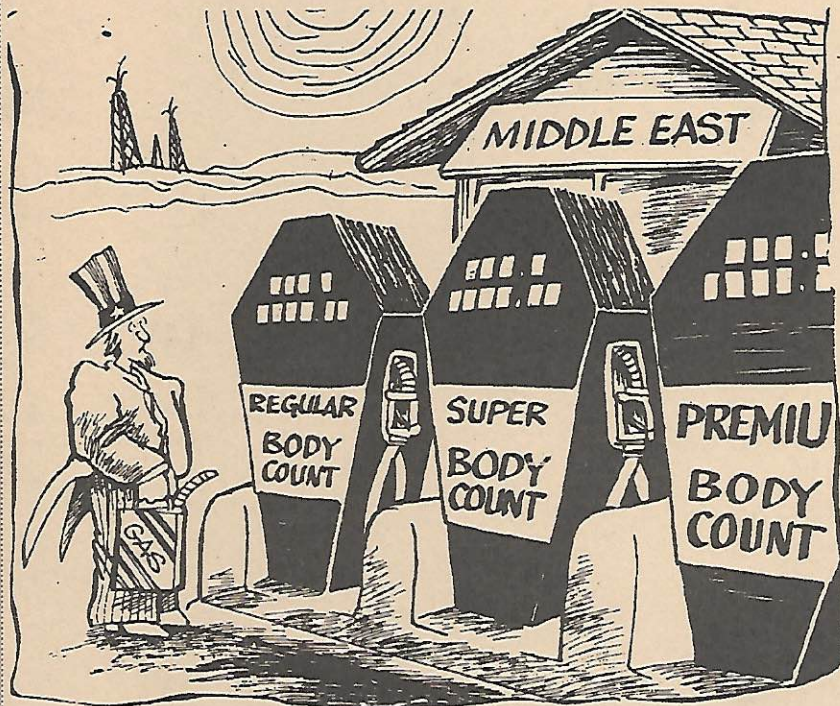


Bring the Troops Home Now! No War for Oil!



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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.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, No. 82, February 1991

Closing date January 6, 1991

Send correspondence and subscriptions to BULLETIN IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009.

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A Brief Introduction to the Fourth Internationalist Tendency

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) is a socialist group dedicated to help create a new kind of society. Instead of production for profit, a socialist society would be democratically organized to fulfill the needs of the majority for food, housing, health care, and other basic human requirements. Capitalist competition—which leads to wars, unemployment, and environmental disasters—would be replaced with social cooperation. This will lay the foundation for ending racism and sexism, discrimination based on nationality or sexual orientation, crime, chemical dependency, and other social problems stimulated by the degeneration of capitalist society.

The FIT has an internationalist approach because history has proven that socialism cannot exist in just one country or one region. Capitalism is an international system and has used its economic and military powers to distort the development of all nations—even those which have taken the first revolutionary steps away from capitalism. Socialism must be won on a global scale in order to expand democracy, achieve scientific and cultural progress, and safeguard individual rights.

The FIT wants to help create a mass revolutionary political party in the U.S. to fight against the present domination by a tiny ruling minority, and to establish a government of and for the overwhelming majority. The revolutionary party will draw on lessons learned from the historic struggles of working people in the U.S. and around the world in order to: promote a program addressing the needs of workers and oppressed groups; present strategies and tactics for struggles against the employing class; and organize efforts to win both immediate battles and long-term goals.

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. war and interventions, student formations, and lesbian and gay 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 to the world organization of revolutionary socialists—the Fourth International.

Learn more about our program, activities, and literature.

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FOR THE IMPERIALIST WAR!



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George Bush Launches War Against Iraq—AMOCO Announces 68.6% Profit Rise!

No War for Big Oil!

George Bush's January 17 assault on Iraq was the culmination of months of propaganda and military buildup. But that fact did not lessen the shock and outrage felt by people all over the world. Once again the U.S. government has plunged into a war for the rich that can accomplish nothing to help the masses of people in either the U.S. or the Middle East.

George Bush is not fighting for "democracy" or for the "liberation of Kuwait" as he cynically claims. What interest did he show in democratic rights for the majority who lived in Kuwait—people who had no rights whatsoever—before the Emir was ousted by Iraqi troops? What interest, for that matter, has Bush shown in democracy or liberation for the Palestinian people who were driven from their land and have been persecuted for decades by the Zionist Israeli government?

All of Bush's talk is a fraud! His real interest lies in maintaining control over the oil wealth of the Arab nations and in reasserting the right of the U.S. to impose its will on other countries. The fact that the United Nations is providing a cover for the present U.S. aggression does not change things one bit. Resolutions of the U.N. now become the excuse for Bush's slaughter—of Arab civilians and of young people in the military on both sides.

Ever since the defeat of U.S. troops in Vietnam the rulers of this country have been looking for ways to regain popular support for the use of overwhelming military superiority to bully smaller and weaker nations. They still need to overcome a tremendous legacy of mistrust. Reagan's invasion of Grenada and bombing of Libya, Bush's use of U.S. troops to oust Manuel Noriega in Panama were all dress rehearsals for the present war.

But the upsurge in antiwar activity shows that Bush's decision to go to war may well backfire. Even before a single shot had been fired demonstrations—some numbering in the tens of thousands—had taken place in cities from coast to coast. The January 11 *New York Times* reported that hundreds of union leaders around the country were coming out against the danger of war—because it would be "fought by the children of blue-collar workers." International unions that have adopted positions against a shooting war include: UE, UAW, IAM, CWA, IUE, NEA, OCAW, ACTWU, SEIU, and ILWU. This provides the basis for a real antiwar campaign within the organized labor movement. There is also significant opposition in the Black community, which is only fitting given the large proportion of Blacks and members of other minorities who have been forced into the "volunteer" army to escape the crisis that faces them in their own communities. The international scope of the imperialist forces arrayed against Iraq has also meant an internationalization of the protest movement—with massive actions in many European countries.

We must now redouble our effort to organize against Bush's war! Above all we must have a united antiwar movement in the U.S., one with room for everyone, no matter what their political philosophy or beliefs, who is willing to march to *Bring the Troops Home Now!* Only that kind of movement—based on democratic participation by all, dedicated to building the biggest and broadest possible united demonstrations against the war—can create any real hope of forcing a change in Bush's criminal policies.

U.S. Out of the Middle East—Now!

No War! No Sanctions!

No U.N. or Any Other Foreign Intervention!

Self-Determination for the Arab People!

Let George Bush Show His Commitment to Freedom and Human Rights at Home! Sign the civil rights bill! Cut the Pentagon budget in order to fund schools, health care, AIDS research, and other vitally needed social services! Fight against racism, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, environmental and urban decay in the U.S.—not against Iraq!

The entire Congress—Democrats and Republicans alike—jumped immediately onto Bush's prowar bandwagon. Their only dispute had been over when and how to wage this war. Antiwar activists should pay attention to and encourage elements in the unions and in the National Organization for Women who are once again raising the idea of a new political party in this country. We need such a party—a labor party based on the unions—which could truly represent working people and wage a fight against war.

For further information contact the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (see address above) or subscribe to our magazine, the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* (see subscription blank on reverse side). (Over)

Building a Movement Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East

by James Lafferty

James Lafferty is the regional coordinator of the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean, former executive secretary of the National Lawyers Guild, and currently a member of the January 26 organizing committee of the Campaign for Peace in the Middle East. The following remarks were made at a citywide student teach-in at Columbia University organized by the New York City coalition Students Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East on December 8, 1990.

During a trip to Hanoi in 1971, then Premier Pham Van Dong told me that one reason he was so confident the Vietnamese would win their war with the U.S. was that "Americans have no sense of history." He meant, among other things, that Americans tend to forget the *lessons* of history. So, as we seek today to build a movement against U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf, we would do well to remember the lessons of the movement to end U.S. intervention in Vietnam. After all, although that movement made some mistakes, it did succeed! Indeed, it was the first successful movement against a U.S. war in progress in the history of this nation. We must never forget this fact or fail to apply the lessons of that movement as we go about building a movement against U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf. Let me explore some of the lessons from the anti-Vietnam war movement and their applicability to our movement today.

The first thing we must do is agree on the kind of antiwar movement we want to build. I believe that we should adopt a strategy of building a *mass-based, popular movement* against the war in the Persian Gulf.

It was the work of just such a mass-based popular movement, along with the victories of the Vietnamese on the battlefield, that brought us victory during the Vietnam war. No cadre of leftists, no small group of activists, can—by themselves—force the powerful U.S. military machine to withdraw from one of its imperialist wars. Only a popular movement that is rooted in every corner and every constituency of this nation can do that.

In order to build a mass-based popular movement, we must put forward political demands and utilize political tactics that will bring people into our movement and that hold the promise of forcing the government to end the war. There are only a handful of tactics that can be employed in any "peace movement." There is civil disobedience (C.D.); there is electoral politics and lobbying; and there is the organizing of massive, peaceful, and legal protest in the streets in opposition to the war. Which of these, or which combination of these, is best suited to our purpose?

I believe the history of the movement against the war in Vietnam (as well as the more recent history of the movement against the war in Central America) demonstrates that mass actions in the street are, more than any other tactic, best suited to building the broad-based popular movement we must have

if we are to be powerful enough to force an end to U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf.

Since it is not my purpose to disparage any honest effort, through whatever tactics, to end this intervention, I will say little about the tactic of C.D. or of electoral political work. Those who favor these tactics are dedicated activists and their efforts—though not in my opinion spent in the most effective way—enjoy my respect.

But consider how ineffective C.D. is in building a mass-based popular movement against the war. C.D. actions generally involve relatively small numbers of people. The fact is that the great majority of people in this country are reluctant to take *any* actions in opposition to their government during a time of war, let alone actions which will result in their arrest and conviction for crimes! This is especially true for key constituencies such as labor, in particular, and for the so-called "average American," in general.

Furthermore small C.D. actions, while perhaps drawing some attention to the issue—especially in the early stages of a

As we go to press:

- **George Bush is preparing for war.**
- **The movement against the war is organizing to demonstrate in Washington D.C. and San Francisco—January 19 and 26.**
- **Local actions against Bush's policies are reported daily in the press, on TV and radio.**

Watch the next issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* for further coverage of these breaking developments.

movement—do not pose any real threat to the power structure that is waging the war. To understand this point, ask yourself this question: If you were the president of the U.S., or the secretary of defense, which of the two following headlines would you most *not* want to see in your morning paper: “One Thousand Chain Themselves to Federal Building Door,” or “One Hundred Thousand March on D.C. Demanding an End to the War”?

Electoral politics and lobbying is a somewhat more complicated matter. Certainly, although interest in elections has fallen off in recent times, vast numbers of people in this country do still vote; do still harbor the illusion that their vote matters. But consider this fact: between July of 1966 and July of 1973, there were 113 votes in the U.S. Congress on the Vietnam war and appropriations for that war. Of these votes, only *one* in 1969 (to bar U.S. troops from entering Cambodia and Laos) went against the administration! However during that same time frame there were countless efforts to elect so-called “doves” to Congress and even more efforts to lobby Democrats and Republicans alike to end the war. These lobbying and “electoral efforts” simply didn’t pay off. And this was true despite the fact that, at least by 1969, the majority of people in this country were opposed to the war. In light of this history, is it not fair to question the efficacy of the partisan political approach to ending U.S. wars of intervention?

Advocates of the partisan political approach fail to realize that when the U.S. is at war, most candidates and officeholders will honor the wishes of the antiwar majority only when *forced* to do so by *organized mass pressure*. In this regard, it is important to remember that the war in Vietnam ended under presidents Nixon and Ford—hardly “men of peace”! It was the massive popular movement against the war, and the victories of the Vietnamese, that forced these men to end the war. In short, we learned during Vietnam, and must not forget today, that the most important question for our movement to ask itself is not who is sitting in the White House or in Congress, but who is marching in the streets of the land.

But the question remains, are mass marches and rallies really effective vehicles for pressuring the government to end a war of intervention? To answer this central question, imagine if you will the impact of a mass demonstration such as occurred during the Vietnam war, on April 24, 1971, in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. On that one day approximately 1,000,000 people in the United States marched in the streets of these two cities demanding “Out Now!” That means that nearly one out of every 200 U.S. citizens were in the streets that day in opposition to the war. And portions of this demonstration were carried live by all three major TV networks to the rest of the country. This mobilization was comprised of people from every walk of life and from every area of the nation. The effect was that of a nationwide “town hall meeting” where the people were voting with their feet!

Imagine how such a massive demonstration undermined the ability of the government to wage the war in Vietnam. Imagine, for example, that you were a young man of draft age who had just gotten your draft notice, or a soldier on the ground in Vietnam who had just been ordered to “take that hill!” And then you hear about this huge demonstration of a million of your fellow citizens marching to protest the very war you are being asked to fight and maybe die in. Are you now going to

be willing to make the sacrifices a soldier is asked to make on behalf of that war?

I believe that it is beyond dispute that such massive demonstrations of opposition to the war had both long-range and immediate effects on the policymakers. The Pentagon papers disclose that when President Johnson’s advisers were urging him to bomb the dikes in Vietnam, he called his advisers together and said: “I have one more question for your computers. If I do as you suggest, how long will it take 500,000 Americans to scale the White House fence and lynch me for having done as you advise?” And Johnson did *not* order the bombing of the dikes!

Even President Nixon who used to brag that he watched football games when the demonstrators came to Washington admits in his memoirs that it was precisely these massive demonstrations that stayed his hand. Nixon said he had a “secret plan” to end the Vietnam war. It turned out his plan was to issue an ultimatum to the Vietnamese to capitulate by November 1, 1969, and if they did not he would then use nuclear weapons to, in the words of then General Curtis LeMay, “bomb them back into the Dark Ages.” But in his memoirs Nixon says of his plan:

Two weeks before the ultimatum deadline a half million antiwar protesters filled the streets of Washington, D.C., and similar demonstrations were planned for the following month. *The very people who said they were against the war prevented me from carrying out my plan to end the war.* (Emphasis in original.)

Or consider this quote by Jeb Magruder, from his 1974 book entitled, *American Life*:

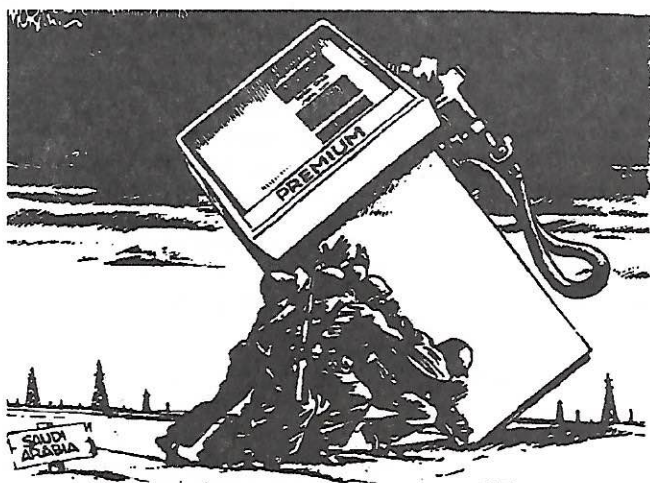
The president’s memos (urging action against the antiwar protesters) had been inspired by the fact that two great antiwar demonstrations were approaching: the National Moratorium on October 15th and the rally at the Washington Monument on November 15th. *We all felt threatened, put on the defensive, by these two well-organized, well-publicized demonstrations.* (Emphasis added.)

In short, the strategy of organizing public opposition to the war into a massive popular movement against the war via mass marches and rallies on behalf of this popular movement did stay the hand of the policymakers and—more than any other strategy—did eventually force these policymakers to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam. And there is no reason why such a strategy could not work again today as we seek to build a movement against U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf!

Now having discussed strategy and tactics, we need to consider how we organize the movement itself.

First, our movement must be organized in a way which reflects its need to set down roots in every corner and in every constituency of the land. That is, we need local coalitions and campus committees working in every part of the country. Last fall’s October 20th demonstrations were successful because they happened not only in New York City, but in over two dozen cities across the land, and in several foreign countries as well. Thus although most of those demonstrations were relatively small, the cumulative effect was very powerful. And its message was not lost on the war makers in Washington. In November of last year the *New York Times*, on its front page, acknowledged that one of the main factors staying Bush’s hand was the growing antiwar movement in this country!

Second, we must strive to build a *united movement* against the war. History has clearly shown that when we are united our actions are larger and far more effective than when we are divided. The actions against the U.S. war in the Middle East this January were called by a divided movement. Can anyone doubt that those actions would have been larger and more powerful if our movement could have agreed on one date for *united* actions? To avoid repetition of the January 1991 scenario we need to involve the entire movement—and not just the leadership—in the process that sets dates for national actions. The best way to do this is for the movement to hold



conferences at which all activists can debate and vote on the future direction for the movement to take.

Third, and most important, all of our organizational structures must be completely democratic. That is, all who are in this movement must have voice and vote in all of the key decisions regarding the actions to be taken by this movement. You can't expect people and groups to pass out leaflets for a march if they haven't been given the right and opportunity to decide what those leaflets will say! Democracy is often time consuming. But there is no substitute for a democratically organized and run movement. As suggested above the best way to insure that this kind of participatory democracy prevails is to hold periodic conferences of the entire movement where all can exercise their voice and vote in deciding the direction our movement will take.

Fourth, our movement must be nonexclusionary. That is, all must be welcome to join no matter what other organizational or political affiliations they may have. The movement to end the war in Vietnam was slowed at times because of red-baiting, or group-baiting. Membership in this movement must depend only upon adherence to the political demands of the movement.

Finally, if we are to build a mass-based popular movement that can force the U.S. government to get out of the Persian Gulf, we must organize it around the correct political demands. In this regard I was pleased to see that both national coalitions built their January 1991 actions around the "Out Now" demand as opposed to a "negotiate" demand. After all, since the conflict in the Persian Gulf is a conflict among Arab nations, what right does the United States have to intervene in that conflict? And

if the U.S. has no right to intervene it has no right to demand that there be negotiations or conditions imposed before it will cease its unwarranted intervention. In short, if we really do believe in the principle of self-determination, how can we demand anything less than an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the gulf?

Speaking of demands, I believe it is wrong for the U.S. anti-intervention movement to condemn the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. First, whatever one may think of the propriety of settling border disputes with force, Iraq's claim to Kuwait is at least as good as that of Kuwait's royal family!

Second, the fact that most Americans condemn the Iraqi invasion is certainly no reason why our movement should. After all, most Americans condemned the National Liberation Front in Vietnam, Noriega in Panama, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Should the U.S. peace movement have joined in those condemnations too? Or should they have done what they did instead—put the onus where it belonged, on the U.S. intervention which was the real cause of the wars that wreaked havoc on those nations?

The plain fact is that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a matter for Arab states in the region to resolve. Our only job as citizens of these United States is to steadfastly condemn the U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf, which is the real reason the world is now on the brink of a devastating war in that part of the world. If we condemn Iraq we only play into the hands of the Bush administration who must convince the U.S. people that Hussein is "Hitler" and that therefore whatever the U.S. does in the gulf is justifiable.

Our movement should also demand an end to the U.S.-sponsored sanctions against Iraq. We must explain to our sisters and brothers in this movement, and to the American people, who support sanctions as an alternative to war that the sanctions are themselves an act of war. If it is not right for the U.S. to intervene with bombs and bullets, it is not right to intervene with economic sanctions that are slowly bleeding innocent Iraqi citizens to death. After all, Iraq has not undertaken one single act of aggression against the people of this nation. By what right do we wage war on the people of Iraq through sanctions? The fact that sanctions may be "popular" with large numbers of Americans only makes our task harder not less necessary. Our job is to be clear and persuasive in our condemnation of these sanctions.

Finally, if our movement will remember the lessons of the movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam; if we will put aside sectarian interests; if we will build our movement along democratic lines; and if we will tell the truth to the people of this nation, we can do today what we did during Vietnam: build a massive popular movement that can finally force the war makers to end their unwarranted intervention in the Persian Gulf. In this regard we would do well to remember the closing words of Fred Halstead in his book, *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War*: "The antiwar movement started with nothing but leaflets. But it proved that people can think for themselves if the issue touches them deeply enough, technology notwithstanding. In human affairs there is still nothing so powerful as an idea and a movement whose time has come." □

The following text appeared as an advertisement in the December 26 issue of the Guardian newspaper. It was signed by 36 individuals from anti-intervention coalitions, unions, camps, and other groups in 9 cities.

An Open Letter to the Movement Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East:

We Need Unity in the Fight Against War

December 17, 1990

Since late November and early December the movement against U.S. intervention in the Mideast has been confronted with a serious division in our ranks. Two dates are being presented for marches in Washington D.C. and San Francisco—January 19 and January 26—by two different national coalitions. Their political slogans are virtually identical.

This is a tragic and unnecessary development. At a time when the world is on the verge of war—a war that could kill or maim hundreds of thousands of Arab women, children, and men, plus thousands of military personnel on both sides—the movement in the U.S. ought to be able to put on a united demonstration of opposition, one that would bring out the largest possible numbers.

It is not our purpose to try to establish blame for what has happened. We believe that serious mistakes were made by leaderships on both sides. As far as most activists are concerned, the reasons for the division do not seem terribly important. Unity is all that counts.

Unity would have been served in the present case if either of the two national leaderships had made a concession to the other on the date for a national march. Both had the opportunity but neither saw fit to do so.

Given this reality we now believe that activists should, to the extent that this is possible, support both actions. We know that most individuals and groups will have to focus their energies on one or the other. But in doing so we should all recognize that the best interests of the movement as a whole will be served if both January 19 and January 26 bring massive outpourings of Americans to Washington to demand that our government bring the troops home. Those building January 19 should see January 26 as a follow-up to their date; those working on January 26 should see January 19 as a building action.

We ask that both of the national coalitions recognize this need for cooperation by supporting the activities of each other, that they see both dates contributing to a broad, collective anti-intervention movement. This will not be as good as a united march, but at least it will minimize the damage done by our disunity.

The movement needs the talents, organizational skills, and political constituencies represented by both coalitions. What is even more urgently needed is for activists to insist, for the future, that decisions concerning dates for actions and the demands of those actions be made at open and democratic conferences of the entire movement at which all who attend have voice and vote. It is essential that all of us dedicate ourselves to the broadest coalition-building effort, based on a commitment to democratic decision making.

Above all, everyone has to recognize that calling for unity is not enough, we must also act for unity. And acting for unity means not just setting our own date and then inviting others to come along, but a willingness to compromise on such secondary questions so that we can join together on the fundamentals.

Bring the Troops Home Now!

For Unity in the Movement!

Eyewitness to the Haitian Elections

It was an election many predicted wouldn't happen. After the entry of radical priest Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide as presidential candidate, the most commonly expected and the most feared outcome was a rerun of the election day massacre of November 29, 1987. But the unexpected reality of a peaceful election in Haiti is confronting revolutionaries in that country with an immensely complex situation.

Electoral politics has been generally scorned by the Haitian left in the past, even by Haiti's new president-elect—Father Aristide himself. It was seen as nothing more than an invitation to repression. The new reality, however, has thrust the question of the class nature of Aristide's movement "The Lavalas" (Haitian Creole for "Tidal Wave") to the forefront, requiring a careful theoretical examination. Also necessary is a general understanding, in this context, on the question of an electoral road to socialism in the third world.

I traveled to Haiti four days before the December 16th election and I left on December 20th. What follows is an account of my experiences, and some general conclusions about the prospects for revolutionary change.

Some Background

When I arrived in Port-au-Prince memories of the November 29, 1987, election day bloodbath were on everyone's mind. It didn't look good this time either. Roger Lafontant, the leader of the paramilitary Tonton Macoutes, threatened Aristide publicly by declaring he would not allow Aristide to run the country. To make matters worse, on December 5, 1990, a bomb was thrown into a rally of Aristide supporters in Port-au-Prince as men in a jeep fired into the terrified crowd. Seven died and 52 lay wounded.

This time, however, the elections were getting more international attention and it was the hope of many that the approximately 1,400 foreign observers, more than in 1987, would serve to dis-

suaude the Macoutes and the army from violent attacks on election day.

Participating as international observers were 812 from the U.S., including former president Jimmy Carter; 430 from the United Nations; and about 200 from the Organization of American States (OAS). About 40 of the U.S. participants, including me, were from the Washington Office on Haiti (WOH), an independent human rights organization. Most of those from WOH were church figures, but there was a sprinkling of "secular" activists like myself.

The major player in Haiti, U.S. imperialism, was behaving more cautiously this time after being stung by international criticism in 1987 following the election debacle that left 34 dead and scores wounded. In early 1986, Washington rushed economic and military aid to the first post-Duvalier military regime over the objections of numerous human rights organizations. It was this new regime, handpicked by the departing dictator, Jean-Claude

"Baby Doc" Duvalier, which the Reagan administration touted as Haiti's best hope for democracy. Yet it was precisely the Haitian army which looked the other way and sometimes assisted the paramilitary Tonton Macoutes as they gunned down innocent voters.

This time Washington sent Vice President Dan Quayle to warn army officers. He was quoted as telling them: "My message is no coups, no murders, no threats, free and fair elections. . . ." To underscore its support for the vote, the Bush administration contributed about one quarter of the approximately \$10 million in election expenses (smaller contributions came from the UN and OAS).

It is important to note, however, that Washington's interest in the election also coincided with a distinct downturn in the mass movements. Haiti's largest trade union movement, the Haitian Autonomous Workers Union (CATH), led by individuals who call themselves revolutionaries, split in half last fall over disputes that

The Aristide Victory and Prospects for Revolutionary Change in Haiti

by Marty Goodman

We have extended the normal news deadline for the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism a few days in order to bring you this report on the January 6 coup attempt in Haiti and its aftermath:

Coup Attempt in Haiti Ignites Anti-Macoute Rebellion

Popular outrage over a failed coup attempt January 6 by Roger Lafontant, head of the Tonton Macoutes, has resulted in the largest anti-Macoute mobilizations ever seen. Called in Haitian Creole "*dechoukaj*" or "uprooting," outpourings of rage spread to every corner of the nation exceeding in scope the *dechoukaj* that followed the departure of "Baby Doc" Duvalier, Feb. 7, 1987.

The Lafontant coup began at 10:30 p.m. He was ousted the following morning at 10 a.m. by troops under the command of General Hérard Abraham, who pledged to

uphold the constitution. After a 15-minute exchange of gunfire Abraham arrested Lafontant and about 24 others and freed Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, president of Haiti's caretaker government. Lafontant was last reported being held in the National Penitentiary.

After learning of the coup the people set upon the Macoutes and although the coup is over the *dechoukaj* is not. Details are sketchy but the Washington Office on Haiti, a human rights group, estimates that as of January 9 some 100 to 200 persons, mainly members

and supporters of the Macoutes, have died in the turmoil.

In a live WBAI (NY) radio interview with Port-au-Prince the day after the coup, Ben Dupuy, director of the leftist Haitian weekly, *Haiti Progress*, reported seeing angry crowds pouring into the streets by about 3 a.m. Dupuy, who monitored police communications, reported, "Police could not move, barricades were set up everywhere,

(Continued on page 9)

centered on personalities as much as on political programs. Haiti's peasant organizations continued to squabble with each other while the largest organization, the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP), faced internal turmoil.

The wild card in the election turned out to be, much to the consternation of imperialism, Father Aristide—a proponent of liberation theology with a vast following amongst the poor. Aristide's decision to run took almost everyone by surprise. Although rumors of his candidacy were circulating for some time he had urged a boycott of the election up until only three days before the filing date expired. Aristide's candidacy was especially surprising because his election boycott position had been a lightning rod for many Haitians in 1987.

Even though he ran on a bourgeois party slate, the National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD), Washington is uncomfortable with Aristide's anti-imperialist speeches of the past, his open admiration of Cuba, and his vast support among the poor. As a ranking U.S. official put it, Aristide is not "our cup of tea."

Aristide's decision to enter the race must also be seen within the context of an ebb in mass struggles. A political vacuum existed in Haiti due to the inability of any elements in the worker and peasant movements to unify and provide leadership. Aristide attempted to break this impasse on his own.

Orientation in Port-au-Prince

Shortly after I arrived in Port-au-Prince, the Washington Office delegation was given an orientation session that began with an outline of the political situation and ended with a discussion on the potential for vote fraud. We were told that each BIV, or polling station, had a registration list, usually about 250, from which the name of each voter must be found in order to prevent multiple voting. Other safeguards included: observers from the political parties; at least one "security" official, usually a soldier we later discovered; and seals placed on the ballot boxes after counting. What alarmed some of us was that in many of the 13,000 BIVs throughout the country, the "Chef de Section" or local chief of police (read Macoute) would be responsible, along with BIV

officials, for transporting the counted ballots to a central election headquarters to be recounted.

Later we had a "debriefing" by Bob Holley, chief of the Political Section of the U.S. Embassy. He represented a stark contrast with previous U.S. diplomats—such as former ambassador Brunson McKinley, whose racist condescension was legendary. Holley, like his boss, the new U.S. ambassador Alvin Adams, calmly spouted buzzwords like support for the "democratic process," "noninterference," "economic development," etc.—the '90s newspeak of international politics.

This was more than I could bear. Memories flashed through my mind: decades of U.S. support to the Duvaliers; military and economic aid to post-Duvalier military juntas whose human rights abuses were legion; and an unsuccessful bid by the Bush administration last year to get Congress to OK an aid package which included \$1.2 million in military assistance earmarked for training, jeeps, spare parts, communications, etc. (See The National Coalition for Haitian Refugees Report, "In the Army's Hands," Dec. 9, 1990.)

My most vivid memory however was the embassy's stated policy of "strict noninterference" in the February 7, 1986, ousting of "Baby Doc" Duvalier. In reality, the U.S. orchestrated his departure, not only by providing the dictator with a C-130 transport plane direct to Francois Mitterrand's Socialist paradise, but by paving the way toward a bloody military dictatorship.

Losing all composure, when my hand was recognized I launched into an emotional tirade, attacking Washington for its 10-year war against Nicaragua as an example of "noninterference." Holley seemed astonished that someone was actually thinking about his baloney. A few moments after my comments I walked out in protest.

Apparently, this "new breed" of imperialist, like the new ambassador, has adopted a slicker, more sophisticated approach. But make no mistake, the selection of Alvin Adams means that Washington is giving Haiti more serious attention to avoid a repeat of the policy disaster of '87. Before coming to Haiti Adams was a special assistant to the U.S. ambassador in Saigon (1969-70); a special assistant to the U.S. secretary of state (1974-76); and

Liberation Theology

The Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a former member of the Salesian order of the Roman Catholic Church, is perhaps Haiti's leading advocate of the phenomenon known as liberation theology. Emerging in the late 1960s and early 70s, liberation theology has become the most contested and controversial theological movement of the century. While the far right recognized early on the dangers posed by the development of this new theology, many on the left have been slow in recognizing its import in the struggle for Latin American liberation and socialist democracy.

Although originating in Latin America, the movement that has given rise to liberation theology—the ecclesial base community movement—has become widespread in many parts of the semi-colonialized and developing world. These communities of Christian activists or-

ganize themselves at the local level to fight for basic systemic change ranging from social services and housing to land reform, democracy, human rights, and the struggle for a just socio-economic order. Liberation theology is meant to guide, criticize, and clarify the thinking and action of churches and communities involved in such struggles. It is the contention of the theologians associated with the movement that the first task of committed Christians is to involve themselves in the struggle for justice at all levels; theology is a second order activity of reflection upon that struggle. It is in this sense that liberation theology is most frequently defined by its proponents as "critical reflection upon praxis." For the theologians of liberation all Christian faith must be rethought from the perspective of the struggling poor and oppressed. Many liberation theologians make no bones

about the fact that Marxism is an integral component to the emerging awareness and analysis of socio-economic structures which perpetuate poverty and injustice throughout the developing world. Consequently, most project a socialist society organized around the needs and interests of the poor and oppressed to replace the presently constituted capitalist societies of Central and Latin America. Inasmuch as most liberation theologians also concur that what is finally important is not theology as such but *liberation*, it is a strong likelihood that they and the base communities will remain significant (and in some cases even decisive) in the struggle for Latin American liberation. □

—R. L. Huebner

deputy coordinator of the Anti-Terrorism Unit under Reagan and Bush (1987-89).

Off to the Northwest and Port de Paix

The day after our initial briefing, WOH observer teams headed for eight cities throughout Haiti. Our team was assigned to the northwestern town of Port de Paix. When I told Haitians in New York that Port de Paix was my destination they groaned. Port de Paix, like most of the northwest, is considered politically backward and a stronghold of Macoute reaction (the term Macoute refers not only to the Tonton Macoutes specifically, but also to those who embody their mentality, such as the army, the police, the big landlords, corrupt politicians, etc.).

After a six-hour drive on Haiti's decrepit, neglected roads we settled that evening into the home, much to my surprise, of the northwest correspondent for the Voice of America (VOA) who was also a reporter for Radio Soleil, operated by the Catholic church. The correspondent was quite open about receiving his checks of \$43 per story straight from the U.S. Embassy. I asked him if there were any favorite candidates at the VOA, since it was an open secret that the U.S. wished to see Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official, win the election. He said no, but he personally supported Aristide. "Why?" I asked. "Aristide will bring more jobs and foreign aid to Haiti." This was a common theme I was to hear many times by Aristide supporters, which reflected not only the political backwardness of the region but also the real lack of definition Aristide has given his movement.

On Saturday morning, one day before the election, we set out to visit voting locations. We spent the morning speaking with BIV officials in Port de Paix, then ventured east to stop in tiny mountain villages all the way to the town of St. Louis du Nord.

Walking around Port de Paix and the other towns we visited, we saw political graffiti everywhere. Most common was, "Long live Aristide!" but often we saw slogans for the pro-U.S. Marc Bazin and even far-rightist ones like "Aristide is a Communist" and "Down with the Communists." Far-leftist graffiti like "Down with the Elections" and "Down with the Capitalists" were visible too, but more rarely than the others.

When we spoke with BIV presidents, we were told that for the most part they had the materials needed for voting. Where materials were still missing they seemed confident that they would be received later that day. Much to my surprise, BIV officials told us they had received no threats of any kind. Security arrangements were often not clear and the concern was that even if one soldier or policeman were provided it might prove inadequate against a death squad armed with the Macoute weapon of choice—the Israeli Uzi submachine gun. But the only violence I heard about was one drunken soldier in a small northwestern town who fired his gun into the air Friday night, shouting there would be no election. He was quickly arrested.

One question we posed to election officials was whether voters, who are 90 percent illiterate, received proper instructions on how to vote. There was a mixed answer to this. In one town, a foreign missionary showed us an auditorium full of Haitians watching a videotape on how to vote. The video was being shown all day giving everyone a chance to see it. This turned out to be an exceptional case, however. In one town officials claimed no one, including the officials themselves, knew what to do on election day. But in general, when election day came, most voters we saw seemed able to handle the procedure, even if they requested the help of a BIV official.

In the last town we visited Saturday, St. Louis du Nord, we decided to drop in on an Aristide campaign headquarters to find out what they expected from their candidate. Inside, the crowd of about thirty was all male except for a single young woman—not unusual for political gatherings in Haiti. They were supporting

Aristide because he'll change the "bad social conditions"; "injustice"; "the lack of human rights"; the "insecurity [i.e., arbitrary arrests and armed robbery]"; "provide jobs"; "build and repair roads"; and "he'll make the rich pay taxes," they said.

They sounded the common theme that with Aristide as president foreign companies, particularly North American, will see a more stable Haiti, establish factories, and provide jobs. They put special emphasis on new jobs because, we were told, St. Louis du Nord was the number one point of departure for boat people leaving Haiti. When I asked how Aristide would satisfy their needs the spokesman said, "He didn't say how he would do these things. Aristide has no program. Others promise all kinds of things, Aristide does not. That's why we're for him. People will vote for him because they love him." I asked, "Is Aristide a socialist?" "No!" they protested, "he's a 100 percent capitalist!"

In the past Aristide has made anticapitalist speeches, but in this somewhat isolated town that part of Aristide's message may not have gotten through. At the same time, it was another indication of his programmatic vagueness.

Election Day

Vague or not, Aristide was the people's choice on election day. Polling stations we visited, both in Port de Paix and in remote mountain villages, were functioning smoothly for the most part. Party observers were at all the polling stations we saw and voting secrecy was usually observed. Army personnel were generally posted outside the BIVs in Port de Paix, and in the remote areas we mostly saw a local cop and/or Macoute. But they didn't seem to affect voting patterns.

We did see irregularities however. A Macoute in a small mountain-top village accused BIV officials of stacking the election for Aristide. Later, a senatorial candidate for a bourgeois party arrived with two Macoutes and accused one official of selling votes for Aristide. After threats of arrest the three departed.

In one city, Hinche, as we later learned from another WOH team, pressure was put on voters to cast their ballots for Marc Bazin. But after UN observers lodged a complaint this ceased, at least while the observers were present. Still later we learned that the vote had to be rescheduled in Hinche due to irregularities. We also witnessed, in one village, a BIV official instructing two seemingly illiterate women to vote for Bazin. All we could do was mention this to the BIV president and an Aristide observer before we left.

It is likely that such intimidation in rural areas was more widespread than has been acknowledged, simply because local authorities can more easily pressure the local population. With 13,000 BIVs spread throughout Haiti it is not possible that 1,400 observers could oversee all of the process. Even so, with observers from the participating parties present it was more difficult for any fraud to be decisive.

From the information I received, the worst abuses occurred in the town of Labadie. One man, whom I met after the election, was connected with the Youth Movement of Labadie (MJL), an organization which has suffered severe repression in the past. He claimed that eight Aristide supporters in his organization were harassed and detained. Three days after the election they were still in jail.

But the bottom line is that most voters wanted Aristide and the FNCD and that's what they got. (Totals in the races for the Senate, the deputies—which corresponds to the U.S. Congress—and magistrate have not been counted as of this writing, but it is assumed that the FNCD took the majority of races it entered.) The 66.7 percent vote for Aristide seemed to roughly tally with the prevailing sentiment throughout Haiti. Aristide's most serious opponent, Marc Bazin, who ran on the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress (ANDP) slate, received only 15 percent

of the vote. All of the nine other presidential candidates received less than 10 percent.

I monitored two counts for president, one for deputy, and one for magistrate. The number of registered voters was announced and the total ballots cast in each race was counted. Then the BIV officials, party observers, UN observers, and myself counted the votes—illuminated by one light bulb and a flashlight—as each ballot was displayed and the name of the candidate selected read aloud. For the most part my totals agreed with or came close to the tally of the BIV officials. The last step was to seal the ballot boxes and then—in the presence of party observers, BIV officials, and a soldier—to transport the boxes to a substation of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), the nongovernmental organization coordinating the election nationally, for recounting.

What Does Aristide Want?

The program released by “Operation Lavalas” is a document 111 pages in length. The theme, says Aristide, is, “Justice, Participation, Transparency.” I will outline some of the highlights of its three sections.

1. Participation/Organization: The Aristide regime will “. . . favor the emergence of authentic popular organizations.” It calls for a “national decision” to be made on most issues, in consultation with all the sectors of the population.

On human rights and punishment for past abuses the program calls for a “national reconciliation based on justice” which means some Macoutes and some army personnel may be brought into court. It also calls for revamping the judicial process by training honest judges as a way of reversing past human rights abuses. Importantly, it calls for a reorganization of the police force, but not the army! (It is worth noting here that in the past Aristide supported public tribunals to try the Macoutes and other human rights violators rather than trusting Haiti’s incredibly corrupt judicial system. They were to be organized by the people’s movements, said Aristide.)

For the implementation of these goals the government will seek the participation of “the peasants, women, youth, and the workers.” A politically progressive list of gains for these sectors is presented: For women, discriminatory legal barriers are to be removed; a childcare system begun; and a new “family code” instituted. Workers will be given the right to organize. Also, the program offers a vague call for workers to participate “in the distribution of the wealth they produce.”

2. The Economy: For the industrial sector there is a plan for the intensification of production and investment by the largely U.S.-owned assembly industry. It states the assembly industry showed “remarkable dynamism in the ’70s” and is today a “principal generator of wealth and jobs.” The program of the new government, while calling for more “dignified” conditions of life for workers and “reasonable margins of profit,” insists Haiti must “arrive at lower costs of production and transportation in order to guarantee the competitiveness of our country vis-à-vis the Caribbean and Central America.” To realize this goal (of the U.S. bosses) an Aristide government shall, with “. . . the owners in agreement with the state and the workers’ organizations, redefine the conditions of political reality to expand the assembly industry.” Just after the elections, an executive committee member of CATH, one of Haiti’s two main trade unions, said that, at least in the near future, he would not press for a raise in Haiti’s minimum wage of \$3 a day out of trust and support for Aristide.

In the rural areas, where three quarters of the population live, a principal goal is the redistribution of state lands (mainly of poor quality) to peasants. No statistics on the amount of these lands is offered. However, much of the good land in this category has been, over the years, owned *de facto* by Macoutes and big landlords. These lands, where they are developed at all, are usually tilled by

peasants under feudal conditions. There is an offer for such landowners to sell their lands to the peasants through a government incentive plan. There are no references in the program to expropriating lands for the use of the peasantry, an urgent need in impoverished Haiti. However, the plan does call for an end to rural corruption and abuses by the illegal taxation of the peasant. Lastly, it calls for the creation of a national credit bank for peasants with the intention of easing the dependence on rural usurers.

On a government to government level, international aid from the U.S. and other countries is seen as a major source of income and investment. An added source of revenue will be a “progressive tax” and the elimination of fraud by “the powerful.”

3. The Politics of Our Human Resources: A major literacy campaign for the reading and writing of Haitian Creole is to be launched, citing Cuba and Nicaragua as examples. Concurrent with this will be the issuing of official documents in Creole and, very importantly, the issuing of land titles in that language.

Haiti’s environmental crisis is to be addressed with a “national crusade for reforestation” to reverse the deadly erosion that has destroyed much of the Haitian countryside.

Particularly interesting in Aristide’s economic plan is its call for some diversification in exports to the U.S., combined with an apparent reinforcement of the economic dependence Haiti has on the world market in general and the U.S. in particular.

Between 1981-82 an “export-led” development model was formulated for heavily indebted Haiti by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank. The USAID said in 1984 that the implementation of their plan was “an historic change toward deeper market interdependence with the United States.”

Key to that “interdependence” is the expansion of the assembly industry, mainly owned by U.S. companies who usually pay below the Haitian minimum wage of \$3 a day and are notorious union busters. In 1984 the *New York Times* labeled Haiti “the low wage capital of the world.”

This plan for an “export-led” economy also envisions the development of an agro-industrial export industry geared to the needs of foreign markets rather than the nutritional needs of the Haitian people, as had been mainly true in the past. The USAID proposed the “gradual but systematic removal” of domestic crops from 30 percent of all tilled land. This will cause “massive” rural displacement and “a decline in income and nutritional status” (USAID 1972).

It is difficult to say how much of the limited program of “The Lavalas” will be enacted. At the time of writing Aristide has already accepted the presidency. But, in the Senate and House, many races are to be settled in a special run-off election scheduled for January 20, 1991, due partly to irregularities but mainly because many candidates failed to get the 50 percent needed to win. Even so, Aristide’s FNCD, although it appears to be the largest single party in the Senate and House, will have at best only about 50 of the 110 seats since it contested less than half of the races. However, by Haitian law, Aristide and the presidents of the Congress and Senate will select the prime minister. Here a compromise from the “traditional” politicians seems to be in the cards. Given the necessity of compromise, if Aristide continues to play the parliamentary game, and as the middle-class, left to center political composition of the FNCD reveals itself for what it is, even Aristide’s liberal program may be significantly watered down.

‘Operation Lavalas’ and the Leninist Conception of the State

The Aristide phenomenon is profoundly contradictory. It has a mass working class and peasant base, and yet preliminary returns reveal that he won in the Port au Prince suburb of Petionville, the

wealthiest suburb in Haiti! Similarly, in areas where soldiers were casting their ballots, Aristide carried the day easily. Even the Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Industrialists placed ads in newspapers promising to support an Aristide government (after the fact of course).

Aristide has gone out of his way to reassure chic supporters in Pétionville: "We give guarantees to the bourgeoisie because the Lavalas means united we are powerful. . . . We are saying to you we are with you. You don't have to be afraid" (*Haiti Progress*, November 28, 1990). Indeed, Antoine Izmerly, a rich importer and liberal, contributed almost \$200,000 to Aristide's campaign and served as his campaign treasurer (*Economist*, December 22, 1990).

A *New York Times* article "Haitian Victor Reported Ready to Soften Stands," appearing four days after the election, noted that during a meeting between Aristide and U.S. officials, Aristide's comments were in "sharp contrast" with his previous public statements calling for social revolution and an end to U.S. support to Haitian dictators. Top U.S. officials like Bernard Aronson, assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs, have even come to Aristide's defense against the charge hurled by Haitian right-wingers that the priest is a communist.

To what extent Aristide is now maneuvering with imperialism and his own ruling class only time will tell. The fact that "the Lavalas" is unconnected with any international socialist tendency is important in allowing the new president some maneuvering room with the U.S.—even though Aristide has expressed his admiration for Cuba, for example. The political strategists closest to Aristide are also without formal affiliation to any socialist tendency. Father William Smarth, another follower of liberation theology, was sent into exile in 1969 by Papa Doc Duvalier but returned in 1986 after the fall of Baby Doc. Konpe Plim, also close to Aristide, is considered a populist and social democrat. But no matter how noble Aristide's intentions are (few doubt his integrity or dedication to the poor) and however clever his diplomacy, a reformist strategy will inevitably bring defeat.

These contradictions sum up the Aristide program—a progressive, bourgeois democratic, populist agenda for Haiti.

Coup (Continued from page 5)

roads were cut, and people started to take justice into their own hands." Dupuy said people pursued Macoutes, "waiting for them to run out of ammunition, then administered justice. People armed themselves with sticks, machetes, chains, and anything they could put their hands on. The people had no fear at all." Dupuy said Aristide had instructed them on the radio to "stay mobilized" until the Lafontant threat was over.

The *New York Times* reported a pitched battle at the villa headquarters of Lafontant between opponents and dozens of his partisans. The crowd outside the villa walls, armed with rocks and sticks, waited as Macoutes fired shots and tossed at least one grenade. Eventually, one by one, the Macoutes panicked, fled the villa, and were beaten to death by the angry crowd. It was reported that nine Macoutes attempted to swim to safety through a well under the headquarters but drowned.

Elsewhere in the capital anger was vented against reactionaries within the Catholic church. The people destroyed the Old Cathedral where Archbishop Francois Wolff Ligonde, a longtime friend of the Duvalier

family, gives services. Ligonde angered Aristide supporters last week when he warned against "political authoritarianism" and "social Bolshevism." Also destroyed was the office of the Haitian Bishops' Conference.

Msgr. Giuseppe Leanza, Papal Nuncio in Haiti, was attacked in his office and stripped of some of his clothing.

Confrontations also took place in Haiti's second largest city, Cap-Haitien. On January 8, Radio Antilles reported a "pitched battle" between the army and slum residents but gave no further details.

Aristide has come under fire from conservative forces for not calling an early halt to the *dechoukaj*. According to the *Washington Post* (January 10) Aristide condemned the destruction of the historic cathedral and the attack on the Papal Nuncio, but added, "I take note of your will to catch powerful Macoutes today so they don't destroy you tomorrow. It is legitimate." He cautioned Haitians to, "Use vigilance not vengeance" and recommended turning Macoutes over to the police rather than using violence.

While the *dechoukaj* continued Washington and the bourgeois press lavished

Aristide has said that his agenda has two distinct parts. Phase I, as he calls it, will be an alliance of the people with the progressive sector of the bourgeoisie. Phase II will be a "people's" revolution. In the Phase I program, as we have seen, there is no talk of struggle, nationalizations, or expropriations. We can only guess whether Aristide is really going to try to mobilize the people, as he has said he will, or rely on deals cut with bourgeois politicians. The more that is done in alliance with the imperialists and the Haitian ruling class to implement Phase I, the greater will be the demobilization, disorientation, and disenchantment of the Haitian people—unless they can develop an alternative leadership to Aristide.

The mobilization of the masses independently of the FNCD will be critical if any real revolution is to succeed in Haiti. The question of self-defense for the population is sharply posed. The approximately 7,000-man army and the 30,000 Tonton Macoutes have weapons and the people do not. Clear and simple. It is obvious that the means of self-defense must be put in the hands of worker and peasant organizations under a leadership that understands the need for the masses to rely only on themselves and their own organization. If Aristide is to provide such leadership—as many in Haiti believe he can—he will have to break sharply with his present political direction. This is, perhaps, not impossible, but it seems increasingly unlikely.

This lack of organization and preparedness on the part of the masses, who themselves have tremendous illusions in Aristide, is perhaps what has frustrated the Haitian far left the most. Aristide entered the election late, totally without an organization prepared to defend the interests of the poor—either with arms or more peaceful means. If progressive political questions are posed by Aristide, and if even minimal bourgeois democratic demands in Haiti cut to the core of the class system, who will back up the masses? The moral authority of the popular will—as bourgeois liberals and social democrats would suggest? That may have worked well enough during an election monitored by international observers, but Aristide's luck cannot hold out forever. Neither did Salvador Allende's—and Allende's support in Chile within the Socialist and Communist parties was vastly more organized. Un-

gushing praise on General Abraham. A January 9 *New York Times* editorial called the general "a new kind of military hero" and proclaimed, "the army has more clearly aligned itself with the constitutional order." An unnamed senior U.S. official was quoted as saying, "General Abraham is the unsung hero. . . . This leaves no doubt that the army is loyal to the democratic process."

Yet doubts and questions remain—especially since it is well known that Roger Lafontant, despite a warrant for his arrest and public threats made against Father Aristide, was escorted by soldiers in Port-au-Prince for the last several months. How could it be that only a dozen armed men were able to enter the presidential palace with such ease? Why were the assailants able to capture President Trouillot, whose personal military guards offered no resistance? Why did the large infantry units, stationed less than a block away in the Des-salines barracks, not respond immediately? Most importantly, why did it take 12 hours for General Abraham to launch his attack on Lafontant's small force? □

Marty Goodman
January 10, 1991

less Father Aristide can perform a true miracle in Haiti, the violent nature of the bourgeois state will catch up with him.

Haiti's economy is devastated. The debt to the World Bank is enormous. Unchecked U.S. imperialism is tasting blood after the collapse of Stalinism. Cuba is isolated and the Sandinistas are out of power. The obstacles that will be faced by a genuine Haitian revolution cannot be underestimated. But this remains the only road toward true liberation for the country. There is no better life for the Haitian masses as long as they remain under the domination of U.S. corporate interests and the old exploiters of Haiti itself.

Finally, what are the alternatives on the Haitian left? In the election there was a candidate of the deservedly tiny pro-Moscow Party of United Haitian Communists, whose meaningless slogan was "Competence, Honesty, Work." Running on the Movement for National Reconciliation (MRN) slate he received less than 1 percent. Beyond the name recognition of its presidential candidate, Rene Theodore, the party wields no significant influence.

On the far left, the biggest tendencies are Maoist groups, the largest being An Avan, the Haitian Workers Party (PTA), the Popular Organization for National Liberation (OPLN), and the Charlemagne Peralte Front for National Liberation (FCPLN). An Avan has influence within the peasant movement, while the Haitian Workers Party has some influence with the superexploited Haitian sugar cane cutters in the Dominican Republic. Thus far the Maoist tendencies, at least the first two, have remained resolutely anti-electoralist in their perspective. These two formations are prone to intense sectarian squabbling with each other. The other groupings are newer.

There are also two avowedly Trotskyist tendencies: Workers Voice, affiliated with Lutte Ouvriere in France; and the Socialist Workers League, as yet an unaffiliated organization. The latter group has some significant influence within the trade union and student movements. Both organizations rejected giving critical support to Aristide in the election, urging those who voted for him to build independent organizations to defend their demands and push the Lavalas in a militant direction.

Jean-Auguste Mesyeux, whose arrest and torture in 1989 attracted much attention, was the vice president of CATH before he

was undemocratically purged by Ives Richard supporters. Richard is president of the new CGT and is pursuing a militant perspective. The CGT has retained the allegiance of the drivers union which initiated successful national strikes in the past. Mesyeux's faction retains the name CATH but he is now thought to be a member of the PANPRA party, led by Serge Gilles who has close ties to France's Socialist Party. PANPRA is one of three parties that comprise the ANDP led by Marc Bazin, the State Department favorite.

A revolutionary strategy in Haiti today requires seeking common cause in action with the progressive aspects of the Lavalas and the masses who support it; building an independent organization to demand that the Lavalas fight for real change; demanding of Aristide that he mobilize the Haitian people independently of middle-class politicians; defending democratic rights in general, and specifically, the Aristide government against attacks from the far right; building and unifying the trade union and peasant movements; and working with community self-defense organizations or "Vigilance Brigades," as they are called, in order to extend such activity to a national level—independently of Aristide to the extent that this is possible.

It is also now impossible to ignore the role of elections—however long this remains a reality—as a new terrain of Haitian politics that must be contested when and where it is realistic.

Aristide is to be sworn in as president February 7, 1991, the fifth anniversary of the downfall of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Much will be told about Aristide's real perspective by the political composition he chooses for his new government. Whatever he does, the class nature of a particularly violent and parasitic Haitian state will not wither away.

In the capital on the day after the election, as if to make that point clear, uniformed policemen in a truck tried to disperse a crowd of jubilant but peaceful Aristide supporters in front of his church. They did so by shooting an innocent pregnant woman in the head and the stomach. As a finishing touch they drove over her body. Such remains the reality of Haiti. □

January 3, 1991

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The New York City Fiscal Crisis—A Perspective

by Robert Fitch

The following comments by Robert Fitch, consultant to the Communication Workers of America and contributor to the Nation and the Village Voice, were presented at a Fourth Internationalist Tendency-sponsored forum "New York City Fiscal Crisis: Labor Perspectives." Other speakers at this December 14 forum were Naomi Allen, member of the Transit Workers Union Local 100 and opposition caucus "Hell on Wheels," and Zan Jacobus of the United Federation of Teachers and "Chalkdust," a rank-and-file teachers' organization. Fitch succeeds in identifying and exposing the fraud of the Wall Street bureaucrats and their political representatives. This is an important component of a broader program of struggle against the cutbacks which the New York City labor movement can begin to carry out, finding allies in the Black community, among other oppressed minorities, women, homeless advocates, etc., when they claim that there is no money to solve New York City's fiscal problems.

This evening, I want to deal with three interrelated questions. First is the *nature* of the present fiscal crisis. Second is who *caused* the crisis. And finally I want to address the question, how can we solve the crisis?

The nature of the crisis. Why is this important? Because the nature of the disease determines the nature of the treatment and the kind of specialists you call in. Wall Street understands this very well. This is why we find the same old economic doctors who nearly killed off the city in 1975 are back in business.

"Please step into the examining room. Take off all your clothes. Oh, you look terrible. I think we're going to have to operate."

What kind of operation do these Wall Street doctors want to perform on us? You've heard of the appendectomy; you've heard of the tonsillectomy. This, I think, is called the "cashectomy."

Last month, Walter Wriston of Citibank, John McGillicuddy of Manny Hanny [Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co.], and Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Freres invited the new generation of trade union leaders, Sandra Feldman, Barry Feinstein, and Stanley Hill to drop in for a checkup. They did. You can see how much they want to set up the old fiscal crisis clinic and start operating, just the way they did in the 1970s.

Felix says he is nostalgic for the fiscal crisis days when he ran the city from a table at Elaine's. No wonder. Wall Street got rid of the Stock Exchange Tax; real estate taxes fell from 4.5% of market value to 1.7%. In real terms, between 1975 and 1984 the city's budget fell by about one-third.

But not everyone remembers the fiscal crisis as fondly as Felix. Not the unions who were forced to use workers' pension funds to bail out the city, not the new city workers who were eventually hired—those

with so-called Tier 2 and Tier 3 pension plans who had to finance their own pension, not working class students who found they couldn't get into City University of New York any more, not the 25,000 city workers who lost their jobs, not people on welfare whose grants dropped from 125% to 87% of the poverty line.

It makes sense that Wall Street would like to define the crisis in terms of 1975 and insist on the same kind of surgery, but we would be foolish to listen to them.

In 1975 the city faced a triple crisis. Its economic, fiscal, and financial dimensions all reinforced each other. The declining economy meant shrinking city revenues. And the deficits were finessed rather than faced by means of long-term, but especially short-term, borrowing. None dared to call it *meshuga*.

In 1990 there is a comparable economic crisis building with 8,000 private sector jobs being lost every month. But although there are fiscal problems, they simply aren't of the same magnitude as those of the 1970s. And no financial crisis exists at all. You can't have a financial crisis if you don't get deeply into debt.

And the city simply hasn't borrowed much money. Our total revenues are \$28 billion. In July we had a short-term debt of \$70 million. Three-tenths of one percent. In 1975 it was \$3 billion out of revenues of \$11.7 billion: 25%. Finally, our current long-term debt is \$1.4 billion: 5% of total revenues. In 1975 it was \$13 billion: 111% of total revenues.

But the biggest difference between 1975 and 1990 is this: in the last fiscal crisis the city was broke and the banks had viable financial structures. Today the positions are reversed. The banks are nearly broke. Citibank is struggling to sell its commercial paper at 12.5%, whereas the city's bonds have fluctuated in the last month between 8.2 to 8.6%.

The political meaning of all these numbers is this: Wall Street wants to solve its own crisis by shifting the expenses of the city onto the workers and the poor. Their game plan is to launch a preemptive attack on city workers so they can avoid paying their fair share. But this time they don't have real leverage. The city doesn't have a financial crisis, we aren't desperate to borrow, and we don't need Felix or the banks to help us get back into the credit market. We can look Wriston in the eye and say, "Walter, if you're so smart, how come you're not rich?"

Let's get a second opinion on their diagnosis of the cashectomy. What is our problem and who caused it? Who caused the crisis? The short answer is Wall Street.

In the early 1980s Wall Street demanded and got the monetary policy it wanted from Reagan; easy credit, easy money, falling interest rates. Between 1981 and 1989 total money supply went up from \$2.2 trillion to \$4 trillion. Where did it go? Did it go into wages? No. Did it get invested into plant and infrastructure? Very little.

In a postindustrialist economy where else *can* it go except into the paper economy, increasing the prices of assets like stocks and real estate. U.S. economic growth was only about 1-2% a year but in those same eight years, the Dow-Jones Index of Blue Chip stocks went up 250%. The value of Manhattan real estate increased even more, 400% from around \$100 billion to over \$400 billion.

In New York, where the paper values are stacked the highest, the premise of our postindustrial economy is that we are all going to be able to make a living by suing each other, by selling one another stocks, and borrowing money from each other, by hiring public relations people to explain how smart we are.

If you're not a banker, a lawyer, or a merger and acquisitions specialist, not to worry. You can make money by selling real

estate. Anybody can get into the act. If you have a studio apartment you sell it and borrow money to buy a one-bedroom. If you have a one-bedroom you sell it and buy a two-bedroom. The two-bedroom person gets a three-bedroom and waits for the price to go up. Eventually of course the banks stopped playing this game and the bubble burst.

But the end of the speculative real estate boom is not the only reason the city's revenues are down. Voodoo economics notwithstanding tax revenues can go down for two reasons: because the rate of economic activity goes down and because the tax rates themselves go down. This is what happened in New York.

Felix says that in New York today "virtually all human activities are taxed to the hilt." He knows this is not true. Taxes in New York City haven't been this low in twenty years. Marginal rates on top income earners were cut 33% in 1987. This measure alone cost the city hundreds of millions in revenues. The city has cut commercial rent tax five times since 1977. It's cut the unincorporated business tax. Property taxes have fallen from over 4% of real value in the mid-'70s to less than 1.7% of real value today. Owners of vacant commercial property have been allowed to pay the homeowners rate. And much more. In fiscal terms New York City's Democrats blame Reagan for our fiscal problems, and certainly he deserves his share, but they themselves have been the agents of municipal Reaganism. And no one has held them to account.

You would think that our economy was hit by a natural disaster or an act of God; it's irresponsible, class-biased fiscal policy that's responsible. How can we reverse this trend? How can we solve the crisis?

Felix Rohatyn of course doesn't want to reverse the trend. He wants to continue it. This is why he put forward his own comprehensive solutions for the fiscal crisis in the November 8 issue of the *New York Review of Books*. It's a five-point plan, most of which is recycled from 1975:

1) cut workers, by attrition if possible, through layoffs if necessary;

2) cut wages: a 1.5% increase—five and a half percent below the cost of living—is too much; "it's more than the city can afford";

3) put the Financial Control Board back in charge of the city's finances. "The FCB has a professional staff which could help in drawing up a plan," he says, "that would be in effect for between two and four years"; and

4) point four is what Felix calls a "constructive dialogue" between unions and Wall Street. With what he calls "equal burden sharing." We all remember how that played out.

Of course none of this so far is new. But point five in Felix's article is novel, it involves the schools. Half of his 5,000-word article deals with his plan for reforming the schools. His proposal boils down to this. First, in the short run, break the teachers' contract. "The city should set aside the new teachers' contract and develop a comprehensive financial plan." Second, in the long run he wants to get rid of the \$6.5 billion public school system altogether by means of the Reaganite voucher plan.

The reaction of the city's politicians to these solutions is very suggestive. Have you ever played catch with a bunch of terriers? You throw out a ball. And the terriers fight to retrieve it and bring it back to you. So you can throw the ball out again.

Council President Andy Stein, Budget Chief Philip Michael, Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman are like those fox terriers. Felix Rohatyn points out that the city has added 50,000 employees. A week later Holtzman suggests that we may have to cut 55,000 employees. Felix says the teachers' contract will have to be taken back. A few days later Stein says the same thing. Then Michael chases down the same ball and drops it at Felix's feet.

Local 1180 has developed its own five-point plan.

1) Raise the personal income tax on those with incomes over \$100,000. Based on 1988 returns this represents the top 2.5% income earners.

The present New York City personal income tax structure was put in place by the Koch administration as a response to Ronald Reagan's tax "reforms." The so-called Tax Windfall Act of 1987 "simplified" brackets and lowered rates. Now single filers with incomes up to \$10,000 pay 2.4%, and the structure tops out at 3.4% for those with incomes of \$50,000 and above. The city's old top rate was a scarcely onerous 4.3%. For comparison, we should note that the personal income tax in Los Angeles goes from 1% to 9%.

We suggest the following rate structure. Maintain the present rates for those under \$100,000 but increase the rate for these top 2.5% income earners as follows:

100,000-499,999—5.5%

500,000-999,999—6.5%

Over 1,000,000—7.5%

Such a program based on fiscal year 1989 returns would provide an additional \$460 million in tax revenues.

2) Tax business services, not consumer necessities.

The sales tax on consumer necessities like clothing and low-budget restaurant meals should be phased out and replaced by a business services tax. Here is where the real gold is buried. In New York City just two professions, law and banking, cap-

tured the bulk of the prosperity of the Koch years.

Port Authority economist Rosemary Scanlon pointed out recently that during the 1980s "income growth in the securities industry was 92% a year. In legal services it was about 27% per year." Subtract those "industries" from the total, she observed, and the decade's real wage growth was only 1% per year.

Based on Port Authority estimates, a 4% tax on the entire hot-air sector—legal and financial services, advertising, public relations, etc.—would generate nearly \$1 billion. This would be enough to pay for an entire 5.5% wage increase for city workers and eliminate half the retail sales tax at the same time!

3) Tax land, not structures.

A tax levied on land used for commercial purposes may be the ideal urban tax. It would fall on the richest families and institutions. It can't be easily shifted to consumers and land owners can't move their property to another state.

Of course New York does tax land. But the city taxes it at the same rate as structures. A differential tax—taxing land at a higher rate than structures—would do away with the usual disadvantage of taxes. If you tax something you generally wind up with less of it. But not land. Tax the production of homes and there will be fewer homes produced. And the price will be higher. Tax land and the amount of land will stay the same and the price will be lower.

The differential tax on land and structures—which was recommended earlier this year by the prestigious NYC Tax Study Commission—has been adopted in Pittsburgh with stunning effect on housing prices and livability. Pittsburgh consistently ranks as at or near the top of the Rand McNally's Almanac's "Most Livable City" list. But among America's largest cities it is at or near the bottom in housing prices.

4) Take away developers' tax exemptions.

New York City has a rich array of real estate tax exemptions for developers. In 1990 the total value of real estate tax exemptions and abatements amounted to \$1.26 billion. This was seven times the total spent on sheltering the homeless. Nine times the cost of the teachers' contract.

But of all the profligate New York tax expenditure programs few seem more senseless than the Industrial and Commercial Incentives Program (ICIP) which showers the likes of Japan Air Lines, the Bank of the People's Republic of China, Con Ed, Peter Kalikow, and Bill Zeckendorf with tax exemptions.

Even those who believe that scarce tax dollars are badly needed to subsidize more

luxury development, as well as those who think midtown is the appropriate place to subsidize it, should think again and think in market terms. Midtown real estate development is inelastic. In a boom the push of subsidies is unnecessary. And in a slump subsidies can't drag the developers to the market because they can't get financing anyway.

Because of the city's legal obligations eliminating programs like ICIP as well as the rest of the alphabet soup of tax expenditure programs for luxury developers would save nothing in the first year. By the time they were fully phased out, the savings could be as much as \$500 million yearly.

5) Tax private universities: \$100 million.

With the exception of Washington, D.C., New York has the highest percent of tax exempt property of any large American city. More than 40% of the taxable value of all property in New York is tax exempt. Much of it belongs to the city itself and to other governmental institutions which the Constitution says can't be taxed. But a sizable chunk belongs to private educational institutions like Columbia and New York University. And the barrier preventing the taxation of their assets is political, not legal.

Cities like Evanston and New Haven are seeking to bring their universities onto the tax rolls. Why not us? With its land, buildings, and stock portfolio Columbia has total assets worth \$2.7 billion. Last year it reported revenues of \$1.1 billion with expenses of \$865 million. Columbia earned more than most of the

Fortune 500 companies headquartered in New York City.

But what is Columbia's business? Educating students is only a sideline. A loss-leader. The 19,000 students enrolled at Columbia bring in less than a fifth of the

university's revenue; less than Columbia earns from its federal contracts. Of course Columbia is taxed on its rental property. But it is exempt from taxes on its capital plant. Bringing the tax-exempt properties of New York City's private universities onto the rolls would add \$100 million.

When you add the amounts raised and saved on all five points and figure in the elimination of the sales tax on clothing and other consumer necessities the total is \$1.4 billion. That just happens to be the size of the official budget gap. So the money is there. It's possible to solve the city's fiscal crisis without layoffs or wage cuts. But there has to be the political will.

But how can we expect the mayor or the governor to come up with a tax package if the public employee unions aren't organized to demand it. But at this point there is very little organization. Our leaders are debating who has the best concession plan.

The outlook of the modern labor leader is foreign to the spirit of trade unionism. Even American business unionism. Gompers at least demanded "more," these guys "less." Instead of solidarity lay off the other guy.

You wonder what these leaders were thinking of when they invited Cuomo to address a major rally just after he announced that he wanted to lay off tens of thousands of state workers and furlough 200,000? How could they cheer him? The new motto seems to be "An injury to one is an injury to one." We need to remember the sentiments that built the labor movement, we need to remember who we are and who they are.

They say "austerity," we say "1975, never again." They say layoffs, we say tax the rich. They say break the teachers' contract, we say break the Wall Street/City Hall chain. □

Labor Conference to Focus on Organizing

by Bill Onasch

The influential newsletter *Labor Notes* is organizing a conference in Detroit, April 19-21, with the theme "Organizing for the 1990s." Ron Carey, reform candidate for president of the Teamsters Union, will be the featured speaker. There will be panels on Expanding Our Unions in the South; Organizing Women Workers; Rebuilding Our Strength at the Workplace; and Reforming Our Unions. A number of workshops and caucuses will also meet.

The last *Labor Notes* conference, in the spring of 1989, had a theme of labor political action and drew a thousand participants ranging from some top international union officials—such as Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers and Amy Newell of the United Electrical Workers—to leaders of reform movements in the United Auto Workers, Teamsters, and Mail Handlers, as well as rank-and-file militants. The UAW bureaucracy took the extraordinary step of picketing that conference which they correctly understood as a challenge to everything the bureaucracy holds dear.

Past *Labor Notes* conferences have proven to be very informative and all indications are that this one, on a topic of critical importance to the future of the labor movement, will be true to this tradition. It will also be the best place for union militants to meet activists from other cities and industries as well as caucus opportunities for those active in a number of important unions.

Every serious unionist should try to attend this conference. A subscription to *Labor Notes* is indispensable to all those who want to follow the North American labor movement.

The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn, Michigan. Registration fee is \$48. Special hotel rates for conference registrants are \$59 single/double; \$69 triple; \$79 quad; phone (800) 233-1234. Travel discounts are available on Northwest Airlines (mention code 04490). Childcare at modest cost is available with advance registration.

To register, or to obtain more information, contact *Labor Notes*, 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210. Phone: (313) 842-6262; fax: (313) 842-0227.

To receive *Labor Notes* send \$10 for a one-year subscription (outside the U.S., \$15) to the above address.

Campus Women Organize for Abortion Rights and Feminist Demands

by Evelyn Sell

The 1989 national mobilizations for abortion rights demonstrated that a new generation of young women had entered the struggle for women's liberation in the United States. At the April 9 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives in Washington, D.C., student delegations from more than 500 colleges participated in the campus contingent. Reach-out efforts to students intensified for the November 12 Mobilization for Women's Lives held in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. The 300,000 demonstrating in the nation's capital included students from almost 400 high schools and colleges. The largest youth contingents came from the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. The November 12 rally in Los Angeles brought 100,000 together in the most sizable abortion rights action ever held on the West Coast. Almost 20,000 students registered with the National Organization for Women (NOW) for the demonstration, according to the student newspaper at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Inspired by their success in mobilizing young women for the two national actions and for local actions during 1989, many campus groups continued to be active in the fight to restore and expand women's reproductive rights. A number of new campus groups were formed in 1990 based on the continuing concern about women's rights. Other campus organizations were established as a result of special efforts by NOW and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL).

NOW Spurs Campus Organizing

Large numbers of young women swelled NOW's membership as a result of its early start in serious campus organizing combined with the authority it gained by calling the national 1989 actions.

Three NOW activists in their early twenties functioned full-time to gain support from college and university students for the April 9, 1989, event in Washington, D.C. Samantha Stevens, who took a semester off from Claremont McKenna College in California, explained how the three started from scratch to make campus contacts. She said, "The last march NOW had was two or three years ago, and there were very few of those participants left on campus, so I'd call the dean of students and say, 'I am looking for a group on campus that's pro-choice.'" Once contact was made, the young NOW organizers tried to establish a promotion network. According to Stevens, "We always made sure to tell the campus organizers to ask their professors to announce the march in class." Other tactics included: regularly flooding classrooms and dormitories with information sheets, and utilizing campus radio stations and newspapers. To subsidize costs for chartered

buses, students held bake sales, car washes, and sold T-shirts and buttons. "A lot of the students I talked to said that they had started up a new group," Stevens said. "There are all these pro-choice groups on different campuses, and women's study departments are now focusing on the issue of abortion more." (Quotations from *the college magazine*, November/December 1989.)

Mobilizing students and young women was again given major NOW attention in organizing efforts for the November 12, 1989, events. NOW followed up its initial successes in attracting young women by organizing a 1990 "Freedom Summer" program to involve student activists in electoral campaigns for pro-choice candidates. The emphasis was on "Action Team Training" to teach student leaders how to organize their peers. As described in the Summer 1990 issue of the *National NOW Times*:

"Action teams are small organizing units particularly suitable to the school environment that expand through one-on-one and group contact. These teams build contact lists through phonebanking, petitioning, sign-ups, and information tables at public events. The contacts are then organized to conduct lobbying, letter writing, electoral activities, public demonstrations, clinic escort and defense or other actions."

In response to court rulings upholding parental consent laws, NOW called the first-ever Young Feminist Conference. Taking place February 1-3, 1991, the conference will address the full range of women's rights issues. (A report on this conference will appear in the next issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.)

NARAL's Campus Project

The National Abortion Rights Action League—which terms itself "the political arm of the pro-choice movement"—embarked on a Campus Organizing Project with the explanation:

"The nation's campuses are becoming centers of pro-choice activity. To harness that energy, NARAL recently launched a Campus Organizing Project to activate pro-choice students on college and high school campuses nationwide. The response has been overwhelming. Pro-choice student activists are building campus organizations to educate and mobilize their peers. NARAL chapters are now operating on several campuses.

"Student activity began last spring [1989] when student activists gathered tens of thousands of signatures on petitions as part of the 'Millions of Voices, Silent No More' campaign, and held speak-outs on over 20 campuses on April 26, the day of oral arguments in the Supreme Court's *Webster* case.

"The Campus Organizing Project involves students in grassroots political work and coalition development with other

local community and campus groups. NARAL provides student chapters and other pro-choice campus organizations with literature and technical assistance in developing an organizing model. . . .

"The Campus Organizing Project is now gearing up for next semester's activities. Among the projects and goals are production and distribution of the campus newsletter, a series of trainings for pro-choice campus activists, and development of an organizing manual for pro-choice student organizations." (NARAL NEWS, Winter 1989)

NARAL was one of the most active forces channeling student energies into the 1990 electoral campaigns of the two major capitalist parties. A national day of action was kicked off by an April 4 rally at UCLA. On over 60 campuses, from Boston to San Francisco, campus activists held rallies, registered voters, attended conferences, and set up information tables. University of Nebraska students marched to the state capital to voice pro-choice demands. In Iowa, Grinnell University students canvassed dormitories to register pro-choice voters. Cornell students wrote and sent thousands of letters to their federal representatives expressing support for the national Freedom of Choice Act. Stanford University students held a pro-choice multicultural event.

Student Groups Promote Abortion Rights, Combat Rape

In addition to campus chapters organized directly by NOW and NARAL, many student organizations have been engaged in feminist activities over the past two years. Abortion rights and reproductive freedom continue to spur the formation of campus groups and the involvement of young women in feminist struggles. For example, Students Organizing Students (SOS) was formed the day after the U.S. Supreme Court limited abortion rights by its decision in the *Webster* case. A spokesperson for SOS explained, "It is young people and students, particularly we who are women of color and low-income women, who are hardest hit by the attempt to strip women of this fundamental right. Our lives are on the line."

By the beginning of 1990, there were SOS chapters on more than 100 campuses. Each campus affiliate decided its own strategy and activities. Campus organizers received information and support from a core committee based in New York City. While pursuing its goal of organizing students at junior and senior high schools as well as colleges, SOS works with other national and local organizations involved in fights for full reproductive rights. According to the *New Directions for Women* newspaper: "SOS groups that have developed collaborative organizing strategies with other campus groups include the Princeton Pro-Choice Coalition/SOS; the Feminist Collective/SOS at William Paterson College; and the Coalition for Choice/SOS at Bard College, to name just a few. At Hunter High School in Manhattan, the gender issues group has merged with SOS. . . ." (January/February, 1990 issue)

An August 13, 1990, *Los Angeles Times* article, entitled "Abortion Activism Aimed at Students," cites 19-year-old Allyson Wagner as an example of how young women are being galvanized by the struggle for reproductive rights. A sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania, Wagner explained that she was nudged toward activism in 1989 when her

campus was aroused by debate over a restrictive abortion law adopted by state legislators. She was among the first students involved in the "Becky Bell-Rosie Jimenez Campaign," a national effort to repeal parental consent laws. Announced by the Fund for a Feminist Majority, the campaign's name reminds young women of Rosie Jimenez, whose death was blamed on a cut-off of federal funding for abortions for the poor, and 17-year-old Becky Bell, who chose a back-alley abortion rather than seek her parents' consent as required by Indiana law.

Parental consent or notification laws affecting minors have been passed by 34 states. The problems encountered by young women seeking abortion counseling or procedures are vividly presented in the video film "Abortion Denied: Shattering Young Women's Lives"—a documentary broadcast for the first time on December 7, 1990, by the TBS cable superstation. The video, now available for wide use by feminist groups, prominently features Becky Bell's parents who are working for the eradication of parental consent legislation.

The key role of the abortion issue in prompting campus activism is described by Deborah Gould in her report on Western Pennsylvania groups. (See "Student Feminists Share Experiences.") Gould also notes the breadth of women's rights issues addressed by activists.

Many campaigns and projects have focused on violence against women. Rapes on campuses are widely described as "epidemic" across the U.S. Research has shown that young female college students are raped four times more frequently than the overall rate for women in general. According to a recent study, one of every six college women is raped or a target of attempted sexual assault. Approximately 90 percent of such attacks are carried out by acquaintances or victims' dates.

"Rape on Campus" was the cover title of the February 1990 issue of *Together*, a feminist newsmagazine published by students at UCLA. Articles explained campus resources available to assaulted students, reported plans of the Women's Coalition to raise rape awareness, published female students' personal accounts of rapes as well as some women's "Prevention Inventions," and reviewed television films about rape.

Six UCLA groups sponsored a March 8, 1990, International Women's Day event which took the form of a Candlelight Vigil and March for Campus Safety as a "response to recent UCLA rape survivor testimonials." Almost 500 participated in the event which was endorsed by off-campus groups including the Rosa Parks Assault Center, NOW, California Abortion Rights League, and Santa Monica YWCA. The action was publicized beforehand in the student newspaper, the *Daily Bruin*, and a postevent editorial supported the demands made by vigil organizers on the administration: "hold rape education programs at fraternity rushes, residence halls, and freshman and transfer student orientations; put rape awareness pamphlets in quarterly registration packets; add self-defense classes in the Recreation Center's program; deal with rape and sexual harassment charges efficiently and quickly, and add more Community Service Officers to patrol nightly secluded areas, including the University Research Library stacks."

Similar demands have been voiced on campuses around the country. Activities focused on rape have included: speak-outs, "Take Back the Night" marches, rallies, self-defense training, and the publication of materials on rape prevention and resources.

Young Feminists Play Important Role

On campuses around the country, student feminists are contributing to the ongoing struggle against sexism and for women's equality. They have provided energetic and consistent forces to off-campus struggles to defend women's clinics against attacks by Operation Rescue, and they have swelled the ranks of national and community actions demanding legal, safe, and accessible abortions. They have taken up the full range of feminist issues including lesbian rights, violence against women, childcare, job opportunities, women's health facilities, and the true history of women's situations and accomplishments in societies around the world and throughout the existence of our species.

Student activists have proven that the media was wrong when it proclaimed the "death of feminism" during the 1980s, and have contradicted *Time* magazine's assertion that, as women face the 1990s, there is a schism between today's younger generation and the veteran feminists who began the contemporary movement for women's liberation 25 years ago. Responding to the *Time* cover story, Leslie Wolfe, executive director of the Center for Women Policy Studies in Washington, noted that more than 500 women in their twenties participated in a November 1989 conference on "Feminist Futures."

The current situation is not a perfect one (as Deborah Gould points out in her report on student activism). Tensions do exist between experienced leaders of long-established women's rights organizations and young feminists. Interest and involvement in feminist events varies from one campus to another, and most students do not participate in meetings, forums, rallies, and other women's rights events on campus.

Although NOW and NARAL organized students to carry out electoral projects in 1990 for pro-choice candidates, many young feminists have expressed a negative attitude toward working for Democratic and Republican politicians. One example of this was the presentation made by a spokesperson for Students Organizing Students at the first regional hearing of the NOW Commission for Responsive Democracy, held in New York City November 30-December 1, 1990. (See the January issue of this magazine for a report of the hearing.) SOS representative Nina Chamyran said that students have learned through their own experiences that lobbying is insufficient and indicated student support for a third party. Formed to explore the feasibility of a new third party, the commission will present its report and recommendations to the 1991 NOW National Conference.

Young women have a crucial stake in steps toward political action independent of the two major capitalist parties. Many gains won during the 1960s and '70s by women's liberation efforts have been weakened or taken away through legislation, presidential orders, and court rulings. Student feminists need a political party with a program which does not compromise their interests and candidates who will fight vigorously for their needs. And a new party will need the energy, dedication, and talents of feminist activists who have been tested in campus and community battles, and who have gained organizational skills which will prove invaluable in launching a new political force involving oppressed racial and ethnic minorities, working people, women, and those fighting for an environmentally sound and war-free world. □

Student Feminists Share Experiences

by Deborah Gould

On April 7, 1990, students representing feminist activist groups from six different colleges and universities in Western Pennsylvania came together for a panel on student activism as part of the "1990 Tri-state Teaching Women's Studies Conference." This was the second time this yearly conference included students on the planning level.

The idea for a panel on student activism was initially suggested by Mary Hamler, adviser to the University of Pittsburgh Campus Women's Organization (CWO). In addition to the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), the other schools represented on the panel were: Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Chatham College, Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), and Pennsylvania State University (Penn. State).

The panel was divided into two parts: the first dealt with information about the various campus groups (how they started, activities, membership, etc.); the second part dealt more with problems and issues.

Four of the groups—CMU, Pitt, IUP, and Chatham—were formed only within the last couple of years. CCAC's Women Taking Action Effectively was formed in the 1970s.

The only issue or activity that all the groups had in common was reproductive freedom. The representatives from Pitt's CWO and from IUP specified that the pro-choice movement was the catalyst for organization. The other four groups either had a pro-choice subgroup, participated in pro-choice marches and rallies, were actively involved in the abortion rights movement, or some combination of the three.

Many of Pitt's CWO activities centered around the abortion issue. Tables were set up in the Student Union whenever a pro-choice march was going to occur. CWO members who sat at the tables would encourage students to attend the march or rally, provide information about the abortion question and other feminist issues, and tell students about CWO and its upcoming events. CWO also participated in a teach-in about abortion last April which was organized by the Campaign for Abortion Rights (CAR), a coalition of groups in Pittsburgh.

Panelists noted some of the other issues taken up by the student groups: educating about feminism, lesbian and gay rights, male feminists, rape, domestic violence, AIDS, racism and sexism, candidates and elections, women's history, acquaintance rape, and eating disorders. Activities carried out by the various student groups included: weekly or monthly meetings, making speakers available, showing films, and tabling to inform students about feminist issues and to mobilize students for rallies, marches, and demonstrations.

Different general approaches to the campus community were described. IUP's organization sent fliers to fraternities and sororities to increase their awareness of feminist issues—while the groups at CMU, Pitt, and CCAC focused on reaching out to students with feminist tendencies. Responses to feminist activism varied from one campus to another. Penn. State seemed to display the most hostile environment. The Penn. State panelist wrote an article for her school's newspaper about the way sexist behavior in the classroom subtly perpetuates an acceptance of more violent behavior toward women. After her strong feminist viewpoint was published, she received angry letters as well as "hate" messages on her telephone answering machine. She also described harassment by fraternity members after a campus "Take Back the Night" march protesting violence against women.

An important aspect of some of the groups' activities involved subgroups for particular concerns or coalitions with other groups. The Penn. State panelist discussed the following subgroups: Academic Awareness Project (ADAPT), Black caucus, and pro-choice group. The CMU Women's Center also has several subgroups which are part of the Women's Center Collective. Women Taking Action Effectively cosponsors many activities with other groups within the university. Campus Women's Organization has relations, informally and formally, with several coalitions. For example, CWO is a member of the Common Ground Coalition which includes Amnesty International, Black Action Society, Central American Peace

Coalition, Bisexual Gay and Lesbian Alliance, Friends of Animals, and other progressive groups on campus.

Relationships between student organizations and off-campus feminists produced some problems. For example, Pitt's CWO had difficulties when dealing with the Campaign for Abortion Rights and established organizations such as NOW and NARAL. There was a tendency for some feminist activists to want to dictate tasks to CWO without giving students an equal voice in planning. There was discussion at the end of the school year with some of the people involved in the nonstudent groups in order to correct such matters—allowing for better working relations in the years to come.

The most common problem affecting the groups on the panel was student apathy. The representatives discussed the stereotyped images many students have of feminist organizations. Most groups felt pressure not to offend mainstream students by appearing too "radical"—while also appealing to politically conscious and feminist students. Many panelists spoke of the lack of support from their schools' administration.

Another common problem the groups on the panel faced was a lack of commitment and sharing of the workload by members. The leaders of the groups felt overburdened because not enough people carried the weight—at the same time, some panelists pointed out that many new members hesitate to get involved in responsibilities because they have difficulty finding a place for themselves among the leaders who seem to have things under control.

I found the panel to be an affirming experience in spite of the recognition of serious barriers to feminist student groups. It was reassuring for me to see other groups in different schools dealing with similar issues and facing similar problems. Feminism on campuses has a long way to go but important strides are being made by committed feminist students working for significant change. □

Fighting for Women's Rights in the 1990s

by Claire Cohen, Carol McAllister,
Gayle Swann, and Evelyn Sell

A Fourth Internationalist Tendency Pamphlet

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The Legacy of Malcolm X and the Black Liberation Movement Today

by Claire Cohen

Despite the gains of the Black liberation movement of the 1960s, the '80s have been a time of stagnation and decline in the condition of African Americans in the United States. We are disproportionately represented among the homeless, jobless, and poor. We continue to suffer unemployment twice as high as the overall rate. Almost half of all Black children are now growing up in poverty. The life expectancy for Black males in Harlem is lower than in Bangladesh. In the South, where 53 percent of Blacks still live, the median income for Black families is below the official poverty line. Drug abuse ravishes our communities and destroys our youth. Racism and hate crimes are dangerously on the rise around the nation. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has made several decisions in the last decade rolling back the gains of the civil rights movement. The most recent effectively took away recourse for Blacks and women to sue for damages when they are victims of racist or sexist harassment on the job. President Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Bill of 1990 which would have given back this right, claiming it was really a quota bill because employers would feel pressured to promote Blacks and women to keep from being sued for perceived harassment. The Democratic Party-controlled Congress failed to override the veto. Last, but not least, on any given day in this nation, 23 percent of all Black men aged 20 to 29 are either in jail, on probation or on parole (according to The Sentencing Project, a Washington, D.C.-based group promoting sentencing reform).

In the face of all this, there are signs that the Black liberation movement is starting to revive, initially around the legacy of Malcolm X. One significant event pointing in this direction was the conference "Malcolm X: Radical Tradition and a Legacy of Struggle" held at Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York City on November 1-4, 1990.

One of the speakers at a conference workshop called "Malcolm X in New York" was Kwame M.A. Somburu. He is a long-time Black revolutionary activist, currently a member of Socialist Action. He lived in Harlem and the Bronx while Malcolm was there. As a member of the Socialist Workers Party, he heard Malcolm speak at Militant Labor Forums. Comrade Kwame's talk inspired me, so I decided to interview him about his perspectives on Malcolm's legacy, the Black liberation movement of the '60s, and where the movement should go from here. During my discussion with him, he further developed many of the points he made in his speech.

Somburu noted that while Malcolm X was not a socialist, he was increasingly sympathetic to socialist ideas and anti-capitalist, especially in his last year of life. Indeed, Malcolm was clearly a revolutionary who emphasized unity, self-determination, and internationalism for our people. He believed in studying and critically analyzing events, information, and

ideas as the means of determining what is to be done. Malcolm resisted opportunism and self-aggrandizement. He readily admitted when he didn't know about something (such as Marxism) and was open to learning about a variety of ideas.

Although he remained a Muslim after his break with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm stated, "Your religion should remain in the closet." He pointed out that racism oppressed all of us regardless of our religion or political ideology. When he founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), he emphasized the need for African Americans to unite in the struggle against oppression whether we are Christians, Muslims, Jews, atheists, socialists, or communists. Most of all, Malcolm urged us to think for ourselves, to fight for power and to join in the collective struggle to improve our lot. He wanted us to realize our own collective strength as a people, to recognize that we, not charismatic individuals, determine the fate of ourselves, our communities, our people. We need to understand that there is no leader who can save us from our despair. If we wait to be led, we will continue to be lost.

In the speech "The Ballot or the Bullet" Malcolm pointed out the bankruptcy of both the Democratic and Republican parties. Yet there remains much confusion about this issue today. The reality of the Democratic Party as a ruling class institution is not negated because it throws us crumbs. We in the African American community need to remember that it was the Democratic-controlled Congress that failed to override President Bush's veto of the 1990 Civil Rights Bill, approved the current reactionary Supreme Court judges, and collaborated with the Reagan administration in rolling back civil rights gains and drastically cutting back needed social programs. Democratic mayors and governors, regardless of race, are no less hesitant than Republicans about calling out law enforcement against working men and women striking for better wages and working conditions. We need to understand that refraining from working in the two ruling class political parties does not relegate us to the sidelines if we use our time and efforts to begin building our own political structures instead. We must expend our precious energies building democratic institutions and organizations, local, national, and international, that will satisfy our interests and meet our needs. Ultimately, we will need to learn how to unite with other oppressed and exploited peoples (Latinos, women, working class and poor whites, etc.) in order to build a new society based on meeting the needs of the majority, those of us who must sell our labor to get our bread.

According to Brother Kwame, one strength of the Black liberation movement of the 1960s was the willingness of people to explore a variety of ideas and ideologies—from nationalism, to Maoism, to Trotskyism. Conferences and "rap

sessions" were held anywhere and everywhere. Bookstores sprang up all over the place, and the people were eager to read and hear what others, of varying perspectives, had to say. We need to get back to this approach. For too long, too many of us have allowed the status quo to convince us to close our minds to ideas other than the conventional wisdom expressed by our so-called leaders.

Another strength of the movement was its budding internationalism. We have a lot to learn from other people's struggles, just as Malcolm did when he went to Africa and the Middle East. On the other hand, people the world over admired and attempted to emulate the civil rights struggle, and we continue to have the potential to make major contributions to the international movement for social and economic justice today.

If we are to advance the struggle for Black liberation, we must also critically examine the mistakes of the movement of the '60s so that we don't repeat them. Comrade Somburu pointed out several weaknesses which seriously undermined the movement and continue to plague it to some extent today. Sexism, lack of real democracy, underrepresentation of working class Blacks in leadership positions in the movement, opportunistic and reformist leaders, and lack of knowledge about how the movement should defend itself against attacks from the establishment (such as agent provocateurs) were and continue to be serious problems. One example of how some of these problems continue to hurt the movement is the founding of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in 1979. Brother Kwame was initially very involved in this. He says that the grassroots of the organization developed a platform that was progressive and revolutionary. However, people's lack of confidence in their own leadership abilities led them to turn to reformist politicians and religious leaders who, in turn, undemocratically disregarded the founding platform and led NBIPP on to a reformist dead end.

I ended the discussion with Comrade Somburu by asking what he felt the most crucial issues are for rebuilding the Black liberation movement, and what role Black revolutionary

socialists should play. Kwame pointed out that we have been "miseducated in a school system that teaches people to look to leaders, not themselves" to effect change in society. "Malcolm X was trying to educate people . . . for the masses to rise up and not just look to the leaders. Many people were just following Malcolm" instead of learning from his example how to think for themselves. Somburu said, "We need to get away from the cult of individualism. If the grass is wet, a spark cannot light a prairie fire. One finger makes a point. Five fingers make a fist."

We, as Black people, need to start by studying the Basic Unity Program of the OAAU, the founding platform of NBIPP, and using them as a basis of discussion about where we go from here.

We also need to involve ourselves in struggles around issues greatly impacting our communities, from the fight for decent wages and working conditions through organizations like Black Workers for Justice to the movement to get the U.S. out of the Persian Gulf. Approximately 30 percent of the soldiers on the front lines in Saudi Arabia are Black, and 44 percent of the women soldiers over there are African American. The Persian Gulf situation is related to the economic situation of African Americans here at home because many Blacks go into the military due to a lack of decent paying jobs and poor educational opportunities in the civilian sector. We need to fight for decent job and educational opportunities in the civilian sector, so Black youth don't have to put their lives at risk in order to have gainful employment or get a higher education.

Finally, we as Black revolutionary socialists have to get involved with our people around the struggles that are meaningful to us right now. In doing so, we should point out the need for and help form institutions and organizations based on participatory democracy where our people can meet to take power ourselves and boot out opportunistic "leaders" who don't really represent our wants and needs. "The leaders of the coming struggles are still out there among the masses," says Kwame. □

Malcolm X: Teacher and Organizer

by Claire Cohen, Steve Bloom, and Evelyn Sell

\$1.00

Order from: FIT, PO Box 1947, New York, NY 10009

On the First Anniversary of Malcolm X's Death

by George Breitman

*The following is a talk given at a Malcolm X memorial meeting sponsored by the New York Militant Labor Forum on February 11, 1966. The text is an appendix in Breitman's *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*.*

Those who arranged the assassination of Malcolm X—because they could not answer, frighten, buy, or corrupt him—wanted not only to silence his voice but to prevent the consolidation of a new movement that would seriously threaten their power and privileges.

It would have been foolish a year ago, it would be foolish now, to pretend that the assassination was anything but a calamitous blow to the freedom struggle and radical movements of this country. The assassination removed the man who was best equipped to build and lead the kind of movement that will meet the immediate needs of black people and the ultimate needs of all working people. We could console ourselves by saying that his place would be filled eventually by others, because that is true, but it did not alter the fact that meanwhile our cause had suffered a crippling setback.

But we should not go to the other extreme and make the mistake of thinking that our enemies achieved everything they wanted to. Their aim was not only to kill Malcolm, but to kill his ideas. Their intention was not only to end his life, but to end his influence. They wanted him not only dead, but discredited and forgotten.

No one could be positive a year ago that they would not succeed in this second aim too. Now, after a year, I think the answer can be given with certainty—they have not succeeded. The effort to discredit him has failed, he is not forgotten, and more people have begun to understand his ideas, to understand them more accurately, than in the last year of his life. Malcolm X the man has been dead for a year, but the truths that he uttered and the example that he set are still marching on. With all of its power, the enemy has not been able to prevent those truths from reaching more and more people, black and white. That is what I want to demonstrate and document tonight.

Malcolm's body had still not been buried when a black lackey of the white ruling class, Carl Rowan, tried to earn some of his pay as director of the United States Misinformation Agency. Waving newspaper articles from all over the world, Rowan complained bitterly that they were misrepresenting the significance of a man who was only "an ex-convict, ex-dope peddler who became a racial fanatic." Rowan was not content to have Malcolm dead; he felt a necessity to bespatter his image and consign him to disgraceful oblivion.

That wasn't only Rowan talking, that was the government, the national government of the ruling class that was not satisfied with Malcolm dead physically, but wanted him dead morally as well. The same position was taken by the press of this ruling class. In the last pages of his *Autobiography* Mal-

colm had predicted that when he was dead, the press was going to smear and distort his effort to open a new road for the Negro struggle. And the *New York Times*, the outstanding big business paper in this country, fulfilled Malcolm's prediction to the hilt the very day he was assassinated, rushing into print with an editorial whose malice and bias it would be hard to match.

The *Times* editorial called Malcolm "a case history," a twisted man who turned "many true gifts to evil purpose," had a "ruthless and fanatical belief in violence," "did not seek to fit into society or into the life of his own people," saw the world in distorted fashion, and was killed by someone who came out of the "darkness that he spawned." It is probable that the authors of this editorial were so carried away by the passion of their hatred for Malcolm and what he represented that they overshot the mark and actually defeated their own purpose. But the purpose was plain—to destroy Malcolm's influence and prestige as thoroughly as the assassin's bullets had destroyed the man.

And the liberals—who preach to the ruling class, but generally accept its basic estimates and outlook—were not much better. The liberal magazine, *The Nation*, began its March 8 editorial on the assassination with the statement, "Malcolm X was the highly intelligent, courageous leader of one segment of the Negro lunatic fringe." The lesson it drew was that the government should proceed to remove discriminatory barriers and thus prevent people from adhering to Malcolm's cause, which it called defeatist and mistaken. The editorial ended by saying that if the government would do that, then Malcolm "will in the long run have done great service not only to the Negroes but to all Americans"—even though he was the leader of a lunatic fringe, which as any liberal knows, must be shunned and isolated.

But something has happened since those editorials were printed, something unexpected by the men who wrote them in February and March. Around the end of October, less than four months ago, two books by and about Malcolm were published—the *Autobiography* and *Malcolm X Speaks*, a collection of speeches and statements from his last year—and these became the means for registering what had happened to Malcolm's reputation and standing during the seven or eight months after his death.

You have heard what the editors of the *Times* said and wanted people to believe in February. But on November 5 they printed a review of the *Autobiography* by a member of their staff, and lo and behold, it's not along quite the same lines as their February 22 editorial. The reviewer is Eliot Fremont-Smith, and he begins as follows:

"It is probably fair to say that the majority of the public regards Malcolm X... as a violence-preaching 'Black Muslim' racial agitator who reaped his own bloody end." He then adds, and this is what is new (for the *Times*), "There is, however, another view of Malcolm X—one that is increasingly prevalent among civil rights advocates—that with his death American

Negroes lost their most able, articulate, and compelling spokesman." Fremont-Smith doesn't take sides in favor of this increasingly prevalent view and against the view fostered by his bosses—he says only, "Both views represent parts of the truth." But now at least the so-called part of the truth that was completely absent from the February editorial is getting a certain amount of airing and hearing.

Fremont-Smith notes now "that in the last year of his life he radically modified certain of his ideas and began to take an active role in the securing of Negro rights within, not apart from, American society." He continues: "How important a spokesman he could have been for American Negroes had he lived remains in doubt." At any rate, this raises a doubt about the position of the *Times* editors, who showed no doubts whatever. Fremont-Smith casts further doubts on their position when he says, "As this extraordinary autobiography shows, the source of Malcolm X's power was not alone in his intelligence, energy, electric personality or ability to grow and change, remarkable as these were. Its source was that he understood, perhaps more profoundly than any other Negro leader, the full, shocking extent of America's psychological destruction of its Negroes" (which he calls "an almost automatic function of white society").

The point I am trying to make is that the authors of that scurrilous *Times* editorial in February could not have foreseen that in November they would have to print an article so much at variance with their own prejudices. This was not because the *Times* editors have changed, have reformed, have become more honest—but because the atmosphere has changed. They simply could not get away in November with the kind of falsification they thought possible in February. Too many people are learning the truth, and the editors have been forced to readjust a little.

The editors of *The Nation* suffered a similar fate. In March they had belittled Malcolm as the leader of a lunatic fringe, but on November 8 they printed a review of the *Autobiography* by Truman Nelson which began by saying, "This is the story of a man struck down on his way to becoming a revolutionary and a liberator of his people." Nothing about lunatic fringes. And near the end Nelson says of Malcolm, after his final return from Africa in the autumn of 1964, "I heard him in Harlem, on a platform with Babu, the Zanzibar revolutionary, say the problem is now simply the oppressed against the oppressor. He had begun to renew himself, and his regenerated purpose began to take form, a political form. He was talking now like a member of the revolutionary majority." Talking like a member of the revolutionary majority probably strikes some of *The Nation* editors as lunatic stuff too, but they're not saying that now.

Earlier, in the September 20 *Nation*, Harvey Swados, writing about the radical parties in this country, expressed the conviction that "Malcolm did have a remarkable capacity for political growth," which, he said, "many white liberals refused to recognize, perhaps because it is a capacity that is foreign to them."

This is true—most white liberals lack that capacity. So do black liberals, even black liberals who call themselves radicals or social democrats, like Bayard Rustin. But even in Rustin we have witnessed a certain change during the months we have been examining, a change which can be explained only by a change in the prevailing intellectual atmosphere. Rustin and Malcolm were political opponents, because Rustin favors sidetracking the Negro struggle into the Democratic Party and

uses the most radical-sounding arguments to justify this policy, while Malcolm called this policy what it is—political Uncle Tomism. Immediately after the assassination, Rustin and Tom Kahn did a hatchet job on Malcolm, printed in *Dissent* and *New America*—an article designed to cut Malcolm down so that no young militant would ever look in his direction for guidance or inspiration. After the *Autobiography* appeared, however, Rustin reviewed it in the November 14 *Book Week*. Now Rustin too had to sing a slightly different tune, had to show a little more respect for Malcolm the man, even though he continued to belittle his achievement and confuse his evolution by garbling together Malcolm's positions on important questions from different and conflicting periods of his life.

Having a capacity for growth that is lacking among most liberals, some radicals have been able to learn things in the year since Malcolm's death. An example is Emile Capouya, who reviewed Malcolm's *Autobiography* and a book by Elijah Muhammad in the *Saturday Review* of November 20. I think it is worth quoting because Capouya is both honest and independent. Capouya discusses his attitude to Malcolm during his lifetime, which he supposes represents the majority opinion still:

"As long as he was a follower of Elijah Muhammad, I was repelled by what I knew of his economic and social program, his irreconcilable attitude toward the whites, the puritanism of the Nation of Islam's moral doctrines, and the bad grammar of the sect's newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*. The Black Muslim demand for a separate state within the United States I regarded as a piece of cynical demagoguery, or perhaps plain foolishness. What it came down to is that Malcolm X was talking revolution, his own variety, and since that was not the same as mine, I could fall back on all the familiar excuses for not using my imagination. When Malcolm X parted company with Elijah Muhammad, made his pilgrimage to Mecca, returned bearing a more conciliatory racial message, and began to involve himself in direct political activity, I grew slightly more sympathetic.

"Now that he is dead, and the social forces to which he gave expression are for the moment thwarted, I can see how badly I misjudged the man and the movement. It has taken me a long time, but I begin to see why many Negro intellectuals, and radicals black and white, were so impressed by him, applauded his intransigence while he was alive, and felt personally diminished by his death. Right now, in this country, every man stands between the devil and the deep blue sea. The ideals we profess as a people have scarcely any other function than to color greed at home and violence abroad. We are in a moral and political crisis. Almost alone, Malcolm X knew it and declared it; his doctrine was cast in terms of race, but that was very nearly an accident." (Elsewhere in the review Capouya makes the correct point that *class* questions are often expressed in *racial* terms.)

Much the same thing that happened to Emile Capouya has been happening to other people, especially student rebels. Donald Stanley, reviewing the *Autobiography* in the October 14 *San Francisco Examiner*, writes:

"... one of the really surprising things that's happening is the spreading legend of the late 'Black Muslim' leader whose influence has failed to stop at graveside.

“Malcolm’s ghost is walking today alongside not only the blacks engaged in their fight for rights and equality, but it insinuates itself more and more frequently into such nonracial student movements as those which animate Berkeley.”

Most of the changed opinions about Malcolm that I have been reporting up to now have been by white people, not black. That is because there has been little or no change in black people’s opinions. Without hearing everything Malcolm said, without knowing whether he had altered his view on this or that question, the masses of black people sensed, felt, and knew that he was speaking for them all the time and to them most of the time. They knew that unlike most Negro leaders, he could not be bought. Foolish white liberals like Robert Penn Warren could say, in his book *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, that Malcolm “may end at the barricades, or in Congress. Or he might even end on the board of a bank.” But the black masses knew, before the assassination, that Malcolm would never sell out, and the assassination only confirmed this conviction. Middle class Negro leaders, the moderates and liberals, are keenly aware of what the masses think about Malcolm. That is why, despite their hostility toward almost everything he represented, they have been careful about the way they speak and write about him—more careful, for example, than Bayard Rustin or Carl Rowan, whose main audience is not the Negro masses.

When we examine Malcolm’s standing in the black community we come to something apparently paradoxical. Malcolm was a black nationalist; in the first months after he left the Black Muslims he was a pure-and-simple black nationalist, and in his final months he was something more than that, he was a black nationalist plus social revolutionist (although he had then begun to have doubts about the black nationalist label).

Now black nationalism—this doctrine or ideology or tendency with which the name of Malcolm was and is associated—had reached the height of its popularity in the black community from 1962 until around the middle of 1964. Many more people called themselves black nationalists during that period than ever before. Black nationalists were self-confident in those years, they felt the wind was in their sails. But around the middle of 1964 something happened that changed this situation. I think it was the nomination of Goldwater, which precipitated a crisis, a political dilemma, in black nationalist circles. I cannot go into that here, but I think I could show that whatever the reason was, a change did begin to take place then among most of the people who considered themselves black nationalists. Some of the steam began to go out of them, some of them stopped calling themselves black nationalists, confusion set in, morale fell. This was noticeably the case after the assassination of Malcolm, the man so many had counted on to lead the formation of a new, nationwide black nationalist movement.

And yet—and this is the paradoxical part—while *organizationally* the black nationalist tendency has suffered serious setbacks in the last year or two, *ideologically* its influence has spread far, wide, and deep. It is as though it was locked out of the door and came creeping in the window. For today many of the ideas, demands, and slogans originated by black nationalists in 1962, ’63, and ’64—ideas, demands, and slogans associated in the public mind above all with Malcolm X—are common coin in most of the black community and even in many

of the civil rights organizations that didn’t want to touch Malcolm with a ten-foot pole.

Malcolm is dead and the movement he wanted to build has not grown or prospered organizationally. But many of their ideas—black leadership, black power, building a base in the ghetto, control of the ghetto, self-defense, racial pride and solidarity, identification with the colonial revolution and Africa, independent black political action—these and other concepts, which were considered the unique attributes of black nationalism and Malcolm X two years ago, are now generally accepted in the black community, or they are not argued about, or at the very least they are given lip service even by civil rights organizations that repudiated and denounced them not long ago.

The continued spread of Malcolm’s ideas can be illustrated by two of the major developments of the last year—Watts and the movement against the war in Vietnam.

Malcolm predicted Watts, and probably would have been blamed for it if he had lived. He predicted that 1965 would see the biggest explosion yet, and Watts was certainly the biggest and most explosive demonstration against racial oppression of our time. Malcolm did not call such explosions “race riots”—he used the word “pogrom” to describe the Harlem events of 1964—and he would have concurred with the youth of Watts who called their uprising a revolt, not a riot. Even the most obtuse commentators on the Watts events were compelled to recognize the basically black nationalist and potentially revolutionary character of the Watts uprising, which is only another way of saying its Malcolmite character. In the 1964 struggle, the people of Harlem who booed Bayard Rustin and James Farmer shouted, “We want Malcolm.” They could not do that in Watts in 1965. But in essence the people of Watts were shouting, through their actions, for a leadership with the integrity and intransigence of Malcolm.

Malcolm died just around the time of the first major escalation of the counterrevolutionary war against the people of Vietnam, and only eight weeks before the April March on Washington where the present antiwar movement was born. But he had been speaking out against the United States government’s war from the beginning. He spoke out against it long before Martin Luther King, and without any equivocation about where his sympathies lay. He spoke out against it in the spirit of the best and strongest parts of last month’s antiwar statement by SNCC, and would surely have supported the antiwar demonstrations scheduled to take place in the South this weekend. William Worthy reported in the November 20 *National Guardian* that during the International Days of Protest rally in Berkeley on October 16, one speaker on the sound truck remarked to another: “Has it occurred to you that if Malcolm X had not been assassinated last February, he would undoubtedly be speaking here today or at one of the other big demonstrations? His presence would have added an important extra dimension to the protest.” He could also have said, with equal accuracy, that Malcolm was one of the influences that had helped to educate and inspire many of the thousands of young people who came out into the streets that day. Malcolm placed his greatest hopes in young people, in students; he would have felt his hopes were being confirmed by the rise of the present antiwar movement, and he would have reached out the hand of solidarity toward it.

In the Summer issue of *Dissent*, the social democratic magazine which some people are beginning to call *Assent*, Irving Howe, its editor, claimed that he had heard Malcolm say at a meeting “that he would go, not unarmed, to Mississippi, if the Negroes there would ask him to come: a condition that could only leave him safely North, since the last thing the Negroes of Mississippi needed or wanted was Malcolm’s military aid.” Since this was a misrepresentation both of what Malcolm had said and of sentiment in the South, I wrote *Dissent* a letter pointing out that Malcolm did not remain “safely” North, but went to Alabama and spoke there twice in the last month of his life, getting an enthusiastic reception from the Selma students, and was scheduled to speak in Mississippi the weekend he was killed. And I added that “the spread of the Deacons for Defense and Justice into Mississippi indicates that Howe is not speaking for all Mississippi’s Negroes” when he says they don’t need or want Malcolm’s position on self-defense. Howe replied in the Autumn issue that he would not argue about what Malcolm had said, but insisted that it would not do “to invoke the Deacons” as an example of what Malcolm was advocating. “For that group, whatever judgment one may make of its methods, is involved with, part of, the Civil Rights Movement; it works together with CORE; it does not, as Malcolm did, talk violence and practice abstentionism.”

Now the question is not whether Malcolm was willing to work together with CORE on certain projects; of course he was willing—they were the ones who were unwilling. The question is: Are the Deacons the kind of self-defense movement Malcolm advocated, or aren’t they? I think the answer is that they are, that Howe is trying to create a distinction that doesn’t exist in reality, as part of his tendency’s persistent effort to cut Malcolm down. But if anyone doesn’t agree, I would offer the testimony of the Deacons themselves. In particular, I would offer the testimony of Henry Austan, a young man who joined the Deacons in Bogalusa last year, around the same time Malcolm was killed. Austan is out on bond and faces trial, with a possible ten-year prison sentence, for shooting a racist assailant in self-defense during a civil rights march in Bogalusa last July. Here are some of the things Henry Austan said, as reported in the November 22 *Militant*:

“The Deacons have given the Negro throughout the nation an organization they can point to with dignity. There is no dignity in the non-violent march. . . . There is no dignity when a Negro woman is attacked. . . . The attackers have no respect for the non-violent. . . .

“They patted Dr. King on the head when he used non-violence in Alabama. If non-violence is such a good thing, why don’t we have a non-violent army in Vietnam? When King condemned the Deacons for using ‘violence’ in defending Negroes’ lives and property, they gave him a Nobel prize. When Dr. King condemned me for shooting a white racist, they called him a responsible leader. When King condemned the U.S. for armed intervention in Vietnam, they said Dr. King had stopped being responsible and had gone into meddling.

“If violence is right in Vietnam, then surely violence is right in Mississippi. If violence can be a righteous tool for the white man, then surely it can be just as righteous for the black man. If violence can be used to murder defenseless women and children in Vietnam, then certainly it can be used in Louisiana to defend Negroes’ lives and property.

“It seems funny to me they want me to fight the Vietcong, when the Vietcong never called me a nigger.”

Whose voice does that resemble, if not Malcolm’s?—even though it comes from a young man who didn’t become active until Malcolm was dead. So it is not at all surprising to hear Henry Austan continue in that *Militant* interview and say:

“Malcolm X is my idol. Malcolm had not yet reached his peak, but I believe he was on the right road. The road I’m on is the one I think he was on. I think he believed that the black man in America had to unite and to stand up. I think this is what he was trying to do—unite the Negroes. He once said, ‘Freedom by any means necessary’—which I made my motto. I hope it will become the motto of the entire black mass of this country.”

So Malcolm’s ideas have been spreading since his death, in the South as well as the North—not only his ideas on the specific question of self-defense, but his whole outlook, which was summed up in the motto the Henry Austans have chosen and hope will become the motto of all black people in this country. They are taking root and spreading, especially among the young people—those in their twenties and late teens, and younger even than that. I want to conclude my documentation by citing a recent incident as encouraging in its way as Henry Austan’s remarks and example.

There is a Saturday afternoon TV program in New York called “Speak Out” which is conducted by Sonny Fox over station WNEW-TV. Sarah Slack reported in the November 20 *Amsterdam News* that forty high school students were on that program discussing the questions, “Who are your heroes?” and “Why are they your heroes?” The expected answers were indicated by a row of blown-up photographs they had on display—pictures of John F. Kennedy, John Glenn, John Wayne, Lyndon Johnson, and others of that type. To the probable surprise of the authorities, one student, described in the article as “a clean-cut American teen-age Negro boy,” said:

“Malcolm X, more than any other individual, helped the Negro race raise the image of itself. And he, more than any other, helped the Negro show more pride in being a Negro.”

Another youth, white, said: “Malcolm X is a hero to me because he stood up like a man and fought so strongly for his beliefs. Malcolm X did not run over anybody to get him to believe as he did. He simply talked and those who want to believe him did so.”

And a young girl, also white, said “Malcolm X fought for what he believed in. It is right for a person to fight for his beliefs.”

I am not sure about the accuracy of the saying about what comes out of the mouths of babes, but I do believe that what comes out of the mouths of teenagers is significant. For they are the next generation, the one just around the corner, who will be heard before the 1960s have ended. And when the truth has taken root among people still in junior high and high school, when they have been able to pierce through the anti-Malcolm propaganda and brainwashing and to identify with him, black and white, then I think we have every reason to believe that the propagandists and brainwashers of the ruling class have failed, and that Malcolm’s place in history will be as high and honorable as his influence on the next revolutionary generation will be strong and productive. □

How the *New York Times* Distorted Malcolm X's Views on Violence

by Walter Lippmann

The press is so powerful in its image-making role, it can make a criminal look like he's the victim and make the victim look like he's the criminal. This is the press, an irresponsible press. It will make the criminal look like he's the victim and make the victim look like he's the criminal. If you aren't careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.

If you aren't careful, because I've seen some of you get caught in that bag, you run away hating yourself and loving the man—while you are catching hell from the man. You let the man maneuver you into thinking it's wrong to fight him when he's fighting you. He's fighting you in the morning, fighting you at night and fighting you all in between, and you still think it's wrong to fight him back. Why? The press. The newspapers make you look wrong. As long as you take a beating, you're all right. As long as you get your head busted, you're all right. As long as you let his dogs fight you, you're all right. Because that's the press. That's the image-making press. That thing is dangerous if you don't guard yourself against it. It'll make you love the criminal, as I say, and make you hate the one who's the victim of the criminal.

—Malcolm X¹

Malcolm X was one of the best known and least understood public figures of modern times. His incomparable ability to articulate the aspirations of Black people had been honed by years of public speeches, debates, and media presentations on behalf of the Nation of Islam (popularly known as the Black Muslims). It was further developed during the last year of his life, as the leader of his own independent trend of thought and action.

Malcolm's views were carefully thought out and painstakingly presented, because he was always conscious of the need to win over and educate his audiences. As a member of the Nation of Islam, and its leading public representative, Malcolm's appeal to reason made his approach quite different from that of the Nation's leader, Elijah Muhammad, whose appeals were made to faith and authority.²

His precise formulation of issues was especially true on the question of self-defense, or as the press called it, the question of "violence." Malcolm and the Nation of Islam were continually accused of preaching violence, advocating violence, "race war," etc. Was this true? Was this what Malcolm spoke out for? What were his real views?

Throughout his life, Malcolm was confronted with violence, beginning with the rape of his mother and the murder of his father by white racists. Violence would stalk him through his years in the criminal underworld of Harlem, as well as his years as a Muslim minister, when he witnessed repeated attacks on Black people. When the Los Angeles Muslim mosque was

attacked by police in 1962, Malcolm was assigned to organize the Nation's public response. His life ended in violence when an assassin's bullet struck him down as he began to address an indoor political meeting.

From the need to simply survive as an individual, through his developing consciousness of the need for a full program to solve the problems of Black people, Malcolm prepared himself to meet and to stop violence through self-defense.

This concern for self-defense against a socially originated violence is clearly shown in his *Autobiography*, where we find Malcolm preparing to defend himself on a number of different occasions and circumstances.³

After joining the Nation of Islam, when Malcolm became a public figure, he learned to spell out the need for self-defense explicitly, as in this 1960 statement:

We are never aggressors. We will not attack anyone. We strive for peaceful relationships with everyone. BUT—[we teach our people that] if anyone attacks you, lay down your life! Every Muslim is taught never to [initiate a] fight. Respect another man's life rights whether he is white, black, brown, yellow or what-not! Respect him as a man. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!" Never be the aggressor, never look for trouble. But if any man molests you, may Allah bless you!⁴

The above quotation, utterly unambiguous, was available to anyone looking for the truth in the widely circulated book *The Black Muslims in America* by C. Eric Lincoln, published in 1961. It was reviewed in the *New York Times* book review section on April 23, 1962.

If the record was not clear from the above quotation, another appeared in Louis E. Lomax's book *When the Word Is Given . . .*, a 1963 study of the Nation of Islam which appeared early in 1964:

Lomax: It is suggested also that your movement preaches violence.

Malcolm X: No, sir. The black people of this country have been victims of violence at the hands of the white men for four hundred years and following the ignorant Negro preachers, we have thought that it was god-like to turn the other cheek to the brute that was brutalizing us. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is teaching black people in this country that, just as the white man and every other person on this earth has God-given rights, natural rights, civil rights, any kind of rights that you can think of, when it comes to defending himself, black people, we should have the right to defend ourselves also. And, because the Honorable Elijah Muhammad makes black people brave enough, men to defend ourselves no matter what the odds are, the white man runs around here with a doctrine that Mr. Muhammad is

advocating violence when he is actually telling negroes to defend themselves against violent people.⁵

Prior to 1963, coverage of the Nation of Islam in the *New York Times* was sporadic at best. The Nation's attitude toward "violence" was not covered.

Nineteen sixty-three was a turning point in the liberation struggle by Black people in the United States. Marked by an increasing militancy and a rejection of tokenism and gradualism, the year saw the explosion of the Birmingham ghetto in May. In June there was a massive protest march of over 200,000 in Detroit initiated by Black radicals. Finally, in August, there was the better known and more politically moderate March on Washington.

The growing militancy of the freedom struggle was in part due to the pressure put on the major civil rights organizations by the Nation of Islam and Malcolm. He sharply criticized their weaknesses and hesitation, and their inability to prevent racist attacks against Black people. The Nation of Islam grew considerably at that time. Their critique of the existing organizations was widely felt to reflect reality. In good measure, this was due to Malcolm's ability to translate his political conceptions into the language of the Black masses.

For all these reasons, the *New York Times* in 1963 began to increase its coverage of the Nation of Islam. The coverage varied widely in quality. One excellent series appeared, written by M.S. Handler. Malcolm's views on political developments of the day were faithfully recorded by Handler. His articles won Malcolm's praise for their accuracy, and he was asked to write the preface to Malcolm's *Autobiography*. Handler accurately reported Malcolm's remarks on self-defense:

We don't preach hatred and violence. But we believe that if a four-legged or a two-legged dog attacks a Negro, he should be killed. We only believe in defending ourselves against attack.⁶

The lesson of Birmingham is that the Negroes have lost their fear of the white man's reprisals, and will react today with violence, if provoked. This could happen anywhere in the country today.⁷

Handler's superiors at the *Times* were, however, less interested in an accurate presentation of Malcolm's views. Just three weeks after the above quotations appeared in the *Times*, C.L. Sulzberger, in his Foreign Affairs column, wrote:

A nasty phenomenon of this century has for the first time extended its shadow, if faintly, across the North American continent. This is the phenomenon of violence expressed or threatened by extreme activists in dissatisfied minority groups.⁸

Sulzberger tried to link the cautious Black Muslims with such diverse groups as the left nationalist Front de Liberation Quebecois in Canada and the fascist Organization de l'Armee Secrete in France. Note carefully the line about violence "threatened" by "extreme activists." Malcolm was always clear to avoid precisely such advocacy, as his actual words clearly demonstrate.

While Malcolm was still under the discipline of the Nation of Islam, the *Times* only once saw fit to editorially attack the growing nationalist movement, although it gave coverage to attacks on the Muslims by other groups and individuals.⁹ The

news stories about the Muslims were more or less accurate, with Handler's articles the high point of the period.

The basic orientation of the Nation of Islam, as laid down by Elijah Muhammad, combined a verbal intransigence and rejection of modern American society with a refusal to get actively involved in the daily struggle to change it. Malcolm's role as chief public representative and troubleshooter for the Muslims brought him into more contact with militants actually involved in the struggle than any other Muslim official, including Elijah Muhammad.

Malcolm was under pressure by these militants, as well as by rank-and-file Muslims, to translate some of the verbal intransigence into practical action by joining the struggle and giving it a more militant direction. Malcolm stated this openly in an interview with Lomax given shortly before his split:

But I will tell you this: The Messenger has seen God. He was with Allah and was given divine patience with the devil. He is willing to wait for Allah to deal with this devil. Well, sir, the rest of us Black Muslims have not seen God, we don't have this gift of divine patience with the devil. The younger Black Muslims want to see some action.¹⁰

In the year after the split from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm's ideas developed very rapidly. They developed in a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and pro-socialist direction, as George Breitman has pointed out in his book, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*.¹¹ Because of this new orientation, the editors of the *Times* began a campaign of distortion and vilification against Malcolm and his ideas. This came as no surprise, in view of Malcolm's expressed desire to get off the sidelines and into the struggle.

Malcolm sought to give the struggle a revolutionary orientation. He also saw the need for political education against the white-dominated socioeconomic system of the United States, which he saw as completely racist in character. The *New York Times*, the most authoritative defender of the American social order, thus had a vital interest in preventing the broad circulation and acceptance of Malcolm's ideas.

To accomplish this, it was necessary to misrepresent the views he actually held, thus making him appear ridiculous, crazy and/or socially dangerous. In this respect, the *Times* set the editorial tone for the general nationwide pattern of distortions of Malcolm's actual views. A final, and not unimportant aim, was to politically prepare the public for the murder of Malcolm X. That is why, as we shall see, one of the key points the *Times* editors hammered away at was the lie that Malcolm favored violence.

Let us see how the *New York Times* covered the story of Malcolm X during the last year of his life, bearing in mind the *Times* motto, printed on its masthead, that it publishes "All the News That's Fit to Print."

Malcolm's split from the Nation of Islam was announced at a press conference in New York on March 12, 1964. He issued a statement outlining his views at that time, which included the following passage:

Concerning non-violence: it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law.

In areas where our people are the constant victims of brutality, and the government seems unwilling or unable to protect them, we should form rifle clubs that can be used to defend our lives and property in times of emergency, such as happened last year in Birmingham, Plaquemines, La; Cambridge, Md; and Danville, Va. When our people are being bitten by dogs, they are within their rights to kill those dogs.

We should also be peaceful, law-abiding—but the time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked.

M.S. Handler, in an article printed in the next day's *Times*, reported the essence of the press conference and the statement issued, including a quotation of the first paragraph above.

Malcolm, perhaps aware in advance of what the press reaction to his declaration would be, commented to the assembled reporters:

I am not dumb enough to advocate the violent overthrow of the government, but it is within the Negro's right to do whatever is necessary to win freedom, justice, and equality.

It is our moral, legal, and religious right to defend ourselves, just as whites do.¹²

The *New York Times* editors had a fundamentally different political approach from Malcolm. On Saturday, March 14, an editorial was printed with the title, "To Arms with Malcolm X," which included the following paragraphs:

Malcolm X, the embittered racist recently ousted from the Black Muslim movement, has struck back in anger. He has called upon Negroes to form rifle clubs, ostensibly to defend lives and property in time of emergency. "It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or rifle," he says, adding with a straight face, "We believe in obeying the law." His is a call to break the law; to take the law into one group's hands; to erect a private militia.

His is a call to arms against duly constituted police forces. When he mocked the assassination of President Kennedy, he exposed himself to Negroes and whites as the irresponsible demagogue he is. The Negro civil rights movement has accomplished more in the past few years by non-violence—by what its real leaders call active passive resistance—than by appeals to armed mobs.

The above passage from the *Times* gives a vivid example of its political and editorial methods. Note the tone of the comments, including such adjectives as "embittered racist," "struck back in anger" (against whom?), "with a straight face," "armed mobs."

How else but "with a straight face" is one supposed to issue a call for self-defense, a matter of the utmost seriousness for anyone who advocates or practices it? What about those armed mobs? That was the opposite of what Malcolm called for. When he said he wanted rifle clubs formed, he meant precisely that the defense of the Black community should be carried on in an organized, disciplined, planned way, so that the minimum possible force would be necessary. He expressed concern that innocent bystanders not get hurt. That would surely happen if people were to pick up arms at random and begin firing whenever they were attacked.

Not only does the semihysterical tone give a distorted impression of what Malcolm meant, but the editorial also very seriously changes exactly what Malcolm was trying to convey. When the *Times* refers to a call to break the law, when it refers

to a "call to arms against duly constituted police forces," it twists the truth completely.

Malcolm said, "In areas where our people are the constant victims of brutality, and *the government seems unwilling or unable to protect them*, we should form rifle clubs. . ." (emphasis added). This was not a call to attack anyone. In fact, it was a clear and open call upon the government to defend the democratic rights of the Black citizens of this country.

This was not a call to take action against duly constituted police forces, unless calling upon them to do their duty is an attack on them. The *Times* editorial aimed to give the impression that somehow Malcolm was responsible for the explosions of discontent by the ghetto dwellers of this country, thus absolving the "duly constituted police forces" and government representatives of their responsibility in these areas.

The next important occasion in which the *Times* saw fit to attack Malcolm was in May 1964 in a series of horror stories about an alleged gang of Black youth in Harlem, calling themselves "Blood Brothers," whose supposed purpose was training Black youths in techniques for killing white people.

On May 29, 1964, a front-page story appeared with the headline, "Harlem: the Tension Underneath." Its author was Junius Griffin. A picture of two figures practicing judo purported to depict members of the "Blood Brothers" appeared underneath the headline. The faces were darkened so that identification was not possible. The article reported a small fight that took place over a fruitstand in Harlem. Out of this fight, it was suggested, the murder of its owner came about. A few selections from the article will reveal what was being attempted:

The trouble, now known in Harlem as the Fruit Riot, set the stage for the expansion of anti-white youth gangs, some of whose members call themselves Blood Brothers. The police say that three Harlem youths under indictment for the recent murder of two white women are members of the Blood Brothers and participated in the Fruit Riot.

In the six weeks since the riot, the Blood Brothers have intensified their training in Judo and Karate fighting methods, peaceful Harlem residents have become worried, and the Police Department has detailed some of its best men to concentrate on the central Harlem area.

Social workers and community leaders trace the anti-white philosophy of Harlem youth gangs to 1959, the year when the Black Muslim and Black Nationalist movements began to spread. Malcolm X, who formerly headed the Black Muslim Harlem Mosque, and who was noted for his speeches denouncing the white man, became the idol of many of Harlem's youth.

Malcolm broke away from the parent Black Muslim group last March and formed Muslim Mosque, a Black Nationalist group.

His Black Nationalist organization is one of nine in Harlem advocating Black control and unity in economics, politics, and social activities of the Negro, patterned on the emerging new nations of Africa.

Black-against-black activities have disappeared and many of Harlem's youths have found new interest in Africa and its leaders.

Within three years, about 5,000 apostate Black Muslims fanned out in the Harlem community. They adopted Malcolm's anti-white philosophy.

It was the philosophy of this group that encouraged the formation of the Blood Brothers and three or four similar

gangs. While there is no known connection between Malcolm X and the Blood Brothers, dissident Black Muslims have trained senior members of the gang.

Interspersed throughout the article are several more fuzzy pictures of alleged "Blood Brothers" practicing judo techniques. The author claims to have interviewed several members, and cites quotations from them. Proceeding from the front page, the article takes up almost a full inside page, an indication of the importance attached to the story. This was only one of several articles by the same author that was given prominent placement by the *Times* during this period. All of the articles dealt with the alleged "hate gang." The *Times* also ran an editorial on the story, calling for police repression of the group.

These articles, and especially the one excerpted above, contain an amazing assortment of contradictory and unsubstantiated statements. The last paragraph, cited above, is an example. Referring to a group of dissident ("apostate") Black Muslims, it is asserted that the philosophy of this group encouraged the formation of hate gangs. Completely left out of these stories were the actual conditions in which most Harlem residents were forced to live.

Another example: "While there is no known connection between Malcolm X and the Blood Brothers, dissident Black Muslims have trained senior members of the gang." Malcolm was known to be a "dissident" Black Muslim, so that despite the statement to the contrary, the implication is made from the juxtaposition of the different phrases that Malcolm was responsible for the growth of the group.

The most important social welfare agency operating in Harlem at the time was the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU). It was headed by the distinguished sociologist Dr. Kenneth Clark. The agency had numerous contacts with ghetto militants, and was certainly in a position to know of the existence of such a "hate gang." Dr. Clark issued a statement on May 7, 1964:

The story reported in the *New York Times* of May 6, 1964, attributing to a researcher of Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited information indicating the existence of a Harlem gang or gangs indoctrinated or trained by dissident Black Muslims and dedicated to organizing anti-white activity has no basis in fact.¹³

The *New York Times*, which had tried to give the impression that it was concerned to bring out the facts on this case, was only able to find space in the middle of an article which appeared on page 67 to print Dr. Clark's statement! It is clear from the prominence given these stories, and the burial of the reply, that the *Times* was intent upon creating an impression that the Harlem community was preparing for massive armed slaughter of white people.

Yet another series of events occurred which lends great weight to the hypothesis that the origins of the *Times* story was in its editorial department rather than in the Harlem ghetto.

Junius Griffin, author of the *Times* article, was invited, along with a number of Black freedom fighters, to participate in a panel discussion on the "hate gang" story. The participants included Malcolm X, just returned from Africa, Quentin Hand of the Harlem Action Group, William Reed of Harlem CORE, and Clifton DeBerry, 1964 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party.

Griffin initially accepted the invitation to speak at the Militant Labor Forum in New York. (The *Militant*, a weekly newspaper reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party, had received Malcolm's praise because of its accurate reports of his statements and activities.) On the day of the scheduled event, Griffin pulled out, sending a telegram which included the following, "Regret that cannot participate in your symposium. Professional ethics restrain me from such participation."¹⁴

One can only wonder what "professional ethics" prevent a reporter from appearing on a panel with leaders of Harlem's Black community to defend a front-page news story he had written for the *New York Times*.

The summer of 1964 saw a series of explosions in the nation's Black ghettos, including Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Rochester, Chicago. In these areas, Black residents responded to police attacks; they responded by attacking the police and other symbols of domination of the ghettos by outside forces.

During this time Malcolm was traveling in Africa. He attended meetings with leaders of the newly independent states of Africa, who aspired to free their homelands from colonialism. He finally made the hajj, the holy trip to Mecca, which Muslims are required to make at least once during their lives. Thus, it would seem obvious that Malcolm, out of the country for the whole period of the ghetto outbreaks, was not in a position to have started or been responsible for them. But in September, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released a report on the summer outbreaks. The report stated that:

The evidence indicates that aside from the actions of minor organizations or irresponsible individuals, there was no systematic planning or organization in any of the city riots.

The report then listed and described, without directly naming, three individual "troublemakers" whose activities were alleged to have been instrumental in bringing about the "riots." First on the FBI list was Malcolm X:

In March of this year a widely publicized ex-convict announced a broadly based nationalist movement for Negroes only. In this announcement, which was frequently repeated and widely noticed, Negroes were urged to abandon the doctrine of non-violence and to organize rifle clubs "to protect their lives and property."¹⁵

By these methods, Harlem leaders Bill Epton and Jesse Gray were put also put on trial by the FBI and in the newspapers. Once again, this story was front-page news in the *New York Times*.

The last major blast by the *Times* against Malcolm X came in the editorial published after his assassination:

The life and death of Malcolm X provides a discordant but typical theme for the times in which we live. He was a case history, as well as an extraordinary and twisted man, turning many true gifts to evil purpose.

Malcolm X had the ingredients for leadership, but his ruthless and fanatical belief in violence not only set him apart from the responsible leaders of the civil rights movement and the overwhelming majority of Negroes. It also marked him for notoriety, and for a violent end.

Malcolm X's life was strangely and pitifully wasted. But this was because he did not seek to fit into society or into the life of his own people. He could not even come to terms with

his fellow black extremists. The world he saw through those horn-rimmed glasses of his was distorted and dark. But he made it darker still through his exaltation of fanaticism.

Yesterday someone came out of the darkness that he spawned and killed him. The murder of Malcolm X demands an investigation, even if it was a fanatic's act, and the fringe of fanatics has no trouble acquiring weapons for violence. But this murder could easily touch off a war of vengeance of the kind he himself fomented. It will take alertness and vigilance on the part of the police, especially in view of the ease with which lethal weapons are available, to make sure that violence is avoided.¹⁶

Here the *Times* repeats once again the lie that Malcolm advocated violence. This editorial fulfilled Malcolm's description of the role of the press perfectly; trying to make the criminal look like the victim, and the victim look like the criminal.

It twists and distorts reality and displays a venom rarely seen in the pages of the sophisticated *New York Times*. An example is the reference to "the darkness that he [!!] spawned." Everything is turned upside down here! The Black victims of discrimination, segregation, exploitation, and brutality are held to be the causes of violence and "darkness" when they act to protest the conditions in which they are forced to live.

The editorial distortions of the exact content of Malcolm's views were not the only ways in which the *New York Times* conveyed, or attempted to convey, a false impression as to the nature of these views. The placement of articles in the paper is also significant. Stories dealing with supposedly "inflammatory" statements by Malcolm, the series on the "Blood Brothers," and other attacks, such as the March 1964 attack on Malcolm and other Black radicals by New York City Police Commissioner Michael Murphy, were all given prominent space on the front pages of the *Times*, or in the columns of the editorial section.

The accurate accounts by M. S. Handler, as well as the more factual articles, and materials like Dr. Clark's repudiation of the "Blood Brothers" hoax were buried inside the paper. The reader just glancing over the front pages would get a different impression than the reader who carefully read every inch of news coverage.

The printing of certain articles and documents, such as the FBI report on the 1964 explosions, without any editorial comment dissociating the *New York Times* from the conclusions presented, leaves the obvious implication that the *Times* agreed with the material.

Malcolm X was the most outstanding revolutionary leader to have developed out of the Black peoples's struggle for freedom, justice, and liberation in the United States. During Malcolm's lifetime, the *New York Times* was the leading daily newspaper in the country. As the preeminent defender of the existing capitalist social system, the *Times* set the tone and line for the rest of the news media. Reviewing its coverage of the life and legacy of Malcolm X, a clear pattern of distortion and misrepresentation is apparent.

When the reader has occasion in the future to consult the newspaper regarding important issues of the day, please bear in mind that "All the News That's Fit to Print" does not mean the same thing as "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." □

Bibliographic Note

The best way to understand Malcolm X's ideas about violence or anything else is to hear the speeches he gave which were tape recorded. The next best thing is to read *Malcolm X Speaks*. A list of existing tapes and lecture notes may be found in an appendix to *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* by George Breitman. *The Last Year of Malcolm X* also contains an exhaustive listing of books, pamphlets, and magazine articles by or about Malcolm which had appeared by 1967.

Notes

1. *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York, Merit Publishers, 1965), p. 101.
2. See "Malcolm X, the Man and His Ideas" by George Breitman (*The Assassination of Malcolm X*, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1976), pp. 21-23.
3. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York, Grove Press, 1965).
4. C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 4-5.
5. Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word Is Given . . .* (New York, Signet Books, 1964), pp. 173-74.
6. *New York Times*, May 10, 1963.
7. *New York Times*, May 11, 1963.
8. *New York Times*, May 29, 1963.
9. See, for example, *New York Times*, June 21, July 3, July 11, and October 24, 1963.
10. Lomax, *When the Word Is Given . . .*, p. 179.
11. George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York, Merit Publishers, 1967), pp. 34-38.
12. *Militant*, March 24, 1964.
13. The full text was printed in the *Militant*, May 8, 1964.
14. *Militant*, June 8, 1964.
15. *New York Times*, September 27, 1964.
16. *New York Times*, February 22, 1965.

Treatment of Political Prisoners in the United States Is Denounced

On December 7 through 10, at Hunter College in New York City, a special international tribunal—sponsored by a broad array of organizations representing minority groups and the fight for human rights—heard testimony about the legal persecution of those in the United States who fight actively against the policies of this government. The verdict: “Within the prisons and jails of the United States exist substantial numbers of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War,” and further, “The criminal justice system of the U.S. is being used in a harsh and discriminatory way against political activists in the U.S.” The international panel of legal experts and human rights advocates called on the U.S. government to: “1) Release all prisoners who have been incarcerated for the legitimate exercise of their rights of self-determination or in opposition to U.S. policies and practices illegal under international law. 2) Cease all acts of interference and repression against political movements struggling for self-determination or against policies and practices illegal under international law.”

This verdict, and the evidence upon which it was based, is extremely important.

The image of the United States in many parts of the world, even the view held by most people in this country, is of a democratic society where opponents of the government can dissent freely. But the tolerance of dissent in this country has always had strict limits. Revolutionary-minded activists in the Black and Latino communities, in particular, have long been a target of govern-

ment disruption and persecution. Revelations in the 1970s about the government's COINTELPRO operation (“Counter-Intelligence Program,” directed not against foreign intelligence but against U.S. dissident groups) demonstrated conclusively that there was a conscious policy, implemented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government agencies, to organize violence within groups like the Black Panther Party during the 1960s, and then frame up—or even assassinate—their leaders on the grounds of “combating violence and terrorism.”

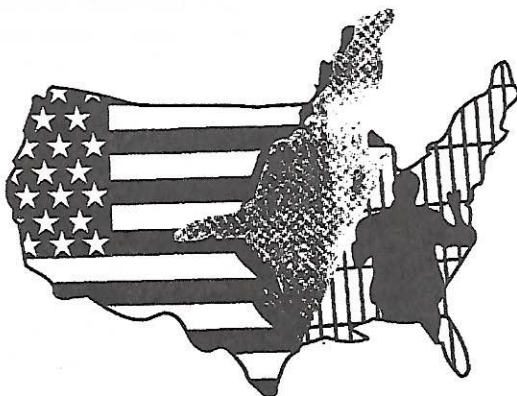
The COINTELPRO was formally terminated after its unconstitutional operations were revealed to the public. The federal government's policy of spying, harassment, and persecution of political dissidents, however, has not ceased for a single day. And the relevant facts of the case were clearly developed

during the two days of testimony before the tribunal. Witnesses included Blacks, American Indians, Latinos, and whites. Former political prisoners, individuals who have worked with or defended political prisoners, historical and legal experts all testified.

Members of the tribunal were Frank Badohu, barrister and solicitor, Association of African Jurists, Ghana; Jawad Boulus, attorney, Palestine; Lord Anthony Gifford, barrister in London and a member of the Northern Ireland Bar and Jamaican Bar, member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom; Norman Paech, professor of public international law and constitutional law at the University of Hamburg, Germany; José Roberto Rendón Vázquez, attorney and professor, faculty of law and political science at Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Perú; Celina Romany, professor of jurisprudence, constitutional law and human rights, City University of New York Law School; Toshi Yuki Tanaka, professor of political science at Melbourne University, Australia; and George Wald, professor emeritus of biology at Harvard University, Nobel prize winner for Biology, U.S.A. Because U.S. and international public opinion should be made aware of the facts that the tribunal has documented, as well as the conclusions it drew from those facts, the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is publishing, starting in this issue, the text of its findings. The final verdict, with which we are beginning our

Introduction to the Findings of the Special International Tribunal

by Steve Bloom



coverage in order for readers to get a clear overview, was actually the conclusion of the document prepared by the tribunal itself (part VIII), which is why it talks about “the factual and legal foundations stated above.” Parts I and II of the judgment follow. Next month we will continue with part III (“The Right to Self-Determination”), and parts IV (“Puerto Rican Prisoners of War”), V (“White North American Opponents of United States Government Policies”), and VI (“Criminalization and Denial of the Rule of Law”) will appear in our April issue.

For more information on the tribunal and the problem of political prisoners in the U.S. contact: Freedom Now, 59 E. Van Buren, Rm 1400, Chicago, IL 60605, 312-663-4399 or 278-6706.

Judgment and Verdict

by the Special International Tribunal on the Violation of Human Rights of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in United States Prisons and Jails

VIII. Verdict

Based on the factual and legal foundations stated above, the Special Tribunal declares:

1) Within the prisons and jails of the United States exist substantial numbers of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.

2) These prisoners have been incarcerated for their opposition to U.S. government policies and actions that are illegal under domestic and international law, including the denial of the right to self-determination, and resistance to genocide, colonialism, racism, and militarism.

3) The U.S. government criminalizes and imprisons persons involved in the struggles for self-determination of Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Black and Mexicano-Chicano activists within the borders of the United States.

4) Those peoples legitimately struggling for national liberation are not to be treated as criminals, but must be afforded the status of Prisoners of War under the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention.

5) The U.S. government also criminalizes and imprisons white North-Americans and others who have worked in solidarity with struggles for self-determination as well as for peace and against nuclear arms, against racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

6) The criminal justice system of the U.S. is being used in a harsh and discriminatory way against political activists in the U.S.

7) The use of surveillance, infiltration, grand juries, preventive detention, politically motivated criminal conspiracy charges, prejudicial security, and anonymous trial juries deprive political activists of fair trials guaranteed under domestic and international law.

8) Political people have been subjected to disproportionately lengthy prison sentences and to torture, cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment within the U.S. prison system.

Further the Tribunal calls on the U.S. government to:

1) Release all prisoners who have been incarcerated for the legitimate exercise of their rights of self-determination or in opposition to U.S. policies and practices illegal under international law.

2) Cease all acts of interference and repression against political movements struggling for self-determination or against policies and practices illegal under international law.

I. Constitution of the Tribunal

The Special Tribunal on Violations of Human Rights of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in United States Prisons and Jails was convened by 88 sponsoring and endorsing organizations from all parts of the United States. The members

of the Special Tribunal assumed jurisdiction pursuant to accepted principles of international law approved and adopted by the world community under the United Nations Charter, in accordance with the precedents of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals and following procedures approved by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (Resolution 1503 [XLVIII]).

The Tribunal received extensive written and oral evidence from political activists and experts testifying in support of a detailed indictment of the United States Government, alleging, *inter alia*, the denial of the right of peoples in the United States and Puerto Rico to self-determination; the criminalization of the legitimate struggle against illegal acts committed by the Government of the United States; the denial of the rule of law to those engaged in such struggles and the use against them of torture, inhumane, and degrading treatment.

The Special Tribunal does not sit as a court of law but, like the Bertrand Russell Tribunals on the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people, this Tribunal applies principles of customary international human rights law. Article 38 of the Statutes of the International Court of Justice recognizes the authoritative effect of the findings of such tribunals on contemporary standards of international law.

The Defendant Government and its agencies are bound to respect international human rights law, not least because Article VI of the Constitution of the United States provides that treaties and other international agreements are "the supreme law of the land."

Although customary principles of law require Petitioners to exhaust their domestic remedies before having recourse to international fora, the overwhelming weight of testimony presented to the Tribunal showed that the courts and judicial officers of the United States routinely refuse to allow Petitioners to raise defenses based on international law and that relief under the law is routinely denied. Therefore we find that Petitioners have in fact exhausted all domestic remedies and that the Special Tribunal is entitled to review all of the cases presented for its consideration.

The Tribunal is satisfied that all appropriate steps were taken by Petitioners to inform the Defendant Government and its agencies of the nature and purposes of the Tribunal hearings, including the service of the indictment on President George Bush and other appropriate federal and state officials, and that every opportunity was given to Defendants to attend and present testimony. Although Defendants failed to avail themselves of the opportunity to testify, many of the documents and expert witnesses indicated fairly the basis of the Government's opposition to Petitioners' claims, and the Tribunal has duly noted Defendants' views in reaching its findings.

In examining the evidence and reaching its conclusions, the Tribunal has taken and employed the following definitions:

"Self-Determination": the right by virtue of which all peoples are entitled freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely

dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic cooperation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence. (Common Article 1 [1] of the International Human Rights Covenants, 1966)

"Prisoner of War": those combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist regimes captured as prisoners are to be accorded the status of prisoners of war and their treatment should be in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949. (General Assembly Resolution 3103[XXVIII]).

"Genocide": any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the groups;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948 [Article 2]).

"Political Prisoner": a person incarcerated for actions carried out in support of legitimate struggles for self-determination or for opposing the illegal policies of the United States government and/or its political subdivisions.

II. Overview

1990 has been a landmark year in the worldwide campaign for the recognition and freedom of political prisoners. The release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and other anti-apartheid fighters, and the negotiations for the release of all South African political prisoners, have shown that even the most repressive and intransigent regimes must at some point acknowledge the existence of political prisoners and account for their treatment and continuing imprisonment. For decades the South African government denied the existence of political prisoners, branding imprisoned anti-apartheid fighters as criminals and terrorists. However, the growing liberation struggle of the people of South Africa and worldwide solidarity forced the government of South Africa to abandon this farcical denial of political prisoners. Similarly, the triumph of the liberation struggle of the Namibian people led by SWAPO resulted in the independence and self-determination of Namibia, constituting a resounding affirmation of customary principles of international human rights law.

Ironically, the U.S. government has expressed strong support, albeit selective, for the freeing of political prisoners throughout the world. At the same time, however, the U.S. government vociferously denies the existence of political prisoners at home and resolutely echoes a familiar refrain that those who claim to be political prisoners and prisoners of war are simply terrorists and criminals.

This Tribunal presents a unique and important opportunity to review carefully Petitioners' contention that the U.S. does indeed hold political prisoners and Prisoners of War.

The Tribunal members have approached this responsibility with the utmost of seriousness and careful scrutiny. The U.S. government must be held to the same standard of international law and human rights safeguards that it subscribes to for the other nations of the world. The denial of the existence of political prisoners and the consequent failure to afford such prisoners the fundamental protections of humanitarian international law constitute serious violations of human rights which, if found to be true, would require the immediate attention of world public opinion and rectification by the U.S. government.

Numerous supporting documents which are delineated in the appendix were also submitted. Of particular interest were documents of the Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) showing its program to disrupt and neutralize leaders and organizations of the African American, Puerto Rican, Mexicano-Chicano, and Native American self-determination struggles.

As we will spell out in more detail in the body of this document, the Tribunal finds that the U.S. judicial system (state and federal) has been used in a harsh and discriminatory manner against people struggling for self-determination within its borders and Puerto Rico, as well as against other political opponents of the U.S. government. Some have been falsely accused and had evidence favorable to their defense destroyed or suppressed, others have been tried on overbroad conspiracy charges which rely on associations and beliefs as an essential element, and many have been tried in an armed camp atmosphere saturated with prejudicial publicity designed to intimidate and prejudice the juries before whom they were tried. Most of the Petitioners have also received draconian disproportionate sentences and have been subjected to torture, cruel, discriminatory, and degrading punishment.

We also find that the Black and Mexican people living within the borders of the United States, and Native American and Puerto Rican people have the fundamental right to exercise self-determination and to seek and receive support from other opponents of repression, and that the U.S. government has carried out a consistent pattern and policy of repression against these peoples, their leaders and supporters.

We further find that captured combatants in a legitimate national liberation movement are entitled to the special protected status of Prisoner of War and should not be tried and imprisoned by the U.S. government as criminals. Rather, these captured national liberation fighters must be held separately under conditions in accordance with the Geneva Convention and immediate steps taken to transfer these combatants to neutral countries until all hostilities cease between their movements and the U.S. government.

We are mindful that the U.S. judicial system is promoted by many here and throughout the world as one of the most progressive and protective of individual rights. The claim that the U.S. does not have political prisoners has gone generally unchallenged. We believe that the evidence presented at the Tribunal overwhelmingly established the opposite case. The U.S. government uses its judicial system to repress the legitimate political movements opposing the government.

It is of critical importance for the international human rights community as well as all freedom-loving people to bring to world attention the plight of U.S. political prisoners. □

Revelations and Misinformation in the USSR on Trotsky's Assassination

In August 1990, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky in exile in Mexico by Stalin's agent, two Soviet periodicals carried special features on the subject. Both features—one in the mass daily *Trud* [Labor] and the other in the glasnost mass weekly magazine *Ogonyok*—reported to the Soviet people more facts about the responsibility of Stalin and his agents for Trotsky's murder than had ever before been publicly admitted.

Trud, organ of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, with a circulation of more than 21 million, printed in two parts on August 14 and 15 an interview with Luis Mercader, the youngest brother of Trotsky's assassin, Ramon Mercader, entitled "Sacrificed in Vain?" *Ogonyok*, with a run of 4.6 million, ran a four-part series, "The Assassination of Trotsky," commencing with issue No. 34 on August 18. It was written by Yuri Paporov who was the Kremlin's cultural attache in Mexico in the 1950s and is now living in Mexico and working in the Trotsky Museum.

Both these items have special interest to those who are concerned about the excavation of historic truth from beneath the mounds of Stalinist lies. In reading these items, one can see just how far the reform-minded Stalinist rulers are prepared to go in promoting this process and where they draw the line. For millions of Soviet readers, the information contained in these articles must have been new, since the official historians have only recently even admitted Stalin's role in Trotsky's murder. But just how much did these special features really report? How much were still lies?

It is in the interest of assessing the progress being made on this front that we present the following material.

Ramon Mercader had three brothers (Jorge born 1911, Pablo born 1915, and Luis born 1923) and one sister (Montserrat, birth date unknown). To establish the truth over fiction, information has been bracketed into the *Trud* interview with Luis by Marilyn Vogt-Downey, who did the translation. The sources used for the bracketed information were primarily Isaac Don Levine's *The Mind of an Assassin*, which despite Levine's political bias contains important factual information (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, New York, 1959), and Isaac Deutscher's *Prophet Outcast, Trotsky 1929-1940* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1980).

Following the items from the Soviet press we are printing excerpts from statements by Ramon Mercader's mother acknowledging her role in Trotsky's assassination and that of her son to a leading Spanish Communist.

An Assessment of Trotsky's Assassination in *Ogonyok*

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

Ogonyok's four-part series "The Assassination of Trotsky," by a former Soviet cultural attache in Mexico Yuri Paporov, is prefaced as follows: "An enormous amount of literature exists about Leon Trotsky's murder. Dozens of investigations, memoirs, and collections of documents have appeared about Trotsky's stay in Mexico. This documentary narrative by Yuri Paporov is the first attempt to tell this story to our compatriots. The author's account is based on materials collected by him in the 1950s when he worked in Mexico as a cultural attache and met and became friends with persons who were directly involved in the events. Yuri Paporov's testimony shines a light into many dark and obscure corners of this 'murder of the century.' It is no accident that a Mexican publisher is interested in his story."

This buildup is misleading. The "documentary narrative" would fill a small book. However, only a small portion of the "materials collected by him in the 1950s" reflects Paporov's unique vantage point in the apparatus that is used to entice the reader's interest: this new material consists of quotes from two conversations Paporov had in June 1956—one with David Siqueiros, the leader of the May 1940 unsuccessful attempt to kill Trotsky, and the other with Diego Rivera.

The rest of the material was "collected" by Paporov the way anyone else would do it—from the numerous "investigations, memoirs, and collections of documents" that are available in many libraries here and abroad, but of course, not in the USSR. Because of Paporov's privilege of living abroad, he was able to read materials other Soviet citizens have been denied access to by the ruling apparatchiks since Stalin's time. What Paporov has done in part is turn this material into a sort of cheap cop thriller that reveals to the reader for the first time the names and deeds of some of the dozens of participants from Europe, the USSR, Latin America, and North America in Stalin's vast and expensive organization dedicated to the murder of Trotsky.

The account is outstanding in Soviet terms for three reasons. First, the series

does present a great deal of material that has never before been presented to Soviet readers. Second, the facts are presented more or less faithfully, unlike for example the falsifications presented as facts in the *Trud* interview with the assassin's brother (see p. 34). Third, the author does not use the admission of Kremlin responsibility for the crime and the revelation of facts about it as an excuse to attack Trotsky and glorify the assassin—the way most other Soviet accounts have done before now. In fact, Trotsky is almost presented in a sympathetic light.

Part I deals with the police investigation of the first (Siqueiros-led) attempt in May 1940, as seen through the eyes of Colonel Leandro Sanchez Salazar, chief investigator for the Mexican secret police. Part II continues this account but works up to his brief meeting with Siqueiros in 1956.¹ Part III recounts the background to Trotsky's arrival in Mexico. This includes descriptions of the suppression of Trotsky in exile and under virtual house arrest in Norway in the fall of 1936. Paporov also shows how these conditions—concessions by the Norwegian government to Stalin—made it impossible for Trotsky to directly refute the slanderous charges raised against him and other Bolshevik leaders at the first of the Moscow purge trials.

The material in Part III may be based at least in part on what Diego Rivera told Paporov during their 1956 meeting, but it is also available in numerous other sources. Part III also includes other material about the conditions Trotsky and Natalya encountered in Mexico upon their arrival. Diego Rivera, who had been a supporter of the opposition to Stalin in 1936, had played a key role in getting the Mexican government to grant Trotsky political asylum. In 1939, however, Trotsky and Rivera broke politically over what position to take following Stalin's invasion of Finland and over other political and personal differences. Rivera subsequently joined the Mexican Communist Party of which he was a member in 1956, although Paporov never mentions this fact.

Part IV documents the entry of Ramon Mercader into the group plotting the assassination and identifies a number of those who played key roles. The story describes how Mercader, through carefully contrived deception, gradually gained access to the Trotsky household and carried out the assassination. Paporov also reports how Mercader's true identity was established by a Mexican doctor, Alfonso Quiroz Cuaron, through his independent research. Mercader, throughout the police interrogation and the investigation and all through his twenty years in Mexico's Lecumberri Prison, refused to disclose who he really was or anything factual about his background, persistently denying that he had acted on Stalin's orders.

The principal weakness of Paporov's account is disturbing, however, because of its broader implications. Paporov provides no source references to document what he says; he does not direct those interested to reliable data. For example, it is obvious that the bulk of the material in the Parts I and II came from the book written by Col. Leandro Sanchez Salazar about his investigation of the Trotsky assassination—*Murder in Mexico*—published in Mexico in 1955. However, Paporov nowhere makes any mention of the book. The accounts of Trotsky's life in exile in Norway and in Mexico could have come from Isaac Deutscher's *Prophet Outcast*. The account of the way the assassination was organized could have come from material in Deutscher's book; from David King's *Trotsky: A Photographic Biography*; from *Mind of an Assassin*, by Isaac Don Levine;

or from any of numerous works containing the facts Paporov reports. However, Paporov provides no sources.

This is a particular problem because Soviet readers have long been subjected to a Stalinist-inspired pseudoscholarship. This method of writing is based on making assertions that are unverified and unverifiable by the reader—because the sources have been deliberately and persistently rendered inaccessible by the ruling Stalinist caste. In this way the entire Soviet population has been fed falsified history for decades. This process is only now being partially and slowly rectified because people in the USSR have taken advantage of the openings offered by glasnost to press for access to previously suppressed writings and documents, and some are now available to the public.

Those who honestly aspire to restore historic truth need to utilize a different method than the one chosen by Paporov. Sources of information need to be disclosed. This is even more important in cases like Trotsky's assassination since a vast quantity of literature on the subject exists that has long been unavailable to Soviet readers. They should be able to find out the extent of the material that has been denied them. Paporov's series does not accomplish that.

Were such sources omitted because *Ogonyok's* editors removed the references from the articles so as to avoid overstepping the limits of glasnost? Or did Paporov, who apparently is no longer in the Soviet diplomatic corps, exercise self-censorship, fearing himself to cross that line? The major archives on the Trotsky assassination located in the Kremlin are still under lock and key. Although many of the major figures in this "murder of the century" are now dead, the Kremlin rulers still have many secrets they want kept, and many reputations to protect both in the USSR and abroad.

Another factor makes the omission of sources disturbing. An uninitiated reader could think that Paporov is providing revelations based on his own independent research. A December 19 *New York Times* article about Paporov indicated that he is currently being paid by the Mexican government to help organize the newly renovated Trotsky Museum in Coyoacán where Trotsky had lived and was murdered. The *Times* piece was written by

Mark Uhlig, who proved himself an unreliable reporter in his coverage of events in Nicaragua over the past four or five years, and we can therefore take the facts it reports in the appropriate spirit of caution. Nevertheless, it states that Paporov is the "first outside scholar who has been permitted full access to the library's collection." It goes on to quote Paporov who says that the focus of his work is to understand "Trotsky as a man rather than as a political martyr."

We doubt that there are any revelations, any new "clues to Trotsky's thinking," to be found in Trotsky's books and papers in Mexico—as Uhlig's article implies. Trotsky spent decades getting his ideas down on paper to be published and made readily accessible. They are available in thousands of books and articles in dozens of languages. It is these ideas that rank Trotsky among the most important thinkers of our century.

Paporov indicates that he is interested in writing for a Russian audience. If Paporov's works about "Trotsky as a man" for "a Russian audience" can help pressure the Kremlin rulers to officially rehabilitate Trotsky; if Paporov's writings can help pressure the Kremlin rulers to open the closed files of the Kremlin's secret police about the assassination of Trotsky and other revolutionists; if Paporov's efforts can help promote the publication in the USSR of all of Trotsky's political writings, all well and good.

However, any writing about Trotsky "the man" or Trotsky the revolutionary Marxist—if it is seriously directed toward promoting historic understanding—should be calculated to share with Soviet readers the vast literature that has until now been unavailable to them, in a way that will help to familiarize them with authors and titles that have remained unknown in the USSR. □

Notes

1. In the incident referred to Paporov's "good friend" Siqueiros contacted Paporov for a meeting after various charges had been made against Paporov in the Mexican press, one of them being that he was involved in organizing a plan to assassinate Trotsky's widow, Natalya Sedova. Siqueiros greeted Paporov at their meeting by proclaiming his readiness to get involved immediately in this affair. Paporov disabused Siqueiros by informing him that he was not involved in any such activity.

Note to our readers:

Due to illness of Marilyn Vogt-Downey, translator of *Notebooks for the Grandchildren*—the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, there is no installment in this issue of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*. The next chapter, "To Each His Own," will appear in our March issue.

Sacrificed in Vain?

The Brother of Ramon Mercader—Murderer of Leon Trotsky—After a Long Silence Has Begun to Speak

In a few days, on August 20, it will be fifty years since the murder of a man whose name was cursed and removed from the pages of our history: Leon Davidovich Trotsky. Today we begin the publication of a conversation that took place in Madrid between Trud correspondent A. Polonsky and Luis Mercader, the brother of the assassin.

My brother was not a vulgar murderer. This was a person boundlessly, fanatically devoted to the cause of communism.—Luis Mercader

In the warm summer days of the last year before the war, there were probably few people in our vast country who paid attention to a short TASS notice printed in *Pravda* on August 24. However, one can be sure that there were at least three places in Moscow where it was read with special interest: in Stalin's office in the Kremlin; in L. Beria's office in Lubyanka;¹ and in the modest Moscow apartment of one of the numerous Spanish families that had emigrated to the Soviet Union after the fall of the Spanish Republic in 1939. The communique was short: Trotsky died in a Mexican hospital from a fractured skull he received during an attempt on his life by someone in his closest circle.

For Joseph Vissarionovich [Stalin] and his sinister agents this of course, was not news: four days earlier in Stalin's office an exultant Lavrenti Pavlovich [Beria] had reported to "the father of the people" that one of the most important "tasks of the party and government" had been carried out: the apparatus had successfully completed the operation ordered by the leader himself. The NKVD chief learned about the event simultaneously from two sources: from his agents in Mexico and from the international wire services which that very day, August 20, 1940, reported: during the latter half of the day, Leon Davidovich Trotsky, a representative of the Leninist Old Guard and founder of the Red Army and of the Fourth International, was killed in his residence in Coyoacán, Mexico. The murderer was a man from his close circle named Jacques Mornard.

However, he had another name—Frank Jacson—and still a third, his real one: Jaime Ramon Mercader del Rio.

In *Pravda*, the murderer's name was not given. In the Moscow apartment where the Spanish family lived, 17-year-old Luis Mercader put down the newspaper and turned to his brother's fiance, NKVD agent Lena Inbert [in some sources, Imbert], with a look of anxiety. She could not restrain herself and admitted: "I know very well that Ramon is involved."

This was nearly a half-century ago. Now Luis Mercader, the murderer's brother, is 67 years old. He is a Soviet pensioner and a teacher at Madrid University and lives in a village called Aluche, near Madrid, in an apartment that could be in Russia: pictures of Russian landscapes hang on the walls, on shelves enclosed in glass one sees Russian books, maryushka dolls, etc. He also speaks Russian: Luis Mercader spent 40 years of his life in the Soviet Union. The rest of the years he spent in Spain and France. And not once during all that time did he ever say a word to anyone about his brother. Now, 50 years later, Luis decided to speak up. He gave his first press interview to *Trud's* Madrid correspondent.

Apparently it is necessary to make clear at the outset that Luis Mercader's decision to end his vow of silence was not purely an arbitrary personal decision nor the result of a correspondent's persistence. More than anything else it became possible because of the onset of glasnost and perestroika in the USSR which changed many things, removed the terror from our lives and made a reality today of what yesterday seemed unlikely. The death of Dolores Ibarruri, a leading Spanish Communist who was intimately involved in the events of that time, also provided an opening for light to be shed on one of the dark pages of Soviet and Spanish history.²

* * *

Trud: So, where should we begin? Perhaps we should start with a description of the events of that day, August 20, 1940. I guess it is worthwhile to recall how it all happened. [What follows are not Luis's words but a crude and inaccurate account put together by the reporter.]

The details about the murder of Leon Trotsky are now generally well known. They have been described in sufficient depth and repeatedly in periodicals throughout the world [but not, of course, in the USSR]. I will briefly summarize them. One day, a young Frenchman Jacques Mornard turned up in the circle of people

around L. Trotsky who was living in a carefully guarded home-fortress. [This distorts what happened. Mornard/Mercader did not "one day . . . turn up" in Trotsky's circle. His presence in the environs of Trotsky's household was the result of two years of careful plotting and deceit that began with an arranged introduction in Paris to one of Trotsky's assistants.] He sympathized with the Trotskyist movement and his published articles came to the attention of Leon Davidovich more than once. [This is false. Mornard/Mercader was conspicuous by his total disinterest in politics during his two-and-one-half-year courtship of Trotsky's assistant.] Mornard, who was extremely handsome, had little trouble winning the love of one of Trotsky's close collaborators and soon he had free access to the home. [This is not true. He only ultimately gained easy access to the well-guarded Trotsky household a few months before the assassination because of his close relationship with Trotsky's assistant. More than a "little trouble" and expense were involved in the complex plot he was a part of.] He brought his articles for Trotsky to look over; the guards admitted him as one of their own. [This is not true. Mercader only brought one article for Trotsky's opinion. But this article—which Trotsky considered primitive, messy, and in need of serious revisions—was only a pretext Mercader used so he could be alone with Trotsky. Trotsky remarked to Natalya that day that he felt something was peculiar about Mercader and that he did not want to see him again. Unfortunately, Mercader returned three days later, August 20, to kill Trotsky—claiming he had redone the article.]

On that day, August 20, he brought in an article as usual. Even though it was a rather warm day, Mornard had a trenchcoat thrown across his arm. While Trotsky bent over to read the article, Mornard got behind him, took an alpinist piolet from under the coat, delivered a terrible blow at Trotsky's head with the piolet's sharp end. An inhuman, heartrending cry rang out. The guards came running.

One hundred meters from the house was a black limousine in which two people were waiting: Caridad Mercader, the mother of Ramon and Luis, and Soviet NKVD chief Leonid Kotov. They had been wrong in thinking that the murder would be "noiseless," and this created confusion. As soon as they heard screams from the house and the panic began, the car took off. The murderer was seized. In his pocket

they found a revolver and a letter in which he explained that his action was ideologically motivated.

During the investigation and the trial, Jacques Mornard consistently denied knowing either Russian or Spanish or having any links with the USSR or the NKVD, insisting that he was French. He received a 20-year prison sentence.

This generally outlines the central incident in the life of the brother of the man I was speaking with.

Trud: What kind of a man was your brother? How do you remember him as a boy, as a youth?

LM: My brother was ten years older than me and during childhood was my closest friend and defender; he often took me for rides on his bicycle. In Catalonia he was known as a leader of the local Komsomol. [There was no Komsomol. Ramon was, however, apparently one of the leaders of the Communist Party's youth group in Spain for which he was arrested in 1935.] I remember that everyone was impressed by Ramon and considered him well educated. He spoke English and French fluently. He always had a lot of pretty girls around him. Everyone was convinced that he had fame and a bright future in store for him.

Trud: You mentioned his education. Where did Ramon go to school? Where did he graduate?

LM: It is not easy to answer this question. It is one of those enigmas I could never quite resolve. I have met with at least a hundred people who knew Ramon but they could never clarify this. [Ramon was born in Feb. 1914 in Barcelona where he attended first the English Institute and later the school of the Episcopalian Fathers. In 1925, when his mother Caridad—who spoke fluent French and English—took her four children and left her husband in Spain to settle in France, Ramon was sent to Lyon to learn the hotel business.] For example, where did he learn English? Most likely while living with his mother in France during 1936-39—he was already familiarizing himself with what they were preparing him for; and there, secretly studied English. Finally, he turned up in the USA under the name of Frank Jacson, closer to Mexico where Leon Trotsky then lived. [Ramon “turned up” in New York and in Mexico as Frank Jacson because that was the role assigned to him by the NKVD. Luis is probably playing ignorant because a more truthful account would implicate important Communist Party figures in France, Spain, the USA, and the USSR whose crimes are still covered up.]

Trud: It is known that your brother fought in the Spanish civil war and earned the rank of lieutenant.

LM: No, major. [Ramon served briefly in the army of the Popular Front Republican government as a political commissar for the 27th Division on the Aragon front but was wounded in the elbow in 1936 and never returned to battle. He left Spain early in the war, about December 1937.] And then he disappeared. Where, I do not know. But in 1937 I myself arrived in France and met Ramon and mother. We lived together until 1939 until I left for Moscow, while my mother and brother stayed in France. [Ramon succeeded in becoming involved with Trotsky's assistant in July 1938 and left France in October 1938.] They both worked for the NKVD (mother got Ramon involved). Leonid Kotov led the group. [Kotov was Leonid Eitingon, chief of the NKVD/Comintern repressive apparatus in Spain. With the defeat of the Republican forces he moved to Mexico to oversee the plot to kill Trotsky.]

Trud: And after being in France, Ramon really never studied at the NKVD school in Moscow?

LM: No, he never studied at any NKVD school as such. [It appears he did, in Moscow in 1937.] Moreover, I know for a fact that before 1960, he had never been to the Soviet Union. And later on, after he had served his 20-year term and was taken to the Soviet Union, I remember very well that he did not know Moscow at all and was not able to speak Russian.

Trud: What was the source of the rumor that after he was freed he settled and lived in Czechoslovakia?

LM: Evidently, it came from my correspondence with Ramon during the last years of his prison term in Mexico. I knew from my own experience that living in the Soviet Union would not be easy for him and that he would not be able to adjust to it. I tried every way I could to convince him to move to the “most European” of the socialist countries—Czechoslovakia. Perhaps the rumors came from the fact that two Czech diplomats met Ramon upon his release from prison and sent him by plane to Cuba where he spent several days as a guest of Fidel Castro. Ramon never was in Czechoslovakia.

Trud: But let us return to Ramon's youth. How did a young fellow like that develop such a hatred for Trotskyism and for Trotsky himself that would drive him to commit murder?

LM: It is very simple. At that time in Spain, particularly in Catalonia, the Communists fiercely hated the Trotskyists and Anarchists. May 1, 1937, they carried out an insurrection in Barcelona. Do you understand? A war was going on, there were victims at the front, and they tried to seize power in Catalonia. The battle lasted three days, and tanks, artillery, and machine

guns were used. [Note: This is the old Stalinist lie about what happened in Barcelona, capital of Catalonia, in May 1937. In reality, on May 3, 1937, the Stalinist-bourgeois Republican assault guards tried to take control of the Telephone Exchange in central Barcelona. The Telephone Exchange had been won from the fascist troops at the cost of many lives in July 1936 by the Anarchist CNT and after that was controlled by them. In response to this assault on the Telephone Exchange by the central government's troops, the masses took to the streets, erected barricades, and prepared to defend revolutionary Barcelona against a bourgeois onslaught. However, both the radical POUM and the Anarchist CNT failed to provide leadership and, anxious not to alienate the bourgeois forces with which they shared power, advised the workers to abandon the barricades and return to work. The masses were thus defenseless in the subsequent weeks when the government banned the POUM and carried out mass arrests of POUM members and other revolutionaries, hundreds of whom were tortured and murdered. In this way the Republican bourgeois government imposed its control over Barcelona. Such repression of the workers' revolutionary movement seriously undermined the anti-Franco forces.] More than a thousand people were killed on both sides. After the Barcelona revolt they had the same attitude toward the Trotskyists and Anarchists as they did toward the fascists and began to hunt them down and kill them on the spot. For a young devoted Communist like my brother, it was not difficult to consider the leader of the Trotskyists as the most accursed enemy of the working class and of the Spanish revolution.

Nowadays, one hears another version: that Ramon allegedly decided to commit the murder because he was afraid of the NKVD, that he was constantly being watched by NKVD agent and leader of the group L. Kotov. They say that it was fear that led Ramon Mercader to kill Trotsky. I believe that all this is belated guesswork. [This is a suspiciously weak formulation.]

Trud: So, after twenty long years of separation, you finally met each other again.

LM: Ramon and I met again in 1960. Despite all my arguments against it, my brother decided that the only place he should live was in the Soviet Union. He came to Riga by steamboat from Cuba and then came to Moscow. His arrival was kept strictly secret. No one knew what Ramon looked like.

I don't need to tell you how much I looked forward to that meeting. Despite such a long separation, I immediately recognized in that aging, gray, rather sad-looking man my beloved elder brother. It

even seemed to me that he was as handsome and elegant as before. I immediately noticed that Ramon had become an extremely quiet person.

He did not come to Moscow alone but with his family. Later I will tell how he became acquainted with his wife.

In 1961, without great fanfare, Ramon was awarded the title "Hero of the Soviet Union" and given a small apartment in Sokol. In addition, he was allocated a pension of 400 rubles per month and the right to use a summer dacha in Malakhovka. And that was all. After that it seemed as if he were forgotten. It was then that his difficult life in Moscow began.

Soon, my fears that Ramon would have a hard time adjusting here began to come true. You know that life in the Soviet Union has always been strange and difficult, especially for foreigners. And imagine this man, a hero, standing in a queue with his shopping bag for potatoes, crowded into overfilled, cold trolley cars in the mornings. Add to this that neither Ramon nor his wife Raquel Mendoza, a Mexican Indian, spoke a word of Russian. In the evenings, forgotten by everyone, they would sit at home wrapped up in rugs to keep warm. Everything oppressed them: the endless queues, the eternal shortages, the difficulties with the language. I saw that it was unbearably difficult for Ramon; a dark mood overcame him.

Upon seeing how difficult it was for Ramon and his wife to live in Moscow, I began to try to persuade him to go to Cuba: "It's warm there and they speak Spanish. It'll be better for you there. You are lost here."

Ramon refused for a long time, then finally agreed and wrote a letter to Fidel Castro. Not long after that he answered: "Come on over." However, it was not that easy. The responsible governmental organs would not allow my brother to leave for Cuba. It was not until January 1974 that they allowed his wife and children to leave. However, my brother himself had to stay in Moscow until May 1974. It was as if he were still in prison, but this time in the USSR—the country for the sake of which he had sacrificed everything. As each day passed, my brother became more morose.

Once, I went to visit him at Sokol. I knocked. Ramon did not open the door. Finally I entered. My brother could hardly stand up. He was thin, pale, unshaven. The doctors had discovered that he had blood in one lung from a ruptured artery; he could hardly breathe. Evidently, this was due to a blow he received during the interrogation in 1940. We, his relatives, began again to bombard the KGB with letters and telegrams: it is inhumane to forcibly hold Ramon when he is in such a state—alone and sick. Even Fidel could not help him.

Only after 90 days did Yu. Andropov—then chief of the KGB—take pity on Ramon and let him go to Cuba.

Our parting was brief and painful. I had a feeling that we were seeing each other for the last time. Fidel Castro let my brother live on an island with a whole villa—that had previously belonged to wealthy families—with an orchard of banana and peach trees. Ramon was a frequent and welcome guest of Fidel's. [These and all the other remarks about Cuba's and Fidel's allegedly warm reception to Ramon should not be taken at face value. It would be useful to find out if there are other sources of information available about Ramon Mercader's relations with the Cubans.] Ramon became revitalized and recovered so much that he was able to take an advisory post at the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As a "specialist," having served 20 years in prison himself, he tried to improve the life of local prisoners. This problem always bothered him. I remember sometime in the beginning of the 1960s the new Criminal Code of the RSFSR was published. I had just stopped by to visit Ramon and found him furious. With an issue of *Pravda* in his hand, he was in a fit of rage: "How can they do this?" he shouted. "I spent 20 years in a prison cell and I had no idea that such an inhumane, medieval criminal code could be in the works. How embarrassing that this should be printed in *Pravda* for all the world to see! They would have been better off concealing this invention of theirs."

Trud: Living in Moscow, you must have spent a lot of time with your brother. He must have told you about his life in prison, in particular about whether the Soviet side was concerned about him, whether or not there were any attempts to organize his escape. Did you know about this?

LM: As far as I know, Moscow did not leave Ramon to an arbitrary fate. They spent on him, according to the information I have gathered, around \$5 million. They hired him the best lawyer and set up an entire organization in Mexico to help Ramon. A woman was hired who prepared home-cooked meals for him and brought them daily to the cell all throughout the years of his confinement. By the way, Ramon married the daughter of this woman, an Indian, while he was in prison. He had a library, a radio, and daily newspapers. He read avidly and after years in prison he became a walking encyclopedia.

Trud: As far as I know, your mother Caridad Mercader played a key role in the tragic fate of your brother. Is that true?

LM: That is right. It was she who got Ramon involved in the group which was led, as I already said, by NKVD General

Leonid Kotov. It was she who was sitting in the car by Trotsky's home to take Ramon away immediately after the murder along a route that had been well worked out beforehand—to California and from there by boat to Vladivostok and then via the Transsiberian railroad to Moscow. She had to make this trip without her son but with General Kotov. [This is not true. Caridad and Eitingon went to Moscow via separate routes.]

During the years when my brother was in prison, my mother never stopped writing Stalin and Beria asking them to organize her son's escape. Ramon said later that in 1944-45 a plan for his escape was allegedly worked out but due to carelessness and precipitous actions by mother, the escape plan fell through. [This is false. Caridad tried unsuccessfully with the NKVD to organize Ramon's escape. There is evidence to suggest that she resisted one NKVD escape plan, however, because she learned that it included plans to have Ramon killed in the process.]

In April or May 1941, my mother Caridad was invited to the Kremlin and she took me with her. Mikhail Kalinin awarded her the Order of Lenin (the height of cynicism!) for her role in L. Trotsky's assassination. Beria also sent mother a gift—a box containing a bottle of Georgian "Napereuli" wine, 1907 vintage. The label bore the two-headed eagle emblem of the tsar.

They let mother leave the USSR in 1944, during the war. After that, she lived in France and came back occasionally to see her children and grandchildren. She was a woman with a complex character who was emotionally unstable. At the same time she was attractive and men were interested in her. She had thrown her husband out early in the marriage and become totally absorbed in politics. Near the end of her life, Ramon admitted to me that she was a drug addict. Generally, one should say that he had fond memories of his father who was inoffensive and was never involved in politics, while he had harsh, I should say even severe, criticisms of mother.

Mother was miserable during her infrequent visits to the Soviet Union. She was simply horrified over the local way of life and procedures. This only confirms my personal conclusion about the duplicity of many Communists who think one way, talk another, and behave in still a third way. That describes my mother who seemed to be a devout Communist and died in Paris at the age of 82 with a portrait of Stalin on the wall above her bed, but who would never have even considered returning to the Soviet Union to live.

When she came to visit us, we broke our necks to show her that life here was not as bad as it seemed to her. We tried to re-cre-

ate conditions she was accustomed to in Paris. We dined out in restaurants which turned out to be a scandalous experience. You see, she was not accustomed to waiting 30 minutes to be served. But in the USSR this is normal. You go there and you wait. . . . She demanded a hotel room. With great difficulty, we got her into the Gagripsh. And again a scandal: she could not understand why the best hotel in town could have only one toilet on each floor! Before she died she said: "I did what I could for the abolition of capitalism and what kind of socialism have we created? I don't understand anything."

Trud: Did Ramon also have these contradictions?

LM: You know, he was a fanatical Communist but in the later years in my opinion he began to do some thinking. For example, when he came to the Soviet Union in 1960, he knew that many former key NKVD agents had been "taken away." His first

concern was: where is Leonid Kotov? Kotov was the NKVD's second in command in Spain and his boss in Madrid was General Orlov. By the time the Spanish campaign ended, sensing that the guillotine of Stalin's terror was beginning to chop off heads within the NKVD ranks, Orlov escaped from Madrid to the USA. There he wrote a letter to Trotsky warning him that his assassination was being planned. But Trotsky did not believe him and thought this was a routine provocation of the repressive organs. After completing the "Mexican operation," that is, Trotsky's assassination, Kotov returned to Moscow and was decorated.

But at the time that Ramon arrived, Kotov was in prison, for the second time. The first was under Stalin in 1951. Stalin followed a firm principle: if you know too much, you have to be eliminated. And Kotov knew a great deal. Moreover, he was a Jew, and Stalin was just then developing

the next anti-Semitic campaign. L. Kotov's real name is Naum Eitingon. However, I would not be surprised if even this were not his real name. Stalin imprisoned Kotov but did not manage to shoot him before he died in 1953. Soon after this Beria released his collaborator. But in 1960, Khrushchev imprisoned L. Kotov for collaborating with Beria. Watching this "carousel" go round, Ramon could not but draw conclusions even though he sincerely tried to suppress any doubts. However, once in a while we would have seditious conversations. I, for example, chided my brother—a Hero of the Soviet Union—when Nasser was awarded the same title. "So Ramon," I said. "Who are they placing on the same level as you?" (We knew that Nasser had a portrait of Hitler hanging in his office.)

And Ramon had a terrible death. He developed bone cancer. He died in immense pain October 10, 1978, in Cuba.

This article is reprinted from *International Viewpoint* No. 197.

Walesa's Hollow Victory

by Cyril Smuga

When he announced his intention of running for the presidency of the Polish Republic in June, Lech Walesa was conscious of the growing gulf between the government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki—identified by the masses with Solidarnosc—and large sectors of society, victims of his policies. "One could not hope to obtain economic results and, as a consequence, it is necessary to guarantee a broad participation of the society in the exercise of power, and thus to assure its acceptance," he explained.

All through his campaign he repeated incessantly "my program will be what you want," seeking to present an image as a candidate who listened to the masses.

The result of the second round of the presidential elections witnesses the defeat of this initiative.

Confronted by an inconsistent candidate, whose sole merit was that of serving as an expression of social discontent, the leader-symbol of Solidarnosc only received the support of 39.65 percent of those eligible to vote! In this first free nation-wide election 47 percent of the electors took refuge in abstention whereas more than 13 percent of eligible voters chose to support the eccentric Tyminski. The victory of Walesa, obtained in such conditions, is indicative of disorders to come. And his goal—to gain the people's acceptance of the suffering necessary for the reestablishment of capitalism by participation and social manipulation—is not yet won.

It is among the youth and the workers that Walesa's challenger obtained the highest percentages of the vote—30 percent of voters under 25 and 26 percent of workers taking part in the vote declared their support for Tyminski. The latter obtained his best scores in Higher Silesia, the industrial heart of Poland, and in the rural regions of Greater Poland. At Elblag, city of the first important investments of foreign capital (the Swiss-Swedish holding ABB has recently taken over the Zamech enterprise there, one of the most important of the city), Tyminski received 35.7 percent of the votes. These figures reflect the disarray which is particularly strong among the young workers.

The zealous application of the recipes of the International Monetary Fund has led to a lowering of 30 percent in industrial production, a reduction of the real average wage on the order of 35 percent, and a

vertiginous rise in unemployment, which has already passed—before the big waves of dismissals linked to privatization—the threshold of a million. The social deficit which had overshadowed Mazowiecki in the first round of the presidential election has not spared Walesa.

The latter has suffered also from the democratic deficit. In voting for the candidates of Solidarnosc in the June 1989 elections, the electors had pronounced themselves for democracy. They could then have only a single reference to this hope—that of the democracy which reigned inside Solidarnosc in 1980-81. A democracy from below, with election and recall of representatives, organized around workplace collectives capable of influencing the decisions taken at the summit. A decentralized democracy, where each link—in the workplace as in the region—was sovereign and could reject the decision of the superior echelon if it went against its interests.

This memory, at the same time blurred and idealized during the decade of the state of emergency, was the sole experience of democracy on a mass scale that the great majority of the population knew. Far from corresponding to this ideal, the parliamentary democracy installed in Poland has been that of the absence of alternatives, justified in a language mixing pseudo-scientific argumentation and an authoritarian morality, all the more authoritarian when its actors felt themselves invested with a historic mission.

Paradoxically, the election of Lech Walesa thus bears witness to a growing rejection of the theme he has made his own—that of the return to capitalism. For all that, in this election none of his opponents has presented an alternative to this choice. Not even the ex-apparatchik Stalinist student Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, whose program stipulated "an indispensable privatization of a large part of the productive capital." Social discontent, of which the strikes in the mines and in urban transport on the eve of the first round were the expression, has thus not been able to find an electoral expression. It is a time bomb that the new president must dismantle and which could weigh on the struggle for his succession opened inside Solidarnosc.

The immediate stake will be to preserve the internal democracy of the Polish trade union, put in danger after the attempts of its national leadership to muzzle the leaderships of the combative branches (miners and urban transport workers) on November 20, as well as the national agreement of the workplace commissions (the "Network") on November 7. □

Trud: I have heard from reliable sources that there are witnesses who say that not long before his death your brother said: "They cruelly betrayed us." Did he end up understanding that his sacrifice was in vain?

LM: I don't know. My brother's last wish was to be buried in Moscow. I was not present at the burial myself; my wife Galya was.

"Everything was very grim, gloomy. They brought the urn from the airport in a small box and placed it next to the hole that had been dug. Other than Ramon's wife and children, I saw no familiar face. Everyone was a stranger; everyone wore identical trenchcoats and hats. And the same undistinguishable speeches: this is a hero of Spain who gave his life for a bright present and a happy future for our Homeland, for communism. Blacks limousines blocked the entrance to the cemetery. The urn was lowered and covered with a gray stone slab. A hymn was played. An honor guard fired a salvo. That was all. I began to sob when I saw that the metal plate on the slab bore a phony name 'Ramon Ivanovich Lopez.'" [This was the name Mercader used while living in the USSR.]

Over the next ten years, we would visit this pathetic grave and place flowers on it. Sometimes the grave had been walked over so much that it was difficult to find where Ramon was buried. I was always calling the KGB and asking them to put some kind of a monument over it. But they always had excuses: There is no marble, there is no money, etc. One time I could not restrain myself and said: "You erect stone vaults for your generals but to a hero who devoted his life selflessly, you do not even want to place a simple stone."

* * *

What can one say?

Even today, in Kuntsev Cemetery where Ramon Mercader, who was sacrificed in vain on the altar of communism, is buried, there is no monument. His ashes lie under a rose granite slab placed there only in 1987 and which still bears another's name: "Lopez, Ramon Ivanovich, Hero of the Soviet Union." The same inscription is engraved with gold letters on the list of honor at the entrance to the KGB offices. But here is another mystery in connection with Ramon Mercader. None of his names are included in the book "Heroes of the Soviet Union." He is simply not there. Nor is he included in the list of officers in the Republican army where he had the rank of major. Nor is his name listed at the church where he was christened. Officially, it is as if this man never existed at all.

I asked the man sitting before me, Luis Mercader, one more question:

"What do you have to say about the secrecy which remains even after your brother's death?"

"I say that this is an injustice and that it is time to stand up for him. Publications are appearing, including in the USSR, that do injustice to my brother's memory. He was a man who gave up everything for the sake of his country, for the sake of an idea which he believed in and for which he lived. It is time to return his name to him and it is time to finally speak the whole truth."

Trud: It is not excluded that in this epoch of glasnost things will finally be seen for what they really are: for example, Jaime Ramon Mercader Del Rio committed a crime, a political murder. And that for this the title Hero of the Soviet Union is not appropriate.

LM: My brother Ramon Mercader received an assignment. And he carried it out.

* * *

Lord, what an unusual and tragic fate: to be excluded from the list of people who ever lived on this fallible planet. □

Notes

1. Lavrenti Beria was the chief of the NKVD, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Lubyanka is the prison in Moscow where his office was located.

2. Dolores Ibaruri, well known in Spain by her pseudonym "La Passionaria," was a founding member of the Spanish Communist Party in 1921 and was elected to the Central Committee of the Spanish CP in 1930 for supporting the Stalinist bureaucracy in its suppression of the Opposition. One of the most prominent promoters of the Comintern's ultraleft Third Period policies and then its class collaborationist Popular Front turn during the Spanish civil war, Ibaruri was in the thick of the criminal intrigues, repressions, kidnappings, tortures, and assassinations carried out by Stalin's and the Comintern's agents against the revolutionary forces in Spain. She fled Spain in 1938 and went to the USSR where she lived until 1977. She returned to Spain in 1977, two years after Franco died. There she was named president of the newly legalized Spanish CP, in which she continued to participate until shortly before her death on November 12, 1989, at the age of 93.

The Mother Speaks

The following account of statements by the mother of the assassin of Leon Trotsky was written by Enrique Castro Delgado, a member of the Spanish Communist Party since 1925. He escaped Spain and fled to the USSR after Franco's victory. He had been a member of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Spanish CP when he fled. However, while in Moscow, he

developed differences with the Kremlin rulers and in 1944 was expelled from the Spanish CP and from the Comintern. After several months "between anguish and death," he said, he was allowed to leave the USSR; he settled in Mexico.

In 1943 he met Eustacia Maria del Rio Hernandez, or Caridad Mercader, Ramon Mercader's mother, and they became close friends. Caridad Mercader had become totally disillusioned with Stalin and the bureaucratic apparatus she had so loyally served. She wanted desperately to leave the USSR.

*Enrique Castro Delgado sent this account of a meeting he had with Caridad in 1944 to Isaac Don Levine. Levine included excerpts from it in his book *The Mind of an Assassin* as the final chapter, "The Mother Speaks." We have excerpted portions of their dialog.*

"You don't know these people, Enrique. They are people without souls . . . without souls . . . people who, after taking everything from you, kill you either at once or kill you slowly as they are doing to me now . . . as they are doing to you too! . . . But, furthermore, they know that I am no longer the woman I used to be . . . because even criminals get tired of being criminals and, when they realize what they are, they want to stop being criminals. . . . If I told you . . . and yes, I am going to tell you, I want you to know that which you don't know, who these people are. . . ."

"You must know it. You have to. Because if anything happens to me, because if I am assassinated by those for whom I murdered, by those for whom I made my son into a murderer, my poor Luis into a permanent hostage and my other two children into ruins, I want you to know. Do you understand me? I want you to know so that with this knowledge you can help to see that no more people are fooled by these illusions as you and I were. . . ."

"I want to avenge myself in some way on these swine. . . on these beasts who, blinding us with the illusion of socialism, have torn me to pieces, have broken my family into bits, everything, everything. . . . No, Enrique, we have been poisoned by the literature of the October revolution, by illusions of our own revolution, by the idea of socialism, and we didn't realize that we had fallen into a world of lies and terror. . . . People do not know this, but one day they must be made to know it. They must know it! . . . They must know that Caridad Mercader is not simply Caridad Mercader, but the worst of assassins . . . yes . . . the worst.

(Continued on inside back cover)

Workers Revolutionary Party Objects to Coverage in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*

The following letter has been abridged for reasons of space.

Dear Editor:

Re: "Potential for a Conscious, Working Class Revolutionary Movement in the USSR" by Marilyn Vogt-Downey in your October issue. This article includes some gross inaccuracies, to put it politely, about the conference initiated in Moscow in August by the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

1. It says the Workers International was formed at the initiative of the WRP in Britain. True. It mentions that, under the leadership of Gerry Healy, the Workers Revolutionary Party launched a slander campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack. Also true.

But it didn't mention that Healy was expelled, not only for sexually and physically abusing party members, but also for slandering them as agents and that this expulsion commenced a break with the methods of slander, which included a repudiation by the WRP, developed in detail in our public meetings and press, of the slanders against Hansen and Novack. For daring to not only challenge Healy's lies but expel him from the party, we ourselves were subjected to a slander campaign by those who continued to support him. They also launched 17 cases against us in the British bourgeois courts, one of which resulted in a comrade spending two months in jail.

2. The article, having referred to the Workers International, says that "the U.S. affiliate of this international current, organized in the 'Workers League,' has consistently aided government harassment of left groups here." This is untrue; the Workers League has nothing to do with the Workers International.

Your readers can check out for themselves that top of the list of targets of the Workers League's disgraceful slander campaigns is... the Workers International. One can regularly read in the Workers League's publications how we are "objectively assisting the bourgeoisie," etc., and they recently accused one of our leading comrades, Cliff Slaughter, of "aiding fascists."

After this latter fabrication (which came shortly before the Workers League's unsubstantiated slanders against Mark Cur-

tis), we decided to refuse members of the Workers League and its collaborators entry to our meetings. We considered that their charge of us being "collaborators with fascists" made discussion impossible. Marilyn knows this perfectly well, because a member of this vile group arrived for the Moscow meeting. I told her, and some Soviet comrades, that I had refused him entry. All were agreed.

3. Marilyn implies that it was "not in the plans of the WIRFI" that she, a member of the United Secretariat, should attend the conference. What a fine way to speak of comrades who attended a conference with her and discussed frankly and openly!

It was in our plans that any in the so-called "Trotskyist" organizations who wished to seriously discuss rebuilding the Fourth International were welcome at the meeting—a fact made public in Workers Press several times, months beforehand. What we were, and are, against is unprincipled attempts to "unite" organizations simply because they call themselves Trotskyist. Unity must be on the basis of principle, as comrade Gusev rightly said in a speech at the Moscow meeting which you published.

The only person barred from the Moscow meeting was the Workers League representative—for the reasons stated above. Both Marilyn and a member of the International Workers League (LIT, based in Argentina) were welcomed to the meeting and we were ready to fight out openly the deep differences we have with the other organizations claiming to be Trotskyist.

4. If Marilyn was more honest, she would have attacked us not for being reluctant to discuss (we are not), but for what we actually say, to which she is opposed.

She reports, and it is true, that in Moscow representatives of the Workers International "attacked the USFI and its political policies, in extremely harsh terms."

But rather than say a word about the substance of those attacks she only adds that we raised "false and sectarian charges." We did not. We stated quite openly our opposition to the USFI: that it has long ago abandoned the prime necessity of building the Fourth International, to overcome the crisis of revolutionary working class leadership, as the strategic goal of this epoch.

Let me give examples. Also in your October issue, there was a report of Ernest Mandel's debate with Gregor Gysi. The latter (who narrowly avoided resignation, following his complicity with Stalinists who took millions of marks off to the USSR to keep it safe from German workers), you describe glowingly as "the president of a mass party coming out of the international communist movement."

Here are two policies:

We went to Moscow to raise the question of rebuilding the Fourth International with workers and students. We believe everything depends on rebuilding the International—on the basis of a struggle against Stalinism, a struggle against those who since the war have tried to liquidate the FI into Stalinism in one way or another, against Mandel's conception that Stalinism has a "dual nature" and a "progressive side." Without this, we will never win the best elements from the old Communist parties.

Mandel went to Berlin to discuss "unity of the left" with a discredited Stalinist bureaucrat: no mention was made of the historically central question, the Fourth International. The consequence of this policy, in one Stalinist-ruled country and Stalinist-dominated movement after another, has been the liquidation of Trotskyist forces into some "unity" in which the political independence of the working class is lost.

When the Communist Party historian Vadim Rogovin proposed such "unity of the left" at the Moscow meeting, there was a healthy reaction by young Soviet comrades, Trotskyists, who said that a new workers' party would be built in conflict with the whole Stalinist bureaucracy; that the program of such a party would be not "left unity" but political revolution against the bureaucracy.

When Mandel invited the same Vadim Rogovin to a Trotsky memorial meeting in Paris, he again spoke of "unity of the left," etc. Unfortunately no young Russian comrades were there to challenge him. But why didn't Mandel? Why was the name of the Fourth International, which to Trotsky was the central historical question, not even mentioned at that meeting?

Why do you use so much venom against the Workers International?—while at the

same time Ernest Mandel's polite debate with discredited Stalinists is reported so enthusiastically?

Why don't you attack the USFI leadership, for their constant burying of the struggle for a leadership of the kind set out in the Fourth International's founding program; for their abandonment of the policies set out in that program's section on the USSR; for their revolting maneuvers with the American SWP?

Why don't you criticize Mandel's book *Beyond Perestroika* which conceals the program of political revolution under the weight of speculation that the bureaucracy can make the necessary changes?

Simon Pirani
London

Marilyn Vogt-Downey Responds:

Dear Simon:

1. I doubt if anyone can follow all the splits in the radical (and ex-radical) movement and still engage in any real activity to advance the interests of working people around the world. Unfortunately that applies in my case. I ceased following the ins and outs of the Healyite movement and its various offspring at least 15 years ago. Healy's movement was—and the Workers League in the United States still is—a cancerous outgrowth of the left. They are really no longer a part of the workers' movement at all, with their outrageous attacks—verbal, legal, and physical—on other currents, parties, and activists. It is positive that your group has repudiated Healy's methods—in particular the slanders against Joseph Hansen and George Novack. I would be interested to get copies of your statements on this.

However, even though I did not know precisely where your group stood with respect to the old slander methods, I noticed full well that you *did not* use such a method against me in Moscow. Therefore, I had no intention of directly identifying you today with that sordid history.

2. My article was poorly formulated on this point, and I realize why you were offended. When I said that "The U.S. affiliate of this international current" was organized in the "Workers League" in the United States, the antecedent of my "this" referred to the Gerry Healy current which I had just described. But given the overall context it could easily be interpreted as you do, to refer to the WIRFI. That was not my intention. I apologize for the misunderstanding.

3. Since I do not follow the *Workers Press* I could not have known that "several times, months beforehand" it was inviting "so-called 'Trotskyist' organizations" to attend your meeting. I do know, however, that the international current with which the Fourth Internationalist Tendency iden-

tifies—the United Secretariat of the Fourth International—was never officially invited.

You and the WRP put the conference together on short notice. That is why it was so poorly attended. It was obvious to me that you organized the conference to declare that a section of your group had been formed—to "plant your group's flag," as it were, on Soviet territory. You neither sought nor found any more agreement with the others who attended than you did with me on a whole series of important questions. In the end, you even refused to have a democratic vote on your proposals when you saw that they would not win the majority. Instead, you simply announced that you would go ahead and pursue your own agenda with whomever indicated an interest. You left the meeting with the same preconceived notions you arrived with, screaming defensively at anyone who raised questions or disagreed. Let's not try to rewrite history at this early date. The facts can easily be verified from tapes that were made.

In my article, I did emphasize the positive aspects of your initiative, which I still defend. It was a very worthwhile meeting—despite all its obvious weaknesses—because at least a few people did manage to get together to talk who would not have done so otherwise. But the meeting *was* pathetically organized and attended because of the WIRFI's sectarian approach.

4. It is true that I did not repeat your various charges against Ernest Mandel and the Fourth International in my coverage of the conference. The fact is that I did not consider your charges important. I was more interested in knowing what those in attendance from the Soviet Union thought and said about domestic and international issues, including about the ideas of Leon Trotsky. That was why I attended the conference. I thought then—and I think now—that it was inappropriate to take up the limited time of the meeting with an exchange of charges and countercharges between the WRP/WIRFI and the FIT/FI.

However, I am glad that you repeated some of your opinions in your letter so that readers of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* can see that I was justified in my characterization of them. How can you expect me to bother answering your preposterous charge that the Fourth International "has long ago abandoned the prime necessity of building the Fourth International to overcome the crisis of revolutionary working class leadership, as the strategic goal of this epoch"? No one who reads this magazine, *International Viewpoint*, or any other publication of the FI or of its component groups, can take such a charge seriously. We—who support the FI—may disagree among ourselves on how best to go about

the process of building our world movement. You obviously disagree with us as well. But it is sectarian lunacy to accuse us of abandoning the very cause for which we are united.

I will not here, either, bother to refute point by point your other statements. I will only say that you appear to have an endemic tendency to misinterpret what you read; and I am under no illusion that I can correct this in a few short paragraphs. I will, however, cite one example. Gregor Gysi was correctly identified in the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* as "the president of a mass party." What is "glowing" about that? Is one speaking "glowingly" about George Bush to identify him as president of the United States? These are facts of life, whether we like them or not. I am astounded that you base your criticisms of Mandel on the article in our October issue describing the debate with Gysi. I would have thought *any* Trotskyist would have been quite enthused—not only by the fact that the Stalinists were forced to debate us but that the ideas Mandel expressed were able to find such a broad audience.

Your criticisms of the content of Mandel's remarks—remarks which I considered excellent—make no sense. Do you really believe that none of the several hundred thousand PDS members should or would ever support environmental protection, women's rights, or workers' strike movements? Are these not progressive struggles? Would you not welcome them to join us in these struggles? Isn't the united front based precisely on a collaboration among groups and individuals to achieve specific, agreed-upon goals—despite profound disagreements on other issues?

Not only are Communist Party members—and even leaders—involved in "progressive" movements from time to time, but even bourgeois politicians and labor bureaucrats can sometimes be forced to participate in and promote mass progressive movements. Do the movements become any less "progressive" because of this? Do you refuse to allow them to help mobilize their ranks behind such a cause on those occasions when they are forced by circumstance to do so? This contradictory nature of the actions taken by Stalinist and reformist leaders is an expression of the "dual nature," or more precisely, the dialectical nature of *reality*. It enables revolutionaries to work together with, and find an audience among, masses even when they follow these misleaders.

I stand by my assessment that your charges are "false and sectarian." Also, having reread my description of the conference in Moscow, I stand by what I said in the article. Aside from the one poor formulation I noted above, there were no

other "gross inaccuracies." You have failed to point to any.

In your letter you accuse me of being dishonest. But what is really involved here (aside from the normal quotient of misunderstanding) is an honest disagreement about how to build a Trotskyist movement in the world today. Charges of dishonesty are not likely to result in a fruit-

ful dialogue. You need to stand back and examine your own approach to other activists and other political currents. Things are far more complex than you give them credit for.

You and several WRP/WIRFI members did indicate at the conference that you were prepared to collaborate with the FI on projects in the USSR dealing with the pub-

lication of Trotsky's writings and Trotsky's rehabilitation. If that offer means anything we will have to find ways to pursue a different kind of discussion than the one you initiated in your letter.

Marilyn Vogt-Downey
FIT, New York

Mother (Continued from page 38)

... Because not only did I travel throughout Europe tracking down Chekists [Stalin's police agents] . . . who had defected or diplomats who had abandoned paradise, so as to assassinate them pitilessly . . . I have done even more! . . . More! . . . I made—and I did this for them—an assassin of my son, of Ramon, of this son whom I saw one day come out of Trotsky's house bound and bleeding and unable to come to me and I had to flee in one direction and Leonid [Eitingon] in another. . . .

"Do you see this? . . . This is the reward for the assassination of Trotsky. . . . Ramon, the condemned man in Lecumberri Prison, is here nothing less than a Hero of the Soviet Union; and I, his mother, who pushed him to this crime, am nothing more or less than the possessor of the Order of Lenin. . . . People who know it envy us, but many do not know the high price of these two merdes. . . . Yes, for the assassin of Trotsky is my son, Ramon, whom I, in the

name of the sacred interests of the revolution and of socialism, drove to this crime; and I am . . . a thing to inspire horror.

"And I want to get out, Enrique, and get to Mexico . . . to see whether I can get Ramon out; and see whether I can cleanse myself of this crime in any way, a greater crime than that of having killed Trotsky. . . ."

"But did you do this deliberately?"

"No, Enrique, I was crazed by many things; exalted by the revolution, inflamed by Leonid who stirred up a new hope that I had buried many years before . . . because we were going to be married! Because they were going to bring Ramon to me here! And also my children from France! Because here my life was going to begin again without the loneliness and bitterness of so many years! . . . And it was all a lie. They did not free Ramon, nor did they bring my children from France, nor has Leonid married me, nor did they wish me to get

out. . . . They only want me to die here, in silence, slowly, hiding my tragedy under this Order of Lenin which burns my flesh. . . . It burns me, Enrique!"

Months later, Caridad Mercader was allowed to leave and go to Mexico. For about a year she tried to find a way to free Ramon del Rio Mercader. But around her the agents of the NKVD had spread a net. She got into Lecumberri only once but did not see her son. Afterward, an automobile almost ran her down. . . . And she felt that they wanted to eliminate her in the same way that she has been employed so many times to eliminate others. Driven by fear, she went to the French Embassy one day and managed to get a visa to go to Paris. They tell me that she lives there more disturbed than ever. □

Mexico City
June 16, 1959

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