-led prodemocracy slate won the national leadership and has fought off attempts by the Laborers to put them in receivership. The Mail Handlers leadership was present at the May 1989 *Labor Notes* conference and spoke at several sessions.

Labor Notes, the widely circulated progressive and prodemocracy newsletter, while not the official voice of any particular union caucus, has close ties to the leadership of TDU and New Directions. TDU's fortunes have continued to advance, as the Teamsters union, under the threat of government prosecution, has made certain concessions on democratic rights for the membership. These, if implemented, could result in the most representative, or perhaps the only representative, Teamsters national convention which has ever taken place—and certainly the only one where free and open discussion has happened since Miles Dunne, representing Local 544 of Minneapolis, took the floor to debate international president Dan Tobin in 1940.

The democratic reforms which the Teamsters leadership agreed to in March—in order to settle the government's racketeering lawsuit—provide for rank-and-file election of union officers for the first time. Of course, the government is not intervening in the Teamsters to promote rank-and-file control of the union. But opposition militants certainly ought to take advantage of the opportunity to augment their forces. No one should have any illusions that such democratic concessions won through government intervention can, in themselves, be anything other than conditional and temporary. Steelworker Ed Sadlowski won election to the post of district director in the Chicago area in 1973 through the intervention of the Labor Department—which helped to set aside a crooked election. But when he ran for international president in 1976 on a strong anticorruption platform, he got no help from the government

as the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) bureaucracy mobilized to defeat him in a dishonest, violence-ridden campaign of intimidation and red-baiting.

A widely respected Teamster reformer, Ron Carey, president of International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 804 in New York City for 22 years, is running for international president. The election will take place in 1991. Although not affiliated with TDU, Carey has been outspoken against concession bargaining, especially at United Parcel Service, where 80 percent of Local 804's membership works. His candidacy has the support of TDU.

New Directions ran several candidates for regional-level posts in the UAW last year, and they were all defeated. At the UAW convention, Owen Bieber was reelected as international president without opposition. No dissidents were elected to the international executive board. Nevertheless, New Directions held a successful founding convention with more than 500 in attendance in St. Louis in October and clearly has significant support within the UAW.

UAW Smyrna Defeat

The UAW received a significant defeat when its organizing campaign at the Nissan Auto plant in Smyrna, Tennessee, was defeated by more than 2 to 1. This has not altered in any way the UAW bureaucracy's commitment to cooperation with the "team concept" programs of the auto corporations—which mean speedup and evisceration of shop floor unionism—or with the chauvinist anti-import campaigns.

Steve Yokich, the new head of UAW's GM department, makes superficially militant noises about new resistance to the automakers' demands as the fall expiration of the GM contract approaches. This reflects in part the rage of GM workers who are told that the UAW-sponsored concessions of the 1980s would produce job security. Since 1987, GM has closed eight assembly plants and eliminated 30,000 jobs, and has announced plans to shut three more. This year GM temporarily closed 28 of its 36 assembly plants in the U.S. and Canada, laying off 85,000 workers for a week or more. New Directions is mainly based in the GM plants, and the UAW bureaucracy has cause for concern about its ability to deliver a docile GM workforce to the company this fall.

Yokich tries to present himself as a contrast to his predecessor as head of the GM department, Donald Ephlin, a shameless company stooge (who might more accurately have been described as head of GM's UAW department). Ephlin was a frequent flyer on GM corporate jets and practically inseparable from GM executives—with whom he traveled, dined, and played. Yokich nevertheless says he could support programs to increase plant productivity, in return for "real" job security. In other words, he is putting GM on notice that he needs to get some flashy promises in order to deliver an agreement this fall.

Stirrings In the USWA

In the USWA the rank-and-file insurgency led by Ed Sadlowski in the mid-1970s was crushed as the industry brutally restructured, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs and a large part of the younger workers who were the social base for his movement. Not much in the way of dissident opinion has been heard since the early 1980s when Joe Samargia, a supporter of Sadlowski in the presidential election, was eliminated as director of District 33—made up mainly of the iron miners in Minnesota and Michigan. As unemployment mounted to devastating levels on Minnesota's Iron Range in the early '80s, Samargia was given a patronage job in St. Paul by Governor Rudy Perpich, effectively removing him from the union and eliminating him as a possible pole of attraction for protesting unemployed iron miners. But as production on the Iron Range has slowly recovered, attempts to alter the direction of the USWA revived. Dave Foster, secretary treasurer of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly and head of the grievance committee at a small steel mill in the Twin Cities, was recently elected District 33 director. Foster was a founder of National Rank and File Against Concessions which had a brief existence around the time of the Hormel strike. He ran on a program of restoring and defending uniform national pattern agreements in the steel industry. Although the vote was close, it indicates some new motion and, for the first time in many years, a dissident voice may be present on the USWA's international executive board. Another new development in the USWA is the emergence of militant retiree groups, especially in northeast Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Continuing Crisis In Meatpacking

In the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Packinghouse Division, former director Lewie Anderson, who was summarily dismissed in January 1989, has set up a dissident organization called REAP (Research, Education, Advocacy, People). This organization enrolled many of the local meatpacking union officers who went along with his betrayal of the P-9 strike. After Anderson's shortlived attempt to lead an offensive against the meatpacking bosses fizzled in 1987-88, he was dumped by Wynn and given a job by his supporters as a business agent at Local 304A in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. REAP scheduled a founding convention for April 5-6 in Sioux Falls. Its literature has largely limited itself to sniping at the UFCW leadership's salaries (William Wynn's annual pay this year will be \$250,000) and complaints about the union's concessions policies—placing primary responsibility not on Wynn himself but on his assistant, William Olwell. Wynn supporters do not fail to point out that the concessions strategy was implemented under Anderson's tenure in the 1980s. Neither

Coming Next Month:

The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department is presently spearheading a campaign launched by leaders of that labor federation to win federal legislation outlawing the hiring of scab workers. The effort centers around bills introduced into Congress by Representative William Clay of Missouri (H.R. 3936), and the Senate by Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio (S. 2112)—both Democrats. In our October issue Richard Scully will give an assessment of this effort and what it means for the labor movement in the U.S.

side mentions the betrayal of the Hormel workers, the joint work of Anderson and Wynn.

Major concessions began when Anderson agreed to givebacks during the Wilson meatpacking company's bankruptcy in the early '80s. In 1981 the base wage rate in meatpacking under the national agreement was \$10.69 per hour, supplemented by various incentive payments. The Anderson concessions brought Wilson's base rate down to \$8.00 per hour, and parts of the bankrupt company were reorganized as Farmstead Foods, an ostensibly independent corporation that sold most of its output to Wilson. Many other unionized meatpacking plants were similarly reincorporated with new names and the union agreements were abrogated entirely, with no serious opposition from the UFCW. This resulted in operations paying packinghouse workers \$4-5 per hour. Alongside these reorganized companies, new, primarily nonunion, meatpackers grew up to eventually dominate the industry—such as Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) and Excel, numbers 1 and 2 in the industry.

It was in this environment that Hormel, the most profitable packer, went on its offensive against Local P-9 in the mid-1980s. When P-9 resisted, the UFCW played the decisive role in defeating the strikers. Shortly after the P-9 defeat, Hormel reorganized the slaughterhouse section of its Austin plant into a dummy corporation called Quality Pork Products and signed a sweetheart agreement with the UFCW providing for wages even lower than in the rest of the plant.

Then, early this year, Farmstead demanded new concessions. The UFCW international ordered the two Farmstead locals, P-3 and P-6, not to vote on proposed concessions, on the assumption that granting them would provide no guarantee that the company would stay in business anyway. Farmstead threatened to go out of business without concessions, and started laying off workers at the two plants. As of this writing, both plants are shut down with little hope of reopening.

IBP, the industry giant, is building a huge hog slaughterhouse in Waterloo, Iowa, only a few miles from Farmstead's second plant. On May 12 Farmstead workers in Albert Lea, members of P-6, voted to accept concessions demanded by the company. Sixty-two percent reportedly voted in favor. The major concession was to be the assumption by the workers of all or most of the costs of health insurance. This would have run to hundreds of dollars a month, and meant that many workers in one of the most dangerous and debilitating industries would simply not be able to afford medical and hospitalization insurance. On March 20, Farmstead officials announced that the Albert Lea plant would be closed anyway.

The general downward spiral of wages and working conditions in this and other industries cannot be stemmed, or even confronted, without a no-holds-barred struggle to reestablish uniform national wage rates under a pattern agreement. Neither the Wynn/Olwell leadership nor Anderson and his followers are prepared to carry this out.

REAP puts forward a program of rank-and-file election of international and regional officers, against concessionary collaboration with the employers, and some vague statements about justice and respect for the members. It also argues for adversarial unionism and more militant tactics. None of this is new. Anderson, who was a protege of the old Stalinist leadership of the former United Packinghouse Workers union which

merged with other unions to form the UFCW, used to put out this kind of material when he was Packinghouse Division director. However, at each crucial juncture in the struggle over concessions, going back at least to 1981, he capitulated to the demands of the UFCW leaders for concessions—if he did not actually initiate them himself. REAP has shown no sign thus far of having any perspective of organizing a rank-and-file movement, or even putting forward a coherent program for change. The only recent attempt to address this problem in a comprehensive way remains the 15-point "Packinghouse Workers Bill of Rights" adopted by the Rank and File Packinghouse Workers Conference in Austin, Minnesota, in May 1987 (see *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 43).

The brutal assault on packinghouse workers throughout the 1980s has driven them back to a preunion stage of wages and conditions. Speed-up methods of production have been applied with no regard for the human body that has to carry them out, and wages are largely determined by the simple supply and demand of the labor market. That is true especially in rural areas where most of the new packing plants are being located. In some cases, where there are labor shortages, nonunion employers actually pay higher wages than those with union contracts. Eventually the rank-and-file workers will rebel against these conditions, as they did in the 1930s beginning in Austin in 1933.

What's left of the once independent and militant United Packinghouse Workers of America is merely an administrative category within the million-member United Food and Commercial Workers Union. The national wage agreement survives in highly uncertain circumstances mainly in a few plants of the John Morrell Co., and the union is largely eliminated from the industry. What an epitaph this is for the 1980s strategy of the bureaucrats—who were going to make statesmanlike concessions to save "their" employers.

Class Struggle Program Needed

For a rank-and-file rebellion to assume coherent and effective form, it will be necessary for it to crystallize around a class struggle trade union program that is based on the fundamental recognition of one fact: that gains for the workers can only come through the independent action of the workers themselves—and an all-out struggle *against* the employers.

For the concepts of class struggle and class independence to once again penetrate the conscious thinking of the masses of workers, and for it to become a lever to move millions into struggle, it must link up the immediate and urgent needs of the workers with clear proposals for what can be done—proposals that make sense to workers at their present level of understanding. This general programmatic conception is centered around four basic ideas:

- **Solidarity:** All workers should unite in action. This can be expressed naturally in many forms. One crucial front, as we have discussed in this article, is *industrial solidarity*, expressed through industry-wide pattern agreements that prevent the employers from playing off one group against another.
- **Class independence:** The workers should *rely on themselves* and their own power and place no confidence in anyone else—politicians, "good employers," sym-

pathetic cops, judges, lawyers, investors, and so on. The workers themselves and nobody else should make all decisions affecting them. It was this characteristic, more than anything else, that made P-9 such a threat to both the Hormel company and the union bureaucracy.

- **Union democracy:** All decisions should be made through free and open discussion and the vote of all concerned and those decisions should be binding. The rank and file must be fully informed of all matters affecting their interests—*no negotiations behind closed doors between the bosses and the bureaucrats.*
- **Proletarian methods of struggle:** Only the massive, direct, and independent intervention of the rank and file, not shrinking from confrontation with the forces of “law and order,” can win decisive victories. Allies should be sought out from the working class as a whole—employed and unemployed—and from other social layers, including Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, the women’s movement, etc.

Anybody who has some familiarity with the working class knows that these concepts express how workers *feel* when their rights and needs are being challenged. Concrete and realistic proposals based on these considerations in a situation of general ferment can overcome bureaucratic obstacles and hesitations and be translated into mass action. It is obvious that these concepts are intertwined with each other and form a coherent whole.

Lessons of the Past

Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers’ strikes wrote in 1966:

In broad terms, a union left wing can have real meaning only to the extent it strives consistently to help the workers shed class-collaborationist illusions and acquire class struggle concepts. This leads toward full use of union power in direct confrontations with the owners of industry over issues important to the workers. In the process they come up against interventions by the capitalist government on the side of the employers. Through these experiences an honest, knowing union leadership can teach rich lessons about the role of government in the class struggle and about the nature of capitalist politicians presently running the government. The workers can be helped to grasp the need for organization of their own, independent party based on their existing organizations, the unions.

There can be no solution short of building a leadership based on class struggle concepts, a leadership that emerges from a left wing dedicated to the basic perspectives of rank-and-file control over all union affairs. Through such close ties between leadership and membership the full power of the working class can be mobilized. In action the workers will demonstrate their courage, resourcefulness, ingenuity—their capacity to change everything for the better.

Dobbs was speaking from experience. By creatively applying these concepts he and his comrades transformed a small craft union of 150 members into a powerful, dynamic organization of 5,000 that fought three strikes and virtual civil war in Minneapolis in 1934—emerging victorious and transforming Minneapolis from an open shop citadel to a union town. Those who want to pursue this story further should read the four-

volume Teamster series Dobbs wrote on the history of the struggle from 1934-41, published by Pathfinder Press.

At the time Dobbs wrote in 1966, it was not yet possible to apply the programmatic concepts outlined above. Today, conditions are more favorable, the reverse side of the success of the employers’ decade-long offensive. It has started to generate a real opposition. The existence of groupings like *Labor Notes*, TDU, New Directions, and others is symptomatic. Also symptomatic are the big, long, and bitter strikes—regardless of their immediate achievements—and especially the beginnings of independently initiated proletarian methods of struggle in Austin, Minnesota, the Pittston strike, International Falls, Minnesota, and elsewhere. It is clear that the basic elements for the formation of a class struggle left wing are accumulating within the labor movement. One element not yet present is the existence of a clearly articulated programmatic alternative—beyond simple democratic reforms.

Many American workers look back to the 1950s and 1960s as a sort of golden age from which they have been expelled abruptly by the antiunion offensive of the 1980s. Many attempts to grapple theoretically with what happened to the unions in the 1980s exaggerate and idealize the relative prosperity and stable class relations of the 25-year postwar boom and look to that period as a norm, rather than as a temporary social equilibrium. It focuses superficially on the quasi-institutional status of the unions at that time, without taking into account the underlying social and class contradictions that made new developments inevitable. Life *was* better and more secure for many workers in that period—mainly white male workers—but it is illusory to hope that such a period will simply come around again. The relative prosperity of the postwar era was founded on the colossal human and material destruction of World War II. It is neither desirable nor possible to repeat that experience.

Politically, the seeds of the capitulation of the union leadership to the capitalist offensive of the 1980s were already sown by the end of the 1940s. James P. Cannon noted in 1952 in a report titled, “What Must Lead to a New Labor Upsurge?”:

Big changes have taken place since the stormy days of the early CIO—and even since the years 1944-46. In the past five or six years of the armaments boom the class struggle has been muffled, mainly as a result of full employment and comparatively high wages. The upsurge of the late thirties has been followed by a workers’ attitude of wait and see. The workers have settled down into a relative passivity, and a monolithic conservative bureaucracy has been consolidated with firm control over the unions.

This new consolidated, conservative bureaucracy is closely tied in with the government and is, in effect, a government agency within the unions. It fully and consciously supports the whole foreign program of American imperialism and hopes to share in the crumbs of the prospective spoils at the expense of the rest of the people of the whole world.

The American working class has changed profoundly in the past twenty years. In fact it has undergone two profound changes. First, it changed from the atomized and helpless class of the twenties to the insurgent, semirevolutionary mass movements of the middle and late thirties, which rose up on the yeast of the Great Depression. Second, this insurgent, broadly democratic mass movement of the thirties has

(Continued on page 26)

Soviet Communist Party Congress Registers Dramatic Changes

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The 4,657 delegates who assembled July 2 in Moscow for the 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, amidst growing social and economic crises, had their work cut out for them. Part of their work resulted from the policy shifts to perestroika and glasnost launched since the 27th Party Congress five years ago. These reforms had been launched in an effort to extricate the Soviet economy from the stagnation that had resulted from the Communist Party's own tyrannic rule. However, the reforms have not solved the economic problem and have engendered new ones.

The results of the political and economic restructuring—in particular the new tolerance for differing views—have been far reaching. They have created an opening in both the USSR and Eastern Europe for a mass rebellion against the hated Stalinist apparatuses, bringing about a dramatic shift in the relationship of forces in the workers' states. They have also exposed the bankruptcy of the CPSU itself.

Background to the Crisis

The privileged apparatus that has held a monopoly of political and economic power over the nationalized economy in the USSR since the late 1920s is today caught in its own contradictions. The continued bureaucratic dictatorship over the economy has only meant, and can only mean, greater economic stagnation and social deterioration, which undermines the material basis for the bureaucracy's welfare. The resulting mass opposition could even bring about its overthrow. So changes were imperative. Scientific and technological progress required a greater openness, which meant lifting the repressive apparatus that had terrorized the population into silence. But this provided openings for the emergence of all sorts of forces opposed to the party and its policies, and beyond their ability to control.

On an economic level, the bureaucracy's choices are no more promising. It seems obvious that only mass working class and peasant control over the land and industries can provide a basis for the rational use of the resources in the interests of the majority. However, the bureaucracy cannot allow this as it would certainly mean an end to the power and privileges of the

apparatus. So the bureaucracy is looking for some kind of intermediate solution—market mechanisms, privatization, help from imperialism—to improve economic efficiency and to get capital and technology. They hope to pull the Soviet economy out of its slump while perpetuating bureaucratic rule.

The bureaucracy today, as it has been since it consolidated its rule in the mid-1920s, is caught between the two major social classes, themselves locked in permanent struggle, the capitalist class and the workers. The capitalists, or imperialists, seek stable and considerable profits from their investments. The political situation in the USSR is not promising to them because the workers there are already organizing against the social inequities of their society which have only become more pronounced since the bureaucracy's economic restructuring has been implemented. In the meantime, the bureaucracy has endeavored to throw the responsibility for solving the deep crisis onto the shoulders of the producers through decentralization and enterprise self-accounting which have only worsened the crisis.

The focus of today's mass protests in the USSR—whether of the non-Russian nationalities, the victims of environmental catastrophes, or workers demanding food, clothing, and shelter—has been the Communist Party and its apparatus which is universally despised and more and more isolated. As a result, tens of thousands of the 19 million party members, most of whom joined for personal advancement, have quit to avoid public abuse.

The plethora of post-glasnost opinion polls have documented the party's unpopularity. One conducted by *Siberskaya Gazeta* in June revealed that 85 percent of those polled felt the party's policies served "party functionaries," only 7 percent felt the party served the "people as a whole," and 2 percent the "working class." Only 27 percent of the party members surveyed said that they would join the party again if they had to do it over. Even Gorbachev has lost considerable public confidence over the past months. The Communist Party magazine *Dialog* reported that only 19 percent of the people polled in June had confidence in Gorbachev's policies, down from 46 percent in March, evidence that the bureaucracy's options are narrowing even further.

Congress Reflects the Crisis

The official party platform for the Congress, published June 28 in *Pravda*, addressed none of the pressing social problems and was basically irrelevant as far as the masses of the population was concerned. It did make a few concessions toward democratizing the apparatus or overhauling it. These measures were evidently aimed at addressing some complaints that had been raised by party dissidents in the opposition platforms (unprecedented since the 1920s)—notably the Democratic Platform and the Marxist Platform. Both of these documents had been published in *Pravda* in the months leading up to the Congress,¹ and the official party platform formally acknowledged the right of loose groupings to form inside the party around such statements, though not formal factions.

As it turned out, the Soviet people are not the only ones who oppose what the CP and the government are doing; the delegates to the Party Congress expressed their opposition as well. A poll of delegates carried out by a Party Central Committee commission showed the following: On privatization of property, which Gorbachev and his advisers are promoting with ever greater vigor, 12 percent thought it should be banned; 11 percent felt it should dominate the economy; 73 percent thought it should have only a minor role. As far as the government's economic reforms, 52 percent felt they were "half measures," 25 percent felt they would lead to chaos; only 11 percent thought they would radically improve the situation. A full 54 percent felt that the government's foreign policy only partially meets Soviet interests and 10 percent felt it does not meet them at all.² We do not know in what direction they think foreign policy should go, but it is unlikely to be a more internationalist one.

Defections from the Party

Such dissension within the delegates, 68 percent of whom were full-time party functionaries, farm and factory directors, ministers, or appointees to other posts, had prompted some speculation that the Congress would precipitate a major split. However, while there were numerous noisy charges and countercharges made at the party tops by the delegates, amongst the delegates themselves, and at the delegates by the party tops, the body adjourned after its nearly two-week-long series of meetings more or less intact. Gorbachev was reelected party head (3,411 for, 1,116 against) and the party's program was approved without significant dissent.

However, several prominent figures who think Gorbachev is moving too slowly with the introduction of market reforms and privatization publicly resigned from the

party right as the Congress was adjourning. Boris Yeltsin, the "maverick" recently elected president of the Parliament of the Russian Republic, and Gavriil Popov, president of the Moscow Soviet, abandoned the sinking ship as did two dozen or so others, many of whom were supporters of Democratic Platform.

In a statement they released announcing their resignation from the party, Popov and Anatoly Sobchak, the head of the Leningrad City Council, explained their disappointment with the Congress for not surrendering its power, for not offering the country a "real program for the transition to a new society," for refusing to support "the primacy of universal human values, the transition to a market economy, and to a plurality of forms of ownership, including citizens' private ownership."³ They were leaving the CP, they said, to assist in the creation of a multiparty system. At the conclusion of their statement, however, they appealed "to all council leaders of all levels not to join any political party," thereby offering proof that they really have no program at all to offer as an alternative to that of the CPSU.

Only the last five of the Congress's eleven days were televised. Selections from the first sessions were televised in the evenings. Foreign and Soviet correspondents were allowed to observe the proceedings.

Vladimir Bludov, a delegate from Magadan in far northeast Siberia, a gold-mining region that had received no meat deliveries as of June 1, was the first delegate to speak. He demanded the resignation of the entire Politburo and the Central Committee and that none of them should again be allowed to run for top party posts. The trade unions in the Magadan region recently vowed to conduct a general strike if deliveries of food and other vital goods were not received. Although the Soviet Union is one of the world's largest gold producers, the production figures are a state secret; the miners live crowded in poorly heated huts and never have enough to eat, according to *Moskovskiy Novosti*.

Bludov was followed soon by Leningrad delegate Yuri Boldyrev, a supporter of the Democratic Platform, who proposed the delegates discuss the bad consequences of the decades of one-party rule and "the political responsibility of the Communist Party towards the people." Surprisingly, more than 1,000 delegates supported his motion even though such a discussion would have undoubtedly raised numerous crimes of the Stalin and post-Stalin era that many present would rather not have aired. The delegates supported a motion to have the right to question every member of the Politburo. However, any questions—there were thousands in the end—had to be sub-

mitted in writing through a Congress commission. The Politburo members answered some before the body.

Gorbachev's Speech

Gorbachev, in his opening speech that lasted over two hours, summarized the developments since the inauguration of the restructuring over four years ago. He denied that the economic and social problems of today were caused by perestroika:

It was an extremely grim legacy that we inherited. Let us jointly recall and consider the facts.

Take the neglect in the countryside, in farming and in the food processing industry. Did it arise yesterday, after 1985? Yet it affects the food situation to this day as well as farmers' lives and positions.

Or the sorry state of our forests and rivers, the millions of hectares of fertile land flooded as a result of the former policy in power generation. Are these deeds of the past few years?

The grim environmental situation: more than 100 cities in a disaster zone, with 1,000 industrial establishments brought to a standstill as a result; the drama of Lake Baikal, the Aral Sea, Lake Ladoga and the Sea of Azov; Chernobyl and other accidents; the disasters involving railways and gas pipelines. Are not all these the consequences of policy pursued for decades?

Unfortunately, none of these problems is directly addressed by Gorbachev's policies, although, according to *Pravda*, the Congress did vote to establish a commission to investigate the political consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

Gorbachev admitted that the many problems have worsened since the changes were instituted, and blamed "the bureaucratic stratum in the managerial structures and . . . the social forces associated with it." The situation is "intolerable" in the consumer market, he said, attributing this to the fact that "cash incomes have been growing faster than the production of goods." Too many people received pay increases, like "school teachers, medical doctors, and other brackets and also pensions and stipends" were increased. (Note: In May Gorbachev got a pay increase from the Supreme Soviet for his new post as president of the Parliament: 4,000 rubles per month, 2,300 after taxes, plus a house in Moscow, the country, and the Crimea; special planes, helicopters, and cars; a 1,500-ruble per month pension and a state-owned country house with servants and guards and transport upon retirement.)

If the workers had less money, of course, there might be a few more goods on the shelves because people could not afford to buy them. It is also true that when there are no goods to buy, people have nowhere to spend their money. This has given rise to what capitalist and Kremlin economists are calling the "ruble overhang," which they somehow consider part of the bureaucracy's economic problem that needs eliminating. More food and consumer goods in the shops, of course, would go a long way toward eliminating this problem. The shortage is the problem, not the wage increases workers have received. After all, at least 41 million people in the USSR earn less than an official poverty wage of 78 rubles per month.⁵ Wage increases are consistently among the demands raised by striking workers.

Gorbachev blames wasteful enterprises, poor support to the government from the Politburo (the government was the Politburo!), and too many subsidies as well for the continuing economic crises.

The economic proposals he offers remain unchanged:

The very logic of perestroika and the dramatic social and economic situation in the country bring us face-to-face with the need for fundamental changes in the economic system. What we are talking about is establishing a basically new model of the economy: a multisectoral model, with diverse forms of ownership and management, and with a modern market infrastructure.

This will clear the road to people's business activity and initiative, and create new and powerful motivations for fruitful work, and greater economic efficiency.

Gorbachev called "absurd" his own government's announcement several months back that the transition to a market economy would start with retail price hikes. The tactics had "not been thought out well enough," he concluded. The original announcement prompted panic buying, emptying shelves completely in only a day or two. It was shortly rescinded.

Everything should be done to insure "the people will be socially protected" during "this difficult transition." He went on:

When going over to a market economy we must single out the measures that come first. Even today, nothing prevents us from beginning to turn state enterprises into joint stock companies, from granting real freedom of enterprise, from leasing small enterprises and shops, and putting up housing, stocks, shares, and other equities, as well as part of the means of production, for purchase and sale.

How will this clean up the environment affecting the "more than 100 cities in a disaster zone" so that the 1,000 closed enterprises can function? What will it do to get food and vital medical aid to children in Turkmenia where 53 of every 1,000 children born in 1988 died before reaching one year of age and where "no children get enough to eat"?⁶ How can Gorbachev's program transform Central Asia from a monocrop cotton economy, under the near-feudal management of the apparatus? How will it eliminate child labor and end the oppression of women—an oppression that is so severe that, according to the Soviet documentary "The Flame" made in 1988, over a recent 18-month period more than 360 women burned themselves to death in order to protest the conservative conditions of life which allow them no freedoms?

The delegates, it seems, did not raise these questions. However, they were not very pleased with Gorbachev's speech. They applauded him for barely five seconds, "firmly in their seats," as *Financial Times* reporter Quentin Peel described it. Such a response by delegates to a speech by the party chief at a party congress is certainly without precedent and indicates that something has changed, even if it is not the social priorities of the delegates.

Although a movement focused on the oppression of women in the USSR has not been a prominent part of the popular and workers' upsurge to date, Gorbachev did recognize that "We have to admit that the woman question is among the most crucial issues facing us."

"Perhaps we should take real steps at this very Congress to have women represented in the Central Committee, at the Politburo, and the Central Committee Secretariat," he added.

Only 7.5 percent of the delegates at the Congress were women. There is one woman on the new Politburo, replacing Alexander Biryukova who had been in charge of light industry and was allowed to retire. The woman, Galina Semyonova, fills the new post on women's issues.

Politburo Members Speak

The Minister of Defense Marshal Dmitri Yazov provided an indication of the breadth of rebellion among the youth. He informed the Congress that the Soviet army is 400,000 short because of widespread draft evasion "encouraged by university leaders and some newspapers." Yazov was the commander of the government troops who attacked peaceful protesters in Tbilisi, capital of the Georgian Republic, on April 9, 1989, killing 20.

Chairman of the KGB, Vladimir A. Kryuchkov, explained the rationale for his police point of view. Kryuchkov represented the Kremlin in Hungary in 1956 and

helped orchestrate the bloody Soviet invasion in that year: "In all my practical work, I act on the deep conviction that perestroika was the only and inevitable way out of the dead-end situation in which our country found itself in the mid-80's. The real factors uncovered by perestroika leave us without a doubt that each year of delay before the beginning of renewal was fraught with the danger of an unpredictable social explosion."

He calls for a "regulated market" to halt the social process that he sees unfolding—a shadow economy, and the growing stratification of wealth (there are tens of thousands of millionaires already). "At one pole we have luxury, and at the other difficulties and deprivation. Must we not think about where all this will lead us? If we don't catch ourselves in time, then at the present rate of growth of social distortions, will we or our children not find ourselves on the threshold of a new version of the October revolution?"

Kryuchkov also attacked Oleg Kalugin, a former general in the KGB who has become a popular hero for exposing how the KGB, despite glasnost, is continuing its surveillance and FBI-type dirty tricks against democratic forces. He reported that the reforms were a sham and that the KGB still took its orders from the party. Kalugin has been stripped of his rank and medals for speaking out and, since the Congress, criminal charges have been raised against him, though a number of deputies in the Supreme Soviet have publicly demanded that his charges be investigated.

The much-derided Yegor Ligachev, who has been in charge of agriculture, received hearty applause for his demagogic defense of socialism, attacks on private property, and defense of public ownership; for his defense of the party and attacks on the "veering from side to side" or "blind radicalism" of the reformers and marketeers. Ligachev is a believer in the old Stalinist order which he falsely equates with socialism. The bourgeois reporters call him a "Communist hard-liner" and it was those types who applauded him with such energy at the Congress. But he is, of course, a Stalinist hard-liner and not a real communist at all. He has no real alternative economic program to offer except the pre-Gorbachev system that created all the current problems.

Gorbachev, in his opening speech, was more forthright about this sticky problem for the bureaucracy. Referring to the deep-going changes underway in Eastern Europe, he said: "When somebody says this is the 'collapse of socialism,' we counter it with the question, 'What socialism?' That which had been, in point of fact, a variation of Stalin's authoritarian

bureaucratic system that we have ourselves discarded?"

Remarks in a similar vein were expressed on July 4 by Leonid Abalkin, deputy prime minister and one of Gorbachev's key economic advisers. Abalkin declared to the Congress that the party "had failed socialist ideals in every respect."

Then he went on with an impassioned plea for market reforms:

If we want to have an efficient economy . . . if we want to have shops full of a wide range of high quality goods, if we want to get rid of the disgrace of queues and speculators, if we want sufficiently powerful incentives for people to work, then we have no choice other than a market economy . . . to secure social well-being.

At least part of the audience tried to clap him into silence, according to Leyla Boulton in the *Financial Times* report of July 5. The words "market economy" were very unpopular among the majority of the delegates representing the hard-line Stalinist current, like Ligachev, as were the words "private property." In fact the delegates on July 3 refused to allow the words "market economy" to be used when naming the Congress's economic commission.

Intervention of the Democratic Platform Group

However, the party's own property and its privileges were an issue the Congress could not avoid. Numerous mass protest actions have included attacks on the privileges of party members and the apparatus. The Democratic Platform raised the popular demand that the party should divest itself of its own private property, which was reported to include almost five billion rubles in an "insurance fund." The motion was defeated by the Congress, but a draft resolution on "Budget and Property" was presented by a Central Committee Commission to diffuse criticism. In addition, the Congress ordered that a commission be created to study party privileges and report back.

In addition to the "insurance fund," party property—offices and residence buildings, land, publication houses, printing plants, television and radio stations, resorts, special stores and medical facilities, etc.—is the material basis for the bureaucracy. *Pravda*, July 11, reported that the Congress was told how today's party tops should not be compared with those of the past. "The illegal unearned privileges in facilities do not exist today. Since last year, only the president and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers have state dachas. The others have been

shifted to facilities provided by organizations or institutions they work for. . . . State dachas have been transformed to public service facilities. . . . There are no more special distribution points, stores, or buffets in the Central Committee."

This claim is belied by the sheer indifference on the part of the party leaders toward, and their official statements about, the severe shortages that the rest of the population is experiencing. The fact that the apparatus feels compelled to deny its privileges, however, speaks volumes about the current situation.

Any new political parties confront endless obstacles because they have no facilities, sometimes not even paper to print on. The DP forces, now within the party, appear to hope to take some party property with them when they split. DP claims to have over two million supporters. Its more than 100 delegates at the Congress represented a wide range of views.

Protecting the party's own private property is undoubtedly a priority of both the Gorbachev reformers—who are proponents of private property rights—and the Ligachev conservatives—who claim to find the idea of private property anathema. The DP suggestion that the party turn over its wealth found no echo among the delegates. Anatoly Lukyanov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet and one of Gorbachev's team of advisers, expressed the prevailing sentiments in the hall when he said: "We have no intention of dividing with them [DP] party property collected over 70 years."

Some of the DP delegates had hoped to nominate Alexander Yakovlev—Politburo member and chairman of the Central Committee's commission on international policy—to replace Gorbachev as party chief. However, Yakovlev (like all the other Politburo members, to avoid being fired) announced that he was resigning from the party leadership. Yakovlev said he wanted more time to devote to his government post. When defending himself before the Congress, Yakovlev spoke of his role in the commission reviewing the cases of Stalin's victims (see box on this page). He ended his remarks with a pitch for the importance of the market and private enterprise if the party is to survive.

Miners Renew Their Strike

On July 11, the day Gorbachev was reelected party chief, 400,000 workers in coal mines and other industries throughout the Soviet Union carried out a one-day strike demanding the resignation of the government, an end to privileges of the apparatchiks, better pay and improved living conditions. The action was called to mark the anniversary of the beginning of the mass miners' strikes last year. The

strike this year focused on the failure of the government, headed by Prime Minister Ryzhkov, to live up to promises for improvements made to end last year's strike.

The only gain the Donetsk miners saw was some pay supplements. Neither food nor housing conditions have improved. The strike committees have not only continued to function but grown in size and begun to become a political force. In some cases, they have ousted the local party apparatchiks from the mines. Workers in more than 250 mines from Vorkuta in Ukraine and in other industries in Moscow, Leningrad, Gorky, Volgograd, Chelyabinsk, and Perm, for example, participated in the July 11 strike action.

A law passed by the Supreme Soviet after last year's strike wave outlawed strikes that were political or affected the energy industry. This strike by the miners violated the law on both counts. The strikers also defied pleas by Gorbachev and the Party Congress not to go ahead with the action. The strikers pledged that this one-day strike was only a warning of what will come if the government does not take hasty measures to meet their demands.

Whereas last year Gorbachev expressed a certain conciliatory attitude toward the miners' strikes and sought to turn them into expressions of support for his economic reforms, this year he expressed contempt for the protest. He denied the strike was widespread and blamed it on "hotheads." Neither were others in the government sympathetic. Abalkin, deputy prime minister, claimed that the workers' demands of last year had been met and that now they just want more.

Yuri Boldyrev, who had worked with the organizing committee for a congress of the Donetsk miners, put the situation this way: "What do these radical reforms the government is proposing amount to? To higher prices, to solving the problems the government has created at the expense of the workers."⁷

Reshuffling of Personnel

There were some personnel and organizational changes made at the Congress, although not in accordance with the demands of the striking workers. All the members of the Politburo resigned from their role as party leaders except Gorbachev and Vladimir Ivashko, who

Continuing Need to Fight for Historic Truth:

Here are excerpts from the remarks of Alexander Yakovlev to the USSR CP Congress:

A special area of my work in recent years has been the commission on the additional study of materials connected with the repressions. I will tell you honestly that this work is exhausting when the remains of millions of people continually haunt you.

During this period a good name has been returned to nearly a million people, returned without hesitation or doubt in the firm conviction that justice is being done and truth celebrated.

But sociohistorical truth is also needed. Many hundreds of thousands of rehabilitated, you will agree, is a large enough number to draw the conclusion that such a scale of falsification and repression could not have been a matter of chance, could not have been a result of ill will.

By whom and how was the mechanism of repressions created and put into motion, how did it function, how were its organizers able to seize control of the party, the state bodies, and society? Why did no one stand in its path? How and to what extent was our development crippled as a result? Why was it attempted later to reanimate the bloody face of Stalinism?

All these are not moot questions. . . .

These questions certainly are not moot. In the answers to them lies the explanation for the economic and social crises of the USSR today. History was falsified and destroyed so as to hide this truth from the people. Many stood in the way of the rise of Stalinism, defending workers' and party democracy and internationalism against the conservative bureaucratic onslaught that prevailed. But they were reviled, slandered, arrested, and murdered. Yakovlev has undoubtedly had privileged access to these forbidden materials for many years. But the Soviet masses will not learn the answers to these questions from him. Only one million rehabilitated of more than 20 million who perished shows how far we are from resurrecting the historic truth. But it is a basis for further efforts.

How many of these 20 million were supporters of the Left Opposition, the Marxist opposition to the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy starting in the 1920s? Left Opposition leader Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov have not been among those rehabilitated. Does the destruction of this opposition and all its supporters and their relatives "haunt" Yakovlev, too? 1990 is the 50th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination by Stalin. Many other such assassinations of the bureaucracy's opponents took place before Trotsky's, including Sedov's mysterious death. What would Yakovlev say or what does he know about these questions?

None of the Congress delegates apparently sought to find out, or if they did, such questions were not among the 20 or so of the more than 250 written ones received from the delegates that he chose to answer at the Congress.

He did admit, however, that in addition to the major public show trials of 1936-38, there were more than 60 trials in the 1930s in Moscow alone, "carefully concealed from public opinion" (*Pravda*, July 3).

Economic Crisis Worsens:

Even as the Congress was meeting, the economic crisis was worsening. On July 9, the government announced that it was holding back seven million tons of oil destined for shipment to Eastern Europe. With oil production down due to strikes in Azerbaijan and work slowdowns by oil workers in the Tyumen region demanding improved living conditions, the shortage of fuel is threatening to upset the harvest. This would further jeopardize food supplies.

Then, two large accidents in the Tyumen oil and gas producing regions of Western Siberia during the weekend following the Congress added to the crisis. As a result of one of the accidents, 27 oil wells had to be closed following a leak and a fire burning 400,000 tons of oil.

On July 20, Ryzhkov reported that the slow growth in the food industry plus lower than expected grain harvests mean that "at the rate things are going, we cannot expect an improvement of food supplies and social tensions will grow even more," according to the July 22 *Izvestia*. He added that shortages of foreign currency mean that purchases of grain abroad to make up for the shortfall will not be possible.

Ryzhkov blamed the shortage in foodstuffs on blackmarketeers who take food to Eastern Europe where they sell it for higher prices. As a result of this, he announced that the relaxed border crossing checks between the USSR and Czechoslovakia and Poland will be made stricter. Other factors are also contributing to the problem. During the Congress, the government had announced that at least one-quarter of the combines are out of commission due to the lack of spare parts.

Not only are the food, fuel, and consumer goods industries in trouble as a result of bureaucratic policy, so is heavy industry. Following a meeting of directors of all enterprises under the control of the Ministry of Heavy

Industry, 50 factory directors issued an appeal to the government to reimpose its central distribution of raw materials from which it has pulled back as part of the economic restructuring program. Industries are now supposed to make their own deals for delivery of supplies and equipment. But this has not proved workable, according to the appeal that was printed on the front page of *Rabochaya Tribuna*, a newspaper for industrial workers:

The 1991 plans for the manufacture of complex and much-needed engineering products . . . are under genuine threat of disruption. . . . The reason is that up to this day no decision has been taken on the procedure for supplying materials for the proper working of the economy. The old system of fixed quota supplies has been demolished. The new market system has not yet been established.

Two giant plants—the Donetsk gormash mining machinery plant in Donetsk and the Amursk metallurgy works in Northeastern Siberia—"had both failed to sign a single supply contract for raw materials in the coming year."

The self-accounting system of perestroika, *Rabochaya Tribuna* commented, is at fault. "Those industries which are to a considerable degree responsible for scientific and technical progress are in a tragic situation with regard to material and technical supplies."

Such a situation helps explain why there is a shortage of spare parts for combines, a shortage of railroad cars, and insufficient road-building and construction machinery. The appeal from the 50 directors seems to indicate that the worst is yet to come. A similar situation has prompted the recent slowdown by the Tyumen oil workers. They cannot produce, they say, without the required raw materials and equipment any more than they can produce if they lack adequate food and goods to carry on a normal life.

defeated Ligachev in the election to the newly created post of deputy general secretary. Some like Defense Minister Yazov claimed retirement; others cited health reasons.

Those resigning included the chief government ministers, Prime Minister Ryzhkov, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, and KGB chief Kryuchkov. They, like Yakovlev, claimed that they preferred to be able to devote more time to their government posts. They will still be members of Gorbachev's Presidential Council, so nothing will really change much. Those resigning are simply distancing themselves a bit from the fire directed at the party leadership and to appear more neutral. Nor have their politics changed. As for Yegor Ligachev, having been roundly defeated in his bid for deputy general secretary by Gorbachev's candidate (receiving 776 as opposed to 3,109 for Ivashko), at the end of the Congress he announced that he was retiring to Siberia to write his memoirs.

Like the election of Gorbachev himself, Ivashko's election seems to show the limited options available to the bureaucracy at this juncture. He had been elected party chief in Ukraine in September 1989 after the retirement of the long-time party boss Shcherbitsky. He was taken into the Politburo in December. In June 1990, he was elected to head the newly elected Parliament in the Ukrainian Republic, which is still dominated by party hacks (only 25 percent representing real opposition forces). His nomination for that post prompted 100 democratic and nationalist

deputies to walk out of the Parliament where thousands outside were demanding the resignation of the Communist Party. The opposition called for strikes to protest the fraudulent nature of the elections and the worsening shortages of food and other consumer goods. Ivashko resigned as party chief but retained his post as head of the Ukrainian Parliament.

But when the Ukrainian delegation to the CP Congress was called home by the Ukrainian Parliament which demanded that they devote themselves to Ukrainian problems, Ivashko refused to return and resigned as head of Parliament. Since then, this conservative-dominated Ukrainian Parliament—under pressure from the mounting opposition outside in the streets and from the democratic and nationalist deputies—passed a resolution declaring the Ukrainian Republic sovereign, much as the Russian, Moldavian, Estonian, Latvian, and Uzbek parliaments have done.

Ivashko will be joined on the Politburo by the new Ukrainian CP chief and the party chiefs from the other republics, Lithuania, and seven or so other appointees representing Central Committee commissions.

At the end of the Congress, over a dozen of Gorbachev's reformist supporters were solidly defeated in the elections to the new Central Committee—including Abalkin; Roy Medvedev, the historian; and Otto Latsis, deputy editor of *Kommunist*. After pleas from Gorbachev and others that if this defeat was allowed to stand, everything they had done at the Congress would be

wasted and that the youth of the country would be alienated, the delegates reversed their vote.

Gorbachev managed to win formal support for his new reformist policies, new leadership structure, and new rules; and his platform was adopted despite the grumbling and charges of the conservatives and the walkout by the "radicals"—who share Gorbachev's reformist policies and just think he is moving too slow.

Independent Working Class Response

The 400,000 striking workers on July 11 demanded the resignation of the government. Other workers demanded the removal of decision-making responsibilities from the corrupt ministries. But neither of these demands will bring much improvement. The striking miners and oil workers and others who are protesting need to throw the bureaucrats out of the ministries like they are throwing them out of the mines. The workers need to take over the ministries themselves, open the books, collaborate to direct resources and raw materials into the vital areas, and insure that the economy does not grind to a halt with all the human suffering that would entail.

Just as the bureaucrats assembled at the Congress would entertain no notion of surrendering their billions in property and wealth, so they will not surrender their control over power. The bureaucrats are

(Continued on page 32)

People's Daily World Reduced to a Weekly Lessons for the Left

by Samuel Adams

The *People's Daily World* is the organ of the Communist Party, USA (CP). Its May 10 issue contained the following front page announcement:

To Our Readers

Beginning in the first week of June, we will be reducing our frequency of publication to weekly.

This is a decision which we have arrived at reluctantly. The sole reason for this step is financial.

Other radical and left organizations in the U.S. publish weekly or monthly. The CP alone was able to sustain a paper which came out five times a week. But no more.

This cutback in publication is another manifestation of the deepening crisis affecting the CPUSA and other Stalinist parties around the globe. The reasons for it are certainly more than financial. It is the Communist Party's political bankruptcy which lies at the root of its problems.

Specific Nature of the CP's Crisis

The convulsions that have been shaking the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries these past several months resulting in the ouster of a number of Stalinist regimes have sent shock waves through the CP's ranks. This was particularly the case with regard to East Germany. A warm relationship had developed between the CPUSA and the Honecker regime, with the *People's Daily World* frequently publishing glowing accounts of the alleged high standard of living, social programs, cultural life, and democracy in that nation. So it was more than a small surprise for CP members to witness Honecker's overthrow and the decisive rebuff dealt the East German Stalinists in the elections that followed. Events in the rest of Eastern Europe also took their toll.

But what is now happening in the Soviet Union is of far greater consequence to the CPUSA: acute food shortages; chronic lack of housing; escalating rebelliousness of workers; growing fragmentation, with the Baltic republics voting for secession and others, including Russia, endorsing "sovereignty" or separation in one form or another; serious morale problems in the armed forces; negative economic growth; mounting calls for new leaders in government and rejection of many party hacks in Soviet elections; the impending split of the CPSU. All of this has placed in jeopardy the continued rule of the bureaucratic caste. But it is this very bureaucracy that the CPUSA has uncritically defended since the late 1920s, when Stalin consolidated his rule.

The CP in this country has consistently maintained a position of equating the Soviet bureaucracy with the Soviet state. Whereas the Left Opposition in Russia and the Trotskyist

movement around the world supported the interests of the workers of the USSR against the bureaucracy and called for the bureaucrats' overthrow through a *political* revolution, returning democratic control to the workers, the CPUSA like its sister parties in the USSR and elsewhere served as an apologist for the bureaucracy's rule and all that entailed: harsh repression and executions of millions, frame-up trials, forced collectivization and mass starvation; sell-out of revolutionary movements in other countries as part of the bureaucracy's policy of seeking detente with imperialism; liquidation of Soviet military leaders prior to World War II, etc., etc.

In exchange for supporting all this, the CP in this country reaped certain rewards. It was acclaimed by the Soviet party leadership as a great progressive force. During the days when the USSR seemed to be advancing and its leadership was looked up to by oppressed peoples around the world, this counted for something. In addition, leaders of the CPUSA visiting Moscow could meet with the general secretary and other top officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They could arrange tours to the USSR of youth, trade unionists, and peace leaders. All of this added to their prestige and authority in this country. It helps explain why for decades they occupied a dominant position in the U.S. left.

But all of this has now ended. The CPUSA leaders chose to swim with the Soviet bureaucracy and now they may well sink with it. The USSR is disintegrating before the eyes of the party's faithful and the leadership is incapable of explaining why.

How the CP Leadership and Membership Are Attempting to Deal with the Crisis

The national chairman of the CPUSA is Gus Hall. Through articles in the *People's Daily World* and the CP's theoretical journal, *Political Affairs*, Hall has been seeking to reassure the membership and to find a way out of the party's crisis. But it is proving to be an impossible task.

Hall's basic approach is to minimize the problems confronting the Soviet bureaucracy. He says that overall things are going quite well in the Soviet Union and that the amazing thing is how much they've accomplished there in just 70 years. But at the same time he injects a note of uncertainty: "In many ways, this is a difficult moment for the world Communist movement. There is some confusion. There is some loss of confidence. There is some frustration." (*Political Affairs*, August, 1989)

Hall and the CPUSA are big Gorbachev backers. They quote his speeches at great length while disparaging his opponents on the "left" and "right." They line up with Gorbachev in opposing self-determination for any of the Soviet republics.

Hall also exudes confidence that things will turn out well in the Eastern European countries. He says the Communist parties there will continue to govern, only "They will have to work in a united front with non-Communists in a coalition government." (*Political Affairs*, January 1990) Characterizing the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat as "obsolete," Hall counterposes to it a socialism which he says must be made more "livable and democratic." He expresses confidence that things are moving in that direction, particularly in East Germany. (*Political Affairs*, January 1990)

The striking thing about Hall's analysis of events is its detachment from reality. Hall's approach is calculated to soothe, while denying the magnitude of the problems overwhelming Stalinist governments.

Because developments in the "socialist world" are so demoralizing to CPUSA members and so much in conflict with the party's past teachings, the CP's ranks are being urged to concentrate more on the class struggle within the U.S. This commendable thought comes strangely from a group that has always subordinated the interests of U.S. workers to the policies and perceived needs of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Hall resolutely denies that the CPUSA is in crisis. On the contrary, he paints a picture of a thriving organization poised for substantial growth. He points out that the CP recently contracted with a professional agency to secure speaking engagements for Communist Party representatives. Some engagements for fees were apparently arranged, particularly at campuses. It is certainly questionable whether this is because the CP's influence is growing and people are anxious to hear what it has to say. A more likely reason is that there is curiosity as to how the Communist Party spokespersons in the U.S. can explain the incredible rejection of their counterparts in the Eastern European countries and increasingly in the Soviet Union itself.

Divisions Within the CP

In my article "Stalinism in Crisis: 'Difficult Days' for the Communist Party, USA" (*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, November 1989), I wrote the following:

Deep fissures and potential splits within the ranks of the CP's membership lie just beneath the surface and are already becoming evident. . . . Hall, an unregenerate Stalinist, has enormous authority within the CP, and as long as he is around he may be able to keep the lid on, at least for a while. But, if so, it will be temporary at best, as the contradictions between avowed socialist goals and counterrevolutionary bureaucratic practices become more and more obvious.

To date, the CP has managed to survive the tumultuous events in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China without a split. But the pot is boiling, the lid is shaking, and the convulsions in the "socialist bloc" are producing growing divisions within the CPUSA as well.

For example, in Hall's January 27 National Committee report, he asks, "How should the party deal with a member of the National Committee who appears on a public radio program and when asked what the lessons are for the CPUSA from the events in Eastern Europe, he answers: 'To cleanse the party of Stalinism and remove the Stalinist leaders.'

Speaking for myself, I think this is irresponsible and slanderous."

Hall also complains about "leading comrades" circulating private political letters. And speaking of the CPUSA's ranks, he says, "Even a few [comrades] . . . call for the removal or resignation of the national leadership. . . . I believe some of these comrades are using the call for removal of the leadership to open the doors to removing the working class, class struggle policies of our party." (Such as supporting the Democrats?)

The National Committee meeting also saw an indictment of the CPUSA's bureaucratic methods. Black party leaders were especially sharp in their criticisms. Angela Davis spoke of "our failure to facilitate the democratic functioning of our party." Charlene Mitchell referred to "the command-and-control nature of our leadership." James Steel noted, "There is an unprecedented upsurge, democratic upsurge in our country. It's in process, it's escalating, and it is reflecting itself in the party. One of the spearheads of this upsurge is among the African-American people. That too is reflecting itself, I think, in the disgruntlement of many African-American comrades. If you listen to the discussion, there is a divergence of perception, and it has a certain racial dimension to it, in terms of composition of who is saying what."

The issues being debated also center on the CPUSA's position on democracy in the "socialist" camp.

We saw a striking example of this in the CP's reaction to the massacre at Tiananmen Square. James Jackson, for decades a top Black CPUSA leader, and Carl Bloice, associate editor of the *People's Daily World*, also Black, denounced the violent crackdown ordered by the Chinese Stalinists. But Gus Hall, while dutifully expressing regrets, came down on the side of the Chinese government, as he put it, in defense of "socialism."

A letter in the September 29, 1989, *People's Daily World* gave vent to the growing dissatisfaction enveloping the CPUSA:

Many people in this country want some critical commentary and a dialogue.

I wish I could see more evidence of such a dialogue in the *People's Daily World*. True, we get Bloice's upbeat reports about changes in the USSR and the debates about perestroika in that country. What we don't get is debate from people in this country regarding perestroika and the "new thinking." Nor is there any discussion or commentary regarding the unprecedented developments in Hungary, Poland, and China.

We did get a few articles and letters on the recent suppression in China—most of which asserted that Beijing's leaders were defending socialism against allegedly counterrevolutionary students. The *PDW* also printed Bloice's eyewitness report from Beijing which said something quite different. Taken together these pieces do not begin to tell us what is going on with China's socialism—if it can still be called socialism.

It would seem there would be less of the "frustration" and "confusion" Gus Hall was talking about if the *PDW* opened its pages to candid and critical discussion regarding the present-day crises in existing socialist countries. The people's newspaper ought to deal with the things that are on people's minds—even if these are sometimes painful and embarrassing.

In the course of the last several months the *People's Daily World* has printed a number of articles and letters on the very

subjects the letter writer raises. The views of the contributors fall roughly into three categories. First, there are the neo-Stalinists who decry what they claim is an unduly negative appraisal of the Stalin era. While acknowledging Stalin's "mistakes" and "excesses," they acclaim his "achievements."

A second view seeks to appear more even-handed. It is more critical of the repressive system that developed within the Soviet Union, China, and the Eastern European countries. But it argues that this criticism must always be placed within the context of indicting the evils of capitalism.

The third view wants the CPUSA to break with the past and speak up forcefully for democratic socialism. This position is more forthright in criticizing repression and bureaucracy in the "socialist bloc" countries.

A sharp debate has now erupted over these questions between two well-known personalities in the CP movement: Tony Monteiro, a member of the editorial board of *Political Affairs* and Ron Johnson, African-American affairs editor of the *People's Daily World*.

It was initiated by Monteiro's review of the book "Has Socialism Failed?" by Joe Slovo, general secretary of the South African Communist Party. Monteiro, writing in the CPUSA's theoretical journal *Political Affairs* (April 1990), is critical of the book because he thinks it goes too far in condemning Stalinist practices. He says, "Criticism takes many forms. Slovo's bends to the negative side. It fails to grasp what is positive in socialism's history and its current transformations. As such, it tends to ideologically disarm, rather than lay foundations for new and better defenses of socialism and sharpened criticism of capitalism in the present situation."

To back up this charge, Monteiro counterposes his concept of "the imperfections in socialism" to Slovo's more scathing denunciation of bureaucratic repression under Communist Party regimes. Monteiro makes this rather striking statement:

Stalinism (which Slovo defines as socialism without democracy) and forms of socialist democracy tended to coexist.

So the problems in the Soviet Union, China, and the Eastern European countries were not really so serious after all!

Monteiro also defends the one-party system. He sees it as being "often an inevitable stage in the consolidation of revolutionary power," even though he concedes that "in the long run it does not serve democracy."

But his main point—and this is the thread that runs through his review of Slovo's book—is that "The criticism of socialism must occur within the bonds of defending it." Here Monteiro is distorting what Slovo said. Slovo did not criticize "socialism." He condemned Stalinism, a distortion of socialism, and he criticized Communist parties throughout the world for their "embrace of Soviet domestic and foreign policies, some of which discredit the cause of socialism." This statement, so obviously applicable to the CPUSA, causes Monteiro to bristle and to launch into an irrelevant account of how Communist parties opposed fascism, supported union rights, fought racism, and anti-Semitism, etc.

In his response in *Political Affairs* (May 1990), Johnson expresses strong disagreement with Monteiro's positions. He castigates him for his refusal to face up to the realities. Johnson says, for example, "In fact, there is no critique or critical

mention of Stalinism in Monteiro's article. He does write, 'the label Stalinism is generally used to discredit existing socialism.' Generally used by whom? General secretaries of other Communist parties?"

Johnson concludes by asking, "Is Slovo ideologically disarming? Perhaps. I suppose that depends on which ideology one upholds—Marxism-Leninism or the desecration of Stalinism."

Johnson makes clear his support for the Slovo position and his undisguised contempt for Monteiro's criticism of it. He charges Monteiro five times with misunderstanding or disregarding Marxism.

There are three conclusions that revolutionary socialists can draw from this dispute. The first is that some new winds are indeed blowing in the Communist Party, USA, which now permit the publication of opposing views on the question of democratic socialism. This is in sharp contrast to the stultifying and limiting selection of subject matter that has previously characterized party publications.

The second is that nothing printed to date in the party's publications goes to the heart of the problem of socialist democracy. Stalinism is not "socialism without democracy," as Slovo says. Rather it is the usurpation of power by a parasitic, privileged bureaucratic caste which substitutes its rule for the direct rule of the working class, while presiding over a system of collectivized property. None of the CPers speaking up in print are antibureaucratic as such. They just don't want a bureaucracy that governs in such a harsh and oppressive and bureaucratic way.

Third, despite these limitations of understanding and consciousness, the differences within the CP between the Monteiros and the Johnsons run very deep. They reflect the widening gap in the CP over how to react to the big events shaking the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and how decision making should be conducted in the CPUSA itself. And they raise the question of how long the various wings of the party will be able to hold together. Some CPers may be moving in the direction of throwing off the yoke of Stalinism altogether, and a convergence down the road between them and revolutionary socialism is not excluded. The situation bears watching.

The Yeltsin Factor

The one constant for the CPUSA programmatically since its inception has been support for the man in the top spot in the Soviet Union. From Stalin to Gorbachev, whatever the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union said was gospel. That approach has been so deeply ingrained in the pronouncements of the CPUSA that without it one can hardly imagine the party being able to function.

But now the unthinkable could occur: a Soviet leader—Boris Yeltsin—whom the CPUSA not only disagrees with but has denounced—could end up as Gorbachev's successor. Even in his present position as president of the Russian Republic he is a power to be reckoned with and a real problem for the CP.

Gus Hall has characterized Yeltsin as a "capitalist dupe" and "part of the antisocialist campaign." But Yeltsin is now part of the top bureaucracy ruling the Soviet Union, which the CP continues to support.

For Trotskyists, who have always supported the interests of Soviet workers against the bureaucracy, the change of personalities in the USSR's leadership is not a decisive question. But the CPUSA, which has always aped that leadership and echoed its message, is now being faced with yet another crisis of program and ideology for which the leadership will have no answer. This provides a challenge for critical thinkers and Marxists in the CP.

The cutback in publication of the *People's Daily World* reflects the rejection and loss of influence for U.S. Stalinism. In my earlier article, I spoke of the need for revolutionary socialists "to develop a dialogue where possible with CP members and discuss with them the need to reorient to principled class struggle revolutionary politics in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky." This need continues and grows stronger as the CPUSA faces an ever deepening crisis of perspective. □

U.S. Unions (Continued from page 17)

changed into the organized and bureaucratic labor movement of the present day, has grown passive and conservative under the influence of prosperity and is now dominated from top to bottom by a conservative bureaucracy of imperialist agents.

It must be said that the American working class has now undergone a third profound change. Although the labor movement remains dominated by a conservative bureaucracy, it is one whose authority is gravely eroded. The workers' mood is not passive and conservative, but angry, resentful, and apprehensive of the future. These elements cannot coexist indefinitely, and the presently small but successful challenges to the bureaucratic rule foreshadow bigger developments in the future.

Alternative Socialist Vision Is Essential

As anyone who had absorbed Cannon's analysis in 1952 could have predicted, once the employers, driven by the imperatives of their system, felt the need to move aggressively against the unions, it was inevitable that the bureaucracy, the employers' fifth column within the labor movement, would open the gates to the enemy. What could not be predicted was how long it would take for the rank and file to recognize this betrayal and respond to it. The response is taking longer than anyone would have predicted in 1952, because the militants of the 1980s, and now the 1990s, are separated by generations from the militants of the 1930s. The mechanism for transmitting the historical memory of the working class movement—the socialist and class conscious workers' organizations in the U.S.—have been isolated from the unions for 40 years, and the most important of these—the Socialist Workers Party—has undergone a profound crisis which has severely weakened the ability of Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. to play a significant leadership role.

But the response is developing nevertheless, as it must. Workers have never, and will never, remain passive and indifferent to the deterioration of their wages, working conditions, and future prospects. But in order for the workers to prevail they must have a vision of a new society and a new world that is different from that of the employers. Otherwise, they are

bound to accept the society that exists and to seek whatever partial solutions they can find within it. And the world of the employers is more and more openly proclaimed as one of permanent scarcity, austerity, inequality, and dog-eat-dog competition. Without their own ideology the workers are disarmed in advance. Only socialism presents a coherent and realizable vision of a better world which can be organized by the action of the workers and the propertyless masses of the world themselves.

Every insurgent labor movement, since the Chartists in the 1840s, has put forward a plan for a new and better society. The Chartists, in spite of their magnificent class consciousness and political awareness, looked back to a golden age of independent producers and artisans that never really existed and could never be re-created. Their successors throughout the world, standing on their shoulders, adopted socialism. As Ernest Mandel said recently, anyone with the slightest bit of education knows that socialism is not "the product of the October revolution or the Cuban revolution. It was born as a current within the modern workers' movement, rising against capitalism. *The Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848, not 1958."

The American workers cannot turn back to a false golden age of postwar prosperity as their guidepost for present and future struggles. Even under the most favorable interpretation, the prosperity and gains of the past could guarantee no security so long as all social wealth remained in the hands of the employers. Under the capitalist system all gains of the workers must and will remain conditional and temporary. Workers can be won to an understanding of this harsh reality and inspired by the vision of a better world of cooperation and human solidarity. There is nothing alien about socialism to the American labor movement, as has been demonstrated in every heroic period of the U.S. class struggle. Impelled by a necessity to fight for their most basic material needs, the American working class will rediscover socialism as an indigenous and indispensable element of their struggle for a better life.

This is the real challenge to the present and newly awakening dissidents and militants within the trade union movement—to connect up the elements of political and historical consciousness with the mass labor movement. □

The Capitalist Market and the Workers' State

Assessing the Reforms in Eastern Europe and the USSR

by Steve Bloom

On March 6 of this year the Parliament of the USSR voted for a new law which overturned previous provisions of the Soviet Constitution prohibiting individual citizens from owning "means of production." This represented a significant development in a country where the ruling dogma has been for years that "Marxism-Leninism" prohibits any such activity in a "communist" or "socialist" society. And what is taking place in the Soviet Union remains mild by comparison with events in Eastern Europe. New regimes in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia are undertaking a wholesale privatization and marketization of their economies.

Worldwide the bourgeois press has touted these changes as marking the overthrow of what they, too, call "communism" and the victory of "free-enterprise capitalism." And understanding this process is a significant challenge for revolutionary Marxists. We reject the pretensions of the bourgeois ideologues, as well as the false programs of the reformists and bureaucrats in the Eastern countries. But we cannot simply rely on old formulas from our history to give quick and easy answers to the new questions posed by current events.

In the late 1920s and early '30s, when the Stalinist bureaucracy was tightening its grip on the first workers' republic, Trotsky analyzed the situation and concluded that, although this bureaucracy had succeeded in usurping power from the working masses of the USSR, it had not been able to completely overturn the social gains of the October revolution. The workers' state remained, he argued, though suffering from a severe degeneration. Trotsky pointed to three features of the Soviet economy that remained proletarian in their essence, and which the bureaucrats still had to maintain in order to defend their own privileges: *a predominantly nationalized economy, central planning, and a state monopoly of foreign trade.*

At the end of the Second World War, several years after Trotsky's death, property relations were introduced into the Eastern European countries, then under Soviet occupation, which copied those in the USSR itself. The international Trotskyist movement determined that new workers' states, bureaucratically deformed from birth, had been established.

But today each of these economic realities cited by Trotsky in his approach to the bureaucratized workers' state is breaking down—in the USSR and in Eastern Europe. Does this fact mean that the workers' state itself has definitively broken down?

To examine this problem we will need to stop and take a fresh look at the broad theoretical characterizations "workers' state" and "bureaucratized workers' state." A better understanding of these and other relevant theoretical abstractions will help us to comprehend what is happening today in Eastern Europe and the USSR. We will, in the end, come to better understand the following essential theses:

- 1) "Socialism" has not been overthrown in any of these countries because socialism never existed there.

- 2) They were and remain bureaucratically dominated transitional societies. The "market reforms" and partial privatization of their economies that have taken place do not, in and of themselves, negate the transitional character of these states, that is, capitalism has not been restored.
- 3) In fact, the present economic stagnation stems, to a significant degree, from an overcentralization imposed in the past by the Stalinist bureaucrats in order to advance their own narrow self-interest, and not at all to advance the interests of socialist development or to strengthen the workers' state.
- 4) The way in which the new regimes in Eastern Europe and the USSR are trying to solve their economic problems, however, will not advance the interests of the masses. The present reforms are seriously undermining the foundations of the workers' states by increasing social inequality and permitting the unrestricted growth of genuine bourgeois layers. These are things which revolutionary Marxists oppose. In this sense the present process may well be laying the basis for a genuine capitalist restoration at some point in the future. It must be actively combatted.
- 5) There is an alternative even if—as a result of inherited inefficiency and pressure from the world capitalist economy—a real solution to the crisis in these countries includes making concessions to the laws of the market. Any such steps must be carried out on the basis of democratic decisions by working people over all aspects of economic life. The masses themselves are the only ones who should determine what economic spheres will be subject to central planning and what the overall social goals will be in those enterprises, in what areas private entrepreneurship and market relations can be allowed and what will be their limits, and what other sacrifices and concessions need to be made. All of this requires complete and accurate information along with full freedom of discussion and political pluralism, as well as the absolute right of final decision for the masses themselves.

Old Processes and New Ones

To begin, we should note that in at least one important respect what is happening today in the USSR and Eastern Europe is not entirely new. It is, in this sense, an accelerated development of the process that has actually been going on ever since Stalin and the petty-bourgeois social layer that he represented defeated the Left Opposition in the USSR. It was as a result of this defeat that we saw the first of a series of empirical twists and turns, pragmatic economic and political adjustments, as one bureaucratic policy after another failed to produce the desired results.

This failure of Stalinism was obscured, to a certain degree, because of the apparent stability that the regimes in the USSR and Eastern Europe achieved during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s—even if it was a stability punctuated by periods of extreme crisis in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and only enforced in the last analysis by Soviet military power. It is now absolutely indisputable that this stability was more appearance

than substance. All the while a process of decay was taking its toll, which has now manifested itself in new and entirely unexpected forms. The present situation is marked by a profound crisis of the old bureaucratic parties, and is pregnant with possibilities for even more radical changes.

So the process taking place today in these countries is, at one and the same time, a continuation of the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution that began in the USSR in the latter half of the 1920s, and a qualitatively new struggle, with significant new stakes.

Recognizing this dual reality can help us to avoid one profound mistake that is prevalent among leftists today. The crisis in the USSR and Eastern Europe is a crisis of *bureaucratized workers' states*. Too many people on the left have tended to omit the all-important adjective, "bureaucratized," from that formula, and think simply about "the workers' states" in crisis. Since workers' states are, of course, good things for the working class, these people also tend to see the events of the last year as an essentially negative process.

Yet the *bureaucratized workers' states* have never been a positive expression of proletarian power. Their positive features exist, to the extent that they exist, *despite* the bureaucracy, and only by way of comparison to bourgeois society. From the point of view of the international proletariat and the social goals of the Russian Revolution these *bureaucratized workers' states* represent a *regression* from the fight for socialism, a *negative* reality. What has been taking place is primarily a crisis of the bureaucracy. For this reason we should see the present situation, while it certainly contains important negative elements, as one with an extremely positive potential for progress in overcoming Stalinist dictatorship.

Big Struggles Lie Ahead

There are different social forces in these societies with profoundly different interests. Some would benefit from a capitalist restoration, but others, the overwhelming majority, will be pushed, at some point, in the opposite direction by the present process—toward real socialist consciousness. The decisive struggle between these tendencies still lies ahead of us for two reasons: 1) Resistance is certain from the workers as the results of the present economic reform process become manifest—that is, as new varieties of social inequality are generated which turn out to have lasting consequences, and are not merely temporary as has been promised by the reformers; 2) a certain period of time will be required before a genuine new bourgeois class can consolidate itself in these countries as a result of those economic reforms—a class that can, in its turn, actually bring about a social counter-revolution. Simple penetration by Western capital is not sufficient for this—unless these countries are turned into outright colonies of the imperialist powers. At least a minimal native bourgeois social base is required to consolidate a native bourgeois state. (For reasons explained in my article, "Comments on German Unification," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 73, East Germany is an exception to this general statement when there is an actual unification with the West.)

Until such a genuine owning class is established, the new regimes in Eastern Europe—whatever their subjective intentions—can find a social base only among the workers and peasants, or within one or another wing of the old bureaucracy (which remains in control of most of the government and state apparatuses), or else attempt to balance between these two forces. This is perhaps the most important reason why it is wrong to talk about the definitive decay of these workers' states *simply* on the basis of the economic reforms that are presently being implemented. The actual class relations which exist in society and are reflected in the state power are something that the capitalists have not yet resolved in their favor, and cannot until a genuine bourgeois

class can take firm control. One of the things that the Yugoslav experience since the 1960s demonstrates is that a process of market reform and concessions to private capital can go on for some time within the general context of bureaucratic society, make deep inroads into the economy, and cause considerable hardships for the working masses, yet still not bring about a genuine bourgeois restoration.

Bourgeois Market, Law of Value, Workers' Rule

It is worth stepping back at this point to take a look at the basic economic and social realities of the transition from capitalism to socialism. If we do so, it will help dispel some of the prominent mythology that presently surrounds events in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

The introduction (or continuation) of a bourgeois market and bourgeois forms of ownership is not incompatible with the existence of workers' states in general. It seems likely that, in one form or another, such readjustments are necessary in Eastern Europe and the USSR given the absolute crisis into which bureaucratic planning has plunged these societies. Revolutionary Marxists stand opposed not to the market itself—a completely utopian notion for *presocialist transitional economies* such as exist in all of these countries at the present time—but to *the dictatorship of the market over society*, which can and must be overcome.

A similar statement could be made about the law of value—that is, a simple appreciation of the fact that the price of any commodity on a "free market" (its value in relation to the value of other commodities) is ultimately determined by the socially necessary labor time it takes to produce that commodity. A postcapitalist society can go a long way toward overthrowing the effects of this law, and can even eliminate it as the *primary* regulator of prices in its internal economy. The greater the productive capacity of any society, the greater the maneuverability for central planners in this regard. But as long as a planned national economy has to trade on a world market where the law of value still reigns supreme, that law will have to be reckoned with. And the human social relations that underlie it will inevitably be with us even on the level of national economies—as an important material truth that needs to be taken into consideration in distributing economic resources—well into any process of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Proletarian revolutionists reject the *present* reform process in Eastern Europe and the USSR. The introduction of a blind, relatively uncontrolled marketplace, combined with expanded foreign investment and private enterprise, is not the answer to the ills of these societies. Once again, this has already been tried and has failed in Yugoslavia. But sectarian radicals who try to combat the present marketization by defending some purely abstract, "principled" commitment to 100 percent nationalization and economic planning are also making a profound mistake. Their arguments are unlikely to convince those who have to grapple with real economic problems in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

The masses in these countries consider that the extreme degree of economic centralization that they suffered under is the cause of their present economic crisis. To a large degree they are correct—though there are other causes as well. The Trotskyist movement has pointed out for decades that a major part of the blame for this lies in the fact that this centralization and planning has been bureaucratically, rather than democratically, controlled. But that is only part of the answer. Another, and often neglected fact of equal importance, is that these countries (even the most advanced technologically such as Czechoslovakia and East Germany) did not have an industrial base that could sustain the degree of economic centralization imposed on them by the Communist parties even had this been a democratically controlled centralization—not to mention the absurdity of a national plan that tried to dictate how many TV repair shops, restaurants, or other consumer services would be allowed to operate.

History of the USSR

The effort to “abolish” the market and private ownership of means of production as economic realities in the USSR—that is, to establish 100 percent proletarian economic norms—was *not* an expression of the proletarian character of the Soviet state, but rather a *negation* of it. It was an indication of the defeat of the proletarian government by the Stalinist regime which politically expropriated the working class during the late 1920s.

Stalin took a sharp turn toward nationalizing the economy in 1928, after the previous period of the New Economic Policy (NEP) generated a severe crisis—including a strike by peasants who refused to sell their grain at the price established by the state. Trotsky and the Left Opposition had been advocating a correction of certain one-sided NEP policies for some time, seeing in embryo the dangers that Stalin ended up reacting to only when they created a sharp confrontation. Trotsky’s proposals were designed to stimulate industrial production, through government investment and planning, as a way of creating the consumer goods which the peasants wanted and needed in return for their crops. That would have cemented the alliance between the peasants in the countryside and the workers in the cities which had been the backbone of the October revolution.

Stalin’s new policies appeared to many to be an implementation of Trotsky’s ideas on industrialization and planning, even if only a belated one. They were, however, exactly the opposite. Whereas Trotsky had stressed the need for a set of measures that the fragile Soviet economy could rationally undertake, and for strengthening the alliance with the peasantry by demonstrating that the workers’ government would, and could, try to satisfy the needs of those who lived in the countryside, Stalin launched into a wild and irrational policy of superindustrialization and supercollectivization that the USSR could not objectively support. The emphasis was placed on a crash campaign to create heavy industry for its own sake, rather than on the production of use values that working people wanted and society actually needed. Factory workers were forced to work longer and longer hours for extremely low wages, and could not change jobs without permission from the state. In the 1930s being late for work became a capital crime in the USSR. In short, the Stalinist government tried to make up for what the workers’ state lacked in technological development—that is, in the productivity of its labor—through an increase in the sheer volume of labor power.

In the countryside, rather than taking steps to regain the peasantry’s support for the revolution, Stalin resorted to brute force. Crops were physically confiscated by the military, and the peasants rounded up and forced into state or collective farms. The result was an agricultural disaster that continues to be felt in the USSR to the present day.

The crisis that these bureaucratic societies are presently going through—in Eastern Europe and the USSR—is a direct result of this period of Soviet history. The economies of Eastern Europe were attempts, after the war, to transplant Stalin’s “super-proletarian” economic policies—though each of these national developments had its own individual characteristics. What creates the difficulty is not simply the bureaucratic nature of the governments, though that is a key element, but also the very effort to artificially impose “proletarian” economic forms that were far in advance of what any of these countries could actually sustain. To be sure, these two sides of the problem are interrelated, but that means precisely that they cannot be reduced simply to bureaucratic rule itself.

Marxists understand that material and social reality is, at all times, more powerful than human volition. As Marx commented in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from

the past.” We are constrained by the facts of the material world as we find it, and can only transcend those facts by working actively to transform our material world through the process of applying new discoveries in science and technology. Those who would like to construct socialism are deeply affected by this basic truth. What we can achieve at any given moment, in any given society, is limited by our material and historical circumstances.

Nationalizations and the Workers’ State

What, then, is the correct appreciation of nationalizations and central planning in the development of a postcapitalist society? Certainly these are indispensable tools. And what is the legitimate role here for the continuation of bourgeois economic forms?

Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* made an initial effort to describe the measures that would be taken by a proletarian dictatorship after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It is worth quoting their passage on this at some length:

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state; the bringing into cultivation of wastelands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to labor. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children’s factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc., etc.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another.

The last point here is particularly noteworthy. Marx and Engels did not conceive of “all production . . . concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation” until all “class distinc-

tions have disappeared” and “the public power will lose its political character.” By the time *all* production can become the collective property of society as a whole, *the state will be in the final stages of withering away* and there will no longer be a state properly so called. A state is necessary because class antagonisms remain, which means that classes remain, which means that remnants of bourgeois economic life continue to exist. These cannot and will not be overcome all at once, but only “by degrees.”

Also significant, this passage addresses itself to the kinds of economic measures that would be “generally applicable” “in the most advanced countries.” Yet those nations where the working class has succeeded in expropriating the bourgeoisie politically—the USSR first of all—have been far from the most advanced. So in considering what steps a proletarian government ought to take in them we would have to modify the conclusions in the *Manifesto* even further.

The material and social reality of the transition from capitalism to socialism means that the market—even if it is a market with less and less impact on overall social production—along with other economic norms of bourgeois society, will remain a significant force for an entire period, at least until the initial stages of genuine socialism are achieved and perhaps even until “all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation” and “the public power will lose its political character.” What we advocate is not an *absolute* implementation of nationalization and planning, but *the most advanced application* of these things that is possible in a given society, so that after expropriating the bourgeoisie politically the working class can, by degrees, come more and more to dominate economically.

Needless to say this algebraic formula does not answer a single concrete question by itself. A host of specific economic, political, military, social, cultural, and other factors combine to determine what should be done in any particular revolution. But our *starting point* is here. When we talk about implementing socialist economic norms after a socialist revolution we are talking about something relative, a process, and not an absolute reality that comes predetermined by the social category called “workers’ state.”

Bourgeois and Nonbourgeois Markets

Another question that needs to be clarified is the false identification in the propaganda of the imperialists, and therefore in the popular mind, of markets, and even basic commodity production, with “capitalism.” Long before the bourgeoisie ever existed as a class, people were producing commodities for exchange with other people, and human society depended on markets as a mediator of economic activity—even if only a partial one.

In the precapitalist market, people produced things that others needed—what we call use values—which they exchanged for different things that they needed themselves. In its earliest stages such an exchange of useful items was a simple process of bartering one for another. Later money—in the form of precious metals, or beads, or other scarce items—made such exchanges easier, and enabled them to be carried out over longer distances and separated in time. But the fundamental process remained the same. What the market facilitated primarily throughout preclass, slave, and feudal societies was the production and exchange of commodities in order for their use values to be realized.

The emergence of capitalists, at first simply as merchants within the context of this precapitalist market, began a profound transformation. The goal of capitalists is not the production or acquisition of use values per se, but an increase in the volume of capital in their possession. Starting out with a certain amount of money, they invest it to buy or produce commodities for sale on the market, but only in order to end up with more money at the end of the process. The creation of things that society can use is merely a *byproduct* of capitalist economic activity, not its driving force.

How does this relate to the question of markets within the context of a workers’ state? A workers’ republic, too, can utilize the market, but in a way that has more in common with the precapitalist market—as a mediator in the production of use values for society as a whole, rather than of capital for its own sake. The market can be one important indicator, among many, of the success or failure of central planning mechanisms. In addition, the market in a workers’ state can act as a check on the *quality* of production—something that has been a major problem within the context of bureaucratic society. There is little substitute for instant feedback from consumers to let society as a whole know that it is wasting valuable resources on a product that, in the end, is not worth the time, energy, and raw materials that were used up in its production.

The key here, once again, is that the marketplace can be utilized by the working class in this way only if that marketplace is not allowed to dominate society. The goal of any workers’ government must be to progressively tame the market, to allow it to supplement, and measure the success of, planning, but never to become a substitute for it. After a period of time (how long is impossible to determine given our present state of knowledge and experience, but certainly at least a level of economic development must be attained at which all basic human needs can be automatically satisfied for all members of society) the market can be eliminated.

It is these two conceptions—the goal of subordinating the market in transitional society and its eventual withering away—that distinguish a genuine Marxist approach to the question from the viewpoint being presented by reformist currents in Eastern Europe today, as well as from “market socialist”-type schemes. Looking at the abject failure of bureaucratic planning, falsely identifying this with the idea of planning itself and with socialism, and lacking any real alternative social vision or theory, both the present-day reformists in the USSR and Eastern Europe (of bureaucratic as well as antibureaucratic varieties) and market socialists declare that a genuine planned economy is a utopia, and we must fall back on the anarchy of the capitalist market as the only realistic option.

Of course, what these elements leave out of their thinking, and what cannot be stressed enough, is that *genuine workers’ democracy and direct workers’ control* are absolute necessities if the market is to be made to serve the interests of the workers’ state, rather than undermine it, and if the economy is to develop sufficiently so that the market can eventually be dispensed with. The absence of these things in the countries dominated by Stalinist bureaucracies has been decisive in bringing about their present economic stagnation, not any inherent flaw in planning itself.

A similar point needs to be made about the private production of commodities within a workers’ state. Contrary to what the bourgeois ideologists are gleefully declaring today, “private enterprise” was not an invention of the bourgeoisie. Petty commodity production was an important aspect of economic life in precapitalist forms of class society. What marked capitalism, what set it off from the past, was the *generalization* of commodity production and the technological advances that made possible the *concentration* of that process into large factories for mass production. This required substantial capital—and therefore capitalists.

Criteria for Identifying Workers’ States

There is a simple logical error being made by some sectarian and dogmatic “Marxist” thinkers today. They start with a basically correct statement, understanding the idea with which we began this article: Trotsky pointed to the nationalized economy, central planning, and the state monopoly of foreign trade and insisted that their continued existence in the USSR—even warped and distorted by the antiproletarian approach of the bureaucracy—proved the continued existence of the workers’ state. *It does not follow*, however, that their weakening proves that a workers’ state no

longer exists. Again, we insist, the key question remains: what relationship of class forces is reflected in the existing state apparatus?

The economic relations enforced by that state power is one test of this class relation, but it is not the only one. *For Trotsky in his analysis of the USSR in the 1930s it was the decisive factor.* It was also decisive for the social overturns after World War II—in Eastern Europe, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba (though in important respects Cuba was qualitatively different from all of the others).

The reason it was decisive in these cases was that *the masses themselves had been politically expropriated.* Their exclusion from any real participation in the political decision-making process, combined with the social origins and limited programmatic perspectives of the leaderships involved, placed a serious question mark over the social content of these developments. Therefore, the maintenance and defense of proletarian property forms in the USSR, despite the bureaucracy, and the expropriation of the old ruling classes in these post-World War II transformations, proved the proletarian character of these processes. (The case of Greece—where partisan forces linked to the international Stalinist movement held power briefly after the Second World War but did not carry out an overthrow of private property and the consolidation of a workers' state—confirms, in a negative sense, the usefulness of this approach to the problem.)

But while this way of looking at things may be completely valid for these specific cases, it would be a mistake to overgeneralize as a result of them—especially in the present historic conjuncture which is marked by real mass movements challenging bureaucratic control. This reopens the political side of the workers' state equation—that is, the genuine participation and representation of the working class itself in a new type of state apparatus. From a theoretical point of view this is just as important as the economic question—perhaps even more so.

Both Lenin and Trotsky asserted, for example, that the fundamental nature of the Soviet state that took power in October 1917 was proletarian—even before a single “socialist” economic measure had been implemented. This was true because of the mass base on which the soviets rested, and which was represented in fact by the new Bolshevik government. Following Engels's lead, Marxists have often presented the Paris Commune as the first example of the proletarian dictatorship, even though it was short-lived and made hardly any “despotic inroads” into private property. More recently, the FSLN regime in Nicaragua was, despite its commitment to a mixed economy dominated by the law of value and the bourgeois market, characterized legitimately as a proletarian government—again because of its social base, its commitment to democracy, and the dedication of its cadres to advancing the interests of working people in Nicaragua (whatever mistakes one believes the Sandinistas might have made while trying to balance between all of the contradictory forces facing their revolution).

Given the many varieties of bourgeois power, the various levels of economic development of individual bourgeois societies, and the complex forms that proletarian power has also proved capable of in the brief historical period that we have been able to view its emergence, the point at which the qualitative transformation occurs, the point at which bourgeois power is actually overthrown and proletarian power becomes predominant (or vice versa), certainly has been and will continue to be marked by different specific manifestations in different individual cases. No single general criterion, such as nationalization of industry or the military displacement of the bourgeoisie from power, can serve as a litmus test for all situations. Each one has to be analyzed and discussed in its own terms and on its own merits.

It is clear that today, on the economic front, the basic institutions that defined the continued existence of the workers' state in the

USSR for Trotsky, even after the Stalinist degeneration was firmly entrenched, are being undermined. But the democratic participation of the masses in the political and economic life of these societies took a series of giant steps forward in 1989-90, reaching its highest expression in the semi-insurrectionary upheavals that toppled hard-line Stalinist regimes in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Even though these mass movements have receded for the moment, they have left an indelible mark. The masses know their strength and are capable of using it again.

The real class struggle rarely develops in a straight line. Given the recent history of these countries it is not surprising that there should be mass illusions today in bourgeois-democratic forms. And, in fact, such political institutions do represent dramatic progress over the previous totalitarianism of bureaucratic rule. After a little experience with the consequences of parliamentary “democracy,” however, the masses in Eastern Europe are capable of drawing the necessary conclusions and taking the next step forward.

We must, therefore, note a contradictory development. If the current reforms actually end up dismantling the last vestiges of the nationalized planned economies (and they are still far from this), if the working masses do not succeed in creating genuine forms of direct democracy and a genuine proletarian leadership that can take over the governmental power, then that will mean that a new capitalist class has been consolidated and the workers' states have, indeed, been overthrown. But if the masses are able to effectively advance and reassert their own right to rule, then even if those economic forms that we have come to identify with the workers' state remain severely eroded for a period, the workers' state itself will not only have been affirmed, it will have been immeasurably strengthened.

Real Human Societies and Abstract Theoretical Categories

Marxists use general theoretical categories to mark particular stages of human social organization, identifying them with their dominant economic class. These concepts—slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism—are useful as a general guideline. But no living society can ever be reduced to such necessarily oversimplified abstractions, and there is no reason to think that the evolution of postcapitalist society will be any less complex and difficult, any less a hybridization and coexistence of contradictory economic and social formations, than previous human history has been.

The emergence of the first slave states, for instance, did not abolish preclass forms of society, but coexisted and interacted with them for thousands of years. Capitalism did not eliminate feudalism, but lived with it for centuries in the same geographic territory, eventually outlasting it historically. The European and North American bourgeoisie not only maintained a relationship of tolerance with slavery in the new world, but actually got rich off the slave trade and off the cheap cotton and sugar that the slaves produced. It is safe to say that without slavery, the growth of bourgeois power on a world scale would have at least been much slower and considerably less all-encompassing. It is not unreasonable to expect, then, that vital remnants of the old bourgeois society will exist for a period of time within the workers' state.

It is also important, however, to note an essential difference between the workers' state and those class societies that have gone before it. The bourgeois state is a bourgeois state because it enforces a bourgeois mode of production and bourgeois norms of distributing society's wealth. But a workers' state can never *fully* exist in the same sense. It will never actually enforce a proletarian mode of production and proletarian norms of distribution—“from each according to her/his ability to each according to her/his need”—because these cannot exist until there is a sufficient abundance of economic goods and services for economic classes to

have ceased to exist, and therefore the rule of one class over another to have have ceased to exist, and therefore the state properly so-called to have ceased to exist, and therefore for the workers' state itself to have ceased to exist.

When we use the term "workers' state" to describe any particular human society, then, we cannot be talking about something that is already established in its fullest sense, but only something that is in the process of coming into being (and/or ceasing to be). It is useful to apply the term only so long as we understand this limitation.

General Analysis and the Present Perspectives for Proletarian Revolution

Our goal in looking at all of this, of course, is not just to satisfy ourselves with a more elegant understanding of the world. We need to better arm ourselves in order to change it. By studying and understanding the present social processes we can determine where they came from, what contradictory elements exist that are moving in different directions, and how we can act on the basis of these contradictions to try to help things advance in the direction we would like to see—toward the international workers' revolution.

The only thing that can reverse the continued degeneration in Eastern Europe and the USSR is a further upsurge by the working masses of these states—in collaboration with the workers' revolution in the rest of the world, particularly in the most productive capitalist countries. That has been true from the very beginning. The failure of the Western proletariat to conquer power in any of the advanced countries in the six decades after the Russian Revolution laid the basis for the continuation of the process of degeneration in the USSR and the deepening of that process leading to the present crisis.

This all-important international aspect suggests a useful starting point to chart a road forward for the proletariat of Eastern Europe and the USSR. With the bourgeoisie today actively discussing economic—and even eventual political—union of Western Europe, the idea of a "Socialist United States of Europe" can take on a new meaning and great timeliness for the international proletarian movement. This slogan, raised by any significant wing of the working class of Western Europe, could have a profound impact on the consciousness of those in the East, and cut across the false popular notion that it is only through an alliance with the Western *bourgeoisie* that the Eastern European countries can find the resources they need to overcome their present economic dilemma. Likewise, this slogan raised by a mass movement of insurgent

workers in the East could play a dramatic role in turning around the incorrect identification of "socialism" and "communism" with the totalitarian Stalinist dictatorships.

Revolutionary-minded workers in Eastern Europe and the USSR also need to raise slogans that can sharpen the contradiction between the mass upsurge that was indispensable for bringing about the present democratic reforms, and the actual governmental structures that have resulted from that upsurge: *For direct mass democracy! For workers' and farmers' councils! For real workers' control over all aspects of economic life!* While the bourgeois democratic liberties and parliamentary forms that have been won up to now are a step forward, we do not rest there. The mass movement must move to a still higher plane if further progress is to be made.

Another contradiction exists between the broad, egalitarian social ethic of the Eastern European and Soviet masses (one of the remaining legacies of the workers' state), and the new social conditions likely to result from the current and pending implementation of market reforms. A series of concrete demands for the maintenance of the social gains of the workers' states needs to be raised in an agitational way: For the right to a job, health care, education, comfortable retirement, etc., etc.—demands that workers in capitalist states can also identify with and support both at home and abroad. These specific proposals can breathe life into the general concepts of a Socialist United States of Europe, and for direct forms of mass democracy, and also lay the basis for explaining why state property and central planning should be maintained in all branches of the economy where this is feasible.

Another crucial element has to do with the national struggles taking place in the USSR, and the broader fight of oppressed peoples around the world for self-determination, political liberty, and economic progress in places like Latin America, South Africa, and the Middle East. The obvious similarities and links of these struggles with the fight of the Eastern European masses for social justice provide an opportunity to deepen internationalism and solidarity efforts on all fronts.

If even a significant minority of the present mass movement in Eastern Europe and the USSR arms itself with this kind of programmatic perspective, then the basis can be laid for overcoming the present ideological confusion and moving the struggle forward. This, in turn, will strengthen the workers' states and defeat the efforts of the imperialists to take advantage of the present profound crisis of bureaucratic rule to miseducate and disorient workers around the world. □

USSR (Continued from page 22)

sniffing the wind and looking to maneuver to stay atop the rising waves of protest. But the waves are getting very high. They threaten to crash against the bureaucratic structure as they have in Eastern Europe.

What is needed in the USSR today is a revolutionary party led by the workers that can lead this vast human energy into a

struggle to abolish the bureaucratic apparatus once and for all and organize to run the economy in the interests of the majority. □

Notes

1. See *International Viewpoint* Nos. 187 and 188.

2. *Financial Times*, July 5, 1990.
3. *New York Times*, July 14, 1990.
4. *NYT*, May 22, 1990.
5. *Moscow News*, March 11, 1990.
6. *MN* Nos. 14 and 26, 1990.
7. *MN* No. 24, June 17, 1990.

Reba Hansen (1909-1990)

From the turbulent days of the Great Depression, when capitalism seemed on its last legs, to the no less astounding events of the past year, when the Stalinist monolith started to crumble in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Reba Hansen was a toiler in the vineyards of the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors. For forty-five of those years she was the companion of Joe Hansen, who played a large role in the leadership that held the SWP together during the dog days of the witch-hunt. They were both quiet-spoken, stoic, hard-working comrades who contributed much to the political direction and organizational health of the SWP. They also were fun to be with when they allowed themselves time off.

Reba joined the movement with Joe in 1934. In 1937 they moved to San Francisco where she met Cannon. In 1938 they went to Mexico to work and to guard Trotsky; Reba returned to New York in 1939. Cannon, who was national secretary of the SWP, asked her to work full time for the party. At first she worked for Pioneer Publishers and then became business manager for the *Militant*. During her tenure in this many-sided job, she was in charge of the column called "Militant Army." To those members who put much effort into selling and getting subscriptions to the paper, this column was an eye-catcher. Printed there they could see the comments they sent in with their subs. Reba had edited them with a very light hand. Although the office equipment was primitive and organizing the work of processing the thousands of new subs obtained during the sub drives of the '40s took much work, Reba found the time to write articles for the *Militant* once in a while. Reba worked in the national office of the SWP the rest of her life, except for the time when she was away on other assignments.

In 1947 Cannon's secretary left New York and he asked Reba to replace her. She remained his secretary and close associate until Cannon left New York in September of 1952. In 1956 she and Joe were assigned to go to Los Angeles with the idea that Cannon might write an autobiography and she would work with him on it. This never happened, but *International Socialist Review*, the theoretical magazine of the party, was moved to the West Coast and Reba assisted in getting the magazine out. They returned to New York in 1958. In 1962 the Hansens toured South America for four months, learning firsthand about the Cuban revolution and its impact in Latin America. In 1963 they were in Paris, where they collaborated in putting out *World Outlook*. By 1965, they were back in New York. *World Outlook* had "caught on." People in this country and around the world looked to it for news of, and news of relevance to, the world Trotskyist movement. The name was changed to *Intercontinental Press* in 1968. Hansen remained its editor until his death in 1979. After Joe's death Reba helped maintain the Library of Social History which had been set up by the SWP. Hansen's files were kept there. She worked part-time for the library until her last illness. Shortly before her heart wore out, she returned to Salt Lake City, where she died on the third day of July.

Many of the facts in the preceding paragraph came from an article Reba Hansen wrote for the book *James P. Cannon, As We Knew Him*, published in 1976. Her article is 55 pages long. Most of the other contributions are 3 to 10 pages. Reba was asked to cut her article, but refused. She had worked closely with Cannon for 10 years and he remained her friend until his death. She was able to make a unique contribution to the understanding of Cannon as a person and as the chief organizer of the longest-lived revolutionary party in history. In addition to enriching our understanding of the individual most responsible, next to Trotsky, for the building of the Fourth International, the article also tells us much about Reba Hansen.

In her low-keyed, soft-spoken way she conveys to the reader her satisfaction and pride at the competence with which she handled her work. During the course of portraying her relationship to Cannon, his growing affection and admiration for her becomes clear. Her collaboration with Cannon gave her an important role in the building and maintenance of the revolutionary Trotskyist movement in America.

Reba Hansen died at approximately the same time as the Socialist Workers Party formally left the Fourth International. The Barnes leadership of the SWP had started their movement away from Trotskyism in 1981. The expulsions in 1983-84 of more

than 100 members who wanted the opportunity to persuade the party of the incorrectness of this path toward a "new," amorphous, international alignment, signaled their further political degeneration. Reba chose to remain in the SWP. □

Dorothea Breitman

Louis Sinclair (1909-1990)

The Louis Sinclair memorial meeting later this month at the University of Glasgow will commemorate the valuable historical research work of this modest man who spent the major part of his adult life in pursuit of the voluminous published writings of Leon Trotsky in all languages, Trotsky's complete literary heritage. This is not to say that Louis lacked other interests and engaged in no other activities. Far from it. He cultivated a wide circle of friends of varied interests, was an avid correspondent, enjoyed travel and visits with friends and family in Europe and America. Ill health forced him to forego a planned trip to the U.S. early this year. He was hospitalized in Glasgow and died of pleurisy and other complications on July 7, shortly before his 81st birthday.

His contribution to the recorded history of our epoch was summarized in a caption in the British daily *The Manchester Guardian* (July 30)—"Louis Sinclair: the complete Trotsky collector." This appeared over the tribute by Louis's close personal and political associate Charles van Gelderen reproduced on page 35.

As a youth Louis joined the Glasgow branch of the Revolutionary Socialist League in 1937, an affiliate of the Left Opposition; and for a short time after its founding in 1945, he was a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, then the British section of the Fourth International. After leaving the RCP he never formally

joined any of the several organizations in Britain calling themselves "Trotskyist," but he continued to take a keen interest in developments within the Trotskyist movement and especially in the sections of the Fourth International.

In 1972 the Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, published a 1,082-page tome, *Leon Trotsky, A Bibliography*, by Louis Sinclair. In the preface to this edition, Sinclair wrote "A complete bibliography cannot be considered for many more years. There are uncounted unpublished items in the spheres of Trotsky's activities in the Russian CP, in the Soviet government, in the Red Army and in the closed section of his Archives at Harvard: some of these may fall within the limits of this work. The private papers of his correspondents which are untraced or unpublished is a further area to be researched."

For the next 15 years Louis continued his work on the Trotsky bibliography, and when the closed section of the Trotsky Archives at Harvard was opened Louis was among the first to seek access.

In this period Louis became acquainted with George Breitman of Pathfinder Press, a prominent Trotskyist writer in the United States and leader of the Socialist Workers Party in this country. He kept up a steady correspondence for well over a decade with Breitman because of their common interest in the publication of Trotsky's writings. Their joint work bound the two together. Breitman's tribute to Sinclair took the form of a review of the Trotsky bibliography soon after publication of the Hoover edition, and later (in 1974) Breitman wrote after completion of the first 12 volumes of the *Writings of Leon Trotsky* series, "We are unable to express adequately our debt to Louis Sinclair, without whose monumental *Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography* (Hoover Institution Press, 1972) this series would have been seriously incomplete and subject to more defects than it now has."

After Breitman's death in 1986 Louis continued regular correspondence with members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. The FIT was formed in 1984 by expelled members of the Socialist Workers Party who were prominent proponents of Trotskyism, including Breitman, George Weissman, and the legless veteran James Kutcher. Louis had met them all and was familiar with their contributions to the

Trotskyist movement. He had deep respect for them, matched only by his contempt for the detractors of Trotskyism who usurped organizational control of the SWP and bureaucratically kicked out all known Trotskyists.

Although Louis deplored such developments his preoccupation was in the academic field. In 1985 he contributed his personal library and working papers to Glasgow University and from then on continued collaboration with scholars there and elsewhere in historical research. He established a worldwide reputation.

"A display of material from the University's Trotsky Collection," exhibited at Glasgow University Library, October 26-December 18, 1987, marked the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The introduction to the catalogue of the exhibit included the following note on sources: "This small display of material is drawn from the Library's extensive collection of Trotskiana, which was received as the result of a generous donation in 1983. The original gift comprised some 1,800 editions of Trotsky's works in 40 languages, together with numerous secondary items and several hundred periodicals and newspaper issues containing pieces by Trotsky. Since then, the collection has attracted further donations, notably, a small group of papers and published material from Isaac Deutscher (Trotsky's biographer) presented by his widow. Other significant items which have been acquired are the first Russian edition of *Where Is Britain Going?* of 1935; copies of two films of Trotsky in Mexico, purchased from the cameraman who shot them; a recording of the speech made on the occasion of the founding of the 4th International; and numerous copies of original Trotsky correspondence held in libraries in North America." Louis was proud of his part in helping to organize and promote this exhibit. But he could not be indifferent to organizational developments within the Trotskyist movement throughout the world, and especially in the United States.

In July 1986 Louis had visited the U.S. and spent some time on the West Coast. Upon returning to Scotland he wrote (in his characteristically cryptic style reserved for private correspondence) that he met with leading comrades in Socialist Action in San Francisco, and had enjoyed long talks with them. "I took the general line that the supreme law was the salvation of the

Memorial Meeting for Louis Sinclair:

- Friday, September 28
7:30 pm
Adam Smith Building
Glasgow University

Messages to:

- Tony Southall
67 Glenapp St.
Glasgow G41 2LG
Scotland
-
-

Fourth International itself, not only the SWP; and that under these circumstances if that law was recognized nothing should be allowed to prevent the fusion of your two forces. This would serve as a stronger force of attraction and cohesion than the determination of the Barnes group to liquidate the FI and start afresh. All the time, I insisted I was speaking only for myself and said I would say as much to you."

Louis often seemed torn between his desire to become involved in the organization tasks of the Trotskyist movement and his major commitment to historical research. Certainly one of the most exciting moments for him was the news in June 1987 of a new (and very important) collection of Trotsky material discovered at the Hoover library, sold to the Hoover Institution in 1963 by Boris Nicolaevsky. Louis wrote immediately asking for a copy of the Hoover Institution's magazine, *American Historical Review*, which described the new material. . . . "I'd be grateful, needless to say." We were able to get complete details and, with Louis's encouragement, published an account by Marilyn Vogt-Downey in the September 1987 issue of this magazine.

His search for new material was ceaseless. On November 7, 1988, he wrote upon returning from a visit in Europe: "Have received two volumes from Germany but have not opened the package. Today brought a load from Japan (not opened) and two separate volumes from Felshtinsky (not opened) and a letter from Felshtinsky arguing he has found fresh pieces in Amsterdam." In early 1986 he forwarded a rough translation of a partial critique of Li Xianrong's *Critical Biography of Trotsky*, which at the time was attracting attention in China.

An updated, greatly expanded two-volume edition of the Trotsky bibliography was published last year in Britain. At the time of his death Louis was in process of completing an index of prewar International Discussion Bulletins of the Fourth Inter-

Louis Sinclair's Trotsky Bibliography is available from:

**Gower Publishing Company
Old Post Road
Brookfield, Vt. 05036**

national which include many otherwise unpublished works of Trotsky.

Louis's health began failing in 1988. In June of that year he wrote that the doctor was visiting daily, treating him for lung infection. We were notified that he had been taken to hospital. He had remarkable recuperative powers and soon returned home. But he told us that his condition was getting steadily worse. In one of his last letters, in May this year, he requested a

copy of Trotsky's book *Political Silhouettes*, in Russian, which he had learned was scheduled for publication in the Soviet Union, 50,000 copies. Then he said, "I simply must stop everything I'm doing; I'm exhausted beyond reason."

Louis Sinclair was a staunch ideological and financial supporter of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. We are grateful for the too few years of our association with him, and for the rich heritage of his life

work which he leaves to the benefit of future generations. He always expressed such strong affinity to the life and work of George Breitman that, for us who knew both men, we can find no better words of tribute than those he wrote of Breitman: "Meticulous in method, persevering in endeavor, loyal to his obligations, a willing listener and a master executant, courageous to the end." □

Frank Lovell

Louis Sinclair: the complete Trotsky collector

LOUIS Sinclair, a little-known but remarkable scholar of the history of the Left, probably knew more about Trotsky, and certainly more about his writings, and the literature on Trotskyism, than anyone else alive.

He had spent his retirement, and indeed the greater part of the last twenty years, compiling his massive two-volume Trotsky bibliography, which has become a standard work of reference. The unrivalled collection of Trotsky's books and writings, and of articles and books on him which he accumulated along the way, is now in the library of the University of Glasgow. Sinclair's other labour of love, an index of pre-war internal bulletins of the Fourth Republic, will also be a valuable source for historians of the period.

Louis was born and brought

up in the Gorbals, and after graduating from Leeds University, he returned to his native city, teaching in various schools and retiring at length after some years in the post of assistant headmaster.

During vacations (with no grants from foundations to fund his travelling expenses, of course) he must have visited practically every major library in Europe and America in his search for material, and ransacked the archives of any Trotskyist or ex-Trotskyist who would yield to his obsession.

Almost every second-hand book dealer must have known him personally or through correspondence. Accompanying him on some of these trips to dealers it was remarkable to see how instantly he was recognised as he entered the shop, and on a good day the dealer would turn at once to the appro-

priate shelf with "Ah, Mr Sinclair, I have the book you were looking for!" He kept up a prodigious international correspondence, and nearly every post would bring something. I can remember him one morning unwrapping with pride a copy of Trotsky's *Germany — What Next?* in some obscure Indonesian dialect.

Louis was inevitably much in demand for advice and direction among students of Trotskyism and related subjects. He was fascinated by the changes in the Soviet Union, and always on the alert for new material emerging from long-closed archives, and latterly Soviet historians had themselves begun to find their way to his door.

Charles van Gelderen

Louis Sinclair, born July 28, 1909; died July 7, 1990.

Michael Warshawsky's Conviction Upheld by Israeli High Court

The Israeli High Court has upheld the November 1989 conviction of political activist and Fourth Internationalist Michael Warshawsky, who began serving an eight-month sentence in the Ma'asiyahu Prison on July 1 of this year. Warshawsky is the director of the Alternative Information Center—an independent news agency in Israel which provides information on the Palestinian struggle and publishes the newsletter *News From Within*. Warshawsky was originally sentenced to 20 months in prison and the Alternative Information Center fined \$5,000 for typesetting a booklet which offered guidance to Palestinians subjected to interrogation and torture by the Israeli military and secret police. Although Warshawsky's sentence was reduced from 20 months to 8 months (with 12 months suspended), the court's decision sends a clear message to Israeli political activists that contact with Palestinian organizations involved in the struggle against the occupation and against the violation of human and democratic rights will not be tolerated. (Those wishing to write Warshawsky can do so by addressing their letters to: Michael Warshawsky, P.O. Box 13, Camp Ma'asiyahu, Israel. Information on the Alternative Information Center or subscriptions to *News From Within* can be obtained by writing or sending a check or money order of \$35 to: Alternative Information Center, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem, Israel.)

Yugoslavia and the Market Economy

“Plan, Market and Democracy,” by Catherine Samary, *Notebooks for Study and Research #7/8*. Amsterdam, International Institute for Research and Education, 1988. 63 pp., \$5.

Reviewed by Doug Buchholz

The dramatic changes taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have given rise to much superficial and hasty analysis, among Marxists as well as bourgeois observers. In order to understand these changes concretely and in their historical context, and thus to respond to them correctly, Marxists need not only accurate information but reliable socioeconomic analysis. Catherine Samary’s “Plan, Market and Democracy: the experience of the so-called socialist countries” responds to this need admirably. Although it predates the most recent and radical of the changes under way in the bureaucratic workers’ states, Samary’s analysis provides the necessary tools for understanding and responding politically to these changes.

Samary rejects “purely economic” criteria for determining the social content of “transitional” regimes. According to her analysis, “political” and economic goals and categories are inextricable. This is consistent with (indeed, it underlies) Trotsky’s understanding of “combined and uneven development,” “permanent revolution,” and “political revolution” as necessary to further social development in postcapitalist societies. Samary recognizes this continuity, and refers to Trotsky’s theories as relevant to current debates over reforms in so-called socialist countries.

She also emphasizes, however (indeed, precisely), the importance of “specificity” in analyzing “postcapitalist” regimes; the three “models” of market reforms in postcapitalist societies which she proposes are thus based on real historical experiences, but are theoretically generalized as “types” of relations between planning and market forces. This corresponds to Marx’s procedure in *Capital*, a precedent of which Samary is also aware.

With respect to the use of market mechanisms by a “socialist” system, Samary emphasizes the relation between quantity and quality—for example, a “qualitative leap” from one social system to another can be said to have occurred when the “prerogative” of factory managers of “treating labor . . . as . . . a cost on the same plane as other costs . . . is legalized and protected by the state” (p. 7). Once again, therefore, political criteria—who makes decisions, how, and in whose interests—prove to be necessary to determining the social content of economic choices. It is thus a fallacy from a socialist point of view to treat “laws of the market” as purely objective.

Here are Samary’s three models:

- (1) “Bureaucratically centralized planning”—strict subordination of market relations to a central plan; passive role of money, as a medium in circulation of commodities only; relatively undemocratic economic decision-making processes. This model corresponds to the Soviet Union after 1927, and to all so-called socialist countries before the adoption of market reforms in the 1960s (1950s in Yugoslavia).
- (2) “Use of market mechanisms by the plan”—adoption of commodity-exchange relations by central planners to correct inefficiencies in effects of the plan or to establish relations with generally commodity-producing economies, “without the ‘law of value’ becoming the regulator of the

economy” (p. 10). As above, the social content of such a reform depends largely on *political* factors—the degree of self-management by workers and “who in the firm decides” about investment of surplus product, etc. This extends all the way to the structure of the “socialist” state—“who decides” about the makeup of economic decision-making bodies at the municipal, regional, national (ultimately international) levels; what is the relation between trade unions, party (if the state follows a “Leninist” model), and state apparatuses? etc. This model corresponds to the Soviet Union during the NEP and the Kosygin and Brezhnev periods, to Yugoslavia during the 1950s and early 1960s, and to other bureaucratic regimes during periods of early experimentation with market reforms.

- (3) “Market socialism”—this model corresponds to the abstract possibility of full coherence of the operation of the law of value in a “socialist context,” a highly contradictory situation at best. In Samary’s view, “the only case where such reforms were actually put into practice was in Yugoslavia, during one of the different reform periods, between 1965 and 1971” (p. 10).

The longest and most detailed part of Samary’s analysis concerns the market reforms adopted by the League of Yugoslav Communists in 1965. These reforms aimed at overcoming the general underdevelopment of the Yugoslav economy with respect to the capitalist West, at redressing severe regional economic inequalities, and at undermining corruption and economic inefficiency resulting from “politicization” of economic planning under the authority of a bureaucratic party. The reforms were undertaken as technical economic measures, and indeed were partially inspired by economic “experts” from the International Monetary Fund and the European Economic Community. They thus embodied the separation of political from economic criteria—and the corresponding acceptance of full “objectivity” of the “laws” of supply and demand—which Samary criticizes in her introduction. At no time did they directly address the problems of bureaucratization of economic decision making which Samary believes underlie the inefficiency of hypercentralized planning.

The post-1965 Yugoslav reforms were the most far-reaching adoption of market mechanisms by a “socialist” regime to date. They included practically full privatization of the banking system, nearly unconditional opening of the Yugoslav economy to foreign capital and commodities, and more gradually introduced privatization of domestic firms and cooperatives (Samary notes that by 1971, “the number of [farm] cooperatives was cut in half”—p. 36). In addition, the Yugoslav currency (the *dinar*) was made directly exchangeable for Western currencies, and the federal state renounced virtually all except quasi-bourgeois fiscal and monetarist intervention in the domestic economy (for example, protective tariffs on most goods were revoked, and the federal government adopted credit-tightening responses to inflation and tax-incentive programs to attempt to correct regional trade and development imbalances).

Although principles of workers’ self-management were supposed to be respected by both foreign- and Yugoslav-owned private and semiprivate firms, in practice workers found their former decision-making authority increasingly in the hands of quasi-autonomous managers, often corrupt and sometimes in col-

clusion if not identical with party bureaucrats. Workers' only effective responses to this erosion of their social power were defensive: the right to strike was acknowledged and widely used after 1967 especially, as were slowdowns and other forms of deliberate resistance to management decisions.

The post-1965 Yugoslav reforms had exactly the reverse effects of those intended: as well as eroding workers' actual decision-making power, they exacerbated regional inequalities and tensions by ensuring that foreign and domestic capital would flow to more profitable and "efficient" enterprises in historically developed regions (like the tourism industry of the Croatian coast); they also systematically forced down workers' standards of living through the combination of monetary inflation and industrial recession (particularly in the historically underdeveloped regions of the east and south). Finally, the reforms further alienated workers from the bureaucratized party by increasing incentives for personal corruption and enrichment of local party officials (who often combined forces with or acted themselves as small- and medium-scale capitalists).

The overall stagnation and vulnerability to crisis of the Yugoslav economy also increased as results of the reform, according to Samary. The "opening to foreign [i.e., Western] capital" both made Yugoslav enterprises dependent on foreign investment and flooded Yugoslav commodity markets with imported goods; the *dinar* had to be continually devalued against foreign currencies, increasing the inflation rate; and the Yugoslav state began a highly destabilizing pattern of borrowing from Western banks and lending agencies to finance the trade imbalance, and ultimately its own operation. Concentration of foreign and domestic capital in highly profitable but socially destructive enterprises, such as tourism and small assembly-for-export, led to a pattern of "import-substitution" for domestic production of raw materials and basic industrial goods, and ultimately to massive migration or emigration of the Yugoslav labor force (mainly to West Germany).

In drawing conclusions from "the Yugoslav experience," Samary again emphasizes the inseparability of political and economic categories, and suggests the continuing relevance of Trotsky's thesis of political revolution. She concludes her analysis by quoting documents from the 1968 student revolt, which followed from and supported local workers' rebellions against the effects of the reforms. According to Samary, the "rise of workers' strikes combined with the movement of the students and left intelligentsia of 1968 [was] directed at once against the market-oriented reform and the bureaucracy" (p. 36).

On a more general or theoretical plane, Samary affirms the *incoherence* of the Yugoslav reforms:

As soon as one places the worker at the heart of a society's value system, the conditions under which he or she may be recycled or transferred become a central political problem. The defense by each individual worker—or each collective—of the job situation that they have achieved is not always rational for society as a whole. But only two solutions exist: either the conflict is resolved expeditiously by "the laws of the market," or else mechanisms are found that can involve those affected in the overall problem and arrive at solutions which do not harm their interests: that is, by shortening and redistributing the necessary work time among all, and by ensuring that transfers or reconver-

sions improve status and recognized skills and take family obligations into account. The "additional burden" created by such procedures would be not only compensated, but outweighed by people's enthusiasm for a government that made the right to work its guiding principle and the deepening of democracy in production its preferred problem-solving method. . . .

Under the conditions of the Yugoslav reform, there was no solution to the problems posed, only two conflicting, contradictory logics: hence, the "wage-system-like" relations in the management of investments, that is, the fact that workers' rights to self-management could only be defended by massive resistance to lay-offs and attacks on their living standards.

As for the firm managers, it is clear that lacking "real" ownership of capital and the means of production, they could hardly implement the capitalist rationality of maximizing profits and minimizing production costs. Wasting means of production and financial irresponsibility were not a particular problem for managers whose position remained insecure. In this respect, there was no qualitative difference with the position of the bureaucrats toward the plan, only far more powerful centrifugal forces. (p. 35)

Samary's political conclusions can be extended: "market reforms" in the Yugoslav case represented a desperate effort by a bureaucratic regime to salvage its own privileges; failure of the reforms threatened these privileges further by awakening workers and others to the *incompatibility* of a "coherent" logic of market relations and political democracy. This is a lesson workers east and west must learn, though today those in the east have a less arduous struggle ahead of them (i.e., they face a political, rather than a socioeconomic revolution). The applicability of the Yugoslav experience to contemporary China, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Romania—and even Cuba—isn't hard to see. The remainder of "Plan, Market and Democracy" provides a summary of the debates in the Soviet Union during the 1920s over the justifiable extent of market reforms. As with all other such debates, overtly or covertly, these debates were political as well as economic; Samary argues convincingly that Preobrazhensky's promotion of a faster pace of industrialization tied to limits on the growth of a peasant middle class implied greater *political* democracy than the Stalin regime would allow. Samary's account of these debates provides valuable historical background to the more recent experiences on which her study focuses.

The faults of "Plan, Market and Democracy" result from its origin, as a series of lectures at the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam. In written form, the lectures appear somewhat disjointed, and they demand of the reader an ability to make some historical and theoretical connections. In places, Samary's economic analysis also becomes more technical than this lay reader could follow. The impact of this very valuable analysis could be greater if it were translated and edited more carefully, and presented in a somewhat more coherent and condensed form. These are superficial objections, however; for detailed sociohistorical background to the current changes in bureaucratic regimes, the *content* of Samary's study is unmatched. □

Plan, Market and Democracy

The experience of the so-called socialist countries

by Catherine Samary

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Notebooks for the Grandchildren

by Mikhail Baitalsky

41. The Cunning Machine of the Secret Judicial Sessions (Continued)

Our cunning machine was a rather advanced electronics organization for its time. But in addition to all its own complexities, its functioning had an added obstacle: the problem of political trust. On the one hand, the prisoners, whose brains made the machine work, had to be trusted. On the other hand, how can you trust enemies of the people?

Our unit had a library that wasn't so bad. It was there to serve the designers, engineers, and testers, and it had recent technical publications and new issues of foreign technical journals which did not always reach libraries outside the jurisdiction of the MGB (Ministry of State Security). But alas, the intellectuals Feokenye and Puzentsov were not able to read a foreign language. In the beginning, the prisoners were allowed to read the foreign journals. But when the ideological and political level of the camp officialdom became more developed, it was understood to be impermissible to entrust the reading of rotten technological literature from the West to enemies. They will start admiring it; and anyway, who needs it? What is needed here is a strict adherence to principle. And principles demand that an enemy of the people must not read Western journals.

Feokenye overcame the temporary difficulty arising from this. He found himself a translator on the outside from among the civilian workers at some scientific institute. But the victory of the Mr. Fidgets [jail guards] brought no benefits to the projects of the cunning machine. The prisoner-designers, deprived of the opportunity to read news about technology, were forced to invent what could have easily been borrowed. On the other hand, ideology triumphed.

However, Feokenye was triumphant, too. He had the last laugh in the mornings, when he went into Puzentsov's office carrying in outstretched hands lists of descriptions, carefully borrowed from new advertisements in an American journal. Puzentsov read them through just as carefully, locked them in two safes, and sealed them as top secret.

O, immortal spirit of Puzentsov and Feokenye! I meet you at every step. I am surrounded by secrecy. It means that even the very reasons for the secrecy are a secret. Why was our camp located in city "N"? Why does the product of the distilleries go under the letters "N-N"? Why are the comparative statistics about the telephone systems in our country and in other countries "N-N-N"? What kind of military secret can they be? Perhaps the reason for this secrecy will become clearer if a few statistics are cited. In 1937, we had 5 telephones for every thousand inhabitants; in 1964, 17 per thousand. But in Greece, the corresponding figures in 1937 and 1964 are 6 and 51. In Poland, 6 and 38; and in Portugal, 9 and 57; in Spain they are 11 and 80; in Japan, 19 and 100; in Czechoslovakia, 15 and 100; in Holland, 47 and 180; Australia, 87 and 240; Sweden, 116 and 421; and the USA, 151 and 462. In our country, the total number of telephones (that is, in homes and offices) in 1964 totaled 3,900,000; two years later, around 5,000,000; and in 1967, around 5,800,000, i.e., 24 telephones per thousand inhabitants, ten times less than in Australia. Our maximum annual growth rate is 14 percent. However, in 1971, the growth rate was 10 percent. In order to catch up with Sweden, we would need about 25 years, and that is only if Sweden were to stand still.

Telephones as a means of communication between state institutions succeeded as much as was necessary for Stalin. Five telephones per thousand persons means that only institutions were equipped with them. For telephones to become not only an instrument of the state but a service to society, a means of communication for all its members, the number of telephones would have to surpass a certain magnitude. One can't say precisely how many but at least one telephone per every two or three neighboring households. To run to the neighbors to make a call or for them to call you to the phone is not particularly pleasant; but we will allow it as a beginning.

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.

The normal situation would be for every family to have a phone. If I have a phone but my friends do not, however, then the phone will not serve as a means for us to socialize.

With a distribution of phones as in Australia (240 phones per thousand persons means almost every family has a phone) or Sweden (421 phones per thousand), where surely there is no family without a phone—with such a distribution, it will be the best means for human interrelationships and an active element for genuine cultural development.

Because it then links up organically with other elements of public culture, for example with the procurement of goods for the home, it makes the situation of women easier not *in words* but in deeds. This cultural link, in turn, pulls after it new links. For a woman to be able to purchase food by phone, there needs to be a high level of culture in commerce, i.e., genuine, not feigned, interest on the part of the store in satisfying the needs of the customers and irreproachable honesty on the part of the sellers and deliverers. And from this, further, it flows that the basis for the nourishing of the children is the nourishment of honesty, the spirit of which is people trusting one another. This is not the spirit that Stalinism encouraged, with its distrust of people, concealed by words about unreliability, with its secrecy, the barbs of which were turned inward, with its informers heralded as exhibiting the highest virtue of a Communist, a Young Communist, or a Pioneer.

The elementary “Thou shalt not steal” is only part of this honesty or human trust. However, the only way to make a people worthy of trust is to trust them. We find ourselves in a vicious circle. How can we begin to trust people if they have not become trustworthy? And we keep going round and round without deciding to break out.

While taking up this vast and extremely important theme starting with the question of the telephone, I certainly do not mean to say that installing a telephone in every apartment makes everyone honest. A telephone is only one element of culture in which everything is interconnected. Without it, we have one connecting link less.

Is the telephone network a less important indicator of the concern of the state about its citizens than a radio broadcasting network? Our broadcasting has developed to a very high level. No apartment is without a receiver. Propaganda through the radio is necessary *to the state* and in being concerned about radio broadcasting, the state is taking care of itself. A telephone as a means of communication between ordinary citizens, however, is necessary to society while it is a matter of indifference to the state. On the basis of this example of the telephone and the radio, it becomes distinctly evident that I am not the one who counterposes the state to society, as the Mr. Fidgets will be quick to cry out, but rather the state is counterposing itself to society. By hiding the innocent, it would seem purely civilian, statistics like those about telephones, the state is proving that it sees itself counterposed to society. Of course, the construction of automatic telephone exchanges is expensive. However, jamming foreign broadcasts is not cheap either.

We might as well compare rates of growth. The figures I have cited allow us to compare growth rates of telephone systems. During the years 1937-64, our system doubled in size. Czechoslovakia's increased sixfold. Incidentally, the statistics on telephones are available in even greater detail in Czechoslovakia's guidebook *for tourists!* They don't get it!

They are revealing such an important state secret to spies who have penetrated under some pretext or guise. Engineer-captain Puzentsov, I see, was ready to amicably render emergency assistance to the noncomprehending brothers and send them one of his safes with the supply of sealing wax for sealing secrets that are known to the entire world.

No one will dare to doubt that Puzentsov does this from purely ideological considerations; all the secrets and restrictions in our unit near Moscow had an ideological origin. Among the various taboos we had this one: it was forbidden to come out of the *yurta* [barracks] in shorts to soak up some sun. Military secrets must be concealed by trousers. On the warm summer days, the guards walked about the camp and caught violators.

From the window of a department house where our officials lived, there was a good view of the main alley. Perhaps the sight of so many men in shorts was seductive to the wives and daughters of the engineer-captains who themselves found it shocking. “What's going on here? Is this a beach or a labor camp?” the guard asked.

In those years, a sense of modesty was highly encouraged. Stalin didn't like to see the human body exposed, even in marble or plaster of paris. And whatever he liked or didn't like in the morning by evening had become an esthetic law for the critics and literary experts in civilian clothes.

* * *

We were educated not only by restrictions but by being shown a hero as a role model we could emulate. On Sundays, they presented picture shows. They brought in a film projector, pushed the tables together in the dining room, hung up a bed sheet (there were enough cinema operators around), and Aleksandr Nevsky would pronounce those words that the scriptwriter had thought up for him:

“Whoever comes to us with a sword will die by the sword.”

These words do not appear in the historical chronicles. If Aleksandr Nevsky did say them, the chronicler failed to record it. But the film creates the impression among many viewers, especially children, of authentic truth. It is not so terrible if a scriptwriter—in this case it was Petr Pavlenkov, author of “Happiness”—puts into the princely mouths this slightly distorted gospel saying. In its evangelical version, it is true, it has a deeper and, I would say, philosophical and humanitarian meaning: “Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.” It is an idea that is repeated many times in the writings of Jewish religious teachers of the first two centuries of the Christian era—Akiba, Hilel, and other creators of the Talmud. Granted Pavlenkov has his own philosophy. The only sad thing is that his invention has for a long time been integrated into our schools' history textbooks, which after all are supposed to be science and not film scripts. Thus our children have received even the history of the thirteenth century in a retouched version. Ivan the Terrible was also seriously retouched. It is curious that both roles in both films inspired the artist Cherkassov. Not without reason did he say “no” in *Pravda* to faultfinding and opening old wounds. Ivan Vasilevich was not a sore in our past. When it came to dealing with critics, he sent in Malyuta.¹

The camp official ordered all prisoners to go to the picture show. He watched to make sure that no one refused spiritual

food. One time, I and the engineer Protopopov, with whom I had a friendly relationship, decided not to go to the pictures. They were, in fact, showing "Ivan the Terrible." I found it physically repulsive to see this murderer sugarcoated, shamelessly rehabilitated in the film. The scheme was obvious: Stalin, like Ivan, is a Terrible But Just Savior of Russia. The duty-guard caught us redhanded and herded us off to the movie. The point is that while we were looking at the film, the guards were looking in our suitcases and night tables—a more cultured opportunity for a search.

Protopopov, my accomplice, was an exceptionally versatile and talented man. He was a clever person with the best of hearts. We never got to be as close as we might have wished because, in our camp, one's small group of companions—usually three people, four at most—was established for you. If there were more, it was impossible to walk along the alley; and all conversations were conducted primarily during the walks.

This spiritual food that not only Protopopov and I but the entire population along with us could not avoid got perfected on a daily basis. Radio and film more and more became mass culture, especially the radio. The morning began with reports to the leader. This province, that region, that factory reported its achievements and took on greater responsibilities. All day the word abundance was used in all its grammatical forms. In the evening there was the ceaseless rebroadcasting of the very same radio play about collective farms. Which Mr. Fidget wrote it I can't recall. The chairman of the collective farm grumbles to his wife: "Take another spoonful of sugar, don't stir it." These words were to emphasize the country's abundance. In fact, in the play itself, there was no sugar to stir. Who did not know that the life of the collective farmers was not that sweet?

In our yurt a loudspeaker hung directly over our heads. As everywhere else, dominoes flourished in our quarters. With shouts of "double six!" the players drowned out for themselves as best they could the nonsense and the greetings pouring forth from the black, broad, inexhaustible horn of verbal plenty. Could Mr. Operations have really been so naive as to imagine that sugarcoated dramas reeducate us? Hardly. However, to turn off the radio was forbidden. They were playing with our endurance. If anyone, unable to stand it, let loose a derisive remark, it would be reported to Mr. Operations and he would break up the stormy activity, proving how vigilant he was.

By that time, my former editor Tsypin, the master of sailing maneuvers among the reefs, was no longer alive. For his

successors, it had become a hundred times more difficult. The situation was always adding more sharp underwater rocks and the wind could change 16 compass points overnight.

Don't think that the newspapers appeared with white spots. They thundered against bureaucracy, red tape, and narrow-minded philistines, avoiding two things—details and statistics. Details could be unhealthy and statistics sensational. Figures and percentages were allowed (percentages are always better) mainly making comparisons with last year on the same date. For example, up to March 1, 22.47 percent more was sown than last year by that date. A figure is given and how precise it is!

The model for such statistics can be found on the calendar. I tear off a sheet and read: "By numbers of sheep per 100 hectares of arable land, Kirghiz ranks among the highest in the world, significantly surpassing such developed sheep-breeding countries as Australia, Argentina, and others."

Good. We have excelled. I reread it to savor the delight another time. But wait! What's going on here? "By number of sheep per 100 hectares of arable land"—on that basis, the Arabian desert undoubtedly occupies first place in the world. Of course, there are fewer sheep there than in Kirghiz but there is no arable land! The calendar statistical information is not lying, no (all calendars lie except ours). But it introduces a "subindicator" so that a minus begins to look like a plus without in any way becoming one.

The small area of arable land is reflected in the sheep-producing industry itself, which is described in the well-known tale by Ch. Aitmatov, "Farewell, Gulsar!" The writer reveals the full essence of Stalinism with all its indifference to common, social, and popular concerns, concealed by showpieces, by the fulfillment of plans and directives, by percentages and false indicators.

Incidentally, Australia lags "by numbers per 100 hectares" for one small reason: its arable lands produce grain, in fact so much grain that it sells grain to us.

Perhaps the calendar is old. No, the sheet was today's, February 1, 1969. It was published by Politizdat in a run of 18 million.

[Next month: "Conversations in the Main Alley."]

Note

1. Malyuta Skuratov (d. 1573) was one of the key leaders and organizers of Ivan IV ("The Terrible") Vasilevich's terror against the boyars.

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