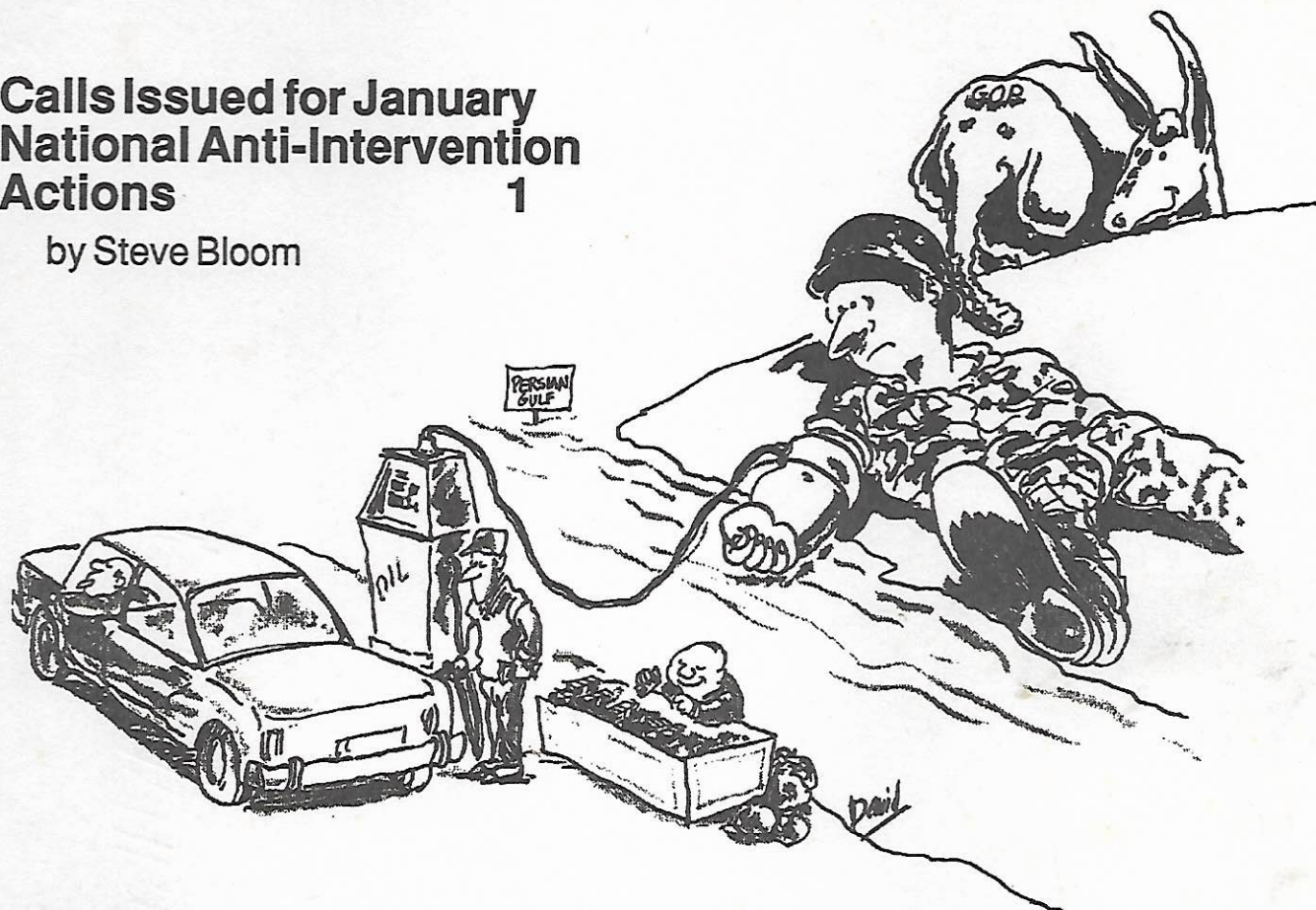


In Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

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

FIT members and supporters are involved in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. We are activists in unions, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. Intervention, student formations, and lesbian and gay rights campaigns. We help organize support for oppressed groups here and abroad—such as those challenging apartheid in South Africa and bureaucratic rule in China, Eastern Europe, and the USSR. We participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies through our ties with the world organization of revolutionary socialists—the Fourth International.

The FIT was created in the winter of 1984 by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because they opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than half a century. We tried to win the SWP back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective, and called for the reunification of Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. through readmission to the party of all who had been expelled in the anti-Trotskyist purge. The SWP formally severed fraternal relations with the Fourth International in June of 1990. Our central task now is to reconstitute a united U.S. sympathizing section of the Fourth International from among all those in this country who remain loyal to the FI's program and organization as well as through the recruitment of workers, students, Blacks, women, and other activists who can be won to a revolutionary internationalist outlook.

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Calls Issued for January National Anti-Intervention Actions

by Steve Bloom

In late November and early December two separate calls were issued by two different national organizations for marches in Washington against U.S. intervention in the Middle East. The Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East set a date of January 19, while a meeting on December 1, called by the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, decided to build actions on January 26. Despite the two dates, there is no substantial political difference in the demands or slogans for the actions.

The December 1 meeting turned out to be the broadest and most representative national gathering of Middle East antiwar activists to date. It took place at the Riverside Church in Manhattan, with between two and three hundred people present. Activists from all over the country participated, including representatives from scores of local coalitions—Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Austin, Kansas, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Washington D.C., to name a few. Students were there from such places as Jackson State in Mississippi, the University of Michigan, and the U.S. Student Association, as well as New York City. National organizations included New Jewish Agenda, Sane—Freeze, Mobilization for Survival, the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC), Jobs with Peace, Housing Now, CISPES, War Resisters League, and others. In addition, many left-wing political parties and socialist organizations were represented.

While the meeting was formally called by the National Campaign, all national groups and local coalitions present were given voice and vote, whether or not they were formally affiliated to that organization. Jack O'Dell of the Rainbow Coalition chaired along with Leslie Cagan, a long-time activist in and leader of the movement. The agenda included Campaign business, but the largest chunk of time was spent on the discussion of emergency national demonstrations for January.

Representatives from the New York-based Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, which called the successful October 20 demonstrations, explained that their group had already decided on January 19, and that it would be difficult for them to change this since literature was already out and building was underway. The majority who spoke at the meeting, however, argued that the 26th was a better date for national demonstrations. Few addressed the real danger that a vote at the meeting for the 26th could result in two national marches on Washington only a week apart.

Spokespeople for a few groups expressed their concern over this situation, arguing for a unified national action on a single date. They underscored the importance of bringing both groups

together through a single mobilization in order to mobilize the largest number of people, pointing out that a decision of the meeting for January 19 could ensure such a united action. However, when the final vote was taken the majority opted for January 26th. This set up a situation where a unification of the two actions was dependent on a change of date by the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention. Given the statements by representatives of that group during the course of the December 1 discussions, that was a gamble that the movement could not really afford to take.

There were a number of good objective reasons for favoring the January 26th date over the 19th. Many students present, in particular, expressed the need for an extra week to help mobilize forces on the campus because of the long break for the holiday in late December and early January. Some argued that the 19th would conflict with local Martin Luther King Day actions around the country. And though it wasn't mentioned, the 19th also conflicts with abortion rights demonstrations in a number of cities marking the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. But it is hard to see how any of these considerations outweigh the need for unified national actions by the movement.

Both of the national organizations concerned need to begin to see that unity in the anti-intervention movement should be the overriding concern of everyone as we face the U.S. government's present drive toward war. Clearly a single date for a national demonstration would greatly improve our ability to draw upon the strength of the growing sentiments against that war, and bring together the largest number of people in opposition to it. Compromise ought to be possible on the completely secondary question of a date.

It would have been wiser and more democratic if the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention had waited for the December 1 meeting before issuing its call for the 19th. Then it could have presented that date for a decision by the broader movement. This was not done, however, and given the fact that the call for January 19 had already gone out, the danger that a vote for the 26th would mean a split in the movement should have been given much more weight in the discussions on December 1. Still, after the December 1 meeting, there was one more hope—if the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention had taken the responsible action and sacrificed its own date in the interests of unity. Unfortunately, neither of the two groups acted in a way that would ensure a common date for the demonstration, and we are confronted with a split in the movement at the present time.

In the ensuing week some leaders have made additional efforts to bridge the gap. Although these have not resulted in a unified date, there is some indication as of this writing that at

least the two national organizations may be willing to treat the alternative actions as additional dates to mobilize the movement, rather than as competition. Now that two national marches will take place, the broad interests of the anti-intervention struggle would best be served if both are as successful as possible.

While local coalitions and groups around the country will have to select one action to focus their attention on, it is not necessary to counterpose them. Many local groups and coalitions have taken a reasonable attitude. For example, in Baltimore the coalition voted to endorse and build both actions—since it is close enough to organize people to go to Washington on two consecutive weekends. In Cleveland the Committee Against U.S. War in the Persian Gulf voted to build the 26th but takes a friendly attitude toward those who want to build the 19th. In Providence, Rhode Island, the vote was reversed, with the 19th as the focus but a cooperative attitude adopted toward the 26th. A coalition of New York campus groups decided simply to endorse the call for January actions in general, thus leaving it up to individual colleges and universities to determine which of the two actions they will build.

It is also possible for everyone to unite around local actions called by the December 1 meeting for January 15—to coincide with the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal set by the United Nations and tie the message of our movement in with Martin Luther King's birthday. Such local actions can build for both the 19th and the 26th.

On a brighter note, the demands for both demonstrations express a clear "U.S. Troops Out Now" perspective. The formal demands for January 26, adopted at the December 1 meeting, are: "No War in the Middle East," "Bring the Troops Home Now," and "Money for Human Needs, Not for War." A

proposal to add a slogan relating to a UN-sponsored peace conference virtually split the meeting in two, and was not adopted.

The setting of these specific points as the basis for united action represents an important step by the Campaign for Peace. As part of its own draft political statement, which it has been discussing for a number of months, the Campaign included a condemnation of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and a call for UN-sponsored negotiations. As long as these points remain part of its formal platform it will be difficult for this organization to become the broad coalition of the entire movement that needs to be built in the U.S. As the discussions on December 1 showed once again, there is no consensus around such ideas among anti-intervention activists. Many feel that saying these things is wrong, or that it might create confusion about our message, leaving open the possibility that there is some legitimacy to the presence of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region.

On November 30, the day before the meeting of the Campaign, President Bush outlined his January 15 deadline for Iraq in a press conference heard across the country. He left no doubt about his willingness to commit the U.S. to a war in the Middle East. The most important task for all those opposed to the government's war drive is to get as many people as possible to participate in local actions and to march on Washington during the demonstrations in January. After January, the essential lesson of these events must be applied by all leaders and activists no matter which wing of the movement we support—unity is an absolute necessity if we are to be effective in our goals. And unity requires finding a way to compromise differences over questions like dates for action in order to work together on those points that are the most essential. □

Join Your Local Coalition in Building the Date It Has Chosen in Your City:

National Marches in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco

Saturday, January 19

- Stop Bush's War Now!
- Fight Racism and Poverty at Home!
- Bring the U.S. Troops Home!

For More Information Contact:

Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East
New York: 36 E. 12 St. NY, NY 10003 (212) 777-1246
Washington: 2025 'I' St. NW, Suite 1020
Washington DC 20006 (202) 332-5049

Saturday, January 26

- No War in the Middle East!
- Bring the Troops Home Now!
- Money for Human Needs, Not War!

For More Information Contact:

National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East
P.O. Box 3009, Church St. Station
New York, NY 10008
(212) 727-3069

New Book-Publishing Project Needs Your Support:

In Defense of American Trotskyism A Three-Volume Series

The movement for workers' power and socialist democracy advances through struggles against capitalist and bureaucratic tyranny—but also through debates among socialists over tactics, strategies, and programmatic principles.

From 1938 the Socialist Workers Party in the United States represented the revolutionary Marxist program of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. But in the early 1980s the SWP leadership began a process of breaking from that program, a break which culminated in a complete organizational split from the Fourth International in 1990. *In Defense of American Trotskyism* will be a three-volume series describing and analyzing the SWP's process of degeneration—as seen by those who are striving to maintain the traditions of American Trotskyism.

Readers will find serious discussions of how Lenin and Trotsky developed revolutionary Marxist theory, and how the 20th century has been transformed by a series of revolutions—in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Central America, and Eastern Europe. The contributions to these volumes discuss the relationship of socialism and democracy, the changes in world capitalism, the crisis of Stalinism, the relevance of revolutionary strategy to all sectors of the world, the necessity of working class internationalism, and the problems facing those committed to building a revolutionary party.

The first volume to be published, *Rebuilding the Revolutionary Party*, will appear in January 1991 and will contain documents and analyses written from 1983–90 by Trotskyists who were unjustly expelled from the Socialist Workers Party during the 1983–84 period. Included will be: "In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity" (1983) by Paul Le Blanc and Dianne Feeley; "The Platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency" (1984); "The Socialist Workers Party Today" by Frank Lovell and Paul Le Blanc, which appeared in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* in 1988; "Balance Sheet on the Socialist Workers Party," which was adopted by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency at its 1990 national conference, and several documents presenting arguments in favor of revolutionary Marxist unity in the United States.

The second volume to be published will contain documents pertaining to the undemocratic purge of dissident SWP members during the 1983–84 period. The third will include documentation on the struggle of the opposition while inside the SWP, from 1981–83.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism readers can help in the publication of these important books. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency has launched a drive to raise \$7,500 to defray the cost of printing and binding this three-volume series. Those who can contribute \$250 or more will receive a copy of each of the three books as they are published. Contributions can be sent to:

**Fourth Internationalist Tendency
Special Publications Fund
P.O. Box 1947
New York, NY 10009**

A Socialist in Congress?

by Tom Barrett

For the first time since 1950 a self-described independent socialist has been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Bernie Sanders, the 49-year-old former mayor of Burlington, Vermont, was elected in a landslide victory over both a Republican and Democratic opponent. Vermont is entitled to only one representative, so Sanders's victory is even more significant since his election was statewide.

In spite of Sanders's shortcomings, which are many and important, his was a victory for the working people of Vermont. His election represents a step forward for the working class of the entire United States. However, it is only a tiny step forward. Sanders proved that it is possible for a conscious socialist to defeat both a Democratic and Republican opponent, and he has pledged himself to working to enact national health insurance and other social programs beneficial to working people.

On the other hand, his conception of socialism has more in common with a Western European welfare state than with the free association of producers envisioned by Marx and Engels, and he has made very clear his intention to work within the House Majority (Democratic) Caucus and *not* to work to build a new working class party in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans. (House Speaker Thomas Foley said on November 30 that unless Sanders joined the Democratic Party he would not be permitted to join the Majority Caucus.) Though he has expressed his admiration for Eugene V. Debs, Sanders himself has much more in common with Norman Thomas—whom Leon Trotsky said considered himself a socialist “as a result of a misunderstanding.”

How Sanders Won

Voters in the United States often select a candidate as much or more for his or her personal qualities as for stands on political issues. Name recognition, “image,” and previous political experience are often more important considerations in a campaign than programmatic statements, which are frequently considered “campaign promises” and not taken seriously. It is not difficult to meet people in the United States who voted for Ronald Reagan and would just as enthusiastically vote for Edward Kennedy for president. Consequently, very few people are elected to office as a result only of their campaigns for that particular office. In Sanders's case, his successful bid for the U.S. House seat was the culmination of 20 years of political activity, and it is difficult to say how many voted for him because of—or in spite of—his avowal of “socialism.”

During the 1970s Sanders ran for office as a candidate of the Liberty Union Party, a small left-of-center formation. This party has never achieved a significant following. It put up a candidate against Sanders and the other candidates for the House seat this year, but managed to earn less than one percent of the vote. Sanders himself made a decision some years ago that the important thing was to get elected, rather than to run propagandistic or party-building election campaigns, and in

1981 he won the vote for mayor of Burlington, Vermont's largest city.

The citizens of Burlington were sufficiently pleased with Sanders's administration of city government to reelect him twice. Of course, Sanders hardly attempted—let alone succeeded—in building “socialism in one city.” He tried instead to provide services to Burlington residents within the capitalist framework. Sanders earned a reputation as an honest politician, a competent administrator, and a friend of workers and poor people—a good personal reputation, to be sure, not one that distinguished him in particular as a socialist.

Though Sanders has consistently run for office as an independent socialist, his attitude towards the Democratic Party has not been one of consistent opposition. He supported Walter Mondale's candidacy against Ronald Reagan in 1984 and enthusiastically supported Jesse Jackson in 1988. After Jackson failed to win the Democratic nomination, Sanders supported the Democratic nominee, Michael Dukakis. In 1990 he endorsed the Democratic nominee for governor of Vermont, who was unable to defeat Richard Snelling, the Republican candidate. Many who voted for Sanders also voted for Snelling.

Where Bernie Sanders Stands on the Issues

Programmatically, Sanders is indistinguishable from many liberal Democrats. The emphasis of his platform has been on social legislation, such as national health insurance and measures to aid the homeless. He supports legislation to strengthen the right of trade unions to strike, such as the law against “replacement workers,” for which the AFL-CIO has been lobbying. He supports a woman's right to choose abortion, and he is committed to measures to protect the environment. On many of these issues revolutionary socialists can make common cause with Sanders in order to win reforms which benefit workers and poor people. National health insurance is an absolute necessity—right now—as is legislation to stop corporate union busting.

Sanders, however, has the mistaken belief that the government is a completely independent entity which stands above “interest groups” (that is, the class struggle), and that the wealthy and powerful have taken control of it through all manner of intrigue and skulduggery. Though it is true that there has always been a high level of corruption in American politics—especially in the U.S. Congress—it is false to think that the election of many more honest and compassionate people like Bernie Sanders will make any kind of significant change. The very structure of the government and the two-party system ensures rule by the bankers and businessmen. In spite of Sanders's good intentions that will not change.

The Gulf Crisis

One of the worst forms of oppression faced by working people is war—in which young working class men, and now women, are sent out to kill and be killed in the interests of the employing class's profits. War has more often than not been the cause for working people to rise up against their oppression

throughout history. It has drawn the dividing line between authentic proletarian fighters and opportunists since the First World War.

Today, George Bush's attempt to reassert U.S. domination of the oil-rich Arabian (Persian) Gulf region has brought the world to the brink of war. One quarter million American troops are stationed in Saudi Arabia, with 150,000 more being shipped out to join them. They are deployed against a well-trained and well-equipped Iraqi army which was built up, ironically, with the political and financial backing of the very powers arrayed against it—Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. As this report is being written, antiwar activists are planning mass marches to be held in January in Washington, D.C., and the West Coast to demand the immediate, total, and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces (see article on p. 1). One voice which has *not* been raised against Bush's military intervention, however, belongs to Bernie Sanders.

When Bush first launched "Operation Desert Shield" in August, Sanders *supported* the decision to send American troops to the region. He complained about the government's energy policies, which he claims make the U.S. "dependent on foreign oil" and make such interventions necessary (a claim which is not supported by the facts). He also expressed the opinion which is shared by many liberal Democrats that the United States should not "go it alone" but work in collaboration with the United Nations and the "democratic" (read, "imperialist") allies. Though Sanders has declared his hope that the belligerents can arrive at a negotiated settlement before shots are fired (a hope expressed by George Bush as well), he has pointedly refused to call for U.S. withdrawal. *Sanders accepts the United States' "right" to intervene in the region; he does not oppose Bush's sending of young U.S. working people to fight against young Arab working people. Fundamentally, in spite of minor criticisms, Bernie Sanders supports U.S. intervention in the Middle East.* At this most important time for a socialist to speak out against U.S. policy, Bernie Sanders has failed, utterly and miserably.

A Socialist in Congress?

What does Sanders's election mean? Does it represent an advance for the working class or the socialist movement? Should socialists encourage their fellow workers to vote for Sanders or other politicians like him? Furthermore, what does Sanders's victory mean for the broader question of socialist electoral strategy? Should the purpose of socialist election campaigns be education, agitation, and organization to build a revolutionary party, or should it be winning governmental office?

Fundamentally, Sanders's victory was personal. The people of Vermont voted for Bernie Sanders, not necessarily for socialism. As has been noted, many who voted for Sanders cast their ballots for the Republican candidate for governor. Few people in the United States know what socialism is—and Bernie Sanders has shed precious little light on that subject—but after two terms as mayor of Burlington, Sanders himself was a known quantity. He had earned a reputation as an honest, competent, and compassionate public official. He may deserve that reputation, but his election does not bring the working class any closer to political power. Sanders's message—like that of Jesse Jackson and other "friends of labor"—is "vote for me and

I will take care of you." It is *not* a message of direct action and the exercise of power by working people.

Sanders did not run for office as a representative of a capitalist party, either the Democratic or Republican. He ran openly as an "independent socialist," even though he hasn't a clue what socialism is all about. It is not unprincipled for socialists either to vote for Sanders or to give critical support to his campaign. Sanders's program may be opportunistic, but he is no further to the right than British Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock or the Canadian New Democratic Party premier of Ontario, Bob Rae.

The question for socialists is less whether or not it is "principled" to support Sanders, but whether supporting him will help build a socialist movement, a movement dedicated to bringing the working class to political power through socialist revolution. Does building Sanders's campaign help working people break out of the two-party trap? Does socialist participation in such efforts bring revolutionists into contact with radicalizing working people?

Sanders attempted to build his campaign beyond Vermont's borders, and that would have been a positive thing if he had been willing to carry it to the level of building a new political party as a socialist alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. He was not, however, and his campaign generated little activity outside the state of Vermont. Even so, had Sanders been campaigning around important issues which could educate and raise working people's consciousness about the issues which affect their lives, critical support to his campaign might have been an appropriate tactic. However, Sanders's refusal to speak out against Bush's military buildup in the Arabian Gulf—far and away the most important issue facing working people throughout the world at this time—negated any educational value his campaign might have had.

To what extent Sanders's campaign brought working class Vermonters into political activity we have only a limited way of judging from our vantage point (see article on NOW Hearings, p. 7). Participation in his campaign in Vermont in order to come into contact with and influence radicalizing workers and young people may very well have been tactically advisable, but only socialists who are politically active in Vermont itself would be able to make that assessment. Critical support to and participation in the Sanders campaign *outside* Vermont, however, would clearly have accomplished very little to build a revolutionary socialist movement.

The United States government—not only the Democratic and Republican parties—is structured to represent the interests of the financiers and to keep working people subordinate. If socialists are elected to office, there is very little they can do by themselves within any branch of government to gain power for working people. That can only be done when working people mobilize themselves, led by their own organizations and especially by a revolutionary socialist party. Building that revolutionary party is the fundamental task to which socialists must address ourselves at this time. Electoral policy must fall into that framework—it must be directed to the goal of building a party which can lead, not to election to Congress or the Presidency for individuals, but to real power for workers and their allies, to *revolution*, the creation of a new kind of state which represents the interest of that vast majority of people who

produce the goods and services from which the employers derive their profits.

Bernie Sanders cannot be accused of watering down his program in order to get elected, since Sanders is no revolutionary and does not claim to be one. However, revolutionists must take care not to be diverted by Sanders's electoral victory away

from our task of educating, agitating, and organizing to build a party to lead revolution. That is a far more important priority than administering a city government or occupying a seat on Capitol Hill. □

December 2, 1990

The Rascals Don't Get Thrown Out This Time

Though there is no doubt about the massive political discontent within the U.S. population, it found little reflection in the 1990 election results. For the most part, they did not depart from previous patterns of returning an overwhelming majority of incumbents to office. In most nonpresidential elections the president's party loses congressional seats, and 1990 was no exception. However, the Republicans' loss of nine House seats and one Senate seat was actually somewhat below the normal shift in congressional partisan alignments, leading some Republican spokespeople to claim "victory."

To the extent that the election did reflect the people's mood, it was in the virtual boycott of voting. On average only 36 percent of eligible voters actually voted in this year's elections. Even a music video by pop singer Madonna, wearing the American flag over a string bikini and warning, "if you don't vote, you'll get a spanking," couldn't bring more voters out. (It is possible that Madonna's trivialization of the political process convinced more voters to stay home.)

For the most part the capitalist candidates did not address the central issues facing American working people. Democrats refused to challenge President Bush's war policies, lest they send "mixed signals" to Saddam Hussein. Even "independent socialist" Bernie Sanders, who won election to the House of Representatives from Vermont, did not challenge Bush on this critical question. Consequently, U.S. voters were not given a chance to register their agreement or disagreement with Washington's military intervention in the Arabian (Persian) Gulf.

Though there is consensus that the United States is entering an economic recession, the Democratic and Republican candidates had next to nothing to suggest in the way of solutions. New York Governor Mario Cuomo offered only "strong leadership" in the "tough times ahead," and New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley did little more than demonstrate that he can still make foul shots as he did when he played professional basketball. Voters in New York and New Jersey, fed up with rising taxes and decreasing government services, decreased their vote for Cuomo and nearly defeated Bradley, both of whom ran against virtually unknown Republican candidates. Democrats could not even capitalize on the savings and loan scandal, which is costing American taxpayers nearly five times as much as "Operation Desert Shield/Sword/Whatever." The broader banking crisis, of which the failure of New York's Freedom National Bank is only a small indication, was completely ignored by those candidates who would claim to be our "leaders."

It is an unfortunate fact of political life that white racism continues to run deep within American society and that some capitalist politicians not only share racist sentiments but are willing to exploit them to their own advantage. In Louisiana, former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke was able to garner over 40 percent of the

vote—and a majority of the white vote—in his unsuccessful campaign for the United States Senate. In North Carolina, Republican Senator Jesse Helms—whose views are scarcely less reactionary than Duke's—shamelessly appealed to white racism to defeat a Black Democratic opponent, Harvey Gantt.

The bigoted white politicians would like people to believe that there is a massive resurgence of racism in the United States. The election results, however, do not show a qualitative increase in support for white supremacists or their apologists. The large voter turnouts for George Wallace in the 1964, 1968, and 1972 presidential primaries—and, remember, Wallace ran as a Democrat—showed very clearly how serious a problem racism is in the United States. Hostility to African Americans played an important role in the election victories of Nixon and Agnew in 1968 and 1972, and Reagan and Bush in 1980 and 1984. Though some northern states—such as Massachusetts in the 1970s and New York in the 1980s—have been scenes of ugly racial confrontations, it is only in the Deep South that white supremacists have been able to win election without hiding their racism behind rhetoric about "law and order" or "quotas."

The default of the Democratic Party in fighting against racism and for better living standards for African Americans was demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the Republican's share of the Black vote. Twenty-two percent of the Black community's ballots went to Republican candidates in 1990, the largest percentage in at least 30 years. The newest African-American member of Congress is actually a right-wing Republican from Connecticut, Gary Franks. Though there is a rightward trend among some sections of the African-American business community, partially reflected in the Connecticut election, this does not fully explain the increase in Black support for the Republicans. The fundamental cause is the recognition—by both Blacks and Republicans—that the Democrats have reneged on their promises. Important Republican leaders, such as congressman Newt Gingrich of Georgia and Housing and Urban Development secretary Jack Kemp, have for some years been urging the Republican Party to make a special appeal to African Americans on precisely that basis, and they are clearly having some success. The obvious potential for independent political action—a new political party which could actually represent African Americans—should renew interest in this strategy for the Black struggle.

The only trend which the 1990 elections registered was the growing gap between the electoral process and real politics. Madison Avenue-style marketing was more a factor in candidates' successes than were their stands on the issues. Working people do not take this charade seriously, nor should they. However, a well-organized and aggressive political campaign which addresses workers' concerns and fights for their interests can accomplish a great deal, even within the limits of the American electoral system. The unfortunate thing is that no such campaign was waged in the 1990 elections. □

—T.B.

National Organization for Women Begins New Party Hearings in New York

by Lisa Landphair

The first of a series of eight nationwide public hearings addressing the formation of a new political party convened on November 30 in the heart of New York City's political apparatus, City Hall. These hearings were mandated by the 1989 national conference of the National Organization for Women. The 1990 NOW national conference approved the establishment of the Commission for Responsive Democracy to probe the pros and cons of founding a new party. The two-day New York hearings consisted of ten panels of testimony presented by individuals, mostly representatives of institutions and organizations, previously selected by a NOW committee in Washington, D.C. Each panel in turn made presentations to the sitting commissioners, followed by comments and queries from members of the Commission for Responsive Democracy. A public forum was relegated to the conclusion of each day with little time remaining.

Though the creation of an alternative party isn't unprecedented in American history, the emergence of a viable force spearheaded by women with the primary intent of defending the interests of all those oppressed *would be*. Unfortunately, NOW New York hasn't yet realized the significance of the hearings, opting instead to boycott them. Consequently, this potentially historic event passed unpublicized, underreported, and underattended. At most the participation topped 50 people. National NOW appropriately pointed out that dissenters should argue their point of view rather than abstain from the majority proceedings.

The hearings began with a press conference hosted by NOW President Molly Yard. She outlined how the commission came to be formed at NOW's national conference last summer. The decision to appoint a commission to explore the possibility of launching a new party representative of America's oppressed sectors, "or at least to enact reforms to challenge" the existing two major parties, came years after the defeat of the ERA in 1982 and the repeated betrayals of "today's parties that want our money, our volunteer time, and our votes without defending our interests."

In a recent statement Yard declared, "Voters are clearly dissatisfied with the status quo. This commission will tackle the fundamental problems of our current political system and seek real solutions to bring about change. The twin lessons of the 1990 elections were that voters desperately want change, and that the system is rigged in favor of incumbency, of those in power. We intend to find answers to this dilemma through public dialogue, utilizing the wisdom and expertise of grassroots organizers, scholars, historians, elected officials, and the general public. The time has come to take this bold step toward a more democratic future, when women, minorities, youth, and the poor are partners in power with today's

powerbrokers." Yard touches, in her comments, on the need for social struggle and political representation for all oppressed people; but she is mistaken in believing that the masses and the politicians who serve the interests of capital can somehow share power.

The Commission for Responsive Democracy

NOW conceives of the commission's function as follows: 1) to achieve greater political representation for those who are consistently excluded and enact a progressive feminist agenda and 2) to deal with the repeated failures of the Republican and Democratic parties: can they be reformed? if yes, how? or, should we establish a new party? if yes, how? The projection is that these issues will be taken up during the course of the next six months culminating in a final report to be presented at the next national NOW conference in July of 1991.

The commission is comprised of over 40 women and men from various parts of the country and of diverse ethnic background and political orientation. In addition to Molly Yard some of the better known commissioners present were former presidential candidate John Anderson, environmentalist Barry Commoner, Fund for the Feminist Majority President Ellie Smeal, former Boston mayoral candidate Mel King, Guy Chichester of the New England Green Alliance, Rosemary Dempsey, vice president of National Now Action, executive director of the Christic Institute Sara Nelson, Joseph Rauh, Jr., a civil rights attorney, and William Winpisinger, former president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

The Panels

Diverse opinions were presented during the panels. The opening panel was heavily reformist, which wasn't surprising since the speakers were liberal Democrats. Deborah Glick, a NOW member who had just won the Democratic primary for New York State Assembly, believes that entrance into the electoral system is possible but not without overcoming substantial barriers. Apparently the media subversively focused on her as an "avowed lesbian" rather than on her program. Ruth Messinger, Manhattan borough president and a veteran Democratic player in New York City politics, thinks reform of the electoral process is the route to power. Joe Rauh still supports New Deal politics and believes that the Democratic Party could be resuscitated by a new coalition. His formula for reform was not seen as a likely prospect. Many voiced disgust at the bankruptcy of the two-party system which in fact functions as one party, "the party of the corporate system."

Minority interests were broadly represented. Rosemary Dempsey made a case for the protection of gay and lesbian rights, spoke of heterosexism as a major prop in maintaining sexist structures and a key tool in keeping homosexuals out of power; she said that after much political activism and struggle there are only 300 openly gay people in professional politics. She made a very important point in stating that a new party could and must make these connections for all those who are disenfranchised. Others protested that minorities remain underrepresented, with African Americans comprising only 2 percent of elected officials despite their constituting 12 percent of the U.S. population and similar figures apply to Latinos. "No party is willing to say 'stand aside, there are others who must be represented'," said NOW member Virginia Montes.

Gwen Braxton, director of the Black Women's Health Project, was not electoral-minded. She believes that democracy is self-determination on an individual and group level. Vernice Miller of the Center for Constitutional Rights followed, saying that we need more democracy in our own organizations. The implication of Miller's presentation was that NOW lacks an understanding of Blacks and the working poor.

Braden interjected that NOW must make a commitment to fight racism a priority. Miller had been an active campaigner in New York Mayor David Dinkins's election in 1989 but did not express an opinion on the question of reform or new party. Jim Haughton of Harlem Fightback (a group that defends the rights of Black construction workers) emphasized the call for a new party.

Asian Americans comprise half of the world's population but only 2 percent of the U.S. population due to legislation that up until 1965 restricted their entry to this country, explained Asian American Caucus director Steve Onne.

There are one and a half million Native Americans, half in urban centers and half on reservations. *Native Nations* editor Alex Ewan said Native Americans can unite and organize but lack the necessary political representation.

Pauline Santos, president of the Philippine American Citizen Alliance, repeated the demand for representation for Filipino citizens and condemned the corruption of the major party monopoly yet supports reform of the Democratic Party.

Labor representatives were predominantly supportive of the creation of a third or labor party (terms that were used interchangeably throughout the hearings). Philip Mamber and Rachel Clough spoke on behalf of the United Electrical Workers. Mamber pointed out that the UE has called for independent political action in the form of a labor party for some time. He advocates the creation of a class party, democratically organized from the start. However, Mamber, who is president of District 2 UE Northeast Region, fully supported Bernie Sanders's campaign in Vermont and told of holding shop rallies for his election. Clough, vice president, spoke of the need for a Canadian-style national health system and support for the strikers' rights bill which would prohibit

scabbing. ILGWU's May Chen said little more than that the ILGWU registers members to vote.

Les Leopold also spoke in defense of the labor party concept. Leopold works with Anthony Mazzocchi, secretary-treasurer of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers, in advancing his labor party efforts which include proposals for the creation of a superfund for workers (a sort of economic safety-net in the event of job loss) and a national health insurance program. Mazzocchi favors as a start a "nonelectoral party for working people"—a labor party with a mass base but without candidates—that "frames the nature of the debate." Leopold told of polls taken in the OCAW locals, UAW Region 9, and a Carpenters local in New England which revealed a majority of the workers, female and male, in favor of a labor party. (Information on the polls and other material can be obtained from the Labor Institute, 853 Broadway, Room 2014, New York, NY 10003.)

The environmentalists were represented by Guy Chichester and Howard Hawkins, spokespersons for the Greens, who advocated a grassroots democracy in place of the existing capitalist (bourgeois) democracy, organization of the masses on the local level, and the "deprofessionalization" of politics.

The Greens envision a movement of direct action by the people from below which would both educate and empower individuals.

Charlotte Brody from the Military Families Support Network (in D.C.), which grew out of the Persian Gulf crisis, told of the anguish of the families of the men and women who have been sent to Saudi Arabia. Brody said that all attempts for a hearing from both the Democrats and Republicans in Congress have failed, and she appealed for support. Molly Yard responded that NOW's national board of directors has demanded the withdrawal of American troops from Saudi Arabia. Its resolution, adopted on November 18, states that the troops were there "to protect U.S. oil interests and seeks to deflect the attention of the people of the U.S. from our domestic crisis" and castigates the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for their subjugation and oppression of women and human rights.

There were clear statements for a unification of all people's movements, stressing the importance of acting *now*. Jim McClellan, historian, provided a fascinating account of numerous yet little known third-party formations in the U.S. in the nineteenth century. McClellan cited a poll which illustrates that 81 percent of the public doesn't like the current state of affairs and suggested that today there are similarities to the swelling of grassroots opposition that occurred a century ago. Dan Sheehan of the Christic Institute, which played a significant role in exposing the crimes of the U.S. government in both the Iran-contra scandal and the Karen Silkwood murder, is fed up with both the Democrats and the Republicans. He, as well as Sara Nelson, executive director of the Christic Institute, favored the formation of a new party. Another strong statement for a new party was presented by Arthur Kinoy, law professor

Calendar of Public Hearings

- Atlanta—January 18-19
- Los Angeles—February 8-9
- Houston—March 1-2
- Tampa—March 23-24
- Chicago—April 26-27
- Seattle—May (1 day, between 3rd and 8th)
- Washington, D.C.—May 24-26

at Rutgers University. Nina Chamyran from Students Organizing Students remarked that students have learned through experience that lobbying is insufficient and explained that the absence of the other scheduled student speakers was not at all due to lack of support for a third party but rather that they were off fighting other battles.

Ellie Smeal, past president of NOW and current chair of its national advisory committee, was the most ardent advocate for a new party. She stressed that a third party would not be a women's party as has been reported in the media. Rather, it would integrate women and minorities into leadership positions of society. What would be the character of the new party? Smeal envisions it as feminist, nondiscriminatory, gender-balanced, idealistic, and "holistic" with a national and global perspective. She described her experiences in Europe where she had met feminists from across the political spectrum. Women in small left parties have had considerable influence on women and on policies in the conservative and social democratic parties. Smeal says she speaks for the majority of NOW's 300,000 members who at the 1989 conference demanded "a new party now!" The strategies NOW has followed for the last four years, including lobbying, are no longer supportable as they continue to be locked out by the Democratic leadership. "Indeed, it is no good to beg other people in power but to take power."

Next, Smeal spoke of practical electoral politics, citing the financial and media advantages available to parties but not to organizations. Smeal advised the commission to set up two subcommittees, one for the formation of a new party and the other to engineer comprehensive system changes in the event a new party isn't financially sustainable at this time. It must be pointed out that Smeal didn't elaborate *what* these "changes" would involve or *how* they would be implemented. Also one senses that NOW lacks a full grasp of the enormity of this

endeavor. For instance, there was no discussion of pressing issues such as foreign policy, not to mention the complete absence of any class analysis. Still, all the hearings were informative and promising. In short, there was little sentiment for the strategy of reforming the Democratic Party, which doesn't necessarily mean a rejection of reform politics. Although some speakers did not address the question of a new party or thought it premature, the majority *did* seem in favor of a new party. Everyone should publicize and participate in the hearings as they move around the country soliciting discussion and debate that could affect us all. *A transcript of the New York hearings can be obtained by mailing \$10 to NOW Foundation, Inc., 1000 16th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036-5705.* □

Young Feminist Conference

A Young Feminist Conference has been called by the National Organization for Women in response to restrictions on minors' abortion rights.

According to the Fall 1990 issue of *National NOW Times*, this conference "will provide an opportunity for youth leaders from both campuses and communities to come together for the purpose of discussing and developing strategies to protect their reproductive rights and to advance other agendas in education, employment, civil rights, and protection from violence directed against them as young women."

The conference will be held in Akron, Ohio. It opens at 7:00 p.m., February 1, 1991, and closes at 4:00 p.m. on February 3.

For details of registration, housing, etc., contact your local NOW chapter or Young Feminist Conference, 1000 16th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C., 20036-5705.

NOW's Declaration for an Expanded Bill of Rights for the 21st Century

WHEREAS, we are determined that an Equal Rights Amendment that bans sex discrimination in the United States Constitution is ratified; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has begun to dismantle women's reproductive rights; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has refused to grant the right to privacy on the basis of sexual preference; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has dismantled affirmative action plans that fight institutional practices of race and sex discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the original Bill of Rights was passed in the year 1789 at a time when slavery was legal and women were considered legal chattel by our revolutionary founders; and

WHEREAS, it is time to complete the promise of liberty and justice under the law for all; and

WHEREAS, our nation faces new problems of catastrophic environmental conditions which could not have been conceived of by the country's founders;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT it is time for an expanded Bill of Rights for the 21st Century which will ensure that all of the citizens of the United States enjoy basic, inalienable, and indivisible human rights to which must be added:

1. the right to freedom from sex discrimination;
2. the right to freedom from race discrimination;
3. the right of all women to freedom from government interference in abortion, birth control, and pregnancy and the right of indigent women to public funds for abortion, birth control, and pregnancy services;
4. the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation;
5. the right to freedom from discrimination based on religion, age, ongoing health condition, or a differently abled situation;
6. a right to a decent standard of living, including adequate food, housing, health care, and education;
7. the right to clean air, clean water, safe toxic waste disposal, and environmental protection; and
8. the right to be free from violence, including freedom from the threat of nuclear war.

Fighting Against the Wage Gap Between Women and Men Workers

by Evelyn Sell

One of the battle cries of the women's rights movement during the first part of the 1980s was "Fifty-nine cents!" Marchers in feminist demonstrations wore "59 cents" buttons to call attention to the gap between the wages paid to women and those received by men. Towards the end of 1990 the media reported that the ratio had risen to 70 cents for every dollar paid to male workers. It appeared that progress was being made in closing the wage gap, and that economic equality between the sexes would be achieved gradually but surely. The reality gives no grounds for such optimism.

The actual figures on the wage gap vary depending on what factors are taken into account by those conducting the studies. For example, the Census Bureau reported that women earned 70 cents for every dollar earned by men in 1987—but when these figures were examined by the National Committee on Pay Equity, this apparent gain for women was actually a reflection of a *decline* in men's wages combined with younger women's entry into better paid male-dominated occupations. For older women, still trapped in "pink ghetto" jobs, the ratio was 60 cents. For women aged 21-29 with four years of college, the ratio was 86 cents.

Although men of all races and ethnic groups earn more than female workers, figures lumping together *all* women conceal the fact that women of color are on the bottom rung of the pay ladder due to their segregation within the lowest-paying female-dominated job categories. This is clearly revealed by looking at the 1988 median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers. Using 100 percent to represent the earnings of the highest paid grouping—white males—Black men earned 74.8 percent, and Hispanic men earned 65.5 percent. White women earned 65.4 percent, Black women earned 60.7 percent, and Hispanic women were the lowest earners at 54.5 percent.

Union membership results in higher earnings for women and more rapid wage increases. The greatest growth in union membership has come from the ranks of women workers, largely because of increased unionization of service industries, government employees, health care workers, and other traditionally female-dominated occupations. These facts help account for some of the progress made by women workers in recent years—and, in particular, explain improvements for Black women workers. In 1988 women represented more than one of every three labor union members, and the membership growth was greatest among Black female workers. One out of every five Black women workers were union members, and 44 percent of all organized Black workers were female. The median weekly earnings for female union members were more than \$100 higher than for nonunion women workers. At the same time, it must be noted that, on the average, unionized

women continued to earn less than unionized men—the difference amounted to *over \$100 less per week!*

Overcoming the wage gap between women and men workers involves confronting two primary realities: women workers get paid less for doing the same kind of work as men, and women are segregated into lower-paying jobs. Almost half of all employed women are in occupations where at least 80 percent of the workers are female. The more women involved in an occupation, the lower the earnings. A 1986 study by the National Academy of Sciences showed that each additional percentage point of women in an occupation was related to \$42 less in median annual earnings.

Battles to close the wage gap have included unionization drives, contract negotiations and strike actions, lawsuits by individuals and groups, pressures for legislative changes, and coalitions formed to win pay equity. The main demands raised by women workers and by the feminist movement have been: *equal pay for equal work*; *affirmative action* (programs to help women break into male-dominated occupations); and *comparable worth* (plans to establish pay rates based on evaluating and comparing job qualifications and responsibilities).

Equal Pay for Equal Work

In October 1990—after a five-year journey through the court system—a settlement was reached in an equal-pay lawsuit filed by a multi-union council against hundreds of New York City hotels and motels. The female "maids" who cleaned and polished rooms received \$15 *less* a week than the male "housemen" who cleaned and polished hallways and lobbies. The settlement closed this wage gap, resulting in an extra pay hike for the 12,000 women employees, and establishing the terminology of "house attendant" for both women and men. In addition, all house attendants received a general pay hike of 5.5 percent. It was clear why the hotel and motel companies resisted changing their wage discrimination practices: the settlement cost them about \$10 million.

This is only one example of how unions have utilized legal avenues for fighting gender-based wage discrimination.

The concept of "equal pay for equal work" was incorporated in the Equal Pay Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1963. Then, the 1964 Civil Rights Act expanded that first step by allowing women workers to file sex discrimination lawsuits on the grounds that they were not paid as much as males for the same kinds of work. President Bush's veto of the 1990 civil rights bill, which was upheld by Congress, was a blow to continued efforts to end wage discrimination against women and minorities. The bill, as originally adopted and sent to President Bush, would have restored many job discrimination

protections which had been seriously weakened by U.S. Supreme Court decisions during the 1980s. Once again, the politicians had proven that working people cannot depend on elected officials to safeguard or strengthen hard-won victories.

Establishing strong legal foundations for "equal pay for equal work" remains an important battle. In and of itself, however, such an equal pay guarantee leaves many millions of women unprotected due to gender segregation in jobs. Most women work in female-dominated occupations. The January 1990 figures from the U.S. Department of Labor show: 99.1 percent of secretaries are women; 97 percent of child care workers; 94.2 percent of registered nurses; 90.6 percent of billing clerks; 90.4 percent of nursing aides, orderlies and attendants; 87.8 percent of data entry keyers; and, 73.1 percent of kitchen workers and food preparation employees. This reality poses the need for women to break into better-paying male-dominated jobs and to fight for wage structures based on gender-neutral elements such as educational/training requirements, level of responsibility, and so on.

Affirmative Action

Efforts to break down traditional patterns of gender segregation in employment is interlinked with the struggle against racial discrimination. This vital connection is underlined by the fact that Black, Latina, Asian, and Native American women workers are the most exploited section of the adult labor force. Employment gains for racial and ethnic minorities are, therefore, of immense importance to the general fight for better employment opportunities and conditions for all women.

African-Americans' civil rights battles, which arose in the mid-1950s and grew during the early 1960s, prompted the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which barred discrimination against anyone "because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." Continuing civil rights struggles pushed President Lyndon Johnson into signing the 1965 executive order which gave an official stamp of approval to the principle of affirmative action. The order (still in effect) mandates affirmative action plans for all companies that have 50 or more employees and that do more than \$50,000 in business every year with the federal government. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforces this requirement which covers about 200,000 firms.

Early affirmative action gains were seriously weakened by court rulings in the late 1970s and during the 1980s. The first significant blow came in 1978 when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the University of California Davis Medical School to enroll Allan Bakke, a white student who argued that he had been denied admission while less qualified students were accepted under the school's quota system for minorities. Similar rulings followed to establish a negative pattern; for example, in 1986 the Supreme Court upheld the reverse-discrimination claims of a group of white teachers who were laid off under an agreement between the union and the school district that protected Blacks from layoffs even if they had less seniority.

For a brief time, it appeared that the erosion of affirmative action might be halted. In 1987 the U.S. Supreme Court actually expanded the grounds for affirmative action in the workplace by ruling that an employer may promote a woman over a man, even if he were better qualified, in order to remedy a "statistical

imbalance" in the workforce. This decision upheld a voluntary affirmative action plan in Santa Clara County, California, which was designed to promote women, minorities, and disabled workers. This was the first high court ruling that specifically applied preferential treatment to women workers.

This legal victory came seven years after the county's Transportation Department gave Diane Joyce a promotion to the position of road dispatcher. The department had originally promoted Paul Johnson but a county affirmative action coordinator intervened on the grounds that none of the agency's 238 skilled jobs were held by a woman. Johnson brought suit in 1982 and won the first round when a judge ruled that he was a victim of discrimination. Three years later, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision on the grounds that the county should be able to exercise wide latitude in pursuing affirmative action. The case was then appealed to the highest court in the nation by Johnson and attorneys for the Reagan administration. When the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Diane Joyce's promotion, attorneys for women's rights groups said the ruling would give a big boost to women seeking nontraditional and higher-paying jobs.

Barry Goldstein, assistant counsel for the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, said: "It's the most important of the Supreme Court affirmative action decisions in employment." He pointed out that the particular facts in the case were significant in regard to the question of qualifications. Diane Joyce was one of nine people qualified for the position, and civil service rules allowed the director to hire any one of the group of candidates. Three of the interviewers gave Paul Johnson a two-point lead over Joyce. Goldstein explained, "These were the same men who had been selecting and promoting candidates in the recent past, in a department where all 238 positions were filled by men." Two of the three interviewers involved in the numerical ranking called Diane Joyce "a rabble-rousing skirt-wearing person."

The court's decision was also hailed by Cynthia Marano, executive director of Wider Opportunities for Women, a national private nonprofit women's employment organization involved in training and advocacy activities to get women into nontraditional occupations. Marano said the ruling would undercut employers' excuses for not hiring and promoting women because "they felt they would be found to be in reverse discrimination. Because of the challenge of [the Johnson] lawsuit and some of the findings of the Justice Department, it appeared that women would not be protected by Title VII [of the 1964 Civil Rights Act]." By upholding Diane Joyce's promotion, the court's "decision has empowered employers to use their affirmative action plans."

This one bright victory was followed by a series of blows against affirmative action by court rulings during 1989 which made it much more difficult for minorities and women to legally challenge discriminatory employment practices. In *Price Waterhouse vs. Hopkins*, the court ruled that women and minority plaintiffs must prove that a "substantial" reason for being denied a job promotion resulted from discriminatory attitudes by management. In *Wards Cove vs. Atonio*, the court shifted the burden of proof from employers and onto people charging discrimination. This meant that minorities and women could not win cases based on statistics showing disparities in the number of jobs held by white males and those

held by minorities and women. In *Martin vs. Wilks*, the court ruled that employees can sue to reopen affirmative action court settlements if they feel they were subject to reverse discrimination—a clear invitation to white males to overturn judgments and settlements won by women and minorities.

Although affirmative action has been battered by politicians and judges, it remains alive. A recent example involves female dockworkers in Southern California. To implement settlement terms of a ten-year-old sex discrimination lawsuit, a drawing was held on June 22, 1990, for 350 dockworker jobs paying \$14 an hour. The lottery was conducted by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Local 13, and the Pacific Maritime Association. Application cards were submitted by 5,778 women. Those whose names were drawn more than doubled the number of women employed at ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The women who initiated the class action suit which resulted in this settlement had sought employment as marine clerks—a position which pays as well as dockworkers. Clerk openings had been traditionally filled by longshoremen who had worked many years and wanted an easier job before retiring. On the waterfront, clerking was dubbed “a gravy job.” In 1979, a small group of women (most of whom were daughters of longshoremen) complained that they had been denied jobs as clerks. At that time, there were 359 male clerks and one female. She had been hired under a special waiver that allowed wives and daughters of deceased union members to fill slots opened by death. The class action civil rights suit filed against the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association was later expanded to include longshore jobs. The case was settled in 1982 and called for women to eventually hold 20 percent of all longshore jobs and 25 percent of all clerk jobs. In order to meet those goals, current hiring requires that women be offered 30 percent of all clerk jobs and 35 percent of all longshore jobs.

Considering only the numbers of women hired, the situation at Los Angeles Harbor ports is the best in the country. At the Port of New York/New Jersey—the only port complex in the country larger than the one in Los Angeles—only 16 of the 6,000 longshore workers are women. Although there are some women marine clerks in Boston, there are no women dockworkers. Out of 510 longshore workers in Seattle, about a dozen are women. About 5 percent of the 2,000 dockworkers in Norfolk, Virginia, are women.

While Los Angeles ports can claim the highest percentage of women workers, the situation is riddled with problems. Women move from part-time to full-time positions at a much slower rate than men. Sexist attitudes of male dockworkers are expressed in many ways: physical harassment, death threats, dirty jokes demeaning women, sexist graffiti on cranes and shipping terminal walls, and complaints about women taking jobs away from men. In 1989, a Local 13 official issued a written apology after making “regrettable remarks concerning our women workforce” during a meeting of union stewards. One woman dockworker, who spoke at a 1990 federal court hearing on the permanent placement of female probationaries, was spit upon while dozens of male workers applauded. She told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, “The same man two times has threatened me that if I was ever on his ship and he was on the crane he would make sure that I was crushed.”

Similar kinds of sexist practices and attitudes plague women working in mines, transportation, manufacturing plants, construction, the aerospace industry, and other male-dominated workplaces. And, like the statistics for female dockworkers, the number of women who have broken into traditionally “male” jobs remains very small. In spite of the harassment and difficulties, women seek these jobs primarily because of the higher pay scales attached to such occupations. Battles for affirmative action continue to be valuable means for raising women workers' earnings and breaking down sexist stereotypes. The question remains, however: what about the vast majority of women who labor in the “pink ghetto”?

Successful Fights for Comparable Worth

The personal experiences of millions of women workers have been confirmed over and over again by studies which prove that jobs dominated by female employees systematically pay less than those reserved largely for men. This historic reality underlies the demand for “comparable worth”—the concept that workers should get paid equally for jobs that are comparable but not identical. Women's rights groups and labor organizations focused campaigns for comparable worth on governmental employers because it was felt they were most vulnerable to political as well as legal pressures. It was hoped that comparable worth gains by government employees would then lead to pay equity successes in private industry.

The first big victory came in 1981 as a result of a strike by Local 101 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in San Jose, California. The precedent-setting new two-year contract called for \$1.5 million to equalize pay between female and male workers. This struggle actually began in 1974 when the union raised the demand that the city carry out a study of gender-based wage inequities in its pay system. The study (finally begun in July 1979, and concluded in December 1980) showed an average wage gap of 15 percent between female-dominated and male-dominated job classifications—although the jobs themselves were comparable in terms of knowledge, accountability, problem solving, and other elements.

When the 1981 contract negotiations began, the city insisted that it could not afford to correct this pattern of prejudice against women workers. Local 101 carefully prepared for the battle over the pay equity issue. Membership support was mobilized through an internal education campaign carried on for many months. Utilizing union meetings and dozens of educational leaflets distributed at workplaces, comparable worth was explained in detail. The union honestly stated that pay equity meant raising wages for job classifications dominated by women workers—but comparable worth would not lower or freeze comparably rated jobs dominated by male workers. Leaflets stressed “the struggle to bring dignity to the workplace,” and the “discriminatory hold employers have over wages for ‘women's work’,” and the issue of fairness. The union leadership called repeated membership votes to assess the level of support for a contract demand that was complex and would benefit some job titles more than others.

When the city refused to negotiate the comparable worth issue, AFSCME responded by filing sex discrimination charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

(EEOC) on June 18. The union's complaint came during the same month that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that jobs do not have to be identical to be covered by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

When the contract expired on July 5, the city was still rejecting the comparable worth demand. The nine-day strike ended when the city agreed to pay adjustments of 5 to 15 percent for female-dominated jobs—over and above the general wage increases of 7.5 and 8 percent for all municipal workers. Additional pay equity adjustments were negotiated in 1983 for 64 female-dominated classifications, and in 1989 for 12 more female-dominated occupations.

In 1982, female clerical and library workers filed a class action suit against the City of Chicago based on an AFSCME study of gender-based discrimination involving pay scales and union representation. Male workers were clustered into stereotyped "heavy labor" jobs in Fire, Police, Parks and Recreation, Sanitation and Sewage, Streets and Highways, and Utilities and Transportation departments. Women were employed in the stereotyped "care giver" departments: Child Services, Animal Care and Control, Health, Housing, Human Relations, Public Library, and Planning and Community Development. This resulted in a median salary range of \$20,000 to \$32,000 for job classifications dominated by men—while the median salary range for female-dominated occupations was from \$10,000 to \$24,900. In addition, the city had a policy which did not allow collective bargaining for workers in female-dominated jobs, although "blue-collar" trade workers, police and fire employees—all men—were represented by unions.

The combination of the pending EEOC complaint and the publicity about wage inequities persuaded the mayor in 1984 to recognize union representation of the city's clerical, technical, professional, and paraprofessional employees. A union certification vote was won by AFSCME, and the first negotiated contract won across-the-board wage increases for female-dominated jobs as well as a general 5 percent increase for all represented workers. Succeeding contracts continued to shrink the wage gap between women and men employees of the city of Chicago.

By the end of 1985 only five states had not taken any steps to address pay equity issues. Throughout the 1980s, significant comparable worth gains were won by government employees in California, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Pay Equity Gains in Private Sector

The first major battle over comparable worth in the private sector was carried out by Yale University. Clerical and technical workers Local 34, an affiliate of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, gained bargaining agent recognition in 1983. Discriminatory job classification was one of the grievances the union set out to correct. Yale's wage structure was important for all New Haven workers since the city was literally a "company town" dominated by the university as the largest employer. Yale's administration was confident that its workforce would be unable to unite because it would be divided by gender and race antagonisms. Over 85 percent

of the university's workers were female and substantial numbers were people of color. The union's campaign strategy depended on mobilizing both its own members and the community to support pay justice for women and racial minorities. The fight by university workers was backed by students and faculty members, women's organizations, the Black community surrounding Yale, and other unions in the area. Local 34's strategy was vindicated when it won an interim contract in 1984.

Wide national attention was focused on the union's 10-week strike in 1985—which won a full contract with two crucial provisions: a seniority-based compensation system and the creation of a joint union-University committee to hear appeals regarding individual job classification decisions. This joint committee was also supposed to review the entire classification system.

Hundreds of employees were upgraded as a result of the contract—but this took place in a random manner which did not impinge on Yale's control over setting job classifications or affect the arbitrary character of the university's pay structure. The union moved to challenge the entire pay system. As part of its strategy, the union switched from arguing generalities during meetings of the joint committee, and forced the university to justify individual classification decisions. When the university was unable to provide legitimate grounds, the chairperson (mandated to be neutral by the 1985 contract) issued a report calling for a complete overhaul of the job category system. The other part of the union's strategy was to conduct its own independent survey of each member's job content. The results showed wholesale discrimination in classifications based on gender, race, and type of work. The union was able to continue to build campus and community support by utilizing its survey combined with the report of the joint committee's chairperson.

When the 1988 contract negotiations began, the union submitted comprehensive and detailed proposals on job classifications which included immediate upgrading of more than 99 percent of the positions, granting the largest pay increases to employees who had been outrageously underclassified, and a four-year phase-in for the new system. Totally unprepared with any concrete proposals of its own, the university was in a very weak position and was forced to accept the union's proposals.

As a result of winning this 1988 contract: over a four-year period, employees received salary increases ranging from 24 percent to about 35 percent; all people of color were upgraded; the two lowest-paid grades were completely abolished, and the number of employees in the upper levels increased from 27 to almost 500; the new job descriptions were based on employees' input; and an appeals procedure was implemented, including the right to arbitrate.

Other comparable worth successes in the private sector are less well known than the Yale University workers' triumph. For example, gains were registered by women employed to sell newspaper advertisements. "Wage parity" was a priority demand of the Newspaper Guild in negotiations with the *New Hampshire Sunday News* and the *Manchester Union Leader*. Inside advertising sales jobs were traditionally female-dominated while males held the outside sales jobs. Intensive and persistent bargaining won a 1983 contract which raised the women sales workers' pay scale from \$134.50 to \$469.40 per

week. This brought the female staff up to 85.7 percent of the pay received by the outside salesmen.

A similar situation involving inside and outside salespersons was tackled by the Newspaper Guild in negotiations with the *Register Guard* in Eugene, Oregon. "Wage parity" demands had been a long-standing issue for the union, and some small gains had been won. When the union prepared for bargaining on the 1985 contract, it was decided to seriously fight for much more substantial changes. The union conducted a detailed job comparison study, and consulted with other Guild locals in order to take advantage of comparable experiences. The union researched old newspaper help-wanted ads from the 1960s which proved a pattern of gender segregation. The Guild local also used the fact that a sex discrimination charge was pending against the newspaper. The union's solid commitment to winning "wage parity" resulted in a new contract which narrowed the gap between inside and outside sales job classifications from 67 percent to 80 percent.

Attacking the Wage Gap During the 1990s

The gains made in winning equal pay for equal work, affirmative action, and comparable worth pay scales prove that successful fights can be carried out to secure higher earnings for women. The persistence of a substantial wage gap, of job segregation patterns, and of sexist attitudes toward women workers shows that much more needs to be done. The examples of successful battles included in this article provide a number of methods and strategies which can be utilized to further narrow the wage disparities between female and male workers. While all available means should be utilized, several aspects deserve special attention: union organization, wide-based support for pay equity struggles, and a self-reliant approach to conducting battles.

- In respect to union organization, it's necessary to press the demand to "Organize the unorganized!" Large numbers of women workers are superexploited in garment sweatshops, in fields and orchards across the nation, in private households as well as in hotels and motels, and in other female-intensive jobs. Although the largest growth in union membership is coming from the ranks of women workers, only about 15 percent of all employed women were represented by unions in 1988.

Women who are in labor organizations still earn less than their union brothers, and continue to be plagued by sexist

practices and attitudes. Contending with such discrimination includes: helping efforts to democratize unions and make them more responsive to the needs and demands of *all* members; exerting pressures through the establishment of women's rights committees; and participating actively in the ongoing life of the union in order to strengthen its power to win struggles with employers.

- Building wide-based support for a pay equity fight involves reaching out to and forming alliances with feminist organizations, racial and ethnic minority groups, community activists, and other forces concerned with economic justice. There is an obvious interrelationship between the needs and concerns of women, as a sex, and members of racial and ethnic minorities: the most exploited and oppressed women workers are Native Americans, Latinas, Blacks, Asians, and recent immigrants. Any gains won by those on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder help to advance all female workers as well as workers in general. Issues involving fairness attract the support of groups and individuals who are concerned with safeguarding and extending democratic rights.

Coalitions to support pay equity demands can: promote the demand among wide layers of the public, exert pressures against employers and legislators, give financial and technical assistance, swell the numbers at rallies and on picket lines, and so on.

- Self-reliance is necessary to build confidence, maintain control of decision making, and establish a foundation for other job-related struggles. Fighters for pay equity cannot depend on politicians' promises or court rulings, and cannot limit themselves to legal or legislative channels. Experience has proven that elected officials promise much and deliver little or nothing, and that court decisions can be watered down and even reversed by subsequent rulings. Self-reliance does not contradict forming connections with support forces—but actually helps win allies who will respect the determination and abilities of pay equity fighters.

As recently as 10-15 years ago, women workers were not engaged in serious struggles for pay equity. The battles won over the past decade prove that seemingly impossible odds can be overcome. Both the women's and labor movements will be strengthened by joining forces to hammer away at long-held prejudices and long-standing practices which discriminate against almost half of the workforce. □

Black Workers Organizing Today

by Claire Cohen

The United States labor force is undergoing significant demographic changes. Indeed, the U.S. government projects that within the next 30 years the majority of American workers will be people of color—either African American, Latino, Asian, or Native American. With the legacy of racism in this country, these changes are bound to have a major impact on the class struggle in the United States. Thus, those of us in the Black community need to increase our class consciousness in the struggle for Black liberation. On the other hand, white members of the working class will find it impossible to advance their struggle for economic justice if they do not consciously develop strategies to overcome white racism and support us in our struggle for racial justice and national liberation. Revolutionary socialists of all races should play a major role in helping to unite these struggles since our perspectives provide both an analysis and program which can be effective in doing so.

This is the background from which I want to discuss the workshop “Black Workers’ Unity and Resistance to Economic Barbarism” that took place at the November 1-4 New York conference, “Malcolm X: Radical Tradition and Legacy of Struggle” (see my article in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 80). I also want to go into some detail on the campaign around the case of Ina Mae Best, a member of Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ) who spoke on the panel along with a number of other representatives of that organization. Best represented the “Rehire Ina Best Campaign” which is fighting to win back her job at a North Carolina textile plant where she was fired for involvement in union organizing activity.

The panel chairperson was Nsia Akuffa Bea of the Black Workers Unity Movement. In addition to Best, panelists included: Gordon Dillahunt, president of Local 1078 of the American Postal Workers Union and member of BWFJ; Ashaki Binta of BWFJ; and General Baker, member of United Auto Workers Local 600 and a founding member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Speakers and audience clearly shared a socialist perspective.

The chair set the tone for the workshop, stating that “it was our free [slave] labor that helped build the wealth of this country that [the bourgeoisie is] still lavishing off today. . . . Slavery not only degraded us, but by white workers allowing it to [continue], it degraded the whole labor movement. The unemployed today serve the same role as the slaves did. They brought the slaves up from the South to undermine white workers on strike [and break the unions]. Today, they use the unemployed workers to do the same thing. . . . This will continue as long as white workers capitalize on their white skin privilege” instead of uniting in struggle with Black workers.

General Baker followed with a historical perspective on the role of African-American workers’ grassroots struggles in the auto industry in Detroit during the 1960s. He also explained

that the poor, homeless, and unemployed of today are members of the working class who have lost their jobs as technology has enabled capitalists to replace human labor with robotics in industry. These displaced workers have become a pool of reserved labor for low-wage jobs or for undercutting struggles to organize unions. General Baker also stressed the need to recognize the complicity of union bureaucrats, Black trade union officials, and Black political leaders in undermining the Black working class. He presented this as a strong argument for a rank-and-file led movement.

Gordon Dillahunt pointed out Malcolm X’s support and participation in a rally during the 1962 Local 1199 hospital workers’ strike in New York and his presence on a picket line of Black construction workers. Malcolm told the workers that the ruling class only let us in the factory when there was a manpower shortage or pressure from the outside. Dillahunt believes that these and other examples indicate “if [Malcolm] were alive today his ideas would not reflect the naive obsession that many Black leaders have with entrepreneurship as a strategy for liberation.” Dillahunt also emphasized the importance of integrating race and class issues. He noted that Black workers “are more vulnerable to the cyclical crises of capitalism due to our marginalization [based on racism].” He went on to say that although there are divergent interests between the middle and working classes in the Black community, the Black middle class is not responsible for the exploitation of Black workers since they employ only an insignificant number. (He also could have mentioned that they don’t own any significant means of production!) “Thus, Black workers should not target the Black [bourgeoisie] as the main enemy.” He pointed out how “the white ruling class exacerbates antagonisms” between classes within racial groups and between racial groups as a means of undermining the struggles of the masses. He stressed that workers’ issues must be linked to community issues and vice versa in order to advance the struggle for Black liberation. He said, “Black capitalism is not the answer.”

Ashaki Binta gave important information about conditions for workers in the South and its impact on Northern workers. From 1974-85 more than 5.3 million jobs relocated to the South “vastly increasing the trend of runaway shops from north to south . . . where right-to-work laws, union busting, and anti-labor policies [are strong].” The South remains the poorest section of the country while organized labor throughout the nation has been “broad-sided.” She pointed out that 53 percent of Blacks still live in the Black Belt South; 34 percent of Southern Black families live in poverty. The median income for Black male workers there is \$11,000 (under the official poverty level of \$12,000 for a family of four), and the median income for Southern Black females is \$6,700.

Ashaki Binta and Ina Mae Best specifically talked about Black Workers for Justice and the Rehire Ina Best Campaign. BWFJ is an organization of Black workers from various workplaces and communities in North Carolina and Keyville, Georgia. It was formed in defense of three Black workers who had been fired for challenging harassment and discrimination at a K-mart store in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in 1981. BWFJ is a pro-union organization with a core of active union members. It is working to eventually organize the South. Since only six percent of the nonagricultural workforce in the South is unionized, most of BWFJ's members are not in any union. But they are all working in various ways to organize their workplaces and build labor solidarity. In 1985, BWFJ formed a trade union commission in order to "work with and strengthen existing trade unions, to win union support for [their] programs, and particularly to address the problems of organizing unions in the South." Members have participated in several union organizing drives and have been active on three central labor councils, in state AFL-CIO sponsored activities, and in many labor solidarity efforts. There is also a women's commission, and women make up half of the BWFJ steering committee. The group also publishes a monthly newspaper called *Justice Speaks* which covers workers' struggles, Black community struggles, and international struggles. (To subscribe to *Justice Speaks* for one year send \$6 to *Justice Speaks*, P.O. Box 1339, Rocky Mount, NC 27802.)

BWFJ also has a local radio program by the same name. It sponsors a workers' school, educational forums, a workers' legal clinic, a workers' hotline, a workers' health and safety committee, and an annual banquet to honor local grassroots activists "for outstanding work for Black liberation and workers' rights." Finally, BWFJ has helped to organize three community-screening health clinics, establish a workers' library and center, and in July of 1990 conducted an "Organize the South—Midwest Solidarity Tour."

According to its fact sheet, BWFJ "believes that unions must seek to unite all workers regardless of race, nationality, sex, age, handicap, or religion, into a single organization according to industry. It believes that organizing unions based on craft weakens and serves to divide labor's potential strength and also reinforces the racial divisions in society. . . . BWFJ believes in the equality, rights, and leadership of women workers. . . . BWFJ believes in international solidarity . . . and supports all progressive struggles against exploitation worldwide. . . . BWFJ believes that the movement for Black political power in the South is a necessary ally of labor for carrying out a concerted and politically sound effort to build a labor movement and trade union base in the South. This base in turn will help leverage the position of Black political power in the interests of workers' rights, community development, and social progress."

The Organize the South—Midwest Solidarity Tour sent 18 workers to visit 5 cities: Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Erie. The purpose was to increase Northern workers' awareness of the oppressive working conditions in the South, to explain how such conditions undermine the struggles for workers' rights in the North, and to increase concrete support for the effort to organize the South. As a result of the tour, solidarity committees were formed in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit, and important contacts were estab-

lished with the United Steelworkers of America, United Electrical Workers, United Auto Workers, and United Food and Commercial Workers. BWFJ is now planning a solidarity tour of the Northeast for the summer of 1991.

Soon after her return from the 1990 tour, Ina Mae Best was fired from her job at Goldtex, Inc., in Goldsboro, North Carolina. She had worked at Goldtex for eighteen years with no history of reprimands or complaints. She was reportedly a good worker who had never been late and had not missed a day's work in ten years. Several months earlier Best had been active in fighting to organize an Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union local in the Goldtex plant. Management responded to the organizing drive by fostering a climate of racial polarization, holding "captive audience" meetings, hiring a union-busting law firm, and harassing pro-union workers. As a result on the day of the elections—March 1, 1990—the workers lost their campaign. Since then, Goldtex has targeted the most active workers in the organizing drive for harassment, transfers, and firings. Ina Mae Best was among them, but she has decided to stand up and fight.

BWFJ hopes Best will become the Rosa Parks of the Southern labor movement because they feel she exemplifies the struggle Southern workers go through whenever they try to fight for their rights. If the Rehire Ina Mae Best Campaign is successful, they hope other workers will realize that through solidarity around each other's struggles they can fight back against the whole oppressive political and economic system and win. To build solidarity and pressure to help Best get her job back, BWFJ has launched a petition drive to get at least 50,000 signatures nationwide by March 1, 1991—the anniversary of the lost union election at Goldtex. In addition, BWFJ has sent Best to talk with workers across the country about working conditions in the South and her own situation in particular. Successful fund-raising events have been held in Cleveland and Detroit to help her with expenses incurred during the struggle against Goldtex. The Detroit solidarity committee is selling buttons to help with the campaign. BWFJ is selling calendars to raise funds. Copies of the petitions and additional information about how you can help can be obtained by writing to BWFJ, P.O. Box 1863, Rocky Mount, NC 27802, or call 919-977-8162.

An important component for a revitalized labor movement in this country is the specially oppressed sectors of the working class—Blacks and other people of color, and also women. Although all workers are exploited, if the more privileged workers do not unite with these more oppressed layers the ruling class will continue to be able to undermine struggles and roll back workers' gains. Thus, the interests of white male workers are directly tied to those of Black, Latino, Asian, and women workers.

One key to revitalizing the Black liberation struggle in this country lies with the Black working class. The overwhelming majority of us are working class. And even Blacks who think they have made it up the economic ladder have a very tenuous hold on "middle-class" status. Even if it were possible for a few Blacks to truly make it into the ranks of the ruling class that would solve nothing for the majority of our people. Capitalism requires the exploitation of the many in order to enrich the privileged few. Any worker from an African or Caribbean country could tell us that exploitation by a Black

ruling class is just as oppressive as exploitation by a white ruling class. Black liberation cannot be realized under capitalism. We can only have full liberation in a society where

the masses of people have the power to determine how our resources are used and how our communities are run. In other words—a truly democratic, socialist society. □

Shame on Delta Pride: Catfish Workers Strike Southern Colonialism

The following article is reprinted from Justice Speaks, Vol. 8, No. 3, November 1990, the newspaper of the Black Workers for Justice.

Indianola, MS—“We needed a union because managers didn’t treat us like adults. They would talk with us abusively, and because the bathroom stalls didn’t have doors, we didn’t have any privacy. . . . When the union came in, I finally felt like I was somebody. The union made me respect myself in a way I didn’t before.”

—Sarah C. White, Delta Pride worker seven years, making \$4.80 an hour.

On September 12, 1,200 workers struck against Delta Pride Catfish, Inc. located in the Mississippi portion of the Black Belt South. This mainly Black women workforce, many single mothers, have been fighting for more than eight weeks for decent wages and working conditions from the largest catfish processing plant in the world.

It is the largest strike by Black workers ever in Mississippi who’ve organized themselves into Local 1529 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Most wages at Delta Pride average at \$4.50 an hour. And according to newspaper reports, the 180 catfish farmers who cooperatively own Delta Pride have said that “their” workers are fortunate to have steady jobs.

Besides deplorable wages, also at issue are health conditions and dignity. Repetitive motion injuries are being ignored by the company, say workers. Tchula, Miss., doctor Ronald Myers says he’s treated a growing number of catfish processing workers with resulting arthritic problems, some in their early 20s. In December, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fined Delta Pride \$35,000 for numerous safety violations, including the “improper medical management of employee injuries.”

Workers say they are allowed six 5-minute trips to the bathroom per week.

Extra trips can lead to being written-up and eventual firing.

Indianola, 60 percent Black, is the county seat of Sunflower County, which is the center of the catfish industry in the U.S. Sixty percent of total U.S. catfish processing takes place in Mississippi. Nearly 2,000 people, one of every six workers in the county, work in catfish processing, but nearly 40 percent of Sunflower County people live below the “official” poverty line recognized by the federal government.

According to workers and their union officials, all the owners and most of the supervisors at Delta Pride are white and more than 99 percent of the production workers are Black, and three-quarters are women. Only about 150 farmers work at raising catfish and they stand to make up to \$3,000 per year for every acre of catfish ponds. There are 93,000 acres under cultivation in Mississippi—and that number is growing fast. And Indianola’s mayor, Tommy McWilliams, until he recently resigned for “potential conflict of interest,” had been Delta Pride’s general counsel.

Therefore, the union understands the value and necessity of mobilizing the entire community’s support; rallies have been held in various churches and support has come from across the South—and begun from other regions of the U.S.

Many workers used to pick or chop cotton before being forced out of the fields by mechanization and into the catfish industry. But workers say that though their jobs have changed, there’s little difference in the low pay, unhealthy work, and constant affronts to their dignity.

“It’s the plantation mentality brought into the building,” said Ester May Woods. “I try not to see it in that light—but my mind focuses back to the old plantation. This takes the place of the cotton patch . . .

the wages and the way they work you. They never let up.”

The poverty and embryonic labor consciousness have given room for the company to hire “replacement workers” and keep the plant in operation. But workers say they’re not discouraged and awareness is starting to spread. In 1986, Delta Pride workers voted to organize a union in their plant—even though the company hired and trotted out Fayette, Miss., mayor, Charles Evers, the brother of slain civil rights leader, Medgar Evers. But word spread of the workers’ victory and the slowly improving conditions at Delta Pride. Afterwards, workers at ConAgra’s Country Skillet Catfish and Hormel’s Farm Fresh Catfish and several other smaller plants waged successful organizing campaigns. And the union now has about 2,500 members in the Mississippi Delta—about half the catfish industry. As a beginning, workers have won vacations and Martin Luther King’s birthday as a paid holiday.

While discussion is building about a national boycott of Delta Pride, workers comment: “I have no doubt that we’re going to win the strike. . . . We made the plant what it is today—a million dollar facility. . . . Because I worked for Delta Pride before the union came in, I know what conditions were like without a union. We really had nothing to look forward to. . . . The biggest difference that the union has made is that we can no longer be fired for an unjust reason or no reason. . . . The union showed us that we don’t have to take abuse. They showed us how to stand up and fight for what we believe in. □

Local 1529 of the United Food and Commercial Workers and Delta Pride Catfish, Inc., agreed on a tentative contract December 13. If approved by the workers, this will end their 13-week strike.

Terror in the Town of Jolalpan

As we were going to press we received this December 10 account of intensified brutal attacks on the people of Jolalpan, a peasant community in Mexico. The November 1990 issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* carried an initial report of the people's resistance to the forced illegal ousting of their recently elected municipal council by the ruling government party. The council represented the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (Revolutionary Workers Party) (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International, and peasant organizations.

Events over the past week have produced a dramatic change in the situation in the struggle of the people of Jolalpan, Puebla. On Wednesday, December 5, a force of over 500 heavily armed and motorized police attacked the town in an operation in which well over two hundred local residents were rounded up and subjected to threats while many were brutally beaten before being dragged away to prison. As a result there are now 57 new political prisoners who join another 7 previously being held in the state penitentiary as a reprisal against the local community's efforts to throw off decades of corrupt control by the national ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Revolutionary Institutional Party) (PRI), and its corrupt local chieftains or *caciques*.

The most recent repression followed several days of protests by members of the *Unión Regional de Ejidos y Comunidades del Sur del Estado de Puebla* (URECSEP), the regional organization that brings together the democratic communal and *ejidal* peasants in this part of the state. The protests were made in response to the failure of state authorities to make good on their promises to free the seven prisoners being held in the state prison in the capital of Puebla, Puebla. At the same time the PRI municipal government which was imposed on the town last October, arbitrarily replacing the democratically elected PRT municipal government voted into office in November of 1989, has stepped up local repressive measures.

One of the reasons given by state authorities for imposing their own council was supposedly to end the violence that began last August 16, when a group of PRI gunmen carried out an attack on local supporters of the PRT city council, resulting in nine deaths. However, the new council lacked any legitimacy as the local population had never been consulted regarding its composition, and even local PRI loyalists were put off by the fact that the new council was headed up by a

regional political boss from outside the immediate area and not one of their own.

In this situation the illegitimate local authorities adopted a course of action aimed at overcoming by force of arms and intimidation any resistance to their rule. They brought in new police forces and deputized a group of 50 armed supporters who began to carry out operations en masse in the town against URECSEP and PRT supporters. Homes were raided and death threats made against the leaders of the URECSEP. Then on November 26, following the mysterious death of a local PRI henchman, the PRI posse intensified its attacks, illegally ar-

Even as the attacks against the people of Jolalpan were being perpetrated, a well-publicized human rights commission set up in June by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari issued its recommendations, apparently with ceremonious fanfare. The following is excerpted from the December 14 *New York Times* coverage.

'Mexico has a human rights problem that it cannot and does not wish to hide,' said Jorge Carpizo, president of the new National Human Rights Commission, presenting the report to Mr. Salinas.

But the report specifically disqualifies the commission from investigating complaints of abuses related to political campaigns or the electoral process.

And it was quickly criticized by private human rights groups that have described the new commission as a government attempt to appear actively concerned about human rights issues while avoiding outside investigation.

'This commission is just an ornament for the government,' asserted Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, president of Eureka, a human rights group that has been sharply critical of Mr. Salinas's government.

'Its aim is to cover up the situation, to make it appear that a human rights problem does not exist.'

resting three close relatives of URECSEP president Avelino Castillo, tying them up and eventually turning them over to state authorities for prosecution. Since the three were all engaged in the communal harvest activities alongside the other members of the community there was no possibility of framing them on charges related to the death of the above-mentioned PRI henchman, but later false charges were levied against one of the three detainees, Valentín Castillo, for having supposedly robbed a soft-drink truck. Local Pepsi bottlers deny having pressed any charges in the case nor any other accusations against the prisoner.

In the face of such escalating repression a regional assembly of the URECSEP decided to begin a week of protests on Sun-

day, December 2, to demand the release of all political prisoners, the legal recognition of the PRT city council, and an end to the repression against the peasants of the region. At the same time it was agreed to carry out protests at the San Antonio ranch, an area of 100 hectares of irrigated lands (the only ones in the region) which rightfully belongs to the agricultural commune of Jolalpan, but are being taken over by a North American rancher named Willis, who lives in Cuautla, Morelos.

All of the protest activities were carried out with total success and without any violence occurring. On Sunday several hundred local residents, backed by a contingent of supporters from the Unión General Obrera, Campesina, Popular (General Workers', Peasants', and People's Union)—a national organization with which the URECSEP maintains fraternal relations—carried out protests along the main highway to Jolalpan to dramatize their plight. Then on Monday protesters moved to the aforementioned San Antonio ranch where a camp was set up to defend the land.

However, on Wednesday, December 5, 11 busloads of police moved into the area to begin a campaign of their own. Over two hundred persons were detained at the San Antonio ranch alone while police operations extended to the center of town.

State authorities tried to justify the raid based on the preposterous claim that they were attacking a guerrilla base that had been set up by the PRT along with forces loyal to Martínez Soriano, a well-known ultraleft figure with a long history of suspicious relations with state authorities who has been accused of involvement in the assassination of several socialist leaders and activists in Mexico. As is well known, the PRT has never maintained any sort of relationship with Martínez Soriano nor does it advocate guerrilla warfare as a tactical option for Mexico. However, to back up their claim, state authorities released photos of huge caches of arms in front of a PRT banner. The photos were clearly the product of a prearranged photo session which was also employed to back charges against the demonstrators that they had violated Mexican law by possessing high-powered arms. Of the more than 50 persons that were imprisoned following last week's raids, at least 13 have been charged with felonies regarding possession of arms. The others have been falsely accused of illegal land occupation in relationship to the protest at the San Antonio ranch.

Though authorities tried to justify their assault as an attack on a guerrilla base—which they claimed had been established at the above-mentioned farm—police forces carried their raid to the heart of town where PRT municipal president Bartolo



Avelino Castillo (hatless), leader of the URECSEP, with Rosario Ibarra de Piedra in Jolalpan. Rosario Ibarra was the 1988 PRT presidential candidate and an organizer in the campaign against the fraudulent election returns that gave a narrow victory to Carlos Salinas de Gortari over Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. She heads up the Comité Eureka which fights on behalf of the disappeared.

Tiempos Quintana was dragged from his home and beaten along with his wife before being taken away to the San Antonio ranch with the others. This was done despite the fact that he had been unable to attend any of the protest activities in recent days. He is now being held in state prison charged with illegal arms possession. Other homes that were raided included that of Avelino Castillo whose home was ransacked, along with his daughter's store, where police stole over seven million pesos in family savings.

More than ever public support is needed in order to stop the wave of repression against the people of Jolalpan. At present the area is virtually under siege by police forces and the growing number of prisoners are being denied access to legal counsel. We ask once again that telegrams be sent to protest the repression. These should be sent both to the governor of the State of Puebla and the national Minister of the Interior Fernando Gutierrez Barrios. Public protests at Mexican consulates would be of enormous help. We also need financial support to help with legal costs

and publicity regarding the case. All donations should be sent in the form of an international money order to the name and address indicated below for the PRT national office.

Protest messages should be sent to:

- Fernando Gutierrez Barrios
Secretario de Gobernación Bucareli
Mexico, D.F., Mexico
- Gobernador Mariano Piña Olaya
Governor of the State of Puebla
Palacio de Gobierno
Puebla, Puebla
Mexico.

Donations and copies of all messages of support should be sent to:

- Simon Castillejos
PRT
Xola 181
Colonia Alamos
C.P. 03400 Mexico, D.F., Mexico

Michael Warshawsky Released from Prison

Michael Warshawsky, director of the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem, was released from prison on November 9. He received one-third off an 8-month sentence that had been imposed by the Israeli High Court. Warshawsky was charged in connection with the typesetting of a booklet offering guidance to Palestinians subjected to interrogation and torture by the Israeli military and secret police. (See previous coverage in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*). Warshawsky was greeted by 100 Israeli and Palestinian supporters at the AIC after his release.

Mass Upsurge in French High Schools

by Keith Mann

Through their massive protests high school students in France have recently succeeded in calling attention to the deplorable state of public education in that country. They also won substantial gains in the form of increased public spending for secondary education. By the scope of their mobilizations and the determination and political savvy in the face of government temporizing, today's high schoolers have shown themselves worthy heirs of a long and proud tradition of worker and student militancy in France. In the process, hundreds of thousands of young people have become involved with politics for the first time.

It was the rape of a student in a rundown high school in a Parisian suburb in late October that sparked nationwide strikes and demonstrations. The movement's demands for more security, smaller classrooms, better facilities—and the increased funding necessary for this—only partially captured the social character of these mobilizations, which was widely noted. The strikes and demonstrations reflected much of the feelings of despair of those shut out from any possibility of escaping the ghetto-suburbs, entering the universities, and eventually finding attractive, well-paying jobs. It is in these suburbs where the problems of oversized classrooms, inadequate facilities, and shortage of teaching and technical staff, which characterize high schools throughout France, are the most glaring. The movement was strongly represented at all levels by students from these impoverished working class and immigrant suburbs. "We are all from Vaulx-en-Velin" (a reference to the Lyonnaise suburb which was recently the site of violent demonstrations following the latest in a series of murders of young immigrants by the police) and "Money for Schools Not for the War in the Gulf" were prominent slogans in the demonstrations.

Such links between social inequality, racism, and the educational system have become a characteristic of all recent student upheavals in France. The massive protests of university students in 1986, which successfully sought to defeat proposed legislation aimed at devaluing university degrees, drew much of its force and inspiration from students of working class families. Many of them had already become politically active through their involvement in the anti-racist struggle. Unlike the mobilizations in 1968 and 1986, however, sharp working class upsurges have yet to follow the present student upheavals. In '68 and '86 the Gaullist political parties in power were dealt a serious blow by the workers and students. The coming period will reveal to what extent the younger generation will hold the ruling Socialist Party (SP)—which claims to stand for an egalitarian society—responsible for France's present problems.

As the movement rapidly grew, the students were confronted with maneuvering by both the government, which sought to derail the movement, and those within the student movement

who had interests separate and apart from the mass of students. These features of the upheaval amounted to a powerful lesson in the dynamics of social change and coalition building. Education minister Lionel Jospin of the SP did his best to defuse the crisis with the least possible cost. His first ploy was to try to atomize the movement by suggesting that students present their grievances to local and regional education officials. Local strikes and demonstrations involving tens of thousands of students did occur throughout the country, but these were seen by the students as preliminary mobilizations towards a projected national march on Parliament scheduled for November 12. This date was chosen to put maximum pressure on the government, since a vote on the education budget was scheduled. Hearing of the students' plans, however, the government changed the budget session to November 5—the date that students returned to classes after a short vacation.

The students were outraged, but not demoralized. Local demonstrations—involving up to 100,000 nationwide—were held on the 5th, and plans for the 12th remained in force. That demonstration drew an estimated 300,000 marchers according to the daily newspaper *Liberation*. Later in the day student delegations held meetings with government officials, including President François Mitterrand. The president assumed a sympathetic tone with the students, allowing the government of Prime Minister Michel Rocard, with whom Mitterrand has a number of differences, to deal with the difficult problem of actually accommodating the students' demands.

The students were also confronted by political maneuvering within their ranks, where competing political tendencies fought for hegemony at the expense of a unified national movement and leadership. The result was two national coordinating bodies: The Independent and Democratic Federation of High School Students (FIDL) which is close to the SP, and the National High School Coordination (CNLEP), which rapidly became dominated by the Young Communists (JC). Each delegation had met separately with Mitterrand and other SP officials on November 12.

The FIDL sought to attack Jospin as the education minister, without launching a frontal assault on the government as a whole. For the SP and the government, the student upheaval couldn't have happened at a worse time. An unpopular proposal to increase taxes across the board by 1.1 percent in order to pay for social security costs led to an attempt by the bourgeois parties in Parliament to bring down the government. For the first time in recent memory, the Communist Party (CP) joined in the right-wing attack against the SP which fell only five votes short.

The crisis-ridden CP looked upon the prominent role of the JC as a way to gain authority and divert attention away from the worldwide crisis of Stalinism which has found deep echoes in their own party. The student upheaval occurred at the same

time as the fractious twenty-seventh congress of the CP was taking place. The JC argued in favor of elections to a national coordinating body by department (France is divided into over 90 departments, including the overseas neocolonies). Many students, however, favored a coordinating body made up of delegates representing the high schools themselves. To the deep resentment of many students, the demonstrations were marked by the spectacle of each coordinating body attempting to drown out the slogans of the other.

The militants of the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR)—youth group of the Fourth International in France—agreed with the mass of students who favored a unitary coordinating body. Their approach to the movement from both a political and organizational point of view was summed up in an interview with a JCR member from a Parisian high school which was published in *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the FI:

“We want the high schoolers to win and we’ll do all we can for that. We explain that unity and democracy are necessary. But we must also explain to whom our demands must be addressed. If we want more funding we have to go to the Assembly and not be diverted. When we go to the Assembly we have to address those who have the power to vote the credits, and that is not the right wing. Only the left majority can do that. The job of the JCR is to explain this.”

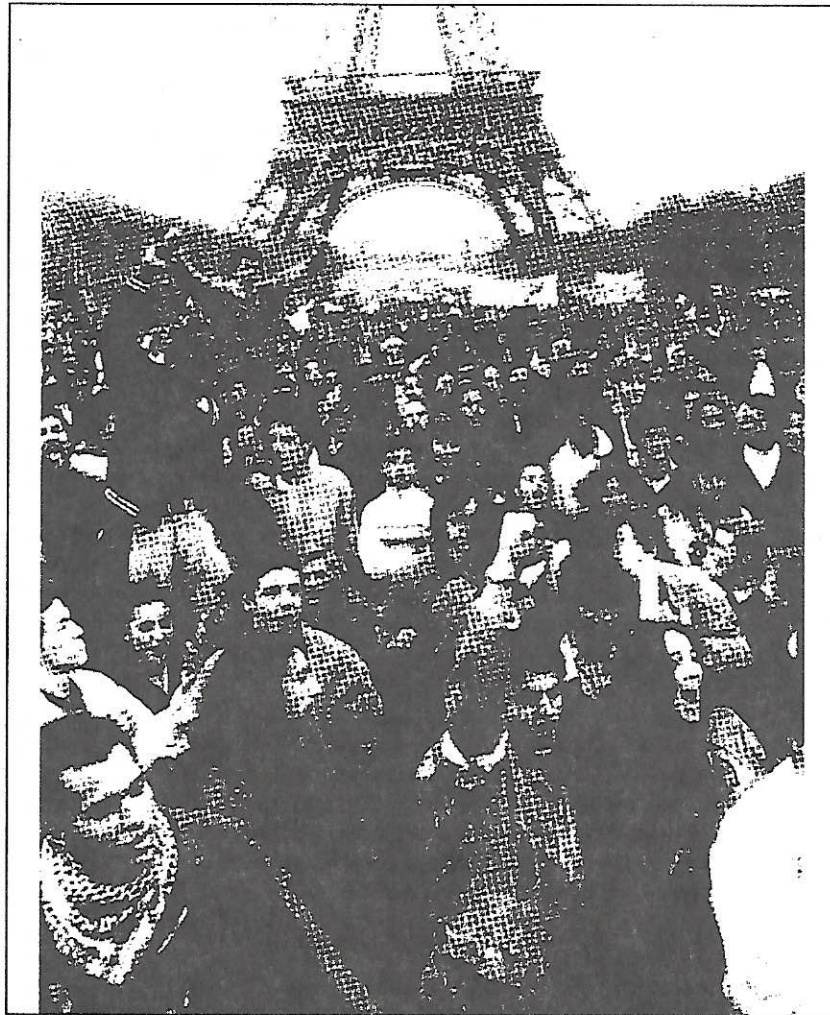
There was widespread revulsion against the divisiveness and sectarianism in the movement, and overwhelming support for a unitary leadership. For a short period a third coordinating body—the Apolitical High School Movement (MAL)—gained a great deal of attention. It claimed that it represented the mass of politically unaffiliated students. It soon became clear that its shadowy leaders were in fact neither the apolitical student activists they claimed to be, nor representative of anyone but themselves. The deeply felt aspirations of the masses of high school students did find an expression, however, in a meeting held in the southern city of Toulouse on November

18th. That meeting drew representatives from 15 city coordinating bodies, as well as delegations from both the CNLEP and FIDL. Most of the students at the meeting rejected the course of forming another coordinating body. Rather, most favored pressing for the unification of the existing structures and the democratic election of delegates from each high school and department for a national meeting of high school students. In this spirit, Nasser Ramdane, a leader of the FIDL, proposed dissolving the existing coordinating bodies in favor of a new one. These developments were widely welcomed by the students and served as a positive counterweight to the disunity that had marked the movement up to that point.

In spite of the serious problems concerning the lack of democracy and unity, the sheer breadth and scope of the movement allowed the students to register important, if partial, gains. Jospin was forced to come to the negotiating table and make a series of concessions. Four and a half billion francs

(\$900,000,000) were allocated to high school spending. On the other hand, additional student demands—such as the stationing of a nurse in every school, free books, and a limit of 25 students per class—remain unmet. Nevertheless, the political education that hundreds of thousands of students received through their participation in these mobilizations is invaluable. By forcing the government to address their concerns, a whole generation of high school students have learned that militant mass collective action is a powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressed.

Another generation of young people have become involved in politics, a new leadership is being formed, and the working class as a whole will benefit. □



Trotsky's Ideas Live Again in the USSR

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The following is an edited text of a talk given at the November 15 meeting in New York to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Leon Trotsky's assassination:

When I went to the Soviet Union this past August, I found there is tremendous interest in the ideas of Leon Trotsky. Although the ruling bureaucratic caste has not yet seen fit to officially rehabilitate Trotsky or exonerate him of the slanderous charges they raised against him and his son Leon Sedov at the Moscow trials, the truth cannot be contained. Trotsky's role as leader with Lenin of the October revolution of 1917 and leader of the Red Army, as well as his uncompromising struggle against Stalin and Stalinism, is being more and more openly acknowledged in the Soviet press and even championed by a number of Soviet scholars. Some of them have even participated in international gatherings abroad to commemorate Trotsky's ideas on the fiftieth anniversary of his assassination.

In addition, Trotsky's works are finally being printed after decades of lies, falsification, slander, and suppression—a historic breakthrough.

While I was in the USSR, in fact, I was able to purchase several such books. One of them is *Toward the History of the Russian Revolution*, printed by the state publishing house Politizdat in a run of 150,000 copies. It contains much important material by Trotsky, like *Lessons of October, Results and Prospects, The New Course*, and a 100-page excerpt from Trotsky's nearly 500-page *History of the Russian Revolution*. Another book by Trotsky that I was able to purchase is a reprint of the 1932 Berlin edition of *The Stalin School of Falsification*, printed by the prestigious "Science" publishing house in a run of 200,000 copies. It is an expensive volume, costing 10 rubles. However, the publisher explains that part of the proceeds from the sale of the book will be contributed to a fund to help victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, making this a very special volume. The remarkable "Afterword" by the scholars who researched the footnotes can be read in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 80. I was also able to purchase the 4-volume *Trotsky Archive: the Communist Opposition in the USSR, 1923-27* that is based on documents of Trotsky and the Left Opposition avail-

able in the Harvard University Trotsky Archives. This collection was issued in a run of 100,000 by "Terra," an informal cooperative publisher.

There are reports that other works are in the preparation stages and will soon appear, some being printed simultaneously by unofficial and official publishing houses.

These remarkable materials—along with other writings of Trotsky—represent the richest contribution to revolutionary Marxist thought in our century.

It is not socialism and Marxism that are dying as the capitalist commentators want us to believe. It is Stalinism that is collapsing—a Stalinism which tried to repress these ideas. Revolutionary Marxism is at last beginning to get a hearing in the heartland of Stalinism, the USSR.

All kinds of people are seeking out these works and reading them voraciously. For example, while I was there, I also wanted to check to see if the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* was being received and used by three libraries in Moscow to which it is being sent. I simply could not believe it myself that two out of three chief librarians happened to be reading works of Trotsky at their desks when I visited their offices!

The spearhead of much of the popular organizing efforts to recover, publicize, and preserve the concealed terrible history of the Stalin period is the Memorial Society. The Memorial Society is devoted to unearthing the entire history of the repression of the Stalin period and preserving the documents for open archives. They organize regular thematic exhibits where materials on various aspects of the repression are on public display, a powerful means of popular education.

The Moscow Memorial group now has affiliates in 150 cities. It has official recognition, and at the end of October Memorial succeeded in erecting a monument to the victims of Stalin just outside the secret police headquarters on Dzerzhinsky Square in central Moscow. It included a section of stone from Solovetsky Island prison. Solovetsky became a forced labor camp that served as a prototype for the other forced labor camps that formed the infamous GULAG and death camps of the 1930s. The island prison was opened in 1923, after Lenin was incapacitated by a severe stroke and as the campaign by Stalin against the Left Opposition was beginning.

There is considerable interest in Trotsky among the politically active youth, many of whom have been reading Trotsky's

works that were passed from hand to hand, works printed abroad in limited numbers, or the odd copies of works Trotsky wrote that somehow managed to survive the confiscations by Stalin's political police. These youth are organized in groupings in dozens of cities and are learning to intervene in the massive struggles on environmental, antinuclear, democratic, and workers' issues and against the power and privilege of the Communist Party apparatus. I direct those interested in what some of these young people had to say to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 78 which contains a report.

The publication of these works of Trotsky is attributable to the pressure from these and a variety of other social forces. Students and scholars who have had access to some of the formerly closed archives want to publicize what they have learned. They are not content to stay within the prescribed terms of discussion established by the Communist Party tops for the apparatchik scholars. As the rulers' economic policies of decentralization, market reforms, and privatization lead the economy further toward an abyss, and as the Communist Party's authority continues to erode, this process of truthful accounting of the past is accelerating.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Trotsky's assassination, articles about that event appeared. For the first time the official press published relatively extensive information exposing the role of Stalin and dozens of his secret police agents in carrying out the crime.

One such account appeared while I was there in the mass daily *Trud* [Work] with a circulation of over 21 million. It was a two-part interview with the brother of Trotsky's assassin—said to be the first interview the assassin's brother Luis Mercader had ever given on the subject.

Also in August, the mass weekly *Ogonyok*, with a run of 4.6 million, began printing a four-part series "The Assassination of Trotsky" by Yuri Paporov. Paporov was an official in the Soviet embassy in the 1950s and knew people who were directly involved in the murder plot, which is rightly referred to by *Ogonyok* as "the murder of the century."

The series, *Ogonyok* claims, is the "first attempt to tell this story" of the assassination to the people of the USSR. In it, Trotsky is described outright as "one of the leaders of the October revolution, chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR, organizer of the Red Army,

and closest collaborator of Lenin," concessions to the truth that should not be taken for granted.

The *Trud* interview with Luis Mercader, brother of assassin Jaime Ramon Mercader del Rio, does not talk much about Trotsky but talks about the assassin.

For example, after having served his 20-year sentence, Soviet readers are informed, the assassin moved to the Soviet Union where in 1961, "without much fanfare" he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and a healthy pension of 400 rubles per month.

But he languished there. Standing in line with his bag to buy potatoes, traveling in cold and crowded trolley buses, the endless queues to buy items in short supply sent the assassin into a deep depression, Luis reports. By the way, the Kremlin authorities appear to have dropped the line that Ramon Mercader was a hero to the prisoners in Lucumberi Prison in Mexico where he served his 20-year term for murdering Trotsky. They now admit that he spent his term in a special cell, with a cook, a library, and even a television, at the expense of the USSR, that is of the Soviet workers.

Stalin's heirs are not proud of the assassin's achievements. In a twist of fate, they have turned Mercader into a nonperson. His ashes are buried in Moscow's Kuntsev Cemetery under a granite slab—placed over it only in 1987!—bearing a phony name: Ramon Ivanovich Lopez.

"What a rare and tragic fate: to be expunged from the list of people who ever lived on this sinful earth," the article says in closing. Luis thinks Mercader should be rehabilitated!

The *Ogonyok* report is much more extensive and includes mostly neutral—though some sympathetic—sections about Trotsky. The series does not contain very many details about the assassination that would be news to those outside the USSR who have followed the literature. It is not really a documentary study but an impressionistic account relying on materials previously published outside the Soviet Union, with all the authenticity of a TV cop series. Some cheap stories that the Stalinists tried unsuccessfully at the time of the assassination to popularize, in order to take the blame for the assassination off Stalin, are unfortunately repeated.

There appear to be no revelations that reflect access to formerly sealed archives. And there are some outright falsehoods even what the reporters claim to be exposing as truth. And the two accounts do not even agree with each other in important respects. But as far as the Soviet readers go, even this partial truth must be a jarring revelation: the number of people gathered in Mexico to carry out the assassination

attempts (Paporov says it was about 60, but it was surely more) and the elaborate measures, time, effort, and money expended to kill only one man.

An underlying feature of these two articles is symbolic of the trap that historic truth represents for those who still hold power in the USSR today. I would like to talk a little about this as it seems to me to present a special reason why we should continue our efforts.

Glasnost has provided openings for the emergence of the authentic history of the USSR for the Soviet people. The task now is to help them turn those openings into chasms—not to lessen our efforts but to increase them. The authentic history of the international workers' movement is also part of their heritage. It must become accessible to the long-isolated working masses in the USSR.

The pressure for this information is also increasing day by day. Newly formed socialist and workers' groups, Russian and non-Russian, seek to learn what has really been happening in the world over the past half century from those who have been involved in the struggles. They know that on this they have been lied to as well. We need to collaborate with them in their effort.

The recent reports on Trotsky's assassination are a case in point. These articles inadvertently show why Trotsky's rehabilitation and the publication of all his works mean the doom of the ruling apparatus—the reason that apparatus is resisting such publication.

Who were these agents of Stalin who were assembled to murder Trotsky? A large number of them are identified as former soldiers and commanders from the Soviet forces in the Spanish civil war, still presented as a noble war in Stalinist lore. The assassin himself, according to his brother, was a leading Young Communist League member in Catalonia who earned the rank of major. This allows Luis to describe his brother as "fanatically devoted to the cause of communism." David Siqueiros, Mexican muralist and Communist Party member who led the unsuccessful attack on Trotsky in May 1940, is also identified as a veteran of the Spanish battles as are many of the gang which joined him.

"How did such a young fellow develop such a hatred for Trotsky?" asks the *Trud* interviewer, A. Polonsky, of Luis Mercader.

"It is very simple," Luis responds. "At that time in Spain, and particularly in Catalonia, the Communists fiercely hated the Trotskyists and anarchists. May 1, 1937, they launched an uprising in Barcelona. Do you understand? A war is going on, there are victims at the front, and they

try to seize power in Catalonia. . . . After the Barcelona rebellion, Trotskyists and anarchists were considered fascists, a genuine hunt began and they were killed on the spot."

That thousands were killed is true. However, Luis's account tells the story the wrong way around.

Following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, the Stalinists, in pursuit of a military alliance with England and France against Hitler, adopted what was called the "popular front" strategy. It meant that the tremendous power of the Soviet Union and the Communist parties abroad was used to control and defuse the mass workers' rebellions in Europe and elsewhere so as to preserve capitalist property relations.

The Communist parties could have led workers in struggles to overthrow the rule of the capitalists. But they, along with the Socialist parties, accepted posts and responsibilities in capitalist governments instead, helping to put a damper on rebellions by the working class and peasants. In Spain there was a bloody war waged against the working class and peasant rebels by the Republican capitalist government in which Communists, Socialists, and Anarchists held key posts.

This was all happening while Franco's military forces—with the backing of the Spanish capitalists and landlords, Hitler's Germany, and Mussolini's Italy—were waging a war to overthrow the Republic. The Republic represented a weak bourgeois parliamentary system that could not alone withstand the workers' onslaught and that is why the bourgeois forces turned to a fascist solution.

Stalin, the only source of arms for the Republican army, refused arms to fronts where the CP was not in control, thereby sealing their defeat. And the Stalinists threw their lot in with the Republic against the rebelling masses. The Comintern police agents and Stalin's NKVD forces shot down, chased down, arrested, tortured, and executed thousands and thousands of Spanish revolutionaries in the pursuit of "class peace" and a futile effort to win the confidence of and an alliance with the English and French capitalist ruling classes against Hitler. The Stalinists thereby helped destroy the working class movement in Spain, the only force that could have successfully resisted the fascist offensive.

The criminal betrayal of the Spanish revolution by Stalin and the Comintern was exposed by Trotsky as the events unfolded—in his correspondence, and in articles and books. He tried unsuccessfully to help forge a revolutionary movement in Spain, despite his enforced isolation. These, and his other writings and political

work of the 1930s, he considered the most important activity of his life.

In 1933, when he had concluded that the Stalinist bureaucracy could not be reformed but had to be overthrown before workers' democracy and internationalism could be revived in the USSR and elsewhere, Trotsky set out to build new parties and a new International. Unfortunately, this new Fourth International movement was forced to break relations with Andres Nin and his forces in 1935 when they merged with reformists to form the POUM and supported a bourgeois government. Trotsky, however, and the Fourth International movement never ceased trying to collaborate with revolutionaries and

defend all those in the workers' movements in Spain and elsewhere against reformist betrayers as well as capitalists of all stripes.

The revolutionists assassinated by the Stalinists in Spain, as Luis recalls, were called Trotskyists and fascist collaborators just as were the Bolshevik leaders being framed up and shot in the USSR in connection with the Moscow show trials.

Once the real nature of the war in Spain is understood, the role of Trotsky's assassins there loses any revolutionary aura. The commander of the group sent to Mexico by Stalin to murder Trotsky was Leonid Kotov, or Eitingon, who had headed up Stalin's Division of Special Tasks in Spain—a euphemistic expression for

NKVD hit squads and executioners. Carlos Contreras—who was really Vittorio Vidaly—a second-level commander of the Mexican assassination team had been a high-level NKVD commander in the bloody suppression of the workers' movement in Barcelona in May 1936, which Mercader's brother Luis spoke about. With Eitingon, Contreras orchestrated the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Andres Nin. Eitingon apparently is still alive in the USSR where he lives on a pension and pursues scholarly endeavors.

Even former Spanish Communist Party leaders like Fernando Claudin consider the repression of the POUM and the murder of

(Continued on page 34)

The following was sent to the New York Times in early November by Marilyn Vogt-Downey in the name of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee. It was not published.

Who Is Falsifying History Now?

Bill Keller's article "Soviet Memorial to the Victimized" on October 31 contained some critical inaccuracies.

Keller was reporting on a welcome development: the Memorial Society in the USSR had succeeded in establishing and dedicating in Moscow, just outside the main secret police headquarters, a monument to victims of Stalin's terror.

The All-Union Volunteer Historical and Educational Society "Memorial" began in 1987 as a movement and was formally established in January 1989. It is dedicated, according to its literature, "to the immortalization of the memory of the victims of Stalinism and the struggle against Stalinism in the broad sense of the word." Its main goals are to unearth all manner of documentation about the millions of victims of the Stalin terror, establish archives where all these materials will be preserved and open to the public, and assist the victims of the repression and their survivors. It now has groups in nearly 150 cities across the USSR, including at the sites of former death camps like Vorkuta.

Despite the openings of the glasnost era, Memorial encountered considerable obstacles to receiving recognition by the government, a material obstacle to its work. To date, despite a consistent campaign by Memorial active supporters, who include not only prominent Soviet cultural and political figures, artistic unions, and relatives of Bolsheviks murdered by Stalin, only the Moscow group of Memorial has been officially recognized. The fact that this public monument has been permitted to exist, therefore, represents a big victory for its campaign.

It is ironic that, when the topic is this heroic quest for historic truth, Keller should have falsely reported several essential facts.

Keller's distortions start with his description of the event. He falsely asserts that "the monument was a victory for those who favored a more sweeping indictment of the Soviet police state, from its origins with Lenin."

In connection with the fact that the monument is centered on a stone taken from the notorious Solovetsky Island forced labor camps, Keller then continues by stating that this camp was "opened in 1918 during the flush of Lenin's victory."

Both statements are false.

Memorial, as part of its ongoing activities has organized a number of excellent exhibits of some of the vast materials it has collected. One of them, organized in June 1989, was an exhibit entitled "The Solovetsky Camps of Special Designation: 1923-39." The date for the opening of the exhibit was chosen because

the first group of prisoners arrived at the island in June 1923, not 1918, as Keller stated.

Moreover, it should be noted that Lenin had suffered a second disabling stroke in March 1923 which removed him from politics until his death in January 1924, so he can hardly be blamed for what took place in those camps. In fact, the forced labor, starvation rations, and finally, the mass executions that characterized the horrible history of those camps heralded and represented part of Stalin's massive campaign of repression. Is Keller now joining those who still want to cover this up?

Keller, later in the article, continuing his theme, asserts that the Soviet Ministry of Culture itself undertook a campaign two years ago to erect a monument to the victims of Stalin's repression because it wanted to preempt the Memorial campaign "and make sure it did not taint the name of Lenin." That, too, is false.

The Memorial campaign has, since its inception, been focused on immortalizing the names and fates of the millions of victims of Stalin's repression which number more than 20 million. The Gorbachev government has consistently dragged its feet and sought to thwart this process of uncovering the suppressed and falsified history it so long endorsed. Of the 20 million victims, only roughly one million had been "rehabilitated" by June 1990, by the Kremlin's official commissions of investigation. These include all the Bolshevik leaders framed up at the Moscow purge trials staged 1936-38, except for Leon Trotsky—who with Lenin led the Russian Revolution—and his son Leon Sedov, whose rehabilitation the current Soviet powers persistently resist.

Memorial, on the other hand, independently of the government—but with the help of a groundswell of popular support—has collected extensive archives of long-suppressed history and tirelessly persists.

Its research exposes the continuity between the repression of the 1920-1950s—the Stalin era—to the apparatus ruling today. Moreover, Memorial's goals are not simply to establish stone monuments to the victims, but to establish open archives that will remain a living monument to historic truth and the victims of Stalin's totalitarian rule.

The Ministry of Culture announced its own plans for a monument because the government wanted to protect *its own* name, not that of Lenin, which—as the uncovered truth shows—Stalin and his successors have been abusing for years in an effort to legitimize their repression.

It is a disservice to the millions of victims of Stalin's terror for Keller to have distorted the facts to suit his own false schema. In so doing, he distorted the noble aims and achievements of Memorial in the eyes of readers and undermined Memorial's image when now—more than ever before—Memorial needs our support.

How Will a U.S. Section of the FI Be Rebuilt?

Why Doesn't the FIT Join Socialist Action?

Dear *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*:

As a regular subscriber to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* who has read your publication for the past three years, I was pleased to read about your change of perspective as regards to the current state of the SWP. Given the SWP's formal break with the Fourth International I think the FIT's new assessment of the SWP is both realistic and essentially correct.

I must admit, however, that I was more than a little disappointed that the FIT made a decision to continue their existence as a separate organization for the foreseeable future. While admitting that the reunification of the Fourth International forces in the U.S. is a desirable goal, and that no differences between these forces are of a "principled nature," it seems to me that the FIT's reasoning for continuing as a separate organization is flimsy, at best.

In the past the FIT has admitted that the Fourth Internationalists in Solidarity have abandoned fundamental tenets of Leninism. If this is the case, and I personally believe that it is, then there is indeed a principled difference that prevents the FIT and Socialist Action from uniting with Solidarity. On the other hand, despite political differences on some questions, there are no principled differences that would prevent the reunification of the FIT with Socialist Action. Despite the FIT's new perspective and its call for a reunification of the American Trotskyist movement, it seems quite obvious the FIT intends to use the differences between Socialist Action and Solidarity as an excuse to maintain their own existence as a separate organization.

In my opinion, the real reason that the FIT doesn't call for an immediate reunification with Socialist Action is that the FIT is unwilling to be a minority in a united organization. As Trotskyists fully aware of the principles of democratic centralism, the FIT knows that they would have every opportunity to press for their positions in a united organization at the proper time. Instead of taking the principled road, though, the FIT has made a sectarian decision while dressing their reasoning in a language calculated to disguise their sectarianism.

I fully agree that a united Trotskyist movement in the U.S. is desirable. Much needs to be done to rebuild what Barnes and Co. tried to destroy. I only wish the FIT's desire for unity was as strong as they'd have me believe. I am disappointed, comrades, because I somehow expected better from you.

Seattle Reader

The FIT Replies

Dear Seattle Reader,

We welcome your statement, "I fully agree that a united Trotskyist movement in the U.S. is desirable." Having stated a desired goal, the next question for revolutionary activists is: how do we achieve this? As happens so often in the revolutionary movement, different answers are given. Your letter clearly proposes: end the separate organization of the FIT and unite with Socialist Action immediately. The reality of the situation is that the FIT and SA are particular currents in a larger Fourth Internationalist movement in this country. Even if FIT and SA joined together, we would not constitute the *entire* movement. This is the major difference between your projection of a fusion of SA and FIT and what the FIT is attempting: to advance a broader process which will bring together *all* Fourth Internationalists in this

country. Our world movement has fraternal relations with *three* U.S. groupings: FIT, SA, and the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity.

You misunderstand our views when you write that the FIT "has admitted that the Fourth Internationalists in Solidarity have abandoned fundamental tenets of Leninism." The FIT has never held that opinion "in the past," as you wrote, nor do we hold that position at this time. Fourth Internationalists who helped found and remain active in Solidarity have not violated any Leninist principle. The FIT did not agree with the specific *strategic* orientation of these comrades—and we did not agree with the strategic orientation of comrades in Socialist Action. We had a different concept of how best to build the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country. But questions of *principle* were not involved in our differences with Fourth Internationalists in Solidarity or in SA.

We have repeatedly stated, and explained again in our call for reconstitution: Fourth Internationalists currently in FIT, in SA, and in Solidarity "have had big differences over important questions such as our assessment of the Nicaraguan revolution and the FSLN, how to interpret events in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and what attitude to take toward other left currents in the U.S. or toward the majority of the Fourth International. These differences can, however, coexist within a common Leninist organization, since they are not of a principled nature; they can be resolved by the normal functioning of a healthy, fulsome, and fruitful democratic centralism which alone assures a voluntary discipline in action."

This is, obviously, quite a different attitude toward Fourth Internationalists in Solidarity than your assessment that they have "abandoned fundamental tenets of Leninism." What grounds do you have for such a viewpoint regarding comrades who have fraternal relations with the Fourth International?

It appears that you misunderstand another aspect of our call when you conclude (based on this assertion about these comrades) that there "is indeed a principled difference that prevents FIT and Socialist Action from uniting with Solidarity." Our call does not propose uniting with Solidarity—although, here too, a question of principle is not involved. The history of the Trotskyist movement in this country and around the world offers many examples of fusions, mergers, regroupments, etc., involving Fourth Internationalists being members of formations that do not strictly follow our conception of a Leninist organization. Whether this is a correct political *strategy* and whether Leninist principles are involved must be evaluated on the basis of concrete situations in each case.

In your opinion, the FIT refuses reunification with SA because "the FIT is unwilling to be a minority in a united organization." Our political orientation has never been determined by whether we would be a minority or a majority. Although we were a minority in the SWP, we did not choose to leave the party but attempted to convince the membership to uphold a Trotskyist program. If a reunification of all Fourth Internationalists were to take place tomorrow or in the very near future, the perspectives of the FIT would probably be a minority viewpoint within a newly reconstituted sympathizing section of the Fourth International. But, rather than fearing a minority status, the FIT would see this reunification as a giant step forward for our movement as a whole.

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The Decline of American Unionism

An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism, by Kim Moody. Verso, London and New York, 1988. 376 pages, \$16.95.

Reviewed by Frank Lovell

This is the most comprehensive and most current of several recent books on the decline of the union movement in the U.S. It opens with a chapter on the situation in which organized labor finds itself at the close of the 1980s, using the five-and-a-half-month 1986 steel strike as illustrative of the wave of wage cuts, plant closures, and failed strikes during the second Reagan administration.

From this recognition of *what is*, the cruel reality, the author begins his review of the history of the modern union movement in the post-World War II years. He traces the emergence of the system of "political bargaining" which began during the war, explains the rise of "modern business unionism" (not essentially different from the business unionism of Samuel Gompers in the old American Federation Labor prior to World War I), and describes the organizational crisis of the unions created by the transformation of U.S. industry brought on by the internationalization of the productive process in the 1970s.

Moody is mainly interested in discovering how changes in prevailing concepts and perceptions of unionism can be brought about, and how a "new unionism" can be created. As executive director of Labor Education and Research Project which publishes the monthly magazine *Labor Notes*, he is a political activist and participant in union reform movements. His insights and his writing show it. Union members are his audience. He knows firsthand the problems and the people he writes about. And this makes his book different from others like it.

Looking Back

The union movement appeared to prosper as the U.S. economy expanded in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. The major industrial unions in auto, steel, rubber, coal, oil and chemical, and trucking had all established industry-wide bargaining, gained company-paid health care and pension plans (and other fringe benefits including wage escalators geared to rising prices, and various forms of supplementary unemployment benefits), and enjoyed amicable labor/management relations through a system of negotiations and arbitration which resolved all on-job conflicts. During these years many strikes occurred, some long ones, but they were resolved finally to the mutual satisfaction of union and management with top

negotiators on both sides congratulating themselves (and each other) on the virtues of collective bargaining.

This state of affairs depended on and was regulated by government labor policy. It endured so long as the economy continued to expand and social stability prevailed, a period of two decades (1947-1967). And during this period the unions deteriorated while continuing to show numerical growth. As working class organizations they became divorced from their members and developed a top-heavy bureaucratic structure. The officialdom acquired a new self-image, and the membership perceived the union differently. They no longer saw it as their organization, as their fathers had in the 1930s and 1940s.

The unions had now become institutions sustained by the company dues-checkoff system, existing independent of and separate from the workers they were supposed to represent. Union officials made all decisions governing the affairs of these institutions, usually in consultation with government or management representatives, and in most cases these union officials at all levels from shop steward to international president saw themselves as evenhanded mediators elected to adjudicate differences between labor and capital, between workers and their supervisors.

The Big Shift

In the mid-1960s this cozy union-management relationship began to cool off because the rate of profit slipped and social unrest developed. Moody says, "Employers pushed for extra profits by trying to lengthen the workday, while workers accepted the overtime so that they could finance their new levels of consumption." But this was no solution to the underlying problem.

At this juncture the cost of living rose sharply and civil rights struggles erupted in the North. The result was a series of wildcat strikes in several industries, directly affecting airline mechanics, auto workers, coal miners, and others. Many of these wildcatters sympathized and identified with the anti-Vietnam war demonstrators of the time, and with the ghetto uprisings. In the unions this sentiment found further expression in organized opposition caucuses seeking to oust the established officialdom, usually at the local level. Awakening Black militancy added yeast to the union ferment. All-Black caucuses, encouraged by the growing popularity of nationalism and guided by the teaching of Malcolm X, announced themselves in several unions and made their presence felt. The most highly publicized example was the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in the United Auto Workers (UAW) which Moody describes in some detail.

Missed Opportunity

An opportunity to prop up and possibly restructure the sagging union movement at this critical time was missed, an opportunity that civil rights leader Martin Luther King hoped to seize. On April 4, 1968, the day King was murdered, he told American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) president Jerry Wurf, "What is going on here in Memphis is important to every poor working man, Black or white, in the South." In February 1,300 Black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, had gone on strike and King was there to support them. Moody says, "The U.S. labor leadership which had the resources to turn a vision into a massive campaign, didn't get the message. In 1968 it cared more about nominating and electing Hubert Humphrey (the Democratic Party candidate for U.S. president) than organizing the unorganized."

There was also another reason the union bureaucracy failed to hear King's message. It was paralyzed with fear and it didn't want to hear any action proposals of any kind. It vaguely sensed that some momentous changes were occurring in existing relations among nations and peoples throughout the world, changes that were not at the time clearly understood. But the U.S. ruling class was well advised that its dominant position in world economy was weakening and that government policy changes were required both at home and abroad. This went beyond the immediate problem of war in Vietnam. And these concerns were undoubtedly transmitted to Meany and other top AFL-CIO officials.

Signs of the Faltering Economy

The bleak future of institutionalized unionism was signaled in 1971 when the government's "New Economic Policy" was announced. The U.S. would no longer redeem dollars with gold in the international monetary markets, thus forcing a revaluation of currencies. The other side of this policy was a wage freeze in this country. Top union officials expressed outrage. AFL-CIO president George Meany denounced the new policy as "patently discriminatory" against American workers. Leonard Woodcock, then president of the UAW, said, "If this administration thinks that just by issuing an edict, by the stroke of a pen, they can tear up contracts, they are saying to us they want war. If they want war, they can have war." This was all bluster. Top union officials soon accepted posts on the new wage-price boards appointed by government to monitor the wage freeze.

The working class standard of living continued to decline throughout the 1970s as inflation climbed. Working conditions in organized industry deteriorated. In some major unions cracks began to appear in the bureaucratic crust. A serious threat to overturn the old ruling group was mounted in the steel union in 1976 by secondary officials. Revolt against an incompetent leadership festered in the coal mines. And the entrenched leadership of the UAW felt threatened for the first time since one-party control was imposed in 1947 by Walter Reuther. In the trucking industry Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) was founded.

Moody describes these and similar developments in a range of unions with all necessary details and the assurance of an

eyewitness reporter. He also describes what was happening to the productive forces worldwide; and what was happening, concomitantly, to international exchanges of commodities and capital investments. He relates all this to the closing of steel mills and auto plants, to mass unemployment in the U.S. industrial heartland, and to the struggles for democracy in the unions and against wage givebacks and other concessions to the employers by company-oriented union officials.

International Production

The transformation of industrial production on a world scale which began in the 1960s, took hold in the 1970s, and dominated the market in the 1980s, had its genesis in the U.S. multinational corporations. In a chapter on "Economic Power Shift" Moody argues that as U.S. economy became internationally integrated it was forced by the dictates of capital investment to restructure. The U.S. Steel corporation is an example of restructuring. This giant corporation closed its steel mills and invested where the rate of profit returns on capital was greater. Since it was no longer mainly a steel producer the corporation changed its name to USX, a highly diversified corporation. How does this affect the unions? Moody observes that "these changes would demand of organized labor and its leadership a flexibility and a political awareness that was altogether missing in the routine of business unionism." The failure of the leadership of the steel union to respond with a program of social demands and appropriate independent political action to the closing of steel mills is an example of what was missing, and how the union was affected.

Soft Talk

As union leaderships retreated in disarray from the obligations imposed upon them by the restructuring of U.S. industry, the employers pressed for wage cuts and other concessions (in fringe benefits such as health care, paid holidays, pensions, etc.) in exchange for promises of "job security." Some employers with tacit agreement of the majority also sought to free themselves of industry-wide bargaining on the pretext that consideration in the form of downward wage adjustments ought to be granted to allow them to stay in business and "save jobs."

These spurious arguments seemed valid in the context of union-management cooperation, the long-accepted basis of contract negotiations. But there was no easy way this could be made acceptable to profitable companies. They argued in negotiations with the unions that companies paying below-standard wages would have an unfair competitive advantage, as unorganized companies have always had. The test came in 1979 when the Chrysler corporation faced bankruptcy and pleaded for a government bailout. It was argued that this would benefit society: the creditor banks, certainly; the company stockholders, of course; the workers whose jobs would be saved, obviously; and the consumers who would retain the wider choice of products, caveat emptor. But in negotiations for the government loan, society's representatives (a committee of the U.S. Congress) discovered that since taxpayers were being asked to take financial risks in this matter others should also make sacrifices, namely the Chrysler workers who were

told to take a wage cut to guarantee the loan. UAW officials agreed, "to save jobs."

This agreement opened the floodgates to "concession bargaining" to which Moody devotes a chapter of his book. He explains the results in several industries. What happened, of course, was the introduction of new standard wage rates. In union negotiations the employers demanded an industry-wide standard wage, but now it had to be fixed at the lowest level to satisfy "fair competition." The most destructive results of this were in the meatpacking industry where the leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) agreed with the employers and cooperated to reduce wages to the level of the unorganized sector of the industry in exchange for continued union recognition and the dues checkoff.

These sections of the book are written for union militants who are trying to understand what happened to their unions. During the past 15 years some unions like the printers have all but disappeared; others have been transformed into hardly more than shells of what unions once were. With the decline and transformation of the old industrial unions the character and composition of the union movement as a whole has changed. The industrial unions have sought to recoup losses in membership through random mergers with smaller unions in various occupations. Moody believes this has produced a new kind of unionism, "general unionism," the UFCW (now the largest AFL-CIO affiliate) being one of the most lamentable examples.

Hard Facts

The composition of the union movement has shifted from predominantly industrial workers toward the so-called white-collar sector of the workforce. From 1950 to 1980 unions in basic industry lost almost three million members, but the number of white-collar union members increased by seven million. In the 1950s, 80 percent of all union members were classified "blue-collar." Today the collar ratio is about 50-50. Almost six million public employees belong to unions, the majority of them blue-collar workers or low-paid service and clerical workers. A high percentage are Black, Latino, women, and third world people. This contributes to the changed character and composition of the union movement.

Likewise the character and composition of the American working class has become more Black, more multinational, and poorer than in the 1950s. Moody calls attention to a new sector of the modern working class, "the new proletarians," who work long hours for low wages in the private service sector of the economy. This is a new industry comparable to the rise of mass production industry at the turn of the century, which has emerged in response to the transformation of industry and the internationalized productive process. It employs millions and remains totally unorganized. The data Moody cites are impressive: "In the decade of the 1970s, 13.4 million of 19.6 million new jobs created, or 68 percent, were in the private service sector. In the first half of the 1980s, all of the new jobs created (that is, all net job growth) were in service industries, while goods-producing industries lost jobs in absolute numbers."

Moody attributes the fact that no effort is made to organize these millions of highly exploited unorganized workers to the

moribund, business-minded AFL-CIO leadership, questioning whether it is possible for the union movement in its present state of disarray to mount a serious campaign to organize the great mass of unorganized workers. From the beginning of his book, either explicitly or by implication, Moody questions the viability of the unions under present leaders. But he explains that unions by nature are not helpless and points to signs of renewed vitality. The formative years of the CIO are his model of what unions ought to be, unions of aroused workers inspiring and leading broad social movements to end the injustices of the workplace and establish new economic and social relations to benefit all members of society. This is what the great mass of industrial workers who founded the CIO wanted in the 1930s, "social unionism."

Union Reform

Reformers and some opposition caucuses in the unions say they want to return to the concepts of social unionism, and are working against great obstacles to that end. The best organized of these reform movements is Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), founded in 1976 at a convention of 200 Teamsters determined to take control of their union and improve working conditions. They publish a national newspaper for members of the Teamsters union, and have grown steadily (with some disappointments and setbacks) from the beginning. They hue to the essential tasks of education and organization, and presently are in alliance with union militants and dissidents who hope realistically to elect a new international president in 1991 and sweep out the gangster-ridden incumbent regime.

Moody has assisted TDU for more than a decade and understands its problems, and the problems of the trucking industry as well. He says, "Teamsters reform cannot exist in isolation from the conditions and consciousness of the rest of the working class," this in conclusion to a brief history of TDU as part of his chapter on organized opposition to the union bureaucracy, titled "other voices." At present these other voices are few compared to the packs of bureaucrats that prowl the unions; and they are scattered, without political identity or a unified purpose. This is a serious weakness in the working class that this book, *An Injury to All*, will help to overcome if it finds the broad circulation it deserves.

Two That Were Different

At the union level two bitterly fought strikes in the mid-1980s illustrate the possibilities and limitations of factory workers in a single plant—determined of purpose, well organized and with able leaders from their own ranks—to protect themselves against wage cuts and life-threatening working conditions. One strike was in Austin, Minnesota, at the Hormel meatpacking plant. The other was at a cannery of about 1,000 workers in Watsonville, California, organized by a local of the Teamsters union.

In reporting the superb organizational methods and broad support in these strikes, both lasting several months, Moody says, "P-9 (the local union of meatpackers in Austin, an affiliate of UFCW) gave tens of thousands of labor activists something more than a successful strike: it gave them a vision of what working class people are capable of doing and the kind

of unionism they can create.” This also applies to the Watsonville strike which lasted longer and unlike the one in Austin defeated the local plant owner, forcing the banks to take over the property and find new management.

Both strikes at the outset faced the hostility and duplicity of top union bureaucrats who hampered their struggle and sought to appease the employers. Both were opposed by local government and suffered police repression. In Austin the Minnesota National Guard was used to protect strikebreakers. In Watsonville the strikers seemed at first to be burdened with an additional handicap of a different kind. None of them spoke English. But during the strike this proved to be an asset because of the solidarity within the economically and socially isolated Spanish-speaking community.

Union Help and Community Solidarity

One of the unique features of these strikes, in addition to the adroitness of the local leaderships, was the immediate response of some sectors of the union movement and others to their appeals for help. This came from local unions and from volunteer support committees of union members and backers in the surrounding areas, over the opposition of union bureaucrats. A third contributing factor was the existing network of well-edited, informative, antibureaucratic labor publications such as *Labor Notes*. In defining the character of these projects he says they were all organized and staffed by people with a background in labor who regard themselves as socialists. And he adds, with more understanding than most radicals who have tried to influence the union movement since World War II, that “these projects were directed primarily at activists who were not socialists. From different angles, most of these efforts attempted to re-create the bridge between leftist intellectuals and ideas and working class activists that had been destroyed by the end of the 1940s.” He says this intellectual/worker-activist connection “had been a key element in the creation of the CIO and in the generally progressive and militant direction it took in the early years.” And the final ingredient in the truly heroic struggles in Austin and Watsonville was the support the strikers received from other social movements in the working class not connected to the unions as presently constituted: the women’s movement, the campaigners for women’s rights and for organized working class women in particular (women were prominent in the organization and leadership of both strikes); the Black community, especially those in the front lines of the uphill battle against racism; the new immigrants, still unorganized but cohesive enough to sympathize with and help the Watsonville strikers; a new generation of student radicals, present and helpful in both strikes; and a show of international solidarity from South African unionists and others in third world countries.

The Future of Unionism

Moody foresees the rise of a “new unionism” which is developing through persistent struggles and shifting moods within rebellious sectors of the modern American working class: independent organizations of women in industry, new expressions of nationalist consciousness among Black workers, growing hostility inside the established unions to

bureaucratic repression, signs of political awakening in the huge (and growing) “party of non-voters,” disillusionment of new third world immigrants in “wealthy America,” and the insecurity of “middle class” workers still employed in restructured manufacturing industries. All this contributes to growing social restiveness, none of it yet able to find broad organizational expression. “The potential for millions of workers to organize,” he says, “depends on the attractiveness of unions. Unions that preside over the pauperization of the working class, that demonstrate no willingness to defend either the economic or special social interests of their members, that raise the banner of competitiveness, that are not organized along lines capable of influencing capital, and that offer no vision beyond nickels and dimes will not appear as a natural channel for workers to express social grievances.”

This does not mean, however, that the great mass of unorganized have consciously rejected unions as possible means of self-help, or as established support agencies. Nor that those 15 million presently paying dues are prepared to abandon their unions. The struggle to reform the unions will continue and simultaneously new organizations and new movements of social protest will develop as the class struggle sharpens. In these struggles the new unionism that Moody visualizes will be forged, just as the new CIO unions were created in the 1930s. Again the new unionism will be a social movement, a movement of millions of workers demanding social justice and bent on transforming society.

“Just as part of the human material for the transformation of unionism lies in the activists, leaders, and veterans of the union and social movements of the recent past,” Moody says, “so the ideas that provide an outline of the direction of a new unionism have emerged from all these attempts by sections of the working class to put their imprint on the social order.” What he seems to be saying here is that the program and leadership of the new unionism have been created (or will be formed) from the “social movements of the recent past.” But precisely what this program is and who the new leaders are is not stated. Nor does he imply that the process is finished and all the elements are in place waiting for the transformation of the labor movement to happen. To the contrary the tenor of his analysis is that organizing efforts, strike struggles, and misdirected political moves during the past 15 years are the beginning stages of the transformation of the American working class and its growing self-awareness of its potential as a political force in society.

Political Action

In light of persistent failures by various sectors of the labor and radical movements, including recent efforts of the Jesse Jackson Rainbow Coalition, to change the character of the Democratic Party from a political instrument of the employing class to a bipartisan defender of rich and poor alike, Moody concludes that the question of independent working class political action is again on the agenda. He says this question has come up in every period when the working class has been forced to create new union structures to defend its economic interests and cites as historical examples successful local labor party campaigns in the 1880s, 1920s, and 1930s as workers sought political protection for the unions they were forming. He does not argue that history will repeat in this way. But he is

The Main Political Currents

convinced by the weight of evidence already in that unprecedented socioeconomic changes are occurring and that the formation of a labor party in the U.S. is inevitable. He expects nothing from the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which looms as a solid pillar of the status quo, dead set against working class political actions. "A new political party in the U.S.," he says, "will have to be the result of a confluence of the current breakdown of American party politics and the kind of mass movements from below that are also the basis for a new unionism." In this view of the gestation of the new unionism and the creation of a labor party both are part of the same process. How a labor party will emerge is unpredictable, the catalyst unknown. "The combination of a break of any major social constituency of the Democratic Party—for example, a large part of the Black vote, and the activation of significant numbers of working class non-voters could well serve as such a catalyst," Moody says.

The program of the labor party will embody the aims of the new unionism: "The weight of Black, Latino, and women workers in both existing and newly organized unions lays the basis for a confrontation with racism and sexism, for example. Such a movement could address the dismal meaning of old age in the U.S. It could lead the fight for jobs and/or income necessary to take on the problems of the Black underclass. At the deepest level, it could challenge the domination of business/individualist values in American culture." It would also, of necessity, address the problems of international exchange and trade, and working class solidarity. Moody foresees this process unfolding in the context of the entropic demise of the capitalist system, hastened by the rise of a vigorous new labor movement capable of resolving the contradictions of the old society.

This very informative history of the modern union movement is, in many ways, a continuation of *Labor's Giant Step* which concluded with the AFL-CIO merger and the formation of "The World's Largest Union," about which that book's author, Art Preis, was overly optimistic at the time. History has not justified his high hopes. The reasons the AFL-CIO unions turned sour are explained from several vantage points in the pages of *An Injury to All* which concludes cautiously optimistic: "In the final analysis, under any foreseeable circumstances, the ability of the working class or large sections of it to break out of organizational and political paralysis depends on the growth of a shared vision of plausible lines of action . . . (and) through their actions, the fighters of the American working class, in their growing numbers, have begun to shape the uncertain future."

The question of working class leadership in terms of party and program is beyond the purview of this book, but it is inherent in the socioeconomic process described in it. If the formation of a labor party in the U.S. is inevitable, that party must have a more clearly defined program than is suggested by Moody. And it will require political organizers who see further than "a large part of the Black vote" and "significant numbers of working class non-voters." The implication is that these political breakaways, in the struggle to free themselves from the capitalist confines of the Democratic Party, will contribute to the political program and help produce the far-sighted leaders to implement it.

At one point, referring to the fundamental concept of democracy in the working class organizations, Moody says: "The working class cannot remake its own institutions unless it controls them." This is profoundly true, but it leaves open the question of how the working class will exercise control over its own institutions such as the labor party and the revitalized unions. These new organizations will be subject to the same hostile pressures of capitalist society as the present union structure. What will prevent the new institutions from falling under bureaucratic control of treacherous leaders?

This, of course, is not a new question for union militants and radicals. And given the present stage of union disintegration it is certainly reasonable to concentrate on the enormous task of restructuring the union movement along lines suggested by Moody, and building a labor party independent of the capitalist parties as a necessary part of the process. He has demonstrated convincingly enough that these tasks cannot be accomplished except through democratic methods of organization and struggle. And if they are eventually accomplished won't the new firmly established democratic institutions of the working class embody the necessary experience and resources to guard against bureaucratic degeneration? So what is to be gained by discussing the possible dangers of future degeneration when the process of regeneration and restructuring has just begun? There's much work to be done. The socialist-minded researchers and political propagandists associated with *Labor Notes* and similar projects—in collaboration with union activists in TDU and in several New Directions caucuses which take their name from the present opposition group in the UAW, and with organizers of migrant workers and other progressives—have already taken the lead and demonstrated successful methods of work, including international solidarity. □

Notebooks for the Grandchildren

by Mikhail Baitalsky

43. To Vorkuta for the Second Time (Cont.)

In the Rechlag, the majority of the “pure,” politicals convicted under Article 58 [of Stalin’s Constitution], i.e., those who had been convicted not for trying to escape or for wearing anti-Soviet tattoos, but for more political acts, were Ukrainians from Western Ukraine (they were called in the camp “Westerners”). A good number among them had served in Bandera’s detachments.

Article 58—its Point 1—was also used to convict Soviet soldiers who had been captured by the enemy. Genuine traitors were also imprisoned under that Article: that is, people who had volunteered during the Nazi occupation to police the local population, perform executions, or head city administrations. There were also a number of Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians (imprisoned under Article 58, for “betraying the Motherland”). There were, in addition, Germans. After that came blabbermouths, convicted mostly for anecdotes; and “terrorists,” including absentminded people who had hurriedly grabbed a newspaper showing Stalin’s portrait to use for something other than morning worship. And finally came Jewish writers, engineers, doctors, and workers who were ridiculously accused of both “cosmopolitanism” and “bourgeois nationalism.”

Until recently I thought that only Lavrenti Beria’s investigators were able to put together such an amalgam as that. How mistaken I was! Not long ago I came upon a copy of a book called “Judaism and Zionism” (in Ukrainian). It was published in 1968 in Kiev. The author was Trofim Kichko, a doctoral candidate of philosophy. He wrote: “At first glance it seems that cosmopolitanism is the direct opposite of nationalism. . . . However, this is not true at all. In fact, cosmopolitanism is the highest form of bourgeois nationalism, its other extreme.” Here we have again the “in fact”! How familiar is this method of proof! To say “in fact” and “in its essence” without trying at all to look at either facts or essence. They all functioned that way from Stalin to Kichko.

After the doctors examined us and assigned us according to our state of health, the camp official appeared with his assistant in charge of personnel assignments, a PPD (Production Plan Department) official. He was a captain with a Jewish name. Holding our records in his hands, he fawned over the major. He

looked over my file and like a true zealous servant wanted to show that he was guided by ideology alone and would never have mercy on a Jew. Maybe he didn’t want the Banderovtisi to think badly of him. I didn’t need his favors. The doctor had classified me as a second-category worker which meant that I was fit to work aboveground but not in the mine. However, the ideological servant had to prove not only that he will refrain from saving you, but that he will drown you with his own hands.

“And this one,” he pointed at me. “Hum, second category, not authorized for work underground. But Comrade Major, you know that we do not have enough people in the mine. Let’s take him, huh?”

“Write down that the old sod can take it!”

The captain had demonstrated his ideological commitment, not only to me.

They assigned me to the fifth brigade. I appeared before the brigade leader. He said:

“Tomorrow you go with us when the shift changes. Guys, here’s the new wood hauler. But look out, old man, that you don’t slack off.”

I was not actually such an old man; I was 48. Many who were younger than me were growing beards. It was useful to look older in the camps. The guys would call you “dad” and try not to push you too hard in the brigade jobs even though that meant that there was more work for the younger ones to do. I didn’t grow a beard. In Rechlag, possession of a razor was considered a serious crime but they shaved us in the bathroom.

Scissors, bread knives, and iron pokers were not allowed in the camp zone. And the same was true of axes. However, a real criminal who wanted to kill someone could always manage to find an axe.

Searches were conducted often, despite the fact that we were searched daily upon entering the living zone after work. They wanted to make sure that we were not bringing back an axe, a knife, some vodka, or a fountain pen. Their interest in fountain pens was incomprehensible. Most likely it was simply because at that time fountain pens were extremely scarce and the wardens wanted them.

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

We were led along in groups of 100 or more. One—or sometimes two—of the wardens would step forth. We opened our jackets and the warden frisked us from hat to galoshes. After being frisked we moved aside. But until everyone was searched, the guards would not open the gate.

Alcohol made its way to us often enough, but if someone got caught with it the bottle was not destroyed. The wardens simply took it for themselves, as a trophy. Confiscation of the alcohol was considered sufficient punishment. Strict punishments were saved for other cases: refusal to work, self-mutilation, or insubordination. Besides solitary confinement in a punishment cell, a prisoner could end up in the special regime barracks, called the BUR [translator's note—using the Russian abbreviation]. The criminals did not mind the BUR so much: one did not have to go to work and, most important, one could play cards. In the ordinary barracks, it was possible to play dominos but cards were confiscated. In the BUR, no searches were conducted.

The BUR was locked up day and night. For a long time the ordinary barracks at Rechlag were locked at night. The warden on duty dragged in a big tub that served as the slop bucket. We took turns dragging it out in the morning. Then we put on our cotton-quilt jackets, our socks (made from scrap pieces of cotton wadding), and our galoshes (made of old tire covering) and went to mine the coal. The convoy leader swore in a good-natured way as was his usual manner. However, the dogs showed how much they hated the smell of our sweaty clothes.

The convoy crew stayed outside the gates of the mine. When we passed onto the territory of the mine, we were transformed for the duration of the shift from the “masters of industry” to hired hands. They paid us but it was not called a wage. It was called “bonus compensation.” We did not earn a wage but still they gave us a bonus, which they were not compelled to do, you know. “Appreciate our concern, you prisoners!”

For various offenses, they would deprive us of this bonus. If it were called a wage, then depriving us of it would have appeared an injustice. To take away someone's wage is not a good thing to do.

The economic organization—Vorkutcoal—paid the camp for our labor and the camp paid us, after first pocketing a large part of the money for services, i.e., mainly to pay for the administrative staff.

By examining the staff of the small camp unit, one can better understand much that took place outside it. A “Special Camp Unit,” abbreviated OLP [translators's note—using the Russian abbreviation] included up to five thousand prisoners. The convoy escort that brought us to work stayed on as guards in the watchtowers. I will not talk about them but about our officials with their staff—from the sergeant-warden to the major—the OLP officials. These workers were not performing military duty but equivalent service of administration, keeping accounts, establishing bans and prohibitions, granting permission, conducting searches, educating, punishing, confiscating, arresting, intimidating, and conducting surveillance.

In dreaming up items to ban, they thereby dreamed up a mountain of unnecessary but recognized salaried posts. One watches to make sure that the prohibitions are observed. Another orders searches for banned items that have not been detected. A third motivates those who keep watch. A fourth has the job of explaining that the measures in question are

vitaly necessary. A fifth reports successes and hitches along the way to a sixth; and a seventh calculates the overall labor exerted by the others and deducts their wages from our pay, plus their northern increment and a bonus for overfulfilling the plan and their devotion to the cause of communism.

Only two services satisfied the immediate needs of the prisoners: the supply department and the infirmary. But there were another half-dozen “departments”: production plan (PPD), registration-distribution (RDD), cultural-education (CED), the special department (its function was a secret!), then came the investigator; after that the regime official, who made sure that the prohibitions were being successfully implemented; then after him came the deputy official of the OLP's political department. The ideological substance of his work was not fully clear to me. However, there is no doubt that it was important since they assigned to it such an important, fat major who was always immaculately shaved and smelled of eau de cologne. When they tapped the prisoners for loans to the state, he called in those who subscribed for an amount deemed too small and motivated them, primarily with threats to limit their rights to correspondence. He also performed all the work involved in parceling out privileges and permission for things that did not cost the camp a kopeck, like the right to send an extra letter or receive an extra parcel.

And finally, one of the main figures in our administrative staff was the operations plenipotentiary—the main one who issued the banning orders, the ideological leader of the searches and eavesdropping, the terror of the OLP who put the checks and “x” marks opposite the names of everyone under observation. He wrote up the charges against transgressors, meted out the appropriate reprisals, awarded with the punishment cell, and wrote reports on the incorrigible prisoners. In the camp they called him “the godfather.” Whose godfather was he? None other than that of the working class. He baptized his children in the bottomless well of the great cult.

The labor we performed had to maintain all these majors and captains and also the sergeant-wardens. The Vorkutcoal industrial combine paid for our work like it paid for the work of the free laborers, but only a portion of the money reached us. The camp that sold its workforce to the combine received the money and divided it between the upper echelons and those way down below.

The methods of payment for camp labor were in principle the same as those paid for free labor—normal wages and piece-work rates. The difference was only in the size and in the name given to it: bonus instead of pay. The deliberately skimpy “bonus” paid to the prisoners in the camps taught all our officials to feel comfortable shifting those who failed to fulfill the norm onto punishment rations—300 grams of bread and a basin of gruel once a day—which made the person still weaker and still less able to carry out the work. I heard the malicious, vengeful words “this camp is not a resort” from a number of wardens whose sense of humanity had been crippled by their service. I even read these words in a newspaper not so long ago. They make it sound as if there are only two choices: it's either Sochi¹ or starvation rations.

If the prisoners had not thought up the idea of *tufra* [appearing to work without working], if there were not dozens of compassionate people to be found among the professional workers, and if we had not contrived ways to get around the

innumerable "rules," everyone would have died from hunger and exhaustion. It is not possible to last for ten years or even five years on the camp rations alone if you really work (and to do so is stipulated in the regulations authorizing the ration level) instead of pretending to work or performing *tufia*.

A clause in the financial agreement between the Vorkutcoal combine and the camp stipulated that the labor power being purchased would systematically raise its productivity. Without a growth in productivity, there is no economic growth. The buyer didn't care what means were used to compel us to raise our productivity: verbal agitation through the CED, or the punishment cell at the discretion of the godfather, or "bonus compensation" and revision of the norms, or a clever combination of all three methods. What mattered was results: coal, coal, and more coal!!

We saw this in the example of comrade Korneyev. He imposed a quota on a shift and the foreman of that shift imposed it on the brigade. That's it; let's go! Strictly speaking, Korneyev was simply demanding from those who sold the labor power that they honorably fulfill their part of the deal. The buyer of the labor power gave us the same equipment that they gave to the free miners. In fact, he paid full price for each ZK. It was no concern of his that more than half of it went to the officials. The equipment brought increased coal output no matter who was operating the coal-cutting machine, a ZK or a free laborer. In 1951-52 there were still quite a few manual positions: the coal hewers and loaders, the wood haulers, the timbermen, the hatchmen. The chopping and hauling of the coal had been mechanized.

The work of the wood hauler was manual from beginning to end and was considered a relatively easy job. Wood is lighter than coal or rock. But the camp had the obligation to deliver good quality labor power (for that reason the commission of doctors existed to determine who was fit for underground work and who were the weakling workers, able to mine less coal). In assigning me to the mine, the ideologically inspired captain was swindling Vorkutcoal. He was palming off on the buyer a second rate product.

But since you're in the mine now, Z, get your lazy ass to work! Work, Z, push! This isn't your aunt's house where you've come for blintzes!

* * *

Even if I had not been imprisoned up north only once, how could I forget it? When you plod along to the mine with the convoy escort, its dogs behind and in front of you, not only your body but your soul turns cold in the merciless blue twilight of the Aurora Borealis that drenches the land of the Special Camp Unit.

The blue-green drapery with its ceaseless convolutions and the uneven border below stretches all across the sky. The folds of the drapery are iridescent with all the hues of a color which artists call cold for understandable reasons. Between the drapery fold—and all that separates them—are long, narrow crystal bright streamers, suspended all the way to the ground like the clear pieces of crystal glass from which modern chandeliers are sometimes made. And it seems that the blue-green chandelier might begin to tinkle overhead with the tones of fine glass.

But nothing in the sky interrupts the boundless silence. The polar lights are clearest on the icy, mute nights. The freezing weather continues even under the April sun. In May, the sun never sets. At twelve o'clock at night—conventional night, that is—it barely touches the horizon; but five minutes later, it again rises, and begins to slowly revolve among crimson waves. Then the waves gradually begin to fade away, becoming first an orangish-grey color and then a greyish blue. The sky seems to have a permanent coating of grey paint. In the clearest morning it suffers from this strange pale shade as if it had a poor night's sleep. All night long, it had to listen to the commanders barking curses; this, with the sound of the barking dogs, reaches all the way to the stars.

The dogs are barking. They are a long way off.
Aren't the whirlpools into the folds of those icy drapes
penetrating into the depths of a world below?
And isn't that blue light showing the way?
Is that not a flag there from the silent planet?
Faraway home, will more of your calls—
faint in the raging waves—ever reach us?
We keep wandering along the snowy sea,
but all we hear is lies and filth.

* * *

The fifth brigade included selected youth. The brigade commander gave me orders for wood deliveries making allowance for my age. However, such considerations were forgotten when the danger arose that the shift might not meet its quota and lose its bonus compensation because of some wood hauler.

The miners' compensation was as much as 300 rubles per month (the equivalent of 30 rubles today). We used it at the camp store to buy margarine and rock candy for our tea. We had to stand in a queue for three to four hours, even though there was nothing in the store except for margarine (which they didn't always have), rock candy, and rotten onions. We had to buy the onions because of the way the packages were put together. We would throw the onions away as soon as we left the shop, and the shopkeeper would come out and pick them up to sell them again. He kept us waiting in line on purpose: if the officials saw that he could get all his work done adequately in only one or two hours each day, they might take him and send him into the mines to keep him from being idle. The shopkeeper was a ZK by the name of Lobzhenidze. Over a short period of time he stole 12,000 rubles from us. It was found sewn in his mattress during a search. He had paid off everyone he had to and was unable to figure out how that dull-witted warden could walk straight to his mattress!

Besides the camp shop they set up a so-called commercial dining room for us. Not every prisoner could go into it and certainly not every day. There, for the fifth brigade—which was considered a leading brigade—about two dozen pirogies filled with jam, and selling for about 50 kopecks each, were left for supper. The camp dining room fed us only twice a day. Supper was not authorized. We were paid in pirogies. You will eat twice a day—you are not making the plan.

All sweaty, I pushed the koza (a little wagon with no sides on it) loaded with posts and siding along the intermittent drifts. As ill luck would have it, it got stuck while I was making a turn. I strained and panted and tried to lift it out, but it wouldn't

budge! Then in the darkness of the mine I saw a little light coming towards me. The brigade leader had sent help.

"What's happened to you there, dad? Get a move on it, hurry up. The coal-cutter has finished the cycle and we need to reinforce the place. The timbermen are cursing you out. Ah, you're stuck, damn it! You push on the ends of the posts and I'll lift with my shoulder. Get by the posts. Jump under, press with all your weight. Ah, ah, ah. You're such a weakling! Here, let me push and you lift. There, now, take a big breath: one, two—we moved it! Again! Again! Praise the lord!"

We moved along, rolling to the end of the track. Then the koza had to be unloaded and the wood dragged along the ground about 50 meters, then shoved down into the pit. The coal-cutter had already reached the bottom and was hollering in a fury:

"Hey you up there with the wood! What the hell are you doing up there?! Yankel, Shmul, Chaim, Moshko—whatever your name is—let's see that shaved mug of yours!"

There was also a young Ukrainian fellow, Misha Smolyak, in our brigade. He came up to me when we were having our bath. Excusing himself, he said:

"Mikhailo Davidovich, I don't want you to think that all Ukrainians are like that coal-cutter. I have already scolded him."

Misha Smolyak was ashamed of his fellow countryman. Misha behaved as if guided by a noble love for his people: he spoke up for their honor and dignity, which had been soiled by the vulgarity of the coal-cutter.

Smolyak was arrested the first year he was in the Soviet army for "Ukrainian nationalism," the charge said. If a genuine love for one's people is nationalism, then Misha was guilty of it.

[Next month: "To Each His Own"]

Note

1. Sochi is a Russian Black Sea vacation resort.

Trotsky (Continued from page 24)

Andres Nin the "blackest page in the history of the Spanish Communist Party, which acted as an accomplice of crimes committed by Stalin's secret service."¹

Among the tens of thousands of working class fighters and revolutionaries these Stalinist forces murdered during that period were Trotsky supporters Erwin Wolf—ordered killed by Eitingon—and Rudolf Klement, a role in whose murder appears to have been played by Trotsky's assassin Mercader. The victims also included a leading Italian anarchist who was fighting in Spain, Camillo Bernieri (he was brutally killed in Catalonia by Eitingon's gang); former Comintern officials posted abroad who broke with Stalin over the vast repression and condemned him, such as Ignace Reiss and Fyodr Raskolnikov; and Trotsky's own son and closest collaborator Leon Sedov, convicted in absentia like Trotsky at the same Moscow trials.

These names and these crimes also need to become public knowledge and the counterrevolutionary policy behind them needs to be exposed. Unfortunately, the

current rulers in the Kremlin are still seeking deals with imperialism in order to shore up their own power and privileges at the expense of working class interests. They treat revolutions in the third world—such as in Nicaragua—as so much small change in their deals. The way the Gorbachev regime has echoed and cooperated with the U.S. war drive against Iraq is only the most recent example.

That is why we must continue our efforts. When the Stalinists assassinated masses of revolutionaries in the 1930s, and Trotsky himself in 1940, they thought that they could bury revolutionary Marxism. They thought they could kill the ideas by assassinating those who explained them. But though they have caused us serious difficulties and defeats—from which we have still not recovered—they did not succeed in killing our ideas.

And they never will.

The international Trotskyist movement has played a small but important role in helping push the truth forward. That is why campaigning for the exoneration of

Trotsky and the publication of all of his writings, and those of other banned revolutionary fighters, is so important. Once the Kremlin admits that the charges against Trotsky were fabricated, tens of thousands of others who were murdered all over the world under the banner of these charges will also be exonerated. And the executioners and their counterrevolutionary policies will be exposed.

That is precisely what the current Kremlin rulers and their supporters abroad—many of whom were complicit in these crimes—do not want to happen.

We must redouble our efforts in defense of the truth and in defense of revolutionary Marxism. □

Note

1. *The Communist Movement, From Comintern to Cominform*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1975, p. 67. See also on these events Felix Morrow, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain*; George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, an eyewitness account; and *The Spanish Revolution 1931-39*, documents by Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, NY.

Reply (Continued from page 25)

There is, of course, a fact of political life that tends to nullify the present situation regarding "minority" and "majority." In any kind of united organization, there would be new minorities and new majorities based on different reactions to the *many changes in the world situation which have occurred* over the past six-seven years. And these reactions have not fallen into pigeonholes marked "SA" and "FIT." Members of a new united group would determine

positions based on specific political questions—and these alignments would not necessarily duplicate categories from the past.

Your letter covers a number of important questions that need to be discussed and clarified in light of the new situation faced by Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. today. We look forward to a continuing exchange of views.

Evelyn Sell,
For the National Coordinators of the FIT

Letters

Che Guevara and Financial Self-Management

In your November 1990 issue you published a review by John Kovach of Carlos Tablada's *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*. The reviewer claims that "Che advocated . . . the financial self-management system, also called the economic accounting system" as well as his own budgetary finance system. This is wrong. The basis of the financial self-management system is *competition* in the market between state-owned enterprises and competition on the factory floor between workers for individual material incentives. Che's budgetary finance system advocated the opposite: centralized *planning* of state enterprises while minimizing competition between workers through expanding a system of "moral" or political incentives that maximized voluntary collective cooperation.

The financial self-management system was imported into Cuba from the Soviet Union. Its competition undermines workers' control and democratic planning. Che's system could only be implemented in a democratically planned economy run by workers' councils.

Lastly, why is Bolshevism singled out for its "anti-democratic potential"? Couldn't the same be said of any other revolutionary ideology that becomes transformed into its opposite? For instance social democracy's central role in aiding and abetting the slaughter of millions of workers in World War I and the murder of German revolutionaries in 1919?

Jim Miles
Chicago, IL

John Kovach Replies—I don't disagree with the major points made by Jim Miles in his letter. I would only point out that the financial self-management system, which was imported from the Soviets as Miles correctly points out, was not applicable to the bulk of Cuban industry; however, 70 percent of Cuban factories were affected by the budgetary finance system.

Miles is right in stating that the financial self-management system did involve competition in the market. In part, this was a mechanism incorporated in order to ensure some connection and sensitivity to fluctuations in the world market. The financial self-management system was applied to enterprises organized by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform and those firms accountable to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. I agree, this system was problematic in that it did function to undermine workers' control and democratic planning. But most important is that within and beyond the limits of the budgetary finance system, the mechanisms for democratic decision making were not clearly defined by Che. Development of both these systems was limited by his own mental constructs of socialism as a top-down bureaucratic system.

Last, I certainly did not mean to single out Bolshevism for its "antidemocratic" potential. I was only suggesting that a history exists which Che chose to ignore. It is true that specific social and historical circumstances can transform any revolutionary ideology into its opposite just as it is also the case that inherent in the assumptions of social democrats

is an ideology that is both antidemocratic and counterrevolutionary.

Mohawk Struggle

Thank you for the reprint of the *International Viewpoint* article on the Mohawk struggle in Canada.

I am of mixed blood, French Canadian and Native American. I would like to be able to support both in their struggles, but Native Americans have been shoved to the back burner far too long. Too often other groups have got the attention, while Indians are simply used and forgotten. No more.

The Mohawk insurrection—which had much support from all Indian leaders of courage and ordinary Indians almost entirely, both in the U.S. and Canada—proved we will go it alone if we are forced to. It also proved that any group on its own can be crushed by a massive military strike against it. But then, Natives knew that already from history. This holiday season will be the 100th anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre, and little has changed.

Jack Bresee
Santa Fe, NM

Comments on the Market and the Workers' States

In his article, "The Capitalist Market and the Workers' State" (*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 77), Steve Bloom makes a useful contribution to understanding the role of the market in the transition to socialism and the process of "reform" in Eastern Europe and the USSR. In particular, unlike so many on the left, he does not confuse the beginnings of a process, which has contradictory economic and class implications, with its completion. That would require the consolidation and extension of the world market and the international capitalist division of labor into what is now the territory of the USSR and Eastern Europe. A whole series of class battles will have to take place before we can say whether or not the events of 1989-90 initiated a process which culminated in the political revolution and a move toward socialism or in the restoration of capitalism (the triumph of a social counterrevolution).

Bloom's article also does not confuse the "commanding heights" of the economy—heavy industry, large enterprises, basic means of production—with the marginal or secondary spheres—such as small enterprises, private workshops, small peasant production which are accurately referred to as petty commodity production. Nationalizations in a workers' state, on the road toward the transition to socialism, should enhance the power and ability of the workers to run the economy and to raise productivity in order to overcome the inequalities and scarcity created by bourgeois society and the capitalist market economy. The market and market-type mechanisms can be a part of this transition to socialism as long as they are firmly subordinated to democratic workers' planning.

The present crisis and reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are in many ways a continuation of the deterioration resulting from the triumph of Stalinism.

During the 1920s and '30s the challenge was posed of economically developing the young Soviet state, largely cut off from international investment and trade. There were three alternatives presented. One was based on market production—the agrarian-market strategy of Bukharin and the Right Opposition. This called for accumulation based on the self-interest of the rich peasants, or kulaks. Another program, developed by the Workers' Opposition, called for an effort at superindustrialization and nationalization/collectivization. It sought to dispense with market and market mechanisms entirely. Third, there was the program of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, which projected a balanced articulation between plan and market. This was, and still is, the only approach compatible with the transition to socialism.

But Stalin allowed the kulak-led strategy to create advanced pressures for capitalist restoration and a semi-insurrection in the countryside in 1928-29, then, in reaction, embarked on a program of reckless, crash industrialization and forced collectivization. This largely destroyed agriculture, starved the peasantry, and undermined the real potential of the industrial workforce. It was exactly the opposite of the program of Trotsky and the Left Opposition

The most important part of this entire discussion centers on the fact that the market is not the same in all countries, all periods, and all situations. It has different effects and different consequences at different times—and therefore can serve different ends.

For instance, market relations in Nicaragua were used in the context of the Sandinista revolution to try to overcome scarcity and raise production. This served the goals of the revolution by producing necessities for the masses in the form of use values—in an extremely underdeveloped country with a weak capitalist economy and internal market. The capitalist sector was regulated by the state in the interests of the revolution (the capitalists hardly had a free hand, which is why they so strongly desired the overthrow of the Sandinistas) and was combined with a socialized state sector, including the cooperatives. This state of affairs was often presented as a necessary concession to the native bourgeoisie and imperialism in an extremely severe situation of war and international isolation. That is true enough. But, in addition, the Nicaraguan economy was simply too underdeveloped for advanced measures of a socialist nature. Even with all the problems that stemmed from the continuation of a large capitalist market sector, without it the Nicaraguan economy would have collapsed all the more quickly.

In fact, if we take the theory of permanent revolution seriously it implies not only that socialism cannot be built in a single, backward country, but also that the underdeveloped countries have been stopped in the development of internal

capitalist markets. This prevents a rounded bourgeois development in the semicolonial world. It leaves the economy dependent, peripheral, underdeveloped, from the point of view of world capitalism. By the same token, the domestic economies of the advanced countries might be thought of as *overdeveloped*. They are saturated with products and capital cannot find sufficient markets to allow a profit on investment.

Therefore, the market has different effects on the economy of the imperialist, postcapitalist, and underdeveloped countries. The latter two, still being less developed than the imperialist countries, will have to go through a phase which will include a significant recourse of market-type relations—even if under the leadership and control of the working class. The objective conditions for socialism in these countries are still less developed than in the imperialist centers, which have actually begun to eliminate the market in the last 40 to 50 years. It has been replaced by planning, albeit capitalist planning for profit and investment in large enterprises—especially among the transnational firms.

Market relations in the imperialist countries under late capitalism have meant that the internal, overdeveloped, saturated markets lead to a massive restriction of production in order to keep prices high. Large enterprises, multinational firms and cartels, and especially the imperialist governments themselves have all engaged in this kind of planning—through implementing price supports, subsidies, quotas on production, regulation, administered prices and profits, fiscal and monetary controls, tax adjustments, public spending policies, etc. The “free” market only exists between small enterprises and producers. It is completely subordinate to the banks and to big capital.

Thus a revolution in the imperialist countries means that the workers will probably have already taken over the factories and restarted production under workers' control, radically suppressing market relations and production for profit, even before the institutions of the bourgeois state themselves are overthrown. They will have already replaced the capitalist market with production for the needs of the workers, the poor, and the disadvantaged. Socialist planning, workers' power and control, and workers' self-management will start out from a much higher level of development than is possible in a third world revolution. The role of the market is essentially decided by history. It will be far different in the imperialist states than it is in the deformed and degenerated workers' states today or in the underdeveloped countries.

Jeff Brown
New York

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