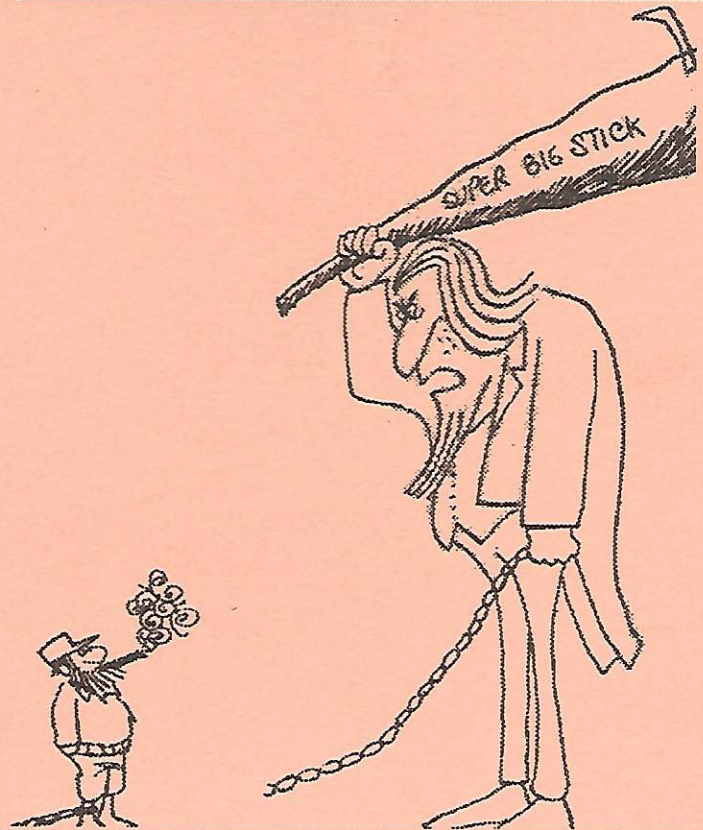


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Who We Are

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

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

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

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Pro-Cuba Rallies Draw Thousands

Rallies in support of Cuban sovereignty and against U.S. intervention were held during January in New York and San Francisco, both with substantial support of labor and liberal forces. The rally in New York was the most impressive such event since the January 1991 mass demonstrations in Washington to head off the gulf war. Last minute attempts by New York state and local officials to cancel the contract at the huge Javits Center convention hall, where the rally was scheduled on January 25, failed. Likewise the counterdemonstration of Cuban *contras*, with CIA guidance, failed in its disruptive objective, due largely to the security provided by the organizers of the rally.

On the day of the New York rally 3,200 people filled the hall to legal capacity. Others were prevented from entering by a brigade of city fire marshals posted in the entrance area where radical literature tables and antiwar displays were located. About 2,000 people lined up outside the building for several hours in sub-freezing weather, hoping to buy tickets and gain admission. Some were allowed in as people already inside left the area.

All those entering had to pass through two metal detectors, a bottleneck as the crowd flowed into the auditorium, greeting friends and carrying hand-made banners of support for Cuba. The crowd included many young people, Blacks and Latinos. Even before the speakers were introduced they were being cheered in anticipation of support for beleaguered Cuba. The first speaker was the prominent civil rights attorney William Kunstler who ex-

plained how official efforts to effectively ban the rally were thwarted by timely court procedures.

The speakers that followed included other notables from the U.S. and abroad, among them Frei Betto, the Brazilian social activist priest and liberation theologian; Tony Benn, British laborite MP; and the Rev. Victor Mercado of Philadelphia. Messages were read from Hortensia Allende, widow of the slain president of Chile; Kris Kristofferson, actor; and the writer Alice Walker. All were absent for health reasons. The message of Alice Walker said, in part, that the Cubans "have exhibited an incredible love, active and sacrificing, for all." She appealed to those who will hear, "Now, as Cuba suffers we are called upon to act."

The action demanded by the rally was indicated and summarized in the slogans: End the Blockade! Lift the Travel Ban! No Intervention! These demands are addressed to the Congress and the Bush administration. And speaker after speaker urged mass action in this country to insure that the politicians presently in government get the message.

Frei Betto, an early speaker, set the tone and expressed the sentiment of the rally. He said, "In all the countries of Latin America, except one, the majority of the people are condemned to death by social conditions." Betto's mission at this rally was to alert the audience and his U.S. constituency to the alternative possibility. He said, "That one (exception) is Cuba. It is the only one where life is guaranteed for the people. Some say socialism

(Continued on next page)

Editorial

The Cuban revolution is in danger.

The propaganda machine of the United States government has cranked itself up full blast, trying to convince the people of this country that the economic crisis on that island has been caused by a failure of the revolution and of the Castro regime.

That is a lie.

They cry long and loud about the "lack of democracy" in Cuba.

That is pure hypocrisy.

The economic problems in Cuba can be directly traced to two sources: the economic blockade that Washington has enforced for decades, and the backing away from trade agreements by the new "free market" governments in Eastern Europe and the former USSR.

Yet despite the U.S. embargo, the average Cuban working person has, since the 1959 revolution, enjoyed a standard of living and social benefits—including job security, medical care, education, etc.—far superior than in any other country in Latin America. This represents a far more democratic reality than the electoral shams which pose as "democracy" in much of the world—especially in the rest of Latin America. Whatever criticisms one might

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legitimately make about the lack of institutionalized democratic forms through which the Cuban people can directly govern their own country, every honest observer will acknowledge that the overwhelming majority continue to support the Castro regime.

The present demands coming from counterrevolutionary Cubans in Miami, from Washington, and even from liberal and social democratic milieus for "free elections" in Cuba are not designed to bring about a democratic expression of political preferences by the Cuban people. They are simply designed to intensify the conditions whereby Cuba's real alternatives become increasingly circumscribed by the military and economic threats from Washington. To this the reactionary forces now add additional pressure by proposing "elections" where plenty of campaign dollars and

media exposure could promote candidates handpicked by the White House. As we know from the results of such "free elections" here in the United States, the results have little to do with "the will of the people."

The obvious goal of the U.S. government today is to soften public opinion here for a possible military strike against Cuba—if it is able to manufacture an adequate pretext. That makes it incumbent not only upon every supporter of the Cuban revolution, but even on those who may not agree with the goals and objectives of the Castro government but who simply agree that Washington should respect the rights of other nations to determine their own affairs—free of military and economic coercion—to mount an active campaign to combat the present propaganda offensive and the threat of military action.

If our movement is going to have a real effect in staying the hand of U.S. policymakers, we will, in fact, have to appeal to the basic democratic sentiments of millions of Americans who do not yet understand the meaning of the Cuban revolution. Many of them will remain opposed to

(Continued on next page)

has failed, but capitalism has failed for the last 200 years. The future of Eastern Europe is the present of Latin America. We don't want this future for Cuba. This isn't freedom. Freedom is to share the goods. Socialism is not a nostalgia, it is the future."

Among others present were union leaders, no less than 40, who endorsed the anti-intervention slogans. They spoke in defiance of AFL-CIO official policy which remains subservient to the reactionary foreign policy of the Bush administration. Those who spoke were representatives of locals and higher union bodies representing auto workers, government employees, municipal workers, transit workers, teachers, service employees, and others. President Harold Mitchell of AFSCME Local 100 in Cleveland, a recent visitor to Cuba, deplored the fact that so few U.S. workers are represented by unions as compared to Cuban workers. He said, "The AFL-CIO, instead of acting in collusion with the U.S. government to overthrow the Cuban government, should send some organizers to Cuba to learn what methods they've used to organize." In an interview with the *Guardian* newspaper after the rally Mitchell told how the U.S. government tries to block information about and support for Cuban workers. He said, "We received a letter from the IRS at the end of December. It wants to tour our offices, review books and accounts for the previous fiscal year, review our tax-exempt status." He said this followed his visit, as an official of his union, to Cuba last November. "I know of no other union in the Cleveland area that received such a notice," he said.

A high point of the rally was when Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of District 65-UAW, and Harold Mendlowitz, president of ATU Local 1202 representing locked-out Greyhound bus company workers, jointly presented a plaque to the two Cuban diplomats on the speakers platform, UN ambassador Ricardo Alarcon and Jose Antonio Arbezu of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington. "We support Cuba's right to self-determination," Robinson said, "a right we as workers and Blacks don't have here."

The final speaker, and certainly one of the most forceful, was Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general in the Johnson Administration. He urged Cuban-American friendship, "union to union, church to church, school to school." He said, "Let's set up, more sister to sister cities. Let Havana tell D.C. how to lower its infant mortality!"

International solidarity and material support for blockaded Cuba was expressed and urged by representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, Haiti, Italy, North Korea, Laos, Palestine, Panama, Puerto Rico, Sweden, South Africa, and the Virgin Islands. Ambassador-at-Large Ben

Dupuy, representing the legitimate government of Haiti whose president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, remains in exile, identified the suffering of his country with that of Cuba. Kingsley Makhubela of the African National Congress reported that the ANC "has been offered money by Western powers to denounce our Cuban friends, but," he asserted, "what's been bought with blood cannot be sold." Jose Manuel Torres Santiago, representing the Puerto Rican Committee for Affirmation, spoke of the close links between the struggles and suffering of the people in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

The dominant theme of the New York rally was uncritical support and praise of the present government in Cuba and a warning to the U.S. government, "Hands off Cuba." The rally in San Francisco on February 1, smaller but no less spirited, sent the same message. Two thousand attended and some of the same speakers as in New York delivered their messages of solidarity.

A sobering note came from Fidel Castro, addressed to the New York rally and read there.

Today Cuba faces an unprecedented challenge. The collapse of socialism in Europe and the disappearance of the Soviet Union have deprived us, all of a sudden, of our main source of essential supplies, including oil, foodstuffs, raw materials, and all kinds of equipment, obtained by means of a fair and equitable trade relation.

Thus, a second blockade has in fact appeared, which comes on top of the cruel economic blockade forced on us for more than 30 years by the government of the United States.

Castro concluded with thanks to all supporters of Cuban independence and his view of the situation:

What is at stake at this very instant in our land is not only the future of our country, but also to a great extent the future of justice, of socialism and of the poor peoples of the world. Therefore, you could very well say the same words written by Jose Marti almost a century ago: "A mistake in Cuba is a mistake in America, a mistake in modern mankind. Whoever stands today alongside Cuba, stands forever."

Throughout the world the eyes of mighty governments and their suffering subjects are on Havana and Washington.

The rallies against U.S. intervention in Cuba held in New York and San Francisco show that there is strong sentiment in this country against military invasion. Organizers of these rallies expressed confidence that this sentiment will deepen and find political expression, albeit in some distorted form, in the 1992 general election. □

Hands Off Cuba! (Continued from page 1)

"communism" and "Castroism." But that need not be an obstacle to mobilizing large numbers against the present policies of the U.S. government—provided we can reach the American public with a clear and consistent demand that Washington simply eliminate its effort to strangle the country economically and militarily.

If the anti-Vietnam war movement of the late 1960s and early '70s is any guide, many Americans who join this struggle simply in opposition to military action by their government will, if they maintain that

activism for any length of time, begin to gain a deeper understanding of the root cause of the problem they are confronting—the very existence of the capitalist and imperialist system. For this to happen revolutionaries must participate intelligently in this broader movement. We must find a way to educate around our own ideas about the need for radical social change, in particular around a real understanding of the Cuban revolution and what it has meant for the people of that country. At the same time, however, we must help

to organize a movement that activists at every level of consciousness and understanding can join and feel comfortable in—provided only that they agree with the most fundamental demands and slogans:

- **U.S. Hands Off Cuba!**
- **End the Blockade!**
- **U.S. Out of Guantanamo!**
- **Self-Determination for the Cuban People!**

U.S. Trade Unionists Visit Cuba

International Labor Conference in Cuba Calls for Unity Against Bosses

by Elizabeth Byce

This article and the "Cuba Close-Up" on the following page were written by Elizabeth Byce, a member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and are reprinted from its publication Toronto Local News, The Voice of the Local, December 1991. Both Byce and Tussey participated in the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange that toured Cuba in November 1991.

From November 7 to 9, 224 labor leaders and activists from 20 countries across North and South America met in Havana, Cuba, to discuss the plight of workers in the new world economic order.

The event, called a "union gathering for the rights and freedoms of workers against neo-liberalism," was hosted by the Cuban Federation of Labor (CTC). The dozens of unions and labor federations officially represented covered a wide political spectrum from Christian democracy to the socialist left. They came together to discuss what we in Canada know as the right-wing corporate agenda and its impact on working people and the poor.

The horror stories we heard were not unfamiliar. Privatization, cutbacks to social expenditures, wage controls, massive layoffs, and union busting. But in Latin America the situation, which was much worse than ours before, is now made desperate for millions by the foreign debt and the austerity measures imposed by international banking bodies and their client regimes. Deep poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, and disease is widespread and growing fast.

As a postal worker my attention was drawn to reports from Argentina about how the postal service there was completely privatized. In Panama, where the U.S. invaded supposedly to restore democracy two years ago, and killed over 2,000 people in the process, thousands of public employees were fired and union rights attacked. In Nicaragua, after ten years of contra war, and following the election of a pro-U.S. government, peasants are losing their land, health, and education are rapidly declining, and the country is creeping towards civil war.

Factories are springing up in northern Mexico, but only to assemble imported parts, with mostly young women workers paid \$6 a day. Unsafe working conditions and horrible pollution are common in such "free trade zones" of Mexico and South America.

The conference demanded an end to exploitative trade and economic policies that favor continued domination of Latin America by the big banks and businesses of the U.S., Europe, Canada, and Japan. The delegates called for an end to the debt payments, for genuine economic development through Latin American cooperation and integration, for respect for human and labor rights and liberties, and for an end to the economic blockage and the occupation of Cuban territory by the U.S. □

A second labor seminar for U.S. trade unionists will take place in Cuba beginning April 25, 1992 and extend for one and two week periods. If you are interested in attending or endorsing the seminar contact: U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, P.O. Box 39188, Redford, MI 48239; phone: (313) 836-3752.

Cleveland Unionists Attend Labor Seminar in Cuba

by Jean Tussey

This is the first installment of a special feature article on "The Structure and Functions of the Cuban Labor Movement Today" written for The United Labor Agency Journal by Jean Tussey. Tussey is vice president of The Greater Cleveland Labor History Society and an active retiree member of Communications Workers of America No. 4340 Printing Sector.

I was one of three Cleveland unionists who visited Cuba with 19 other American participants in a Nov. 2-9, 1991, U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange. The other Clevelanders were Harold Mitchell, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 100 and vice president of AFSCME Council 8, and Gerardo Colon, steward for AFSCME Local 100 General Government Chapter.

The week-long Labor Seminar included formal meetings and informal discussions with Cuban workers at their workplaces, construction sites, and homes. A particularly informative interchange and workshop on the Cuban trade union movement was held at the Lazaro Pena Trade Union School (roughly comparable to the George Meany Institute of the AFL-CIO). We were able to discuss similarities and differences between the structures and functioning of our unions in today's national and international context.

We also attended opening sessions of a conference of trade unionists, men and women from almost every Latin American country but Guatemala, and from Canada, on the impact of "neo-liberalism" on the labor movement. The very modern conference center had simultaneous translation equipment that made it possible for us to follow the discussion of the need for union solidarity everywhere against attacks on labor's rights and living and working conditions by privatization.

The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, initiated earlier this year with the visit to the United States of Joaquin Bernal Camero of the Cuban Trade Union Confederation (CTC), opened a valuable direct line of communication between our unions that is important for increasing our mutual understanding of the problems we face. Participants felt that building labor cooperation and solidarity will strengthen the ability of our unions to perform their historic task of defending the interests of working people.

Toward that end, we invited the CTC to consider sending a delegation of Cuban trade unionists to tour U.S. cities during February 1992, and I hope Cleveland trade unionists will be able to meet with their Cuban counterparts at that time. We also arranged to exchange literature for the study of the history of our respective labor movements, and of the lessons of our experiences.

Clinton Adlum, who visited Cleveland and spoke at Cleveland State University in 1990 as a representative of the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, is now teaching at the University of Havana. Through him and his colleagues I was able to secure some two dozen books on the history of the Cuban labor movement,

(Continued on page 4)

biographies, local labor histories of several provinces, documents of the labor movement, and related materials.

I agreed to a continuing exchange of literature on the Cleveland and U.S. labor movement and the women's movement, and to assist Adlum in securing materials for a special study he is developing at the university on the history of African Americans in the United States.

In 1960, shortly after the popular revolution that overthrew the Batista dictatorship (and before the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Cuba decided to support the July 26th Movement led by Fidel Castro), I went to Cuba with two other Cleveland trade unionists, Auda Romine of the Meatcutters Union and Richard Tussey of the Mechanics Educational Society of America. We went to see for ourselves what kind of revolution it was and how

it affected the workers. When we returned home we joined with others to organize "Fair Play for Cuba."

In 1991 I returned to Cuba, again with two Cleveland trade unionists, to see for ourselves what has happened to the Cuban revolution. The withdrawal of support by the European "socialist" states in league with President Bush's reactionary "new world order" at a time of deepening international economic crisis has exacerbated the effects on the Cuban people of the 30-year U.S. embargo and hostility.

Future installments of this article will compare the situation of the working people in Cuba today with 1960, and describe the structure and functions of the trade unions and how they are dealing with the problems the working people face today. □

Cuba Close-Up

Although the conference lasted only three days, our visit to Cuba was a week long. Our hosts, the CTC, organized several tours for visitors to get to know Cuba a little better.

We went to a cooperative farm, and learned how women and men share the work—and the benefits equally. We visited an elementary school, one that's run by the unions representing the teachers and other workers there.

We toured a psychiatric hospital, which seemed more like a resort situated on acres of land, where the emphasis is on occupational therapy, rather than drugs. Patients make pottery and wood crafts; they grow vegetables and cultivate roses; and before we left, they treated us to an extraordinary cultural program of singing and instrumentals.

We saw many other things too; a workers' recreational center, a hospital specializing in orthopedic treatment, a labor leadership training center, a museum, new tourist facilities. We noticed a lot of construction, and expanding agriculture, despite the hardship Cuba is now enduring with the loss of aid and trade from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Cubans are adapting to changing conditions. They continue to demonstrate what it's possible to do when a society puts people before profits.

So, I found the union conference, and the tours of the Cuban countryside and Havana, very important for several reasons. It gave workers from many countries a chance to share information and ideas about how to resist the capitalist offensive. It helped us to see that the claims of neo-liberal, free market politicians about prosperity "around the corner" or "somewhere else" are just lies. And getting to know Cuba better helped show that there is a good alternative to the international corporate agenda.

Since the revolution in 1959, Cuba has come a long way, particularly in health and education, surpassing all third world countries.

Infant mortality is 10.7 per 1,000 live births—lowest in Latin America, lower than Washington, D.C. (13 per 1,000). Life expectancy among Cubans is 75.7 years.

In 1958, there were 6,286 doctors in Cuba; over 2,000 left the island after the revolution. But today Cuba has 38,690.

Illiteracy was 14 percent in 1959; today it has been virtually eliminated. One hundred percent of 6- to 11-year-olds are in school; 98 percent of 6- to 14-year-olds; 94.3 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds.

In the period 1959 to 1990, the country's population rose 50 percent. But the percentage of secondary school graduates rose 328 percent.

The significance of Cuba's progress can be measured only against its past. For 400 years, Cuba was a colony of Spain. Then for over half a century it was dominated by the U.S., ruled by brutal dictators—a haven for drugs, prostitution, and gambling, with over 40 percent unemployed, and a one-crop economy under the thumb of foreign business interests.

The revolution charted a new course, nationalized the commanding heights of the economy, distributed land to the peasants, and armed the working class to resist foreign aggression.

Imperialism is determined to bring Cuba to its knees, to destroy the revolution—not because Cuba represents any kind of security threat, but rather because it demonstrates another path of economic and social development, one much more in the interests of the great majority of humanity.

The Cuban people are under a lot of strain. The shortage of oil, and sources of energy in general, reduces production.

Many consumer items, like shoes, razors, soap, and toilet paper, are scarce. But the burdens are shared fairly equally. And no one goes hungry, poorly clothed, or homeless.

Support for the revolution, and its leadership, remains strong. There's little evidence of widespread social discontent. Most Cubans are fiercely anti-imperialist, and are quick to point to the real source of their difficulties—U.S. interference.

However, the Cuban revolution does have its internal weaknesses. The lack of pluralism in the media and politics, the lack of freedom to organize independently inside or outside the Cuban Communist Party, and the reluctance of Cuban officials to fully explain the rise and fall of Stalinism in the USSR, etc., make it easier for the enemies of Cuba to attack the revolution.

A convention of the Cuban CP, held in mid-October, took a step in the direction of more democracy (proposing direct election of National Assembly delegates) and relaxing restricted access to membership in the party (lifting the ban on believers in religion).

In my view, more democracy will only strengthen the revolution, not make it more vulnerable to CIA subversion.

But our responsibility, here in Canada, along with workers in other developed countries with governments hostile to the Cuban revolution, is to campaign for respect for Cuban sovereignty. By working to lift the economic blockade and end U.S. aggression, we can give Cuba the breathing space it needs to develop both economically and politically in the most healthy way.

At the same time, we would be promoting international workers' solidarity at a time when it is sorely needed—if we are to stop the attacks by big capital, and its governments, on our rights.

The struggle continues, and support for Cuba and stronger links with our sisters and brothers of this hemisphere, will help a lot to advance it. □

Economic Band-Aids from Bush

by Stuart Brown

The depth of the present economic crisis gripping the United States is not hard to assess. The direct experience of anyone who lives, as I do, in New York City—with jobless and homeless people begging on the street and in the subway—is enough to tell us that things have gotten dramatically worse, even over the last few months. Official statistics reflect the same story: unemployment, people no longer officially unemployed because they have given up looking for work, part-time workers who would like a full-time job, individuals on public assistance, personal bankruptcies, bank and small business failures, numbers in prison, etc., all reach higher and higher levels.

And the jobs that do exist for most working people pay less, in real wages, from year to year. The January 12 *New York Times* carried a chart showing how family income in the U.S. had increased by slightly less than 10 percent between 1970 and 1990—after adjusting for inflation. But even this modest increase masked a *real reduction* in wages for individuals of around 14 percent, since it reflected a substantial change in the number of families with two or more wage earners.

Of course, the economic slump has not affected the ruling class too much. Profits for most major corporations continue to roll in and the wages and benefits they pay their CEOs rise accordingly. The New York Stock Exchange reached record levels in early 1992. There is some connection between this and the decline in real wages for working people over the previous two decades.

For weeks before President Bush's State of the Union address on January 7, the newspapers and airways were filled with reports about dramatic new programs to turn the economy around. This is, after all, an election year, and the worst enemy of an incumbent president running for reelection is a stagnant or declining economy. For all the glory he managed to wrap himself in after the gulf war, for all the ideological capital the U.S. ruling class has tried to reap as a result of the breakup of the USSR and the crisis of the Eastern European states, it is the condition of their lives here at home that will most affect voters going to the polls in November. Every survey of public opinion shows Bush's approval rating dropping, month by month.

When the moment for his address to Congress arrived, the proposals made by Bush were less than dramatic—not much more than a warmed-over version of his time-worn program of tax breaks for the rich. The idea, or so the argument goes, is to make investing still more profitable so that wealthy individuals and corporations will have a stimulus to build new productive facilities and thereby create more jobs. This, supposedly, will improve "consumer confidence," further stimulate demand, prompting further investment, etc.

There is only one flaw in the argument. It does not take into account the fundamental reason for the present economic

slump in the U.S.A. This is not the result of some psychological flaw in U.S. consumers. Their level of confidence in the future reflects a real inability of millions to find work, and the lower incomes of those who do work. Nor is the problem a lack of capital in the hands of wealthy people or a too-high tax rate on profits. During the real period of economic boom following World War II, tax rates on the highest income brackets in the U.S. were *qualitatively* greater than they are today. That didn't stop anyone from investing and making profits.

The present crisis of confidence in the economy—the inability of people without money to buy and the unwillingness of those with money to invest—flows from a fundamental *structural* crisis of the U.S. economy. It results from a profound economic decay that has been growing more and more acute for the last two decades. A band-aid approach of interest rate manipulations and tax incentives will do nothing to cure it.

Around the beginning of the 1970s, the international productive capacity in most major industries (steel, auto, etc.) began to reach a point at which the available market on a world scale was basically saturated. From that point on, increased investment in one country, or in one sector, could only show a profit if its sales cut into the market share of another country, or another economic sector.

This is the reason that international competition became such an important factor around that time—and why the older, less efficient productive capacity of the United States began to lose ground to the newer, more cost-effective production taking place in Japan and Germany. The present efforts in Europe and North America to establish international trading partnerships that will be able to compete more favorably against other nations is also an outgrowth of this phenomenon.

In addition, the 1970s became a decade when the U.S. ruling class began its present, relentless attack against the union movement and the standard of living of American working people. As European and Japanese capital began to cut into the traditional U.S. dominance of international markets, profits could still be maintained if working people in this country were forced to accept an even smaller share of the wealth that they produced in the factories, mines, and mills.

Essentially, this last option—maintaining profits for the rich through driving down the living standards of working people—remains the economic strategy of the Bush administration. But, in the absence of a qualitatively stepped-up (even fascist-like) attack on those living standards there are severe limits as to how much of an impact this can really have. And such a level of attack seems out of the question, at least for the moment. For one thing, it would make it impossible to maintain the useful illusion that the "economic sacrifices" demanded from U.S. unions and others represent only a temporary concession to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. industry, bringing about a

future prosperity that all will have a share in. Even as things stand, this ideological myth becomes less and less convincing.

What are the real forces that limit the success of Bush's strategy? For one thing, there is the simple fact, noted above, of a genuine technological lag of U.S. industry behind its international competitors. This is why U.S. workers—who for years enjoyed the highest standard of living in the world—would have to endure far sharper cuts than even Bush's plans envision before a genuine competitive advantage for U.S. industry could be restored. Secondly, there is nothing which keeps the capitalists in other countries from demanding similar sacrifices from their own workers in order to maintain their own national economic competitiveness. In the end, given these two factors—the technological disadvantages of U.S. industry and the economic expectations of North American workers—this would seem to be a race that the U.S. capitalist class will have a tough time winning.

During the Ronald Reagan era of the 1980s this structural crisis of the U.S. economy was camouflaged by the massive stimulus of consumer and government debt. This Republican champion of fiscal conservatism ran up the biggest federal deficits in history. And no change came about with the entry of George Bush into the White House. A national debt that stood at \$153.5 billion in 1989 hit \$268.7 billion in 1991, and is now estimated to reach \$352 billion in 1992. That will be an increase of more than 125 percent in only three years—despite all the toothless “balanced budget” legislation passed in Congress.

Banks and other lending institutions, during this same period of time, made credit cards available to just about anyone. Ads for ways to borrow money—on a new car, on home equity, on family jewelry, etc.—continue to fill the media. As a result personal indebtedness has skyrocketed to astronomical proportions.

Of course the buying of goods and services with the promise to pay later can help to create considerable demand for a limited period of time. It creates markets for goods and profits for the corporations that produce them. But at some point people cannot afford to borrow any more and the debt has to be paid back. At that point the underlying structural weakness of the economy begins to be revealed, and the financing of a boom based on debt makes the ensuing crisis that much more intractable—witness the savings and loan debacle. Interest (sometimes at usurious rates, especially on credit card debt) which must be paid on old loans extracts money from consumers that might otherwise be used to purchase new goods and services.

The Democratic politicians in Congress have tried to pretend that they have a real alternative to Bush's economic program. They talk in particular about their concern for working people. But their proposals differ from Bush's only in degree, not in kind. Essentially, there is a real debate within the U.S. ruling class: How far and how fast can they push the drive against

working people's standard of living and still avoid a social explosion in this country? The Democrats tend to favor a more cautious approach, a few more crumbs for working people. They polemicize long and loud against Bush's proposal for a cut in the capital gains tax (on profits from sales of real-estate, stocks, corporate property, etc.). But there is no challenge whatsoever to the basic tax structure in the U.S., which is grotesquely favorable to the ruling rich.

None of this is to say that within the context of the generalized economic crisis of the U.S. and world economy periods of upturn will not take place. But it is hard to see how any periodic upturn will represent a real return to the kind of

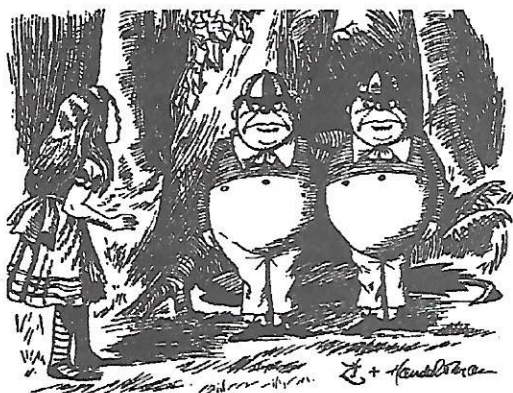
prosperity people remember from the '50s and '60s (or even to some degree the '80s)—a prosperity of rising incomes and rising expectations for most, if not all, American citizens. Homelessness, unemployment, poverty can be expected to continue at unacceptable levels even when the formal recession comes to an end. Public services, schools, etc., will remain underfunded. And the next downturn will probably come sooner, rather than later, and will be accompanied by more

demands for concessions, more cutbacks in government services. All of this will be especially true for the Black and Latino communities, which have always suffered more as a result of their second-class status in U.S. society.

This fact points to one of the continuing realities that both Bush and the Democrats are banking on in their effort to maintain the credibility of capitalist rule in the U.S.A., despite the intractable nature of their economic crisis: the increasingly stratified character of our society. The economic crisis tends to hit hardest at the already oppressed layers, and the ruling class uses this extra oppression of certain groups to limit, at least to some extent, the effects felt by more privileged layers of the working class and others. They are counting on their ability to maintain the support of this relatively well-off grouping—what bourgeois sociologists like to refer to as the “white middle class”—in their effort to maintain the present system.

But even this has become increasingly difficult as the economic crunch makes its effects felt on broader and broader layers. A random statistic points out the real problem: 22,000 jobs (out of slightly over 1.5 million) were lost in banks across the U.S. in 1991—including many with executive titles. These were positions that people once believed represented lifetime economic security. In savings institutions the equivalent figure was 27,000 (out of around 360,000). “Middle class” graduates even from prestigious colleges are finding it more and more difficult to find jobs. Increasingly, it is not only the chronically unemployed and underprivileged who are suffering from the economic decline, but even more conservative layers of the population who used to think that they had a personal stake in the American economic system.

George Bush, and the Democratic Party establishment as well, have good reason to be worried these days. □



“I beg your pardon,” said Alice, “but which of you is the Democrat?”

March for Women's Lives on April 5

by Sarah Lovell

At its national conference last July the National Organization for Women voted unanimously to organize a demonstration for the right to a legal, safe, accessible abortion and called for a March for Women's Lives on April 5 in Washington, D.C. This decision came on the heels of the "gag rule" pronouncement of the Supreme Court—the unconscionable ruling of the Court which prohibits healthcare workers in federally funded clinics from discussing abortion options with women using the centers.

The Court is now poised to strike its heaviest blow against *Roe v Wade* which in 1973 established the right of a woman to choose, this time in review of a Pennsylvania law, scheduled to take place this summer, probably in June or July. So the March for Women's Lives comes at a critical moment. Under the slogans of "We Won't Go Back!" and "We Will Fight Back!" organizing for the demonstration is proceeding on campuses and in cities across the country.

In 1986, NOW organized the first national mobilization in defense of women's right to an abortion. National demonstrations were held again in April and November of 1989. Each one was larger than the previous one. These mobilizations have been invaluable for keeping our movement alive, educating about the issues, drawing in new forces; in effect, for establishing that a majority in this country support women in our fundamental right to control our bodies. But the crime is that this majority opinion is not registered in the ruling institutions of government—not in the judicial, not in the executive, not in the legislative arena.

Not that the "abortion issue" is overlooked in the political field, especially at election time. That's impossible to do. And in this presidential year 1992, it looms as a crucial political ploy. The Democrats intend to utilize it to their advantage, vowing undying commitment to our cause. The whole string of presidential hopefuls are declaring their support for a legal right

to abortion. The Republicans are in a quandary, facing a minority in their party who want to associate with abortion rights while President Bush sticks to his anti-abortion stance. Such is the political scenario displayed at election time.

The fact is that the *Roe v Wade* decision that legalized abortion has been under attack almost from the beginning. First, in 1976, the abominable Hyde amendment cut off federal Medicaid funds for performing abortions, attacking the most needy and vulnerable women. Since 1981 there has been an avalanche of state laws imposing restrictions primarily affecting young women. Then in 1989 came the *Webster v Reproductive Health Service Inc.* The Court decision upholding a Missouri law which imposed more general restrictions. And now we have the Pennsylvania law that the Court will hear this summer. Among the provisions of the law is a requirement that doctors wait 24 hours before performing an abortion and provide information to discourage one. It also requires parental consent for minors. Another provision of the law which could come under the purview of the Supreme Court is that married women must notify their husbands of an abortion under penalty of facing a year in jail if they do not.

Despite the promises of Democratic and Republican "friends" and their protestations of support for women, they have made feeble efforts at best to halt this course of events. They give lip service to our cause only to betray us, and absolve themselves of blame by blaming the Supreme Court.

But the Democrats are a majority in Congress. The Freedom of Choice Act, which would establish a federal law for legal abortion, has not been adopted nor even publicized. The Democrats made a show about introducing legislation to overturn the 1991 "gag rule" but threw in the towel before the fight had really begun.

Faced with the abysmal record of these political "friends" and with similar experiences in the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment, the National Organization for Women decided at its 1989 national conference to explore the possibility of forming a new political party, independent of the Democrats and Republicans, to set a new agenda, an expanded bill of rights for the 21st century. It set up a Commission for Responsive Democracy which held hearings in various states and then recommended that NOW proceed. The national board of NOW has endorsed the proposition, and organizational efforts for a new party are already under way. Final approval will be sought at NOW's national conference this June.

The April 5 demonstration will serve both to show our determination to keep our right to choose intact and to begin the process of establishing a new independent party that will be responsible to us and responsive to our demands. □

Protect Abortion Rights NOW!

**The March for Women's Lives
will assemble at 10 a.m.,
Sunday April 5, on the
Ellipse in Washington, D.C.**

**Contact the National Organization
for Women in your area for
volunteering and/or transportation
information.**

NOW's Global Feminist Conference Fails to Live Up to Potential

by Sarah Springer

I recently attended NOW's Global Feminist Conference held in Washington, D.C., from January 9-12, which was designed to celebrate NOW's 25th (Silver) Anniversary. Between 700 and 800 people attended from the U.S. and around the world. The conference was divided into working groups, caucuses and workshops, and several plenary sessions, all featuring representatives from women's organizations internationally. The main focus of the conference was the current Middle East dialogue.

This was a conference whose time had come. It is important that feminists in the U.S. realize that we must work not only to advance women's rights in this country, but also to oppose U.S. foreign policy that denies women abroad access to reproductive care and that supports governments which deny women education and employment opportunities and fundamental human rights. Many of the women from other countries pointed to the need to globalize feminism, as did NOW president, Patricia Ireland.

Working groups were formed to address such issues as violence against women, economic empowerment, health and reproductive issues, political empowerment, the backlash against feminism, race and culture conflict, and women and families.

The caucuses and workshops included: NOW grassroots organizing; Jewish feminists; young feminists; lesbian rights; NOW herstory; women workers, environmental health and safety; women in the Middle East dialogue; female genital mutilation; disability rights; indigenous women; trafficking in women; the role of women leaders in the environmental movement; women in the Middle East; socialist women's international caucus (entitled "How Did the Collapse of Communism Affect Women in Social Democratic Parties?"); and a workshop on the "disappeared."

The first plenary included keynote speeches by Aminata Diop, a young

woman from Mali who is seeking political asylum in France to escape genital mutilation; Nebina Gueddana, the Tunisian minister of social affairs; and Patricia Ireland. Ireland said that representatives from women's organizations were in attendance from Sri Lanka, Chile, Pakistan, Japan, Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Belgium, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia, Iceland, Nicaragua, Canada, India, Taiwan, South Africa, France, England, Guatemala, Wales, Kuwait, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. Tamar Gozansky, member of the Israeli Knesset, spoke about the need to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Hanan Ashrawi, the spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation at the Middle East talks, discussed life under occupation and the threat of deportation, unlawful arrest, and displacement from their homes that Palestinians face.

It was, in short, a good opportunity to reach out and establish working relationships with feminists internationally. However, the parts of the conference I attended were seriously marred by verbal assaults, racist remarks, and general condemnations of men as the problem behind the attacks on women's rights and equality in this country and internationally. Specifically, men were characterized as having a "natural" proclivity for militaristic aggression, jockeying for political power and positions, etc.

Hanan Ashrawi was hissed at and booed from the floor of the plenary when she urged U.S. feminists to work toward stopping U.S. military funding for Israel, and during other parts of her presentation. Afterwards, Patricia Ireland did not admonish those on the floor with her usual appropriate words, "sisters don't hiss at other sisters." Rather she said that it was important not to single out any one country (namely Israel) for particular criticism, and that the Jewish feminist caucus had told her to remind everyone that Israel is a democratic country.

I also attended the Jewish feminist caucus and was disturbed to find that the

level of reactionary sentiments among most of the participants was quite high. Several women characterized all criticism of Israel and anti-Zionist remarks as anti-Semitic; one woman said it doesn't matter what Israel does because if Israel had been in existence there probably would not have been a Hitler; another woman said that Jewish feminists need to become more involved in education because it is the "minorities—Spanish and Black children" who are growing up to be the most anti-Semitic in the U.S. One positive note is that some people participating in the caucus objected to these kinds of statements. But the overall effect was to stifle discussion through accusations of being too young to know the history of the Holocaust and that criticism of the policies of the Israeli government and Zionism is in and of itself anti-Semitic. The same sentiments—and attempts to rebut them—were expressed at the Women in the Middle East Dialogue workshop I attended.

The makeup of the conference was primarily middle-aged and older women. There were few young people there and few women of color. There were no literature tables representing women's organizations from other countries.

This conference did not live up to its full potential of uniting women around the world to advance women's rights. The shortcomings I saw in the working group, workshops and caucuses, and the plenary I attended point to the failure of some feminists to step beyond the limitations of blaming men and the "patriarchy" instead of addressing the solutions needed to build a society that does not profit by exploiting women. It is also, I believe, a reflection of the reality in which we live, that when everyone's rights are being threatened and pushed back, some people resort to blaming other oppressed people for their situation or characterizing a whole segment of the population as conspirators in repression instead of joining in solidarity for full equality for all oppressed people. □

What Next? Further Thoughts on 'Yugoslavia'

by Michael Protenic

As I write, European Community observers have been shot out of the skies over "Yugoslavia,"¹ only to be replaced with the addition of UN reinforcements. Serbians and Croats are battling on the op-ed pages when not using guns. Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, and Greece are directly involved in Yugoslav internal and border struggles, with England and the U.S. being drawn in steadily.

Right now, "Yugoslavia" consists of Serbia and its satellites (Vojvodina, Kosovo, the Krajina region of Croatia). Slovenia has drifted away. Croatia is fighting for its independence upon a shrinking territory. Macedonia is prepared to declare its independence under the watchful eyes of Serbia and Greece.² Bosnia-Herzegovina is straddling a burning fence, with the U.S. guaranteeing its borders as if it were a sovereign nation. Serbia, meanwhile, rattles its sabers against German and Italian imperialism while bemoaning UN intervention against its latest imperial advances.

It is a scenario the likes of which has not been seen in Europe since before World War II, a replay of imperialist, indeed Byzantine, scheming that is growing to engulf Europe as a whole. One could say, as the capitalist press has, that "Yugoslavia" is the "powder keg of Europe" again. But the more we take a global approach to these events the more we will see "Yugoslavia" as an effect, not as the cause, of worldwide changes that have resounded from east to west. The echoes of the collapse of bureaucratic despotism have bounced through Europe, the United States, and Japan—and found them devoid of ideas, structures, or capital to even "profit" from the destruction, let alone rebuild these toppled economies to their previous state.

It is on this point that we can see how this return to imperialist bickering is not repeating itself upon the same ground, at the same level, as it did in the '30s or earlier. European and Japanese workers have experienced a boom created and supported through the capitalist states. The Cold War demanded that these governments enhance the well-being of capital and labor since competition with communism required that capital "showcase" its achievements for workers. The rebuilding of a war-torn Europe and Japan created room, up until the end of the 1960s, for the economic expansion necessary for imperialism to accomplish this. Our major job as socialists is to press home this historic truth and another—that this period is finally, completely, finished. Capitalist forces are fighting with new weapons, and labor must be armed with a reborn Marxism to defend itself against a capital-poor imperialism that must suck capital from workers more efficiently than ever.

This is why "Yugoslavia" is so critical to understand, as it is a microcosm of global problems besetting the working class and its democratic tasks.

In a previous article,³ the historical roots of the present economic and social malaise received an all too brief overview.



At this point, a more pressing task must be faced—to bring to light the internal and external forces determining the disintegration of "Yugoslavia" and the effect of this upon Europe, the capitalist world as a whole, and the working class internationally. Some subjects must be addressed as questions. At best we can give educated guesses when confronted with forces in the process of change as they collide. What will prevail?

Internal Forces—'Yugoslavia' Pulls Apart

Our first question must be—are there true Marxist forces within "Yugoslavia"? The answer is yes, but from here we go downhill. Those forces are few, have no political power at this time and thus have no voice. Among academics, workers, and village peasants you will find criticism of, and opposition to, the present leadership. But, in many ways, the Yugoslav system as it was previously constructed was a massive restraint on political activism, with the strongest restraints reserved for academic voices who might stir the workers to action and offer political leadership.

What views were supported among intellectuals? Conformity to the system and stress on practical research into real, "on the ground" problems of economic, technological, and social life were "suggested," sometimes not so gently. However, as the "practical" problems were defined by national republics structured upon ethnic enclaves, ethnic nationalism percolated through. Of course, not by design, not by anyone's desire. As usual, this nationalism was a byproduct of misguided economic decentralism and political heavy-handedness surprising to those who only saw the *myth* of a "self-managed" society.

So, at best we can say that intellectuals are compromised, having used their abilities to further an ideology of ethnic superiority that has suddenly sprung from their textbooks into the barrels of rifles.

The demise of the group of Marxists around the journal *Praxis* is an example of this evolution. After the crackdown by Tito in 1971 (the "Croatian Spring"), the intellectuals drifted theoretically and, after finding no response to their former programmatic suggestions, saw the writing on the wall. Many of them are now leading advisers and spokespersons for the nationalist leaderships of their "home" republics. Could we say that this drift among intellectuals is automatic? How deeply does this nationalism run?

Let's examine it further. With the same economic and political conditions, another country, e.g., Sweden or Argentina, would not so easily fall into nationalist rhetoric to be used against fellow countrymen, if only because the ethnic makeup of the population and the ethnicity of the opposed leadership were not as varied. If advanced capitalist countries (Germany, the U.S., France) were able to bring ethnic and racial groups up to a high level of economic and social well-being without sacrifices by those already in advantaged positions, the pole of ethnic or racial politics would also be a weak attractor there. "Yugoslavia" cannot fit into these categories, especially since its guiding ideology was to build an egalitarian society by bureaucratic means—in a society of scarcity beset by ethnic, religious, and economic contradictions, without the advantage of centuries of capitalist productive development.

The point here is that, in the "Yugoslavia" we are confronting at this time in history, nationalism is a highly probable outcome of the political economy that was its base. "Yugoslavia" is a classic example of combined and uneven development. Intellectuals, no matter how noble, cannot ultimately defeat such a strong reality alone. Help must come from a strong political movement based on democratic popular will.

There is much talk of the distinction between the "Communist" (read "old-line Stalinist") Milosevic and the "Fascist" (read "son of Croatian Nazis") Tadjman. Within a political tradition where political stances are worn like high fashion, both descriptions are just too simple. In fact, all figurehead politicians in "Yugoslavia" have used, and abused, all the various methods available to them. The goal: to catch a mass movement at birth, and ride it to fame and glory. The major problem with this is the uncontrollable nature of mass movements based on ethnic hatred. These politicians have found rivulets and, exercising their power within the Titoist machine, turned them into raging tidal waves. But, in the final analysis, politicians are at the mercy of the same forces as intellectuals. They, too, are only working with what they have been given.

There are many who have written about the Stalinist political tradition and its problems with national rights. We cannot go into this here, except for one point—the Yugoslav Communists under Tito knew the explosive nature of the ethnic divisions

they inherited. They sincerely hoped to contain and ultimately eliminate these by a program of economic development leading to prosperity for all. This would have been possible within "Yugoslavia" only if there had been 1) outside revolutionary help to defeat capitalism worldwide, or 2) tremendous sacrifices by the Yugoslav working class to produce investment funds by their own labor—in other words, generalized poverty, or 3) finally, a compromise with capitalism to bring investment on its terms. Both Tadjman and Milosevic are operating within these possibilities. They are both in favor of some centralized control with some room for the market. The danger is that their political life relies upon finding scapegoats for the failures of past and present. In this regard each looks to the other, all the while saying "my way is the only way to save 'Yugoslavia' as a whole." They have turned workers' anger toward the ethnic composition of the central government and the economic bureaucracy.

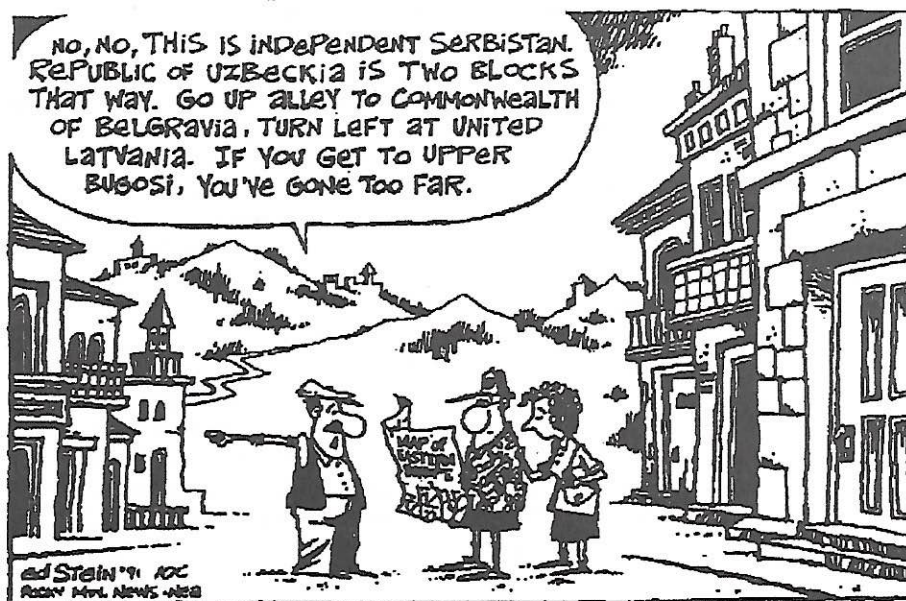
We have discussed intellectuals and politicians. The Yugoslav working class could have the final say in these matters, but its voice has been stilled by runaway inflation, monopoly of the media by the previously discussed sectors of the population, and a trade union bureaucracy that is looking for saviors among the Milosevics and Tadjmans. Another tendency among workers has been a reliance upon intellectuals to voice their demands. With ethnic nationalism rampant among them, workers are left to follow those voices or create their own—not easy in the midst of a shooting war that demands immediate decisions about allegiance and survival.

Yugoslavia and the Capitalist World

Into the vacuum of Yugoslav politics has poured multinational capital and its political henchmen. Foremost is the European Community. The relationship of Yugoslav events to the maneuverings of the E.C. centers around Serbian plans for the region and the industrial ties of the E.C. to the republics of Slovenia and Croatia.

Serbia has lately renewed its ancient historical claim to be a major power in southern Slavic affairs. In this goal it is running smack into capitalist interests which see, in the demise of Stalinism, a reawakening of their traditional goals in this

region. Germany and Italy have taken the lead, demanding that the E.C. as a whole support their initiatives, including the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent republics. The reason for this recognition is, immediately, to protect industrial investment in the two republics. However, the rest of the E.C. has sensed the long-range agenda, and feels the threat to its investment goals. To make matters worse, Germany has aroused bitterness in the E.C. for its unilateral moves of reunification and "realpolitik" in the east. The specter of German imperialism, going it alone, threatens the implementation of "Europe 1992." Further, the loss of German capital (needed for European goals) to the internal costs of German reunification has set back European-wide develop-



ment plans at a time when more, not less, capital is demanded worldwide.

For Slovenia and Croatia, the question of resisting E.C. imperial design was ludicrous. Already deeply in debt to German finance, with over 30 percent of their industry controlled by German or Italian interests,⁵ these republics knew they could play the "Western card" in spite of the risk of civil war. The best defense they had was the threat of angry capitalist finance having to deal with a victorious Serbia that wouldn't play by the rules.

The U.S. role has been less direct, and therefore more insidious. The first financier for Tito's turn away from Stalin, the U.S., with private and government funding, insured the initial investments by Germany and Britain.⁶ As the battering ram for free market domination and unsubsidized industry, American imperialism has always had a soft spot in its heart for Tito. It is no wonder, then, that U.S. foreign policy still looks for another Tito to arise as the "Great Stabilizer," or that Yugoslav political bosses claim the mantle of Tito as they destroy any basis for stability.

The most hidden role has been played by the Catholic Church. Its part, not publicized here as much as in Poland, has been two-pronged. During the rule of "atheistic" communism, it defended its religious and right-wing interpretation of the economic woes of the population. In this regard, its avid promotion of pilgrimages to villages in Croatia where sightings of the Virgin Mary occurred is a case in point. More importantly, the papal authorities in Rome promoted investment in Slovenia and Croatia by some of the most rabidly religious industrialists from Italy and the U.S. The fact that many were tied to the Vatican bank scandals of 1980-82, and that Slovenian and Croatian republic banks guaranteed these investments, caused further chaos economically.⁷ Will the church play a larger role now that these predominantly Catholic republics are independent?

In Summary

With apologies to Albert Einstein, let's do a "thought experiment." What is probable in the combined trajectories of the forces we have outlined?

Within "Yugoslavia," the shooting war has drowned out the needed discussion of *class* alternatives to this balkanization. As the destruction and atrocities continue, the mood of the masses will turn. There will come better knowledge of their exposure to greater exploitation by European capital. The unknown element here is what *form* opposition will take. A lot depends upon the actions of capitalism—will it present itself as aid to development, or guarantor of cheap labor? Let's look at this from the capitalist viewpoint first.

Can the E.C. do anything? Only if the German positions carry the day as they have in the past. However, this possibility is growing dimmer. As we have seen, Germany needs the rest of the E.C. to put together a package that can turn economic conditions around. It must convince British, French, and Benelux banking establishments to offer support to Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia, if a firm resolution is to be reached. With the E.C. stretched to the limit by its needs to finance its member nations' conversions to standardized money and nontariff, nonsubsidized transactions, even this rather limited program is liable to need support from elsewhere. Enter the U.S.?

If this is the last resort of European capital, then the joke is on them. *Before* the latest recession in the U.S., Bush offered paltry help to Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union in their efforts to turn toward the capitalist market. The U.S. would rather rely on a consortium of IMF/World Bank nations, but with the strict strings attached to loans as has been offered to the third world. However, there is a fallback position. This option is not palatable to the U.S. or Europe, but, if all else fails, what is left?

Japan could be brought into this arrangement. As the only capitalist country enjoying a large (although diminishing) block of investment-ready capital, their role would be undeniable. The major problems are: 1) Japanese investments have been successful because they were in controllable, rapid-return situations, mostly in East Asia and the U.S. Why change to risky loans with diffused responsibility and enforcement? It would be much harder to convince the Japanese of this than the idea of buying a few more American cars. . . . 2) This introduction of Japanese capital would cross over the existing spheres of influence that divides world exploitation among Japan (Asia), the U.S. (Latin America, some of Africa), and Europe (the rest of Europe, Africa). The U.S. (already at verbal war with Japan) and Europe (jealous over Japanese success in certain investments in Britain and France) would not be open to this unless strong limits were put upon Japan.

All this depends on the health of the world economy. The limits upon capital maneuverability have a direct effect upon Yugoslavia and all other investment-poor nations in the near future. Capital will also reign into the more distant future (since even a 1930s style collapse will not automatically lead to the final demise of capital) *unless* we see the final alternative.

Building a Workers' United Front

The view taken here is global, based on the need to see this juncture as an *emergency*. To workers internationally, the Marxist movement has gone astray or, worse, betrayed its birthright. Stalinism's demise means a major challenge for Trotskyism—we are now responsible for bringing home the need for revolutionary parties in the bellies of the beasts listed above. As *responsible revolutionaries*, we must be in a position to defend the working class at this critical time, and prepare to ensure workers' democracy when workers are ready to take power. Can we really measure ourselves against these goals?

The faster we find the answer, the fewer "Yugoslavias" we will need to endure. □

January 28, 1992

Notes

1. Throughout this article, "Yugoslavia" will be in quotes, as the existence of the country as a single nation is no longer feasible, and any referrals are to the constituent republics that made up "Yugoslavia."

2. See "The Macedonian Temptation," by N. Champi, *International Viewpoint* No. 215, pp. 12-14.

3. "Yugoslavia—A Nation Under Siege," by M. Protenic, *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism*, No. 88.

4. See "National Questions in Yugoslavia—An Indication," by C. Verla, *International Marxist Review*, vol. 4, no. 2.

5. See, among others, *Twentieth Century Yugoslavia*, by F. Singleton (Columbia Press, 1988).

6. *Ibid.*

7. See *In Banks We Trust*, by P. Lemoux (Anchor Press, 1984).

Crisis in the Former Soviet Union

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The economic reform measures implemented by Boris Yeltsin and the current clique of bureaucrat-marketeers in the Kremlin especially since the January 2 lifting of price ceilings have, of course, devastated the lives of ordinary workers. Prices have risen by 300-2,000 percent. The higher prices have not coaxed hidden reserves onto shelves. Shortages of most goods appear to be worse and when goods do appear they are likely to remain on the shelves because few people can afford to buy them.

With some 55 percent of the population already reduced to poverty by summer 1990 as a result of the government's economic reforms, the January 2 "shock therapy" measures lifting price controls on everything from food to transportation, threaten the very survival of tens of millions.

The Moscow Federation of Trade Unions reported January 17 that an average person needed nearly 2,000 rubles per month to feed oneself since the price controls were lifted January 2. Average wages range from 400-1,500 per month. (Reuters, January 18, 1991) The minimum wage and pension levels are apparently 342 rubles per month. (*Financial Times*, January 2, 1992)

This impoverishment was all foreseen by the ruling bureaucrats who have put themselves at the mercy of imperialist creditors and their advisers in a desperate attempt to secure massive capital investments and technological assistance.

The bureaucrats' old system of totalitarian command economic planning—falsely labeled as communist or socialist—had produced economic and social stagnation that only promised to worsen if continued. Over the past five years, the bureaucrats have been unsuccessful in their efforts to attract imperialist assistance by progressively dismantling the old system, attempting to introduce capitalist market institutions, along with price and currency reforms. All this has had tragic consequences for the population.

All of the previous reform plans—Gorbachev by the time of his resignation had unveiled no less than eleven "plans" going through almost as many economic advisers and Yeltsin has proclaimed at least three since his August counter-coup—have been dumped soon after being announced. None

of the plans have "succeeded" in imposing the drastic price decontrols that they all called for because of the fear of massive social explosions.

It was not until January 2, 1992, that the ruling clique—with Yeltsin on top—dared to take the "plunge" and lift controls on prices. When they finally did, it was ironically not because the conditions were more propitious either politically or economically as far as the ruling bureaucrats were concerned. Rather, it was because imperialist lending institutions had made them an offer they could not refuse.

With the bureaucrats—bankrupt financially, economically, and politically—on their knees before imperialist lending institutions and with no mass organizations of the workers prepared to challenge either the policies of the bureaucrats or their imperialist advisers, the initiative in the situation has shifted. The bureaucrats had maneuvered themselves into an imperialist trap. If they expected to get out—to receive any significant assistance at all from imperialism—they had to first prove that they could pay back what past Kremlin bureaucrats have borrowed, the prospects for which were appearing less and less likely by November 1991.

The imperialists then offered to postpone payments of some \$6 billion in principal due December 1991 if these and other drastic economic reforms were instituted. The situation was to be reviewed in March. The interest payments on the principal, however, still had to be paid.

According to press reports of the negotiations, imperialist lenders were afraid that the disintegration of the Union would jeopardize the possibility that the debt payments would be made. This was a chief reason the bureaucrats scraped together the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in December.

This commonwealth, a loose political and economic entity founded on the ruins of the collapsed Soviet Union, managed by the end of December to include 11 of the former 15 republics. Only Georgia and the Baltic states refused to join it. One of the reasons the creditors wanted this unity was to try to insure that the ruble remained the common currency of all the states and that at least some semblance of fiscal stability could be attained. (See *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism*, No. 93) The Yeltsin team had

no choice in the matter if it were to prove a reliable partner for imperialism and receive assistance.

Whatever the intentions of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin—refurbished or unrefurbished Stalinists—and their co-thinkers who have managed to hang onto power in the newly independent republics of Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Turkmenia, Kirghizia, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, and Tadjikistan, they were bound to have a tough time implementing the "macro-economic" reforms prescribed by the imperialist lending institutions. [Note: Devastated Armenia, being strangled by the Stalinist Baku mafia in Azerbaijan headed by Ayaz Mutalibov, has a democratic, if not workers government. However, it, too, is soliciting imperialist support.] In fact, the economic plan was already in serious trouble by mid-January.

A review of the limitations of the "privatization" plans will indicate the scope of the problem the bureaucrats confront in trying to appease imperialism.

No privatization plan announced to date has really amounted to anything, no matter how far-reaching it sounded. On December 30, Russian Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar announced yet another such plan on top of the earlier schemes put forth by Yeltsin in October and again in December. The December plan projected massive privatization of land to be implemented before the spring planting season with all implementation plans due from local officials by March 1.

Of the earlier plans, Gaidar said: "The law on privatization adopted this summer [announced in late October] could not be properly carried out as no goals, procedures, and orders have been determined. This created abuses and did not create conditions for stable distribution of property in society."

Apparently, this December plan is already being replaced. On February 7, the Russian government announced still another "crash program to sell off state-owned shops, factories, and other property," in what the *New York Times* aptly called "the next move in [the government's] gamble with economic reform." This plan calls for 25 percent of the state property to be auctioned off by the end of 1992 with 25 percent of the shares in the enterprises to be reserved for those currently working in the enterprises in question. The government expects to rake in roughly 92 billion rubles from such sales or about \$840 million at the current exchange rate—not much for one-quarter of what was once a major industrial power.

Regarding this new plan, Anatoli Chubais, chairman of the state property committee, said: "We intend to change the

nature of the process and move away from the theft of state-owned property." The only consequence to date of the privatization schemes has been to allow well-placed managers of state companies to "form their own joint stock companies, leasing out premises for private profit and selling assets on privately run exchanges," according to Chubais. Property worth some two billion rubles has been "privatized" in this way.

These are the layers that have profited by the disintegration of the system and have an interest in seeing this disintegration continue. These and similar such "privatizations"—really theft of property—by the "bureaucratic mafia" may have allowed some individuals to lavishly line their own pockets at popular expense. However, they comprise a relatively insignificant sector of the national economy, the bulk of which is still state owned.

It is not likely that this new plan will be any more successful than those that came before. The generalized collapse of all forms of production and distribution, the increasing shortages and skyrocketing prices mean it is unlikely that shops or factories, even if "privatized" in some way, could become going concerns.

The privatization of land is a good case in point. In early February, Russia's private farmers—the Association of Farm and Agricultural Cooperatives—had their third congress. They are opposed to the market policies. They protested that the high taxes and interest rates aimed at eliminating budget deficits and cutting inflation were hurting them (interest rates are 25-30 percent), the 28 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on farm produce made no sense ("It's crazy to make food even more expensive when there is so little as it is," one of the farm spokesmen remarked.); the price liberalization had ruined them by driving up the prices of vital supplies and equipment. The price of a tractor, they said, had gone up 30 times. (UPI, February 4, 1992)

What is worse, the tractor factories themselves cannot survive, even if the farmers could afford to pay the high prices. A principal factory producing tractors located in Minsk, capital of Belarus, closed in late January because it could not get needed supplies. This happened despite the fact that the price of its tractors had jumped from 17,000 rubles to 500,000 rubles in the recent period. (*New York Times*, January 26, 1992)

As regards the price reforms—or lifting of price controls—themselves, even these were not uniformly enforced. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Kazakhstan all decontrolled prices in early January. However, Ukraine began issuing its own currency, or currency coupons and Belarus plans to issue its own

coupons to cover roughly 60 percent of the workers' incomes that must be used when purchasing certain basic necessities. This has seriously afflicted the stabilization of the ruble as a common CIS currency.

Not only are privatization measures and fiscal stabilization plans unlikely to work, another element of the "crash" program—elimination of food and other social subsidies—has also been challenged.

Beseiged and devastated Armenia where fuel shortages have forced the government to close schools, factories and other enterprises since mid-December, for example, although it lifted most prices on January 4, also raised the minimum wage and salaries for civil servants and introduced a child allowance.

Only in Uzbekistan have mass mobilizations against the price increases been known to have forced the government to retreat.

The institution there of the price reforms on January 16 prompted mass demonstrations by thousands of students who demanded the price increases be rescinded and the government resign. Police armed in riot gear fired into the crowd killing at least three and possibly six students and wounding dozens. Russian press service Interfax reported that as many as 500 students may have been arrested and put the number of demonstrators at 10,000. They were protesting the increased prices in the university canteens and lack of bread in the campus shop.

The demonstrations began Thursday, January 16, and continued at least until the weekend. Police first tried to break up the demonstration and surrounded the campuses. The demonstrators were apparently medical students and other students—from both the Technical University and from Tashkent State University—some 15 of whom were on hunger strike. When protests continued, police broke into dorms and dragged 100-500 students away to buses. A porter who tried to stop the police was also apparently killed. The Uzbek Popular Front spoke out in support of the students and condemned the "authorities' bloody actions." Demonstrations apparently occurred in other parts of Tashkent throughout the weekend. (Reuters, UPI, TASS, January 18 and 20, 1992)

Islam Karimov, former CP head now reincarnated nationalist who recently got himself elected Uzbekistan's president and is the leader of the Uzbek National Democratic Party (formerly the CP), closed the campuses and sent the students "home." He also ordered the 15 hunger strikers arrested.

However, the protests had forced the government to retreat. By Saturday, January 18, the Uzbekistan rulers announced concessions to the students.

Karimov, whose resignation the students had demanded, made a one-hour TV address in which he announced some of the concessions: that the previous canteen prices would be restored; that allowances for students would be increased several times; and that students would be allowed free access to public transport, where fares have apparently tripled.

There has still been no news about the fate of the arrested students or the dozens of wounded protesters or, for that matter, when the campuses were to be reopened.

Demonstrations against the price increases have been reported in dozens of cities across Russia since January 2, including a demonstration of "thousands" in Krasnodar in Southern Russia and hunger strikes in Samara according to a TASS report of January 17. As yet it is unclear who is leading these mobilizations. However, neither the Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, a refurbished formation replacing the old discredited official trade unions—which TASS says has a membership of roughly 60 million—nor any other such large federation has mobilized its ranks. The only large mass protest demonstrations that have been reported, like those in Moscow on January 12 and February 9, have apparently been mobilized by the reorganized forces from the banned CP trying now to pose as defenders of the workers they so long helped strangle. These bureaucratic remnants are mobilizing either for more social protection during the transition to the market or for a return to the old command system. [See *Socialist Action*, Feb. 1992 for Gerry Foley's description of new political organizations formed by the Stalinists and their adherents since the banning of the CP.]

The fact that these apparatchik or former apparatchik elements are calling the protests and that to date no independent worker-based organizations have taken the lead may help explain the relative inaction of the masses of the population in the face of this body blow to their living standard. They would rightly be skeptical of any claims by these bureaucrats to represent the popular interests.

Although a full-blown social explosion is still in the making, Yeltsin's rapid decline in popularity—he had only a 38 percent approval rating by early February—because of the inhumanity of what he is doing has already moved the government to retreat from its plans and projections.

The Russian parliament Presidium on February 3 voted to cut from 28 percent to 15 percent the rate of the Value Added Tax that had been imposed by Yeltsin in December. This unpopular tax, particularly odious during times of rising prices, hits hardest at the poor. Parliament was also projecting increases in social security and

pension payments. Furthermore, the December plan to privatize 80 percent of the collective farms has also apparently been scrapped. The president of the Russian parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov told a congress of Russian farmers that "large parts of the economy, including the farming sector, should remain under state control." (*Financial Times*, February 4, 1992)

Plans to end state subsidies to enterprises are also being challenged by sections of the apparatus who apparently fear the consequences of rising unemployment. Economists critical of the reforms convened by Khasbulatov in early February called not only for sharp tax decreases but for continuing subsidies to key industries, farms, and oil and gas production facilities that are currently operating at a loss.

A convertible ruble has again been pushed into the future.

The first deputy prime minister, Gennadi Burbulis, indicated on February 2, only one month into the "shock therapy" treatment, that the government saw "no hint of a rise in productivity or that production was being stimulated by the increased prices." He indicated that the government was already dropping the plan for rapid convertibility of the ruble as has repeatedly happened in recent years. He, in fact, suggested convertibility "could not be achieved until the latter half of this year, or even next," a marked admission that no matter how much the ruling Stalinists—in their new "marketeer" costumes or hardly credible nationalist disguises—cannot transform the economic foundations of the workers' state just because they want to. Their bungling efforts in that direction have utterly failed and have only exaggerated the dire social problems that existed, leaving the economy in shambles.

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Additional complications emerged by mid-January when the defaults on debt repayments materialized.

On January 17, the republics stopped current payments on credits granted to them by private and major commercial banks of Japan which amounted to a total of \$800 million. As a result, Japanese companies will suspend contracts with Russia and other former Soviet republics. The CIS and the Baltic states failed in January to pay interest and fixed quotas of 1986 and 1987 loans to purchase Japanese industrial goods. The Soviet republics had been guaranteed by the foreign trade bank of the USSR Veneshconombank. However, unfortunately for the Japanese creditors, that bank had been closed since mid-December, and they were unable even to contact it. (OTC, January 17, 1992)

On January 3, the Paris Club of Western creditors had met to finalize an accord that would delay until the end of 1992 the repayment of principal due on the former Soviet Union's official debt. However, the interest payments were still being demanded. On January 11, the Russian government—which had in November pledged to shoulder the bulk of the debt repayment if other republics default—asked for a deferral of even the *interest* payments on the over \$80 billion owed by the former USSR to Western commercial banks and governments. These interest payments alone amounted to roughly \$6 billion through March and \$18 billion for 1992, a lot of money considering that the CIS is broke.

There is no sign that the billions in aid that the bureaucracy is staking its life on will be forthcoming. On the contrary, imperialist economists are sounding ever more disillusioned with the possibility that the bureaucrats can prove their worth.

David Mulford, a U.S. treasury official who played a prominent role in the debt rescheduling meetings in Moscow in November said January 19 that not even considerable funds could help the Soviet republics until reforms are in place, which he said will take "a long, long time." (Reuters release, January 19, 1992) An economic adviser for the Group of Seven industrial powers (G-7), from whom the bureaucrats in the past solicited support, stated January 24, "There are no institutions there [in the CIS] that work. If you gave them money now, it would be like flushing it down the toilet. The G-7 countries don't have the money for the kind of aid the CIS needs. The U.S. and Germany are financially strapped. Japan won't give any money unless it gets back the

Kurile Islands." (Reuters, January 23, 1992)

So the whole problem is being left at the door of the IMF, the main architect of the disastrous policies the government is trying to implement.

Recent press reports have in a matter-of-fact manner outlined what additional measures the IMF is proposing. "The IMF wants [Yeltsin]... to raise petroleum prices to 10-15 times their present level, and they have already quadrupled in the last week."

"Such a rise would increase gasoline and heating-oil supplies by pricing them beyond the reach of many people. . . ."

This would increase government revenues, the IMF insists, "helping to balance the budget and thus increase the value of the ruble, an IMF goal. *And with higher prices reducing consumption at home, more oil would be available for export, thus earning Russia hard currency to repay \$65 billion in foreign debts, another IMF goal.*" (Emphasis added)

Such indecent calculations are endemic to capitalism. No heat and hot water, empty gas tanks, closed factories and schools are considered acceptable if necessary to wring from the debtor nation the payments owed imperialist lenders; hunger, unemployment, and homelessness could be added to the list, as present worldwide experiences have shown.

There needs to be a political revolution in Russia and in the newly independent republics. But this can only come about if a conscious leadership can develop against the privatizations and against turning the economic planning over to the imperialist creditors who will only further plunder the resources of Russia and the other new states. This conscious leadership will need to develop outside the old apparatus and oppose those who strive to return to the old Stalinist command system and its structures as a viable option. This conscious leadership will also need to expose the hypocrisy of the old oppressors and betrayers—whatever costumes and masks they have currently put on—who are now trying to pose as workers' defenders.

It will take such a third force to advance the workers' movements today. No other force can do it. It is surely being formed in widespread regions and through widely varying routes. It will take this force—leading a democratic, massive movement of workers, organized in their own interests and prepared to take power out of the hands of those who presently have it—to open a road out of the economic catastrophes that are now engulfing the ex-USSR.

February 8, 1992

Dakar Pan-African Forum Held

by Amadou Guiro

Amadou Guiro is a member of the Permanent Bureau of the Senegalese organization, And Jef/African Party for Democracy and Socialism, which hosted the Dakar Pan-African Forum.

The Pan-African forum, which met in Dakar, Senegal, in December, was the first time that parties from sub-Saharan Black Africa met together to discuss the situation on their continent, the limits of the present process of democratization, and the program of the left and democratic forces. This meeting is an initial attempt for the rebirth of a militant and anti-imperialist Pan-Africanism, and corresponds to the moment when the imperialists and bourgeois forces have taken an initiative toward the economic integration of the continent.

It is essential to emphasize that, during the colonial period and the fight for independence, the working class movement, the trade unions, and youth were closely linked. After

neocolonial-style independence and the balkanization of the continent, all the anti-imperialist African organizations restricted their activity to a national level, which has accentuated their weaknesses. At the same time, the bourgeois social democratic parties have created an African Socialist International (an African branch of the Socialist International), and the "liberals" are trying to build an African liberal international.

The meeting in Dakar was an important step toward African left unity. African and Black left organizations in other countries which are interested in getting more information can write to: Secretary, AND JEF/PADS, PB 12136, Gibraltari No. 168, DAKAR-FANN, Senegal.

Final Communiqué of the Pan-African Forum

Translation from the French of this final communiqué and the declaration which follows it was done for the Bulletin In Defense of Marxism by Stuart Brown.

At the invitation of the And Jef/Party for Democracy and Socialism, the parties, associations, and personalities below met in Dakar, on the 15th of December 1991, in a pan-African forum, the first of its type since African independence.

The participants lent their support and their encouragement to the struggles of all African peoples for democracy and social justice. They denounced the threats which looms over the process of democratization especially in Madagascar, the Camaroons, Zaire, and Togo. They firmly condemned the recent outrages perpetrated against the opposition in Guinea and in Burkina-Faso. They reaffirmed their solidarity with the struggle of Black people and democratic organizations in South Africa.

The participants also expressed their condemnation of the depraved African ruling gangs, for their corruption and theft of national resources.

On this subject they affirmed their willingness to coordinate efforts in order to combat such plagues through appropriate international legislation and through a fight for the return of plundered financial resources.

At the end of these discussions, the participants adopted a general declaration and a motion of support to the African peoples. They recognized the necessity of pursuing further discussions. For this purpose they projected—in connection with a colloquium on West African economic integration being organized for February 7, 8, and 9, 1992, in Abidjan [in the Ivory Coast]—that the Ivorian Popular Front, in collaboration with other participants from the Ivory Coast, will make all

necessary arrangements to hold a second forum during the same period of time, continuing the process begun in Dakar.

The meeting in Abidjan will take up specific proposals made in Dakar, in particular: for a formal constitution of the Pan-African Forum for Democracy and Progress (FPDP); for the creation of a liaison committee; for the calling of an African Conference of the Forces for Change; for the publication of an informational bulletin; for the creation of a Center for Research on Pan-Africanism; for the organization of debates on themes such as a balance sheet on the experiences of development in Africa and the world, an analysis of development plans for Africa (Lagos Plan, Berg Plan), relations between civil and political society, etc.

For now, the participants decided to establish a technical secretariat in Dakar, charged with maintaining the links between them and making contact with other African groups and individuals who share their goals. The secretariat must, in particular, prepare the documents of the present forum. It will be made up of representatives from And Jef/PADS (Senegal), the MSU (Senegal), the Coordination of Young Pan-Africanists (University of Dakar), Consciousness for a Democratic Alternative (CAD-Burkina-Faso), and the Nigerian Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS).

The participants pledged to pursue the work begun in Dakar and to develop a real and lasting solidarity between the peoples and democratic organizations of Africa in a spirit of mutual respect and reciprocal understanding.

Finally, the participants thanked And Jef/PADS for the organization of the forum which, in spite of its brevity, allowed

a first coming together of democratic African parties, organizations, and personalities. □

Declaration of the Dakar Pan-African Forum

The situation on the continent is extremely critical. Despite its enormous riches, Africa bears a terrible burden in world affairs.

On a political plane, as well as on an economic and commercial level, Africa is subjected to the whims of foreign powers and multinational corporations. Its economy is ruined, constrained by the heavy burden of foreign debt—contracted in the name of the African peoples but serving only to enrich the bourgeoisie and the dictatorial regimes.

These foreign powers and multinationals imposed totalitarian governments on the African countries from the moment of their independence and strive, today, to contain the democratic movement. The entire world must look at Africa and remember that it is primarily to capitalism (the market) that this continent owes its really-existing bankruptcy. The failure of Africa is the failure of its bourgeois political bureaucracy maintained by the West. It has looted the continent and transferred colossal fortunes to Swiss and other Western banks. These are the ones who profit at Africa's expense.

The winds of change which are blowing on the continent may come to nothing if the bourgeois parasites who have, up to now, controlled the destiny of Africa are simply succeeded by new bureaucratic regimes, and if the problem of relations between peoples is badly resolved.

No African country can, by itself, overcome the enormous problems which confront it. That is why we must develop, and make tangible, Pan-Africanist ideas—for the debalkanization of the continent. This is, today, a central aspect of our fight.

Democracy in South Africa Tour

Mercia Andrews, the National Organizer of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), a South African political organization actively engaged in the struggle against apartheid and for a thorough-going democratization of that country, is scheduled to tour the United States and Canada in the spring of 1992. Ms. Andrews is also an active trade unionist, educator, and a former political detainee.

The purpose of her speaking tour is to provide in-depth information on the present status of the struggle by South African Blacks for freedom. As a socialist and longtime political activist, she is well suited for presenting the historic struggle there from the point of view of South African workers, that are in their great majority Black people.

**For more information, contact:
Shaun Whittaker,
304 Grant Ave.
Highland Park, NJ 08904
phone (908) 249-9716; fax (908) 220-1472.**

In order to accomplish that task we must establish new institutions, managed by incorruptible men and women, competent and accountable to the people they represent.

We must also make definite socio-economic choices—on the basis of the needs of the population and the real possibilities of our countries, not in accord with the interests of foreign powers.

Progressive African forces will have to pay as much attention to the internal problems of states as they do to regional or continental questions.

Only then will it be possible to overcome the logic of frontiers inherited from colonial times, substituting for this a logic of people and of grassroots communities. That will make it possible to create an African unity that is neither bureaucratic nor authoritarian, an African unity freely agreed to by the people—who are the only ones capable of developing the new kinds of behavior and the many changes which present conditions on our continent and in the world demand.

The Pan-African forum of progressive parties, associations, and democratic mass organizations which met in Dakar on December 15, 1991, constitutes a first step on this new road. □

Signatories

1) Associations:

African Association for Literacy and Education of Adults
Coordination of Young Pan-Africanists from the University of Dakar
Senegalese Pan-Africanist Organization
Committee for Inter-African Initiative
Gambian Anti-Apartheid Movement (Anti-Imperialist)

2) Individuals:

A Central African observer
Amady Aly Dieng, retired professor (Senegal)
Tidiane Baidy Ly, retired professor

3) Political Parties:

Uganda National Liberation Front (Anti-Dictatorship)
Consciousness for a Democratic Alternative (Burkina-Faso)
Party for the Liberation of Labor (PLT-Niger)
Nigerian Party for Democracy and Socialism
Regroupment of the People of Guinea
Ivorian Popular Front
Ivorian Workers Party
Union of Social Democrats (Ivory Coast)
Cameroon Patriotic Front
Resistance Front for Unity, Independence, and Democracy in Mauritania
Alliance for Democracy and Progress (ADP-Benin)
And Jef/African Party for Democracy and Socialism (Senegal)
Movement for Socialism and Unity (Senegal)

Stop the Indian Government's Move to Forcibly Evict Manibeli Village

The natives of Manibeli village are engaged in a unique battle. In the face of continuing construction work on the controversial Sardar Sarovar (dam) Project (SSP), the people in Manibeli, the first village in Maharashtra affected by the dam, are refusing to move out of their land, their forest.

The SSP would cause the largest ever displacement in India. It will affect over 150,000 people, the majority of them tribes and peasants in the reservoir submergence zone. This comprises 248 villages in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

About 200,000 other people outside the reservoir area will be affected by the project. They resolved to fight the project during the monsoon months of 1991. They have been preventing any dam-related work. The people and activists stationed in Manibeli are engaged in a war of nerves, daily opposing the efforts of the government to get a foothold in the village.

The government of Maharashtra and Gujarat are out to drive the people away. They are unable to proceed with the dam construction at the same pace without evicting Manibeli. Thus, at any time, on any day, armed policemen descend upon the village. The government had made an abortive attempt at eviction in the first week of December. The plans were almost finalized to drive away the people with the help of armed police ready to shoot. But an instant mobilization within and outside the valley—along with an interim injunction obtained from the

Gujarat High Court—deterred the rulers from going ahead with their plans.

However, efforts are under way to mask the forcible eviction with legal sanction. Eviction notices have been issued to tribal families in Manibeli. Any time the officials can, they will “implement” these notices with the help of armed police forces, preferably before the end of January 1992.

The people in the valley are ready to take on any repressive move on the part of the government. We appeal to our comrades to oppose the undemocratic and repressive move with all their might. How?

Send telegrams/letters/memorandums to the Prime Minister of India, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra (Mantralaya, Bombay, India) and Mr. V.C. Shukla, Minister for Water Resources (Shram Shakti Bhavan, Rafi Road, New Delhi-1, India) condemning the evictions. Ask them to “Immediately Stop Any Action Leading Towards Eviction of Manibeli, Forcible or Otherwise, and Initiate the Dialogue on Fundamental Issues with the Narmada Bachao Andolan.”

Send copies to Rohit Prajapati c/o “Parivartan” Nimbalkar Chambers, Dandia Bazar, Baroda, Gujarat, India.

Phone: 91-265-554979

Fax: 91-265-66984

Attention: Rohit c/o 554979

Spread this message in media, among organizations, and organize protests. □

Emergency Request for Solidarity with Tunisian Comrades

On January 4, 1992, following the distribution of a leaflet from the Revolutionary Communist Organization (OCR) denouncing economic austerity and the repression against the fundamentalists, 23 left-wing activists were arrested in the town of Tajerouine. All were released with the exception of two members of the OCR. Three other members of this group were arrested later and tortured.

On January 15, five OCR militants (Fathi Salawi, 27 years old, a workers;

Saber Saadi, 18 years old, a high school student; Mohamed Kamel Charni, 25 years old, unemployed; Imed Zoghiani, 20 years old, a student; and Habib Souili, 24 years old, a student) came before the prosecutor general who prolonged the period of their detention. They are charged with belonging to an illegal organization, distributing leaflets without authorization, and threatening public security. Four other OCR members are currently being sought.

The latest news is that their trial was set for February 6 and applications for bail had been rejected.

To protest against these arrests write to:

- Minister of the Interior
Avenue Habib Bourguiba, Tunis

or, send a fax to:

- Tunisian League of Human Rights
[int'l. code] + 216 1 79 54 66

Indigenous Alliance of the Americas on 500 Years of Resistance, July 1990

In October 1989, at a meeting of Latin American indigenous organizations in Bogota, Colombia, delegates from 21 countries founded the "Continental Campaign: 500 Years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance." In July 1990, at Quito, Ecuador, the first continental meeting of indigenous peoples took place, with delegates attending from the United States and Canada.

*The following statements from that meeting were released by the Indigenous Alliance of the Americas and is reprinted from *La Gente de Aztlan*, an Associate Students of UCLA (ASUCLA) publication, by permission.*

In the spirit of the Red people of Turtle Island, we are committed to tell the truth about Christopher Columbus, educate all people of "our history" since his landing on our shore and of how our people have since suffered. The Christopher Columbus Quincentenary presents an historical look at the roles and contributions through a scheduled national celebration in 1992.

We, as Indian people, continue to see the need for justice, seek to reaffirm our heritage, culture, and traditions, and strive to keep our own native perspective alive.

Native peoples must take this opportunity to provide truth in history by uniting, sharing perspectives, and planning a course of action to acknowledge the dignity of our people and establish a new vision for generations to come.

The continental gathering of "500 Years of Indian Resistance," with representatives from 120 Indian nations, international and fraternal organizations, met in Quito, Ecuador, July 17-20, 1990. The gathering was organized by the Confederation of Indian Nations of Ecuador (CONAIE), the Organization of Indian Nations of Colombia (ONIC), and SAIIC. The following is the Declaration from this gathering. The North, South, and Meso-American conference participants declare before the world the following:

We Indians of America have never abandoned our constant struggle against the conditions of oppression, discrimination, and exploitation which were imposed upon us as a result of the European invasion of our ancestral territories.

Our struggle is not a mere conjectural reflection of the memory of 500 years of oppression which the invaders, in complicity with the "democratic" governments of our countries, want to turn into events of jubilation and celebration. Our struggle as Indian People, Nations, and Nationalities

is based on our identity, which shall lead us to true liberation. We are responding aggressively and commit ourselves to reject this "celebration."

The struggle of our people has acquired a new quality in recent times. This struggle is less isolated and more organized. We are now completely conscious that our total liberation can only be expressed through the complete exercise of our self-determination. Our unity is based on this fundamental right. Our self-determination is not just a simple declaration.

We must guarantee the necessary conditions that permit complete exercise of our self-determination; and this, in turn, must be expressed as complete autonomy for our peoples. Without Indian self-government and without control of our territories, there can be no autonomy.

The achievement of this objective is a principal task for Indian peoples, who, however, through our struggles, have learned that our problems are not different, in many respects, from those of other popular sectors. We are convinced that we must march alongside the peasants, the workers, the marginalized sectors, together with intellectuals committed to our cause, in order to destroy the dominant system of oppression and construct a new society, pluralistic, democratic, and humane, in which peace is guaranteed.

The existing nation states of the Americas, their constitutions and fundamental laws, are judicial/political expressions that negate our socio-economic, cultural, and political rights.

At this point in our struggle, one of our priorities is to demand a complete structural change which allows for the recognition of Indian peoples' rights to self-determination, and the control of our territories through our own governments.

Our problems will not be resolved through the self-serving politics of governmental entities which seek integration and ethno-development. It is neces-

sary to have an integral transformation at the level of the state and national society; that is to say, the creation of a new nation.

In this gathering it has been clear that territorial rights are a fundamental demand for the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. Based on these aforementioned reflections, the organizations united in the First Continental Gathering of Indigenous Peoples reaffirm:

1) Our emphatic rejection of the Quincentennial celebration, and the firm promise that we will turn that date into an occasion to strengthen our process of continental unity and struggle towards our liberation.

2) Ratify our resolute political project of self-determination and our autonomy, in the framework of nation states, under a new popular order, with respect for whatever forms of organization each Nation determines appropriate for its situation.

3) Affirm our decision to defend our culture, education, and religion as fundamental to our identity as Peoples, reclaiming and maintaining our own forms of spiritual life and communal coexistence, in an intimate relationship with our Mother Earth.

4) We reject the manipulation of organizations which are linked to the dominant sectors of society and have no Indigenous representation, who usurp our name for (their own) imperialist interests. At the same time, we affirm our choice to strengthen our own organizations, without excluding or isolating ourselves from other popular struggles.

5) We recognize the important role that Indigenous women play in the struggles of our Peoples. We understand the necessity to expand women's participation in our organizations and we affirm that it is one struggle, men and women together, in our liberation process, and a key question in our political practices.

6) We Indian Peoples consider it vital to defend and conserve our natural resources, which right now are being attacked by transnational corporations. We are convinced that this defense will be realized if it is Indian People who administer and control the territories where we live, according to our own principles of organization and communal life.

7) We oppose national judicial structures which are the result of the process of colonization and neo-colonization. We seek a new social order that embraces our traditional exercise of Common Law, an

(Continued on page 36)

Interview with Two Marines

Tahan Jones and Erik Larsen are two marine reservists who refused to fight in the Persian Gulf. They were not able to obtain conscientious objector status, and the marines have tried to make an example of them because of their vocal opposition to the war (Larsen spoke throughout the United States and Europe, and Jones spoke on the West Coast). Originally, they were charged with "desertion in time of war" which carries a death penalty. Amnesty International declared them prisoners of conscience, and in the face of bad publicity, the Marine Corps backed down somewhat, changing the charges, and seeking a sentence of seven years in a military stockade.

*Jones and Larsen are from the same unit. Jones is Black and Larsen is white. They have agreed to stand together, each refusing to incriminate the other in exchange for a lighter sentence. Larsen went to trial in November, and because of (as National Public Radio put it) public support, he received the sentence of six months. While six months in a military stockade is six months too many, considering what could have happened, it is a partial victory. Jones goes to trial February 24. [The interviews were conducted by Alejandro Reuss and Tom Garvey and appeared in the magazine *Inroads*, *Harvard's Socialist Forum*, Winter 1991-92 issue.]*

Tahan Jones

Q: What happened when you applied for conscientious objector status?

A: The C.O. process is a closed system. All decisions that are made to determine your sincerity are within the military. If you fall outside of this narrow definition of a conscientious objector, then you are going to be rejected. Their definition of a conscientious objector is based on a white male perspective. That is, you have got to be religious and represent some morality. You have to be passive, sensitive, and politically naive. This means you know nothing about politics. You just know about "the word of God." That's pretty much it. Now, on the contrary, an African American like myself, or any other person who is oppressed, will draw on his own experiences. I draw on my experience as a young Black man and I start drawing connections between things. You can't separate your political and your moral beliefs. They are inseparable, but the military believes that you can. Unfortunately, in my eyes, a lot of the things that take place in my community are based on this country's foreign and domestic policies, and so they are political in nature. They are created by the political climate, not to mention the economic climate or the social climate. You've got a lot of factors in there.

I talked with a Captain Swansen in what was about an hour and a half interview. He asked general questions that were customized for a Black person such as, "will you fight in South Africa, would you fight any war in Africa, or would you fight in the Civil War to free the slaves," and my response was always based on historic facts. It was not something that I made up out of thin air, but historically speaking, this country never fought in the interests of the people that it claimed it was fighting for. It fought to oppress them or it fought against their interests. I cannot go and kill in the interests of some corporation so that someone can earn higher interest, or a higher bonus for their executives. He asked me if I was a pacifist. I said no. As a Black man, I can't be a pacifist in a society that constantly is not only a physical threat to me, but a mental threat to me. To me, violence against the mind or the psyche is some of the worst violence because it destroys a person. It causes people to turn inward and to hate themselves literally. You draw this hatred toward yourself or out toward your people.

Then we went back to pacifism. I stated that I would defend my mother or my sister if they were ever attacked. He asked me, "If I were raping your sister and mother, would you come to their aid?" and I said I would, but if some stranger were attacked, I would come to his aid also. If you were being beaten down, I would come to your aid, not because that is my duty, but my own principle. If

someone is in need, you should help. When I told him that, he asked me whether I would fight for the United States. Would I join not a military but a civilian organization to defend this government? I told him no. I would not do anything to defend or preserve this institution, because, once again, historically speaking, our people have been oppressed by this institution. Most people who are not of color, who are not oppressed or politically conscious, would think that this is all just political, but it's not political. It's my moral and ethical belief based on my experience and based on history. If you look at historical facts and statistics even provided by this government, they will show you that what I am saying is true. This is not something I am making up. I am not some political radical like the military may think I am. I'm not. I'm speaking the truth. This is how I see the truth. I didn't want to go in there and kiss butt. I could have. I could have quoted King and Gandhi, and said if the white man hates me, no, I will not hate him back, cause that's violence. But that's not me.

Then he asked about the vets I dealt with. I dealt with a lot of Vietnam vets who were in the military still, and that's the first time I really got exposed to Vietnam vets. They were telling me stories. There was one vet known as "Gunny." He was a gunnery sergeant. He told me how his best friend got killed. He took his best friend's body back to the States. His best friend was Black, and his parents refused to let him attend the funeral because they blamed him for the death of their son. He was making love to a Vietnamese woman, and he assumed that she was a Viet Cong. He wasn't sure. There were no weapons, nothing threatening. None of that. No evidence, in other words. So what he did when he finished making love to this woman was he cut her throat. You understand the expression on my face. Here's some man who is supposed to be a role model telling us something like this. My perception was, "What is this man? Is he sick? Is he a murderer, or is he a hero?" Most marines at this time in early indoctrination would think that he was a hero. "Ooh, aah, ya screw 'er, ya kill 'er. Yeh! Ooh, aah, you know." That's the mentality that the Marine Corps portrays. That's in contradiction to my own values, my own beliefs, and my own principles.

What I'm telling you, and I went into more detail with the captain, was what I told to him. I tried to explain to him in the most articulate way I possibly could—in a way that he would understand. At least I thought he would. Now what happened was, several months later, I finally got ahold of his recommendation. In his recommendation, he had a two and a half page description of my sincerity. This was based on racial stereotypes. He not only attacked me, he attacked the organization [American Friends Service Committee], and he attacked the [antiwar] vets. It all

contradicted itself. He said I was of marginal intelligence, but I received a score of 86 out of 100 on the advanced electronics tests that I took. I was enrolled in school [college]. I think I'm very articulate. I do get nervous in front of large crowds. He stated that I was malleable, and I let disgruntled vets who had been in the Marine Corps really influence me, and that the American Friends Service Committee, which is a Quaker group, used me as a puppet for their own gains.

I just want to say that people need to support those who stand by their principles and beliefs. If this were truly a democratic society with a democratic government like they keep telling us on TV, many people who are in the brig now wouldn't be there at all.

Erik Larsen

Q: In 1985, you joined the United States Marines. Now, you're a conscientious objector to the war. How did this transformation happen?

A: I joined in '85, went to boot camp in '86, and was on active duty from '86 to '87. I became a trained radar mechanic for the Hawk Missile system and had a confidential security clearance or something like that. After I got out of the marines, at the end of that year of active duty, I kind of floated around, did some work as a laborer on a methane gas line and some odd jobs here and there. In '88, I decided to go back to school, and that's where I started to change my opinions and my ideas. It was basically through a few political science classes on Central America and South America where I began to see that the Marine Corps was not always what it was cracked up to be, and was often not the protector of democracy but the perpetrator of human rights abuses. That was one of the first seeds of my doubt.

I initially joined the marines for the same reasons a lot of people do. My folks are Danish immigrants, and I joined to pay back my country for what it had given my family, and a lot of patriotic reasons of defending democracy and freedom. These ideas that everyone is indoctrinated with growing up were my perception of the military and the marines. I began to call that into question, and my doubts began to grow. I started doing some student activism on a local community college campus, and that's when I was first in the newspapers. I was quoted as saying that just because you're a marine doesn't mean that you have to believe what Oliver North believes. That was my first confrontation with the marines trying to suppress my political activity.

A second area outside of the student activism at the college was getting into a great books program where I began to study issues of conscience, reading Plato, Sophocles, Darwin, Marx. I rounded out my education on my own by starting a speakers' bureau in addition to the political activities to sponsor people to come into the college to talk about multicultural issues. From that program, I started to look more at the individual's responsibility. One big question that I began to study was: When confronted with injustices is it the individual's authority or the government's authority that one should listen to? I was looking into issues of conscience to try to clear up this contradiction between being a marine and becoming aware of the world around me.

I started to look at some of my boot camp training to figure out what it was really for. I realized in hindsight—I could see what the military was really about—that it is basically to indoctrinate you to be a killing machine and to obey orders at the drop of a hat. We'd sing songs like "rape the town, kill the people" and "napalm, napalm, sticks like glue, sticks to the mamas and the papas and the kiddies too." Some of my marine training I had to question and I had to back away from to clear up this contradiction. The whole indoctrination is very racist and very sexist. It's very dehumanizing to get a person to kill on command, to have no qualms about taking another person's life. The whole idea of going someplace to nuke or napalm some "gook" or "raghead" or "sand nigger" is their way of getting people to follow orders. After the Jesuit priests

were killed in El Salvador in 1989, I began to think about getting discharged as a conscientious objector.

Q: What are your feelings about the gulf war in particular?

A: Bush's reasons to fight this war were completely bogus. The thing that set me off was when he said it was to protect the American way of life. I see the American way of life as an oil-dependent, polluting, exploitative life-style, and it is not something I am willing to fight for. This war was not about jobs, and it was not about freedom and democracy. Basically, we were defending Arab sheikhdoms where gross human rights abuses have been recorded for years. We were supporting Saddam Hussein with millions of dollars during the Iran-Iraq war. We and other Western countries helped him create his chemical and nuclear program. As soon as Saddam Hussein wanted to have his own oil policies, that's when the United States didn't like what he was doing. This was basically a price war between Iraq and Kuwait. We get a lot of our oil from Kuwait or from Saudi Arabia. They wanted the price at \$18 to the barrel and Saddam Hussein wanted to raise it up to \$23. This little economic warfare that was going on between the two countries was on record way before the war. Saddam Hussein stood up in an OPEC meeting and told Kuwait what it was doing long before the war had started. It's no excuse for someone to invade another country, but it seemed like we really didn't give a shit until there was a real crisis. I'm just very pessimistic about the whole U.S. policy. We weren't there to fight for freedom and democracy. It was a price war to ensure our continued oil dependency. One of the biggest lines I hated that George Bush said was calling on Americans to drive the speed limit and inflate their tires to conserve oil. He's supposed to be the environmental president—he hasn't come up with one good environmental policy to get us off our oil dependency.

Q: How do you feel about all the war hysteria that was whipped up?

A: I'm still seeing it in Jacksonville, North Carolina, with all the flags and yellow ribbons. Patriotism is something used to sell war. Patriotism and war go hand in hand. A lot of the troops didn't want to be in these parades and most of the guys didn't even do anything. It was a big bombing mission, and the people on the ground were the mop-up operation. You can see how many of our guys were killed. Half of our casualties came from friendly fire and most of the rest were accidents. The number of people we killed was ridiculous. The whole flag-waving, yellow ribbon thing was a way to whip up the country to support the war, and it makes me really angry to see how easy it is to sell war.

Q: You mentioned the yellow ribbons. Even in the antiwar movement there was a lot of talk, especially before the war started, about "supporting the troops." What was your feeling about that?

A: I know there was one line that said "support the troops—bring them home now." The other position is that we support the troops who refuse to fight. I talked to a lot of Vietnam combat vets. Vietnam was a long, protracted war, and the idea is to win soldiers to your side and to sympathize with why people go into the army. The military today is supposedly a volunteer army, but in reality it's an economic draft. So to understand the soldiers, and where they're coming from, and their families, and their life-styles, you really have to understand the outlook of the regular working class guy who's just trying to make a buck and to make ends meet. The soldier isn't the one who's responsible for the policy, but he is responsible for a great deal of death and killing. I think the government has learned a great deal from Vietnam. Victory comes from a total destruction of the other side, like a "slash and burn" operation. War is going to be very violent and very quick, and none of those commie, pinko liberals are going to keep us from doing what we need to do. In the future, there are going to be more wars. War is going to be with us. So I think a more appropriate line is "we support the troops who refuse to fight." The whole idea of the yellow ribbon campaign was to build support for the war. People

flying the yellow ribbons and the flags, which was really a very liberal, mainstream idea, actually helped them sell their agenda. The more you can separate yourself from their slogans and their position, the more persuasive you're going to be in bringing people to your side. At the outset of the war the slogan was "no war for big oil." That was a really effective slogan, but it needed a little bit more explanation to give a full picture of what was going on. Maybe next time around, in this battle for the mainstream or for people to come to your side, you have to make very clear what your position is: We support the troops who refuse to fight, but we're not going to blame the soldiers who are there. You have to make clear that the troops aren't the problem. It's the policies and the people who train them and indoctrinate them.

Q: One of the big arguments that people have for objectors such as yourself is that you signed a contract with the military and you are morally obligated to live up to it. What do you think of that?

A: It's ultimately the soldiers' right to decide which wars they want to fight in or any at all. Just because you sign a piece of paper doesn't mean you sign away your right to be a thinking, questioning citizen. I've come to be a pacifist—but that doesn't mean that I'm passive. I may be a C.O., but I'm definitely not passive, and I'm going to stick up for my rights. Yes, I signed a piece of paper, but I didn't sign away my right to be a questioning person on this planet.

Q: Reports out of Saudi Arabia always seemed to say that all the soldiers were really gung-ho about the war and looked down on objectors. Is that a realistic picture of the military?

A: Most likely, those interviews were with white, middle class soldiers. Most of the Black and Hispanic G.I.'s could say [to a C.O.], "I understand where you're coming from and if I were in a different situation, if I didn't have a family, I'd probably be doing the same thing." The December 8 issue of the *Washington Post* had some quotes from a lieutenant in the army who said, "I refuse to lead my troops into battle if we go into Iraq." A press conference in Saudi Arabia was interrupted by a truckload of soldiers saying, "Why are we here? When are we going home? No war for oil." Why was the commandant of the Marine Corps dispatched to Saudi Arabia to tell the soldiers "You will not be bored. My

marines are happy marines"? There was a great problem with morale in Saudi Arabia, especially with race relations. There were a lot of fights. Some units were completely disarmed because there was a lot of racial tension. The media was manipulated by the military, and the military selected the people who would be interviewed and who would not. You have to look for those little snippets here and there that give you a little different picture. I helped unload seabags that were coming back from Saudi. There was a lot of graffiti on these seabags: "Why are we here? When am I going home?" A lot of peace slogans. I know a number of guys coming back from Saudi who just have a lot of questions now.

Q: You paint a picture of people who were over there under a lot of coercion.

A: Guys were sent in handcuffs and shackles—some objectors like Brian Cynthia, Sean Hoddins, and Derrick Jones. I know guys who were brought to Camp Lejeune. There's a guy in the brig right now serving a 12-month sentence for hitting his commanding officer. There was a fight that broke out between the white officers and these Black G.I.s over this one guy. He was a Muslim and he refused to go to Saudi. A lot of these guys who were helping their friend from going onto the bus—they went to Saudi and now they're back and being charged with mutiny, a possible life sentence. There's also a rumor of a mutiny in Saudi Arabia of over 3,000 Blacks and Hispanics where they refused to work. There were units where hundreds of guys refused to go, like in Louisiana. Fort Hood was a hotbed of resistance. Fort Hood, Fort Lewis, Camp Lejeune, and Camp Pendleton. Also in Germany—there's a lot of shit happening in Germany.

Q: A lot of bad things could happen to you for what you are doing. For people who think that conscientious objectors are cowards, could you describe what threats you're under?

A: From March until January, I was charged with desertion in time of war, which carried a maximum penalty of death. In several federal briefs they had mentioned the death penalty. I was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International in July, and those charges were immediately dropped. I'm facing a maximum five-year sentence right now. At Camp Lejeune from January until May there was a lot of harassment and intimidation. The Marine Corps game has been isolation, intimidation, and incarceration. There are twenty or thirty guys now in the brig at Camp Lejeune serving sentences from six months to two-and-one-half years. One guy got sentenced to seven years for misbehavior before the enemy. He was in Kuwait and he refused to get on a truck going into Iraq. He's in the brig there. There are a lot of guys in the brig who committed petty offenses to prevent themselves from going to Saudi or who went UA [AWOL]. The military seems to be more afraid of individuals who speak out than anything else. There are over 3,000 G.I.s who filed or attempted to file for conscientious objection, and hundreds more—around 5,000 total—who resisted in other ways. For example, in Germany there was an armory unit where a guy pulled out 250 firing pins from M-16s to prevent his buddies from going to Saudi. It gave them a week or two before they could order some more and some of his buddies went UA. The German Green Party campaigned from August 1990 through the war for American soldiers in Germany to desert. In fact, an underground safe house system was created. There are a lot of G.I.s who are still in Germany who are AWOL, and guys in Germany actually face tougher, harsher prison sentences than over here. I was in Germany for about two weeks and did some speaking and talking to G.I.s, and the Green Party's program is interesting. I just want to say for the record that I don't encourage or endorse anyone going UA or doing an illegal act. It's the right of every G.I. to exercise their free speech and it's the right of every G.I. to file for conscientious objector status, and to get out of the marines or the army. And it's the right of G.I.s to protest, to organize protests, off-base, off-duty, out-of-uniform. □

Support War Resisters!

Unlike the prosecution, which is fully funded by the government, the defense must raise its own money to fly in witnesses. Any contributions are welcome. Send them to:

Tahan Jones/Erik Larsen Defense Committee
Box 225
1678 Shattuck Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709

for more information, call: 415-655-1201
Letters to them (They appreciate it!) may be sent to:

Erik Larsen
563491139 Building 1041, MCB
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542-5090

PFC Tahan Jones
563491139 Building 8
H-1 Wing A, 2nd MEB, Subunit 1, MCB
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542-5090

Letters to the Marine Corps on their behalf may be sent to:

Commanding General C. L. Vermilyea
4th MAW., FMF, US MCR
4400 Dalphine St.
New Orleans, LA 70146

Ever since the First World War, and probably before, the right in the United States has been hunting for "subversives" in the universities. In 1909, the great populist historian Vernon Lewis Parrington was fired by the University of Oklahoma as part of a general campaign to rid the university of secular influences. The scientific approach to history was perceived, at the time, to be a sinister import from cosmopolitan Harvard, a serious danger to the simple, homespun values of Oklahoma students. When Charles A. Beard published his groundbreaking *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, he was quickly accused of denigrating the founding fathers and with undermining faith in the American system of government. During the 1950s, of course, Joseph McCarthy attempted to link the elite universities with communism, attacking Ivy-league cold warriors like Dean Acheson with, if anything, more vehemence than he used to attack the Communist Party itself. The right was no more enamored of higher education in the 1960s when Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California, largely as a result of a conservative backlash against the student movement at Berkeley. The first shot that Richard Nixon fired in his 1968 campaign for president was a demand that Rutgers University fire Marxist historian Eugene Genovese for his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam war, and Spiro Agnew continuously invoked the conservative "silent majority" against the East Coast "liberal elites." The American right has a long and tediously familiar record of looking for reds in the English department. At the same time, of course, they continue to send their kids to Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. The major research institutions, with their boards of governors made up of presidents of corporations and their connections to the defense department, are no more a threat to the status quo than they ever were. In the following article, Raghu Krishnan analyzes the causes of the newest conservative attack on the professors, the threat of "Political Correctness," and points out that the hysterical language in otherwise bland mainstream publications like *Newsweek* points to something that goes deeper than a simple debate over what college sophomores should read in English 101.—Stanley Rogouski

The Entrenched Strike Back: What's Really Behind the Attack on the 'Politically Correct'

by Raghu Krishnan

University administrations, the academic and political right, and a zealously pro-establishment mass media have treated us to a real spectacle over the past year.

Taken on its own merits, the posturing of these careerists and sycophants as great champions of freedom is at best a sad joke.

However, endowed as they are with money and power, and operating in a climate of strident right-wing triumphalism, economic devastation, and general disarray and demoralization on the left, those heading up the campaign against the "politically correct" have had a real impact.

The response to the narrow "academic freedom" component of their attack is actually quite straightforward. Far from safeguarding academic freedom, they have with frightening arrogance and hypocrisy unleashed a wave of intellectual terrorism against activist, left-leaning students and faculty members.

Kindred spirits of those responsible for McCarthyism in the '40s and '50s, they have seen to it that *anyone* making a

criticism based on social justice criteria is labeled "politically correct" and given pariah status in the academic community.

Backlash Against Affirmative Action

The real agenda of the anti-"politically correct" crusaders has nothing to do with defending the freedoms of speech and expression, and a great deal to do with preserving the "freedom" of almost exclusively male and white, establishment-oriented administrators and faculty members to continue exercising their near total control in every domain of our "public" postsecondary educational institutions.

As such, their campaign should be seen as a backlash against those who demand affirmative action in the universities—in the faculty, student body, and administration—for historically oppressed and disenfranchised groups, particularly women and "people of color."

For similar reasons, limited demands for classroom democratization and progressive inroads into the curriculum have also

earned the ire of the anti-"politically correct" campaigners. They have made it clear that not a single inch of their dominion will be ceded without a fight.

However, to understand the somewhat surprising vigor and scope of the campaign against the "politically correct," this purely "campus" analysis is not at all sufficient.

After all, farcical media portrayals notwithstanding, it's not as if university administrations are on the brink of being toppled by insurrectionary masses of radical students. Far from it.

Nor are the patriarchs of the mass media in the habit of devoting such a lot of space and editorial energy to the specific insecurities of their spoiled colleagues in the universities. Indeed, the university-administrating set usually prefers to conduct its unsavory machinations behind closed doors, not in the media spotlight.

Rather, we must look to the current economic and political conjuncture to explain the persistence and aggressive tone of the campaign against the "politically correct."

Economic Crisis Spurs Ideological Attack

The campus has been chosen as a beach-head for a generalized ideological attack on the past gains of ordinary working people and oppressed groups. This is an attack necessitated by the profound crisis in which the capitalist economies now find themselves—among the worst in the history of capitalism, and largely due to the exhaustion of the post-World War II model for growth.

To be sure, this attack greatly facilitates the job of university administrators anxiously seeking to tie campus life even more closely to the “needs of the marketplace”—or, rather, to the private profit requirements of their friends and associates in the crisis-ridden corporate world.

Affirmative action, radical curriculum changes, classroom democratization—these are anathema to university heads pressing ahead with the implementation of the “needs of the marketplace.” Their tender mercies include the strengthening of student “discipline,” the stripping away of courses and programs of study deemed “nonessential,” and the final burial of any notion of a universally accessible postsecondary education system.

But the attack has repercussions going well beyond the confines of the campus.

Over the last quarter century, universities have been the scene of ideological and social struggles which have dramatically altered Western society. The autonomy of thought and action accorded to such a huge mass of critical-minded young people not yet “integrated” into the system has proven to be a highly destabilizing factor for the defenders of the *status quo*.

For scattered throughout the workforce are the thousands upon thousands of women and men who have gone through the experience of student protest movements as direct or indirect participants. And, crucially, to this figure must be added the millions upon millions of working people who have witnessed and learned from these movements.

‘Vietnam Syndrome’ in the Workplaces

Look into the unions and social movements demanding job security, safe and dignified working conditions, affirmative action and pay equity and you are sure to find in the thick of things activists who were participants in or heavily influenced by the campus movements of the ‘60s,

’70s, and early ‘80s—by the women’s and antiwar movements above all. Indeed, the “Vietnam syndrome” may not have been potent enough to stop the recent U.S.-led massacre of Iraqis, but it’s definitely causing problems for bosses and governments alike in the nation’s workplaces.

If the ruling classes are to successfully roll back past gains of the working class majority, they will have to administer major defeats on these unions and social movements. And doing this requires both an ideological offensive and increasingly authoritarian measures.

The logic of the campaign against the “politically correct” is thus stunningly simple. If the ideas of affirmative action, radical democratization, and broad social justice—and, more importantly, the very notion of organized dissent and protest around these ideas—can be discredited “at the source” (on the campuses), the ideological impact on society will be tremendous.

It would go some way towards ensuring passivity in the face of growing inequalities and the creeping authoritarianism best exemplified by recent back-to-work legislation against public sector and postal workers and the growth of the right-wing populist Reform Party.

Indeed, the campaign against the “politically correct” follows quite nicely on the heels of the last organized foray of pro-establishment ideologues into the mass media, on the subject of the “end of history.”

The “end of history” charade effectively told us that what we’ve got is the best we can ever hope for—essentially admitting the abject failure of the capitalist system to meet the elementary aspirations of the immense majority of humanity. This new one against the “politically correct” goes one step further and vilifies those who continue to try to *make* history, disregarding its much-touted “end.”

Capitalist Triumphalism and Working Class Discontent

The fact is that the capitalists themselves don’t even believe the foolish pronouncements about the “triumph of capitalism” which accompany every simplistic commentary on the historic events in Eastern Europe and the USSR. And they certainly know these tired pronouncements aren’t enough to quell growing discontent in the Western countries.

Consequently, with conventional Cold War red baiting being decidedly passé, an attack on the “politically correct” must

have seemed like as good a diversionary strategy as any!

But hypocrisy, as the saying goes, is the tribute paid by vice to virtue. And the fact that the academic and media establishments have to pursue their real agenda behind the progressive-sounding cloak of “academic freedom” and pay lip service to the fight against racism, sexism, and homophobia is an indication of their weaknesses and the uphill battles they face.

Weak Response from the Campus Left

Unfortunately, the campus left and progressive milieus have been largely unable to seize upon these weaknesses and respond effectively in words and deeds to the attacks on the “politically correct,” electing instead to rest on past laurels and sink still deeper into the cliquish mire of parochialism, paranoia, and paralysis.

The current situation demands of campus activists that we fight for change through politics, not through personalities and navel gazing. We need to clearly restate the basic principles which lay behind the slender campus gains currently under attack—the principles of affirmative action and autonomy for oppressed groups, and democratic control, for example—and patiently undertake the work of building mass-oriented movements to back them up.

It demands that we take the time to develop a vision of the kind of university that we want—and to always keep before us the strategic compass of a society run by and for the working, wealth-producing majority. It should be clear that, particularly in these days of crisis, people will not mobilize over long periods of time to defend past gains and make small advances unless they are inspired by a positive alternative vision of society.

As activists we should not allow the campaign against the “politically correct” to divert us from the important work and responsibilities of the day. It is only by fighting and organizing consistently and uncompromisingly on the side of the most oppressed, disenfranchised sectors of society that we can claim to be the *real* defenders of freedoms—academic and otherwise.

Raghu Krishnan is a member of Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste, Canadian section of the Fourth International, and the University of Toronto United Coalition Against Racism. This article originally appeared in the newspaper Socialist Challenge. □

November 7, 1991

Reexamining the Economic Program of the Left Opposition in the USSR—Part 3

by Barry M. Lituchy

Part 1 of this article appeared in issue No. 92 of the Bulletin In Defense of Marxism. Part 2 was published last month.

Did the concept of “primitive socialist accumulation” discussed in part 2 of this article represent a realistic and feasible economic program of transition from capitalism to socialism in the USSR? Of course, I would argue that it did—especially if one considers the impressive array of measures proposed by the Left to show how this goal was to be achieved. They would have offered the government the flexibility of several different options to resolve specific problems. The lack of options and creative policy solutions in dealing with economic problems was always one of the hallmarks of bureaucratic Stalinist planning.

Central Role of the State

The most outstanding feature in the long-term transitional economy was the predominant role played by the state. This requires some discussion. The advantages which the state administration had in this situation were outlined and discussed in great detail by both Trotsky and Preobrazhensky, but especially by the latter in his chapter on “The Law of Primitive Socialist Accumulation” in his book, *New Economics*.

As previously noted, the struggle that was projected during primitive socialist accumulation—of the state sector to acquire material resources for industrialization and overcome the private sector—was never envisioned by the Left economists as anything other than a peaceful process. Both the private production and state economy would move “forward as a united whole,” without any of the forced expropriations, violence, and acute exploitation that had characterized the period of primitive capitalist accumulation as described so vividly by Marx in *Capital*. In the eyes of the Left, the policies encompassed by the concept of primitive socialist accumulation were the best and, perhaps, the only means of preserving the *smychka*—the alliance between the peasantry and the workers’ government.

The reasons why the state economy could be expected to emerge with important advantages over the capitalist sector were illustrated by Preobrazhensky in his comparison of primitive accumulation under capitalism and socialism. These were basically the same as those factors which would permit primitive socialist accumulation to proceed peacefully on the basis of balanced growth and free exchange, in the context of a mixed economy.

“The socialist system begins its chronology with the seizure of power by the proletariat,” that is, the process can only begin after a social revolution. At the very outset, socialist forms of

production acquire the enormous benefits of a transfer of state power which allow the economic transitional period to proceed through stability and planning, gradually ameliorating and overcoming the contradictions between the old and new social systems. Primitive capitalist accumulation is different, however. Its earliest stages *do not* require any violent social upheaval. Likewise beginning at an inferior level in relation to feudal economy, they also transpire peacefully at first, since “capitalist production arises and develops within the womb of feudal society.” But as the forces of capitalist production challenge and begin to overtake those of feudalism the period of primitive capitalist accumulation eventually becomes one of violence and political upheaval, culminating in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Primitive socialist accumulation begins only after a revolutionary change in the political structure for the very reasons that it “cannot be built up molecularly within the world of capitalism” (despite the pipe dreams of some reformists). For capitalism, on the other hand, a revolutionary overturn of the established government is the culmination of a process begun “within the womb” of feudalism.

Immediately following the proletarian socialist revolution comes nationalization of large scale industry and banking institutions, whereby the state gains control of “the commanding heights” of the economy, as Lenin had put it. However, after this “first act of socialist accumulation . . . which concentrates in the hands of the state the minimum resources needed for the organization of socialist leadership of industry,” primitive socialist accumulation can, at least theoretically, progress without expropriations and with relative social stability.⁴⁴ Again this is in contrast to primitive capitalist accumulation.

“What is it,” asked Preobrazhensky, “that distinguishes socialist expansion from capitalist expansion and makes the socialist form the more stable in its struggle against the capitalist form?”⁴⁵ According to Preobrazhensky it is that modern capitalism had already prepared some of the necessary preconditions for this transition:

The state economy of the proletariat arises historically on the back of monopoly capitalism and therefore has at its disposal means of regulating the whole economy and of redistributing the national income economically which were not available to capitalism at the dawn of its history.⁴⁶

Thus, the state economy enjoys two important advantages over the private sector in this period. The first being the identification of the nationalized sector with state power. The second is its ability to regulate the entire economy in which individual capitalist enterprises have to struggle for survival. The proposed methods for stimulating the expansion of the

socialist sector, and primitive socialist accumulation in general, proceeded directly from these advantages.

Some of the methods by which the state sector would acquire new funds for capital investment included taxation of the private sector, foreign currency earnings through the state monopoly on foreign trade, a system of internal credit, foreign loans, the printing of paper money, domestic savings, and, especially, through a carefully planned price policy that would favor the socialist sector. Naturally, an important role is also assigned to the extraction of surplus value from industrial production for reinvestment, i.e., from the forced savings of workers' wages. But this is not emphasized in Preobrazhensky's writings to the extent that it is in Trotsky's.

One of the most interesting areas of discussion involved the role of credit policy in terms of the redistribution of resources by the Soviet banking system and those acquired from external loans. Long-term agricultural credits were one of the chief means of encouraging the rapid modernization of collective farms and the transition to socialist agriculture. However, of equal significance is Preobrazhensky's discussion of high-interest short-term loans to capitalist enterprises within the Soviet economy.

Did the Left Opposition oppose the long-term existence of a mixed economy? The answer is, categorically, no. In fact, "the granting of credits to private economy may become one of the most important instruments for redistributing the national income in the interests of the state economy and one of the chief economic means of subjecting it to regulatory centres to the state economy." What is important here is that the overall national income and economy continues to grow, and grow to the advantage of the socialist sector. Private enterprises can exist for as long as they are able to cope with the ever-increasing rates of interest—an increase brought about only by the increasing profitability of loans to state enterprises.⁴⁷

Preobrazhensky does not say it, but one must assume that the only limiting factor on private enterprise is its capacity for keeping up with ever new technological innovations and the consequent increases in labor productivity. In such a system private enterprises would actually play a key role in the introduction of new technologies and new products—and would exist for as long as they could compete profitably with the state sector. It is implicit in all of Preobrazhensky's arguments that socialist production must constantly strive to improve the productivity of its labor. This concern is discussed specifically in his section on wholesale and retail transactions.⁴⁸

One final note on credit policy is Preobrazhensky's receptiveness to foreign loans, depending on the rate of interest and the ability of the Soviet economy to use such loans profitably. Of course, it is assumed that the increasingly superior productivity of the socialist economy will attract resources from relatively stagnant capitalist economies. In every instance, credit policy must always be "subordinated to the law of primitive socialist accumulation."⁴⁹ This means that it must always be subordinate to the task of maintaining a relatively faster expansion of the socialist sector vis-a-vis the private, and that it must contribute to the economic superiority of socialist as opposed to capitalist production.

Regarding external sources of accumulation, the state monopoly on foreign trade naturally provided the most cost effective means of transferring new technologies from the West

that would be initially less profitable to produce in the USSR. But once again the success of foreign trade depended upon increased output and productivity in all sectors of the economy. If there was a greater output of agricultural products and a greater proportion of the total agricultural surplus brought to market (commodity production), then the revenues from foreign trade would be greater as well. This expansion of agricultural productive capacity would also make it possible for increasing numbers to move out of the countryside, thereby providing an orderly flow of new industrial workers to the city.

Price Policy

Of all the methods put forward by the Left for primitive socialist accumulation, the most important, and certainly the most controversial, were their proposals regarding price policy in relation to industry and the question of "inequivalent exchange." "Accumulation by way of an appropriate price policy," wrote Preobrazhensky, "has advantages over other forms of direct and indirect taxation of petty economy. The most important of these is the extreme facility of collection, not a single kopeck being needed for any special taxation apparatus."⁵⁰ Inequivalent exchange simply refers to the use of the state's monopoly on industrial products to institute a sophisticated "price policy which will be only another form of taxation of private economy."⁵¹ However, the prices charged for industrial products could not simply be raised arbitrarily. In fact, Preobrazhensky insists that this particular net flow of resources from the private to state sector can only occur *when there was a stability or reduction of prices*. It would depend on an increase in labor productivity in the state-industrial sector that would allow an increased profit to be attained from sales of a given commodity at the same or an even lower price.

A correct price policy for the products of state industry must serve these three aims: accumulation for expanded reproduction and for the technical requirement of industry; raising wages; and reducing prices. Can these three aims be achieved together, or is there a contradiction here? They can be achieved together. There would be a contradiction only in the event that the whole economy were in a stable condition, and if the amount of income in both the state and the peasant economy were in a stable condition. Then accumulation could be effected only through reducing wages or raising prices; reducing prices would be possible only at the expense of accumulation and through reducing wages, and so on. But with the growth in the productivity of labor this three-cornered problem can be solved all at once.⁵²

The implicit assumption here is that prices for industrial goods will express a considerably higher rate of profit for state enterprises than agricultural goods will for the private sector. Prices for goods in the private sector will be set within a maximum level determined by the world market price (beyond which point the state need not purchase domestic goods) and at minimum levels determined by the state's desire to generate the production of that specific commodity.⁵³

Also implicit in this policy is the need to stimulate two constant and complementary economic tendencies: first, the use of accumulated resources for new investments that will significantly increase productivity, lower costs, and reduce prices for industrial products; and, secondly, a redistribution of a certain portion of state revenues for regular wage increases

and a consequent rise in consumer demand for industrial goods. Since there is a “dependence between the amount of exchange and accumulation,”⁵⁴ as Preobrazhensky put it, and since “taxing the private economy. . . consist[s] . . . in taking more from an income which has grown still more,”⁵⁵ it is absolutely necessary for the state to distribute a significant portion of its accumulated revenues to nourish this entire cycle of socialist accumulation. “Only with this system of distribution,” wrote Preobrazhensky, “will it be possible not merely to stimulate the sale of an increasing mass of products and gradually to satisfy the needs of the countryside,” but also to generate an ever increasing consumer demand, disposable income, and incentives for increased output and productivity.⁵⁶

‘Exploitation’?

In the first edition of *The New Economics* Preobrazhensky referred to the relationship between the state and private sectors as a kind of “exploitation.” This was immediately seized upon by the Center and Right factions controlling the government, who looked upon this as an excellent way to discredit the Left faction. Even Trotsky found this scholarly indifference to political fact strange, considering the many other arguments that could be advanced showing how primitive socialist accumulation offered the best hope for preserving the *smychka*.⁵⁷

Preobrazhensky apologized for this “mistake” in the preface to the second edition of his book. But it is clear from the text that Preobrazhensky never meant anything other than tax and pricing policies favorable to the state when he spoke of “exploitation.” He even presented a new and more accurate word *perekachka* (“pumping”) to describe the measures by which the state would acquire resources from the private sector. Still, the political damage had already been done.

Nevertheless, Preobrazhensky went to great lengths. He demonstrated not only that any assertion about inequivalent exchange being disadvantageous for industrial workers or the rural poor was completely false, but also that, to the contrary, it would promote an ever improving standard of living for all sectors of the masses:

It is not the rural poor who are the chief buyers of the products of our industry. Whatever they may lose in this way they can recover from the state in the form of credit, in the form of obligatory accumulation of the fixed capital of their economy, and so on. As regards the workers, this objection is as baseless as the objection to indirect taxes, which are completely transferable to wages. Here is a numerical example: if as a result of an appropriate price policy the working class along with the rest of the population pays to state industry say 50 millions, the state can easily return this sum to the workers by an increase in wages, while the money received from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois consumers is not returned to them and goes to swell the socialist accumulation fund.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Primitive socialist accumulation was a concept that could have provided a means of generating dynamic economic growth through increasing incomes for both the rural and urban sectors of the population. It could also have provided for a steady increase in consumer goods—a chronic problem under the command economy of the Stalinist regime. These were the keys to industrialization of the Soviet Union without disrupting the *smychka*. Such a process was possible.

In thinking through this concept the leaders of the Left Opposition proved themselves eminently practical and creative people. They sought solutions to real problems facing the Soviet economy in the twenties—such as industrialization and the expansion of capital stock for this purpose. They were also admirably adept at refashioning the theoretical tools of Marxist analysis to create an entirely new conceptual approach to economic development. By drawing upon the historical model offered by Marx in *Capital* and “abstracting from the actual economic policy of the state,” as Preobrazhensky put it, they sought to encourage a “movement toward the optimism of primitive socialist accumulation.”⁵⁹

This discussion of the economic thought of the Left Opposition does not pretend to be anything more than an introduction to these ideas. I have not attempted to discuss the relevance of such a conception to revolutionary regimes in small underdeveloped countries like Nicaragua, nor to the nations of Eastern Europe which again today find themselves at the mercy of world imperialism, nor to the Soviet Union which is being destroyed by the disastrous policies of the combined Gorbachev-Yeltsin forces. Clearly, the economic ideas of the Left Opposition deserve to be studied closely by anyone trying to think about the road forward in these countries, or trying to make a socialist revolution anywhere in the world today. □

Notes

44. Preobrazhensky, *The New Economics*, p. 80.
45. *Ibid*, p. 128.
46. *Ibid*, p. 95.
47. *Ibid*, pp. 96-97.
48. *Ibid*, pp. 102-103.
49. *Ibid*, p. 98.
50. *Ibid*, p. 111.
51. *Ibid*.
52. *Ibid*, p. 250.
53. *Ibid*, pp. 170-171.
54. *Ibid*, p. 256.
55. *Ibid*, p. 254.
56. *Ibid*, pp. 250-251.
57. Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 237.
58. Preobrazhensky, *The New Economics*, p. 112.
59. *Ibid*, p. 63.

How Should History Judge Lenin and the Russian Revolution?

by Steve Bloom

Before Stalinism—the Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy, by Samuel Farber. Verso, New York, 1990.

Today in the USSR and Eastern Europe masses of people have come to reject not only the Stalinist dictatorship under which they suffered for decades, but also any hint of Marxist or socialist ideology. This is understandable, given the fact that Stalin and his heirs falsely portrayed themselves as the continuators of Marxism and socialism in order to cover over their crimes and to gain credibility and support (or at least acquiescence) from the populations of the countries where they ruled, as well as from others struggling against oppression all over the world.

One of the chief victims of this vast falsification of history has been Lenin. His real teachings and perspectives as leader of the Bolshevik party and of the Russian Revolution have been buried under so much muck that the excavation process is bound to take considerable time and effort—an effort which will have to be made by those truly dedicated to advancing the interests of working people in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and around the world.

But the truth should be clear enough once people start to take an honest look: Stalinism did not flow from and was not caused by Leninism. The victory of Stalin in the USSR during the 1920s reflected the complete transformation of the Bolshevik party—from an instrument to advance the aspirations of the Russian and world working classes for socialism and liberation into one which helped guarantee their subjugation and subordination to the narrow self-interests of a bureaucratic clique.

Despite the difficulties, the rediscovery of the true history of Leninism and of the Bolshevik party are extremely important if the present efforts of the masses in the USSR and Eastern Europe to gain a measure of genuine self-rule are to have any hope for success. No solution to the present social and economic problems of these societies exists on the road of “the market” or “a return to capitalism.” Yet this is the only alternative being widely presented—often by those who until a few

years ago considered themselves “orthodox communists”—aside from a few, ever-weakening, voices suggesting a return to the “good old days” of bureaucratic power. A different alternative will have to be forged by a new, independent, working class leadership—in continuity with the real history and tradition of Leninism and Bolshevism.

Yet many who should be offering such an alternative today are in disarray. Many of those who had embraced the heritage of October 1917 and the revolutionary socialist perspectives of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky have keenly felt the pressures of collapsing Stalinism, capitalist triumphalism, and popular confusion. Increasing numbers of ex-Stalinists, ex-Maoists, and even erstwhile Trotskyists have begun to back away from their youthful commitments, offering “more mature” evaluations that seek to save the socialist baby from what they see as the filthy bathwater of Leninism.

Samuel Farber’s book *Before Stalinism* serves the useful function of giving substantial and articulate expression to this “new thinking” on Leninism. Unfortunately, Farber’s book is not a useful source for those seeking a serious account of Leninist thought and action. Worse than this, socialist activists who look to it for practical political guidance could find themselves disoriented in the struggles of today and tomorrow. Despite Farber’s sincere desire to provide something of value for revolutionary socialists, and his obvious effort to struggle against the distortions of Lenin and Leninism long propagated by bourgeois and Stalinist “scholars,” his own analysis reflects many of the same weaknesses.

Hopefully, a critical discussion of this work can aid in the rediscovery of the genuinely revolutionary-democratic essence of the Bolshevik-Leninist tradition.

More Subtle Argument

Farber presents a far more subtle, and therefore a more sophisticated, argument than those who have tried to make a direct link between Leninism and Stalinism. He

does not assert an identity between these ideologies nor a clear inheritance from one to the other. In fact, he acknowledges that Stalinist rule in the USSR represented a sharp break with Lenin’s objectives and practices.

Rather, the main thesis of the book unfolds along the following lines: Lenin was a sincere and honest revolutionary who, nevertheless, suffered from profound weaknesses in his overall understanding of Marxist theory—especially in terms of the need for institutionalized forms of democratic functioning and constitutional guarantees of democratic freedoms after the socialist revolution. These theoretical weaknesses caused, and were in turn reinforced by, very real practical errors after the Russian Revolution—most importantly during the period of the civil war and war communism. And these theoretical/practical mistakes of the Bolsheviks combined to weaken the revolution to such a degree that a successful fight against the Stalinist counterrevolution became much more difficult, even impossible.

A small sampling of quotations from Farber’s concluding chapter will serve to illustrate the way in which he addresses this theme and the conclusions he draws:

If one carefully analyzes Lenin’s actions and speeches from 1921 until his withdrawal from political activity due to severe illness in 1923, one can appreciate the difference between what from a democratic point of view was indeed Lenin’s very undesirable regime, and the truly monstrous alternative that was beginning to take shape around the person of Stalin (p. 197).

This present volume is full of criticisms pointing to Lenin’s democratically deficient conceptions even before the revolution (pp. 210-211).

Yet an elementary sense of proportion demands that we distinguish between Lenin’s flawed conception of democracy, which he by and large upheld until at least the Spring of 1918, and the clearly anti-democratic perspec-

tive that, with his associates, he began to adopt shortly before and especially during the course of the Civil War. As we have seen, these anti-democratic views and practices fully crystallized in the period 1921-23 (p. 211).

Certain democratically flawed *predispositions* of mainstream Bolshevism degenerated into an outright indifference if not hostility to democracy (p. 212, emphasis in original).

In any case, Lenin's policies *did not work* at least on the grounds that they deprived Russian society of the political and organizational ability to resist the later totalitarian Stalinism (p. 208, italics in original, boldface added).

To his credit, Farber does not stop with his criticism of Lenin. He appreciates the need, if his argument is to have any credibility, to present a serious, revolutionary alternative to the policies pursued by the Bolsheviks after the revolution:

A still politically active Lenin could have had sufficient political strength and prestige to propose, by no later than say the 1922 Eleventh Party Congress, a New Political Policy (NPP) to accompany the NEP [New Economic Policy] (p. 206).

This NPP would, according to Farber, have entailed a number of points: Legalizing "all parties and political groups willing to accept, and pledge loyalty to, the Soviet system of government." Such parties "would have then been allowed to run slates in open soviet elections." In addition, "these parties would have also been provided press facilities roughly proportionate to their size." And "the government would have immediately closed all labor camps, placed the secret police under strict judicial control, and declared an immediate amnesty for all political prisoners, with the possible exception of those who had directly engaged in violent acts or economic sabotage in support of the White armies during the Civil War."

How We Should Approach This Discussion

It is tempting, in trying to refute Farber's claims, to get into a point by point discussion of all his erroneous interpretations of Lenin's thoughts and actions, and of Bolshevik theory in general. (And this covers a lot more territory than what is suggested in the quotes above.) But that would require another book or two. I will, therefore, focus here on his main line of argument. (To some extent I can excuse myself from the obligation of writing the necessary

countervolumes because much of the essential work has already been done by at least two authors: Paul Le Blanc in his book *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party* and Marcel Liebman in *Leninism Under Lenin*. I recommend reading both of these in conjunction with Farber's work to provide a useful counterposition of views.)

The main points I will defend here are as follows: 1) Farber's presentation of Lenin's theoretical work is profoundly mistaken; Lenin had a deep, consistent commitment to genuine workers' democracy throughout his life. 2) Any errors, whether practical or theoretical, committed by the Bolsheviks during or after the civil war, were not primarily a result of Lenin's methodological or theoretical weaknesses, but of the pressures created by an extremely adverse objective situation. 3) This social reality, not any lack of institutionalized forms of democracy or lack of democratic ideology on the part of Lenin, was the essential reason why Stalin was able to consolidate his power. 4) No program of institutional reform advocated by Lenin or anyone else, therefore—no matter how meritorious it might seem in the abstract—could have been decisive in overcoming the Stalinist counterrevolution in the absence of some event that could rekindle the revolutionary upsurge of the Soviet masses, such as a victorious revolution in Germany or some other Western country.

This last point is absolutely essential, and it is one that Farber fails to take adequately into account in his analysis. Although he does tip his hat from time to time in the direction of the world revolution, he never gives this question the decisive weight it deserves in any discussion of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. And he certainly doesn't seem to appreciate the weight it had in the thinking and actions of the Bolsheviks.

But I think it is safe to say that if there had been a successful German revolution (or the equivalent in some other industrialized country) any time between 1918 and 1923, or even later, no one, today, would be worried too much about alleged flaws in Lenin's theory. As things actually took place, however, with the Russian Revolution condemned to an isolated existence for decades, it is hard to see how *any* leadership—even the most farsighted and theoretically brilliant—would have been able to anticipate and compensate sufficiently for all of the dangers, in order to prevent the overthrow or degeneration of the Soviet state. To assert otherwise, as Farber does, is to develop what can only be interpreted as a fundamentally idealist analysis—asserting that the power of ideology or program can, by itself, overcome material reality.

Farber's entire book—including those parts that we cannot take up in any substantive way here, such as his discussion of repression, press censorship, and socialist legal forms—suffers from a generalized formalism and schematism. He presents an abstract blueprint for how socialist society *should* function—even taking care to acknowledge that this is under the most favorable conditions, of course—then compares his abstract model to the living reality of the Bolshevik revolution—which took place under the most unfavorable conditions. Finding that this real revolution doesn't measure up to his high standard of revolutionary morality he declares it invalid and, abstracting conveniently from the real objective conditions (that is, whether the revolution *could* have functioned as he asserts it *should* have), finds the *essential* cause in the deficiencies of his leadership. This is a fine example of how Marxists should *never* approach reality.

It is, of course, important to keep in mind that while rejecting the basic method and thesis of Farber's book, it is not necessary to reject all of his argumentation. For example, I profoundly disagree with his understanding of the Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, which he treats in a completely scholastic manner—as if it were simply a matter of analyzing how many correct slogans might have been raised in one or another programmatic declaration, rather than looking at the real social forces behind those declarations and the real military danger that existed for the soviet government as a result of renewed openings for Western imperialist intervention. On the other hand, I believe Farber is basically correct when he criticizes the sweeping theoretical generalizations often made by the Bolsheviks, from 1918 until the beginning of the New Economic Policy, about a direct transition to socialism resulting from the policies of war communism.

Farber vs. Lenin on Democracy

Let's take a closer look, then, at Farber's main contention regarding Lenin. (I apologize to the reader for the number and length of quotations here, but I believe it is important to clearly establish Farber's thesis in his own words, rather than merely providing my own summary):

Some sections of the contemporary Left appear to have greatly overestimated the importance that *State and Revolution* had for Lenin's government. I would suggest that this document, which was, after all, written before the seizure of power, can be better understood as a distant, although doubtless sincere, socio-political vision. This as opposed to its having been a program-

matic political statement, let alone a guide to action, for the period immediately after the successful seizure of power (p. 38).

There is no doubt that the objective difficulties caused by economic crises and civil war constituted very major obstacles to the survival of democratic soviets and, as we shall see in the next few chapters, of workers control of industry, press freedom, and socialist legality. Yet these real objective difficulties cannot by themselves explain why Lenin and the mainstream Bolshevik leadership made, as we say above, a virtue out of necessity and did not seem to be particularly disturbed by the loss of the democratic achievements of the October revolution. It is evident that, at a minimum, this leadership did not see these institutional democratic gains as *indispensable* characteristics of a workers and peasants state or of socialism. . . .

Indeed, in regard to the soviets, far from having been invented by the Bolsheviks, they spontaneously developed during the 1905 Revolution and were at the time resisted by Lenin's party (p. 35, emphasis in original).

Lenin had developed a point of view that represented a shift from the position of classical Marxism. The *Communist Manifesto* had proclaimed that the Communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole," and "do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement." . . . Granted that Lenin's party was not an organization like the sects Marx knew, the fact remains that at least in 1905, Lenin's theory still relegated class organizations to a supporting rather than a central role in the revolutionary process (pp. 35-36).

Lenin was therefore clearly implying that the party could normally fulfill its revolutionary role without the existence of broad class organizations, and that a fully developed class struggle would no longer place non-party organizations at the center of future revolutionary outbreaks. Consequently, Lenin's and the party's eventual endorsement of the soviets in 1905 seems to have been tactical in character. That is, the Bolshevik support for the soviets did not at the time signify a theoretical and/or principled commitment to these institutions as revolutionary organs to overthrow the old society, let alone as key structural ingredients of the postrevolutionary order.

Authentic democratic revolutionary institutions (e.g. factory committees, soviets, trade unions) are indispensable if successful worker peasant revolutions are to remain democratic. Furthermore, these institutions, rather than the ruling party, should be where power ultimately resides in a worker-peasant state (p. 39).

[After the July Days in 1917] both the soviets and the moderate socialist parties had become, according to Lenin, "mere fig leaves of the counterrevolution," as expressed, for example, by their failure to defend the revolutionaries from governmental persecution. The party now had to prepare for an armed uprising and the transfer of power to the proletariat and the poorer peasantry. The factory shop committees, rather than the soviets, would now become the insurrectionary organs (p. 41).

There is no evidence indicating that Lenin or any of the mainstream Bolshevik leaders lamented the loss of workers control or of democracy in the soviets, or at least referred to these losses as a retreat, as Lenin declared in connection with the replacement of War Communism by NEP in 1921 (p. 44).

By 1919, Lenin was proclaiming without any situational qualification whatsoever: "Yes, the dictatorship of one party! We stand upon it and cannot depart from this ground, since this is the party which in the course of decades has won for itself the position of vanguard of the whole factory and industrial proletariat." Within less than a year after this pronouncement, Lenin described the attempt to distinguish between the dictatorship of the class and the dictatorship of the party as proof of "an unbelievable and inextricable confusion of thought." Yet, and this is very much worth noting, *it was not during the Civil War, but during the period from 1921 to 1922*, as a political accompaniment to the economic "retreat" of NEP, that the one-party state was completely and fully established. . . . During the actual Civil War period, the government apparently acted in a relatively "pragmatic" fashion without a systematic approach to the question of the suppression of other parties. . . . While it is certainly true that this pragmatism did not yet indicate an unambiguous totalitarian vocation or direction, neither did it indicate even a verbal appreciation of the importance of political freedoms for the proper functioning of soviet democracy (p. 28).

Now that we have heard Farber speak, let's consider what merit there might be in the points he has to make:

1) "I would suggest that [*State and Revolution*] . . . can be better understood as a distant, although doubtless sincere, socio-political vision . . . as opposed to . . . a programmatic political statement, let alone a guide to action, for the period immediately after the successful seizure of power." And: "It is evident that, at a minimum, [the Bolshevik] leadership did not see these institutional democratic gains as *indispensable* characteristics of a workers and peasants state or of socialism." Lenin did not have "even a verbal appreciation of the importance of political freedoms for the proper functioning of soviet democracy."

On this matter, rather than dispute with Farber myself, I am going to let Marcel Liebman present the opposing viewpoint, since he does so quite eloquently in his book, *Leninism Under Lenin*:

At the end of December 1917 Lenin wrote an article (not published in his lifetime) entitled "How to organize competition," which is very similar in inspiration to *State and Revolution*. "One of the most important tasks of today, if not the most important," Lenin wrote in this article, "is to develop [the] independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it as widely as possible in creative *organizational* work. At all costs we must break the old, absurd, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called 'upper classes,' only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organizational development of socialist society." And, as in *State and Revolution*, he declared that "every *rank and file* worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, is capable of organizational work."

When the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets assembled in January 1918, the way Lenin addressed the delegates showed that the "honeymoon" was not yet over, by a long chalk. "Very often," he said, "delegations of workers and peasants come to the government and ask, for example, what to do with such-and-such a piece of land. And frequently I have felt embarrassed when I saw that they had no very definite views. And I said to them: you are the power, do all you want to do, take all you want, we shall support you. . . ." To this he added a glowing tribute to "the work of the masses themselves" and their "creative activity." "Look wherever there are

working people, look among the masses, and you will see organizational, creative work in full swing, you will see the stir of a life that is being renewed and hallowed by the revolution.”

Two months later, Lenin explained to the delegates to the Seventh Party Congress that “what our revolution is doing is not accidental. . . . It is not the product of a Party decision but . . . a revolution that the masses themselves create by their slogans, their efforts.” He emphasized that “socialism cannot be implemented by a minority, by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves” (pp. 219-20, all emphasis in original).

The very drawing up of a constitution seemed, indeed, to the new regime to be something contrary, by its formal and juridical nature, to a living and dynamic conception of the revolution. It would be better, in any case, it was thought, if the form to be taken by the new state were *not* fixed by law, especially as the national setting to which it was confined for the moment, and which determined some of its features, would certainly be transcended with the help of the world revolution, in the very near future, so that many legislative arrangements would be rendered inoperative (p. 227, emphasis in original).

How can it be that Liebman sees Lenin and the question of creating democratic institutions for the revolution so differently from the picture painted by Farber? The answer is that Liebman, unlike Farber, appreciates that Lenin’s commitment to real democracy cannot be measured solely by his attachment to one particular democratic *form*—the soviets which had come to power in Russia. Rather it was to a much broader idea, that “socialism cannot be implemented by the Party” but “only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves.” (By the way, though I have chosen to leave this question aside for the purposes of this review, I cannot help but compare these quotes by Liebman to Farber’s remarkable statement, summing up several pages of “analysis” by him of Lenin’s writings: “the closest that Lenin got in the post-revolutionary period to an affirmation of the need for actual, day-by-day worker involvement in running the affairs of the society was in his persistent emphasis on worker staffing of leadership positions in state and party institutions.” Apparently Farber did not look very far in his search for Lenin’s attitude on this, since the relevant volumes of Lenin’s *Collected Works* are full of passages expressing his complete support to the taking of genuine

power by the masses—as in these quotes cited by Liebman.)

If Lenin failed to pay sufficient attention to the *formal codification* of the soviets as a structural form for the revolution it was certainly not as a result of any failure by the Bolsheviks to “see these institutional democratic gains as *indispensable* characteristics of a workers and peasants state or of socialism.” Rather, it was because Lenin believed that such institutions arose spontaneously from the initiative of the masses themselves. They did not require blueprints adopted at party congresses. The creation of institutionalized workers’ democracy was a task that he expected the revolution itself to solve in passing. And, except for the fact that this process was short-circuited by the civil war, Lenin was quite correct on this point.

2) “[The soviets] spontaneously developed during the 1905 Revolution and were at the time resisted by Lenin’s party.” This is true enough. But as Farber himself points out, of all the Russian socialists in 1905, only Trotsky recognized the importance of the soviets at the outset. This was something new in the world, and Marxists are only slightly less prone than other types of political thinkers toward conservatism when addressing new phenomena. It is to the profound credit of Lenin’s party that it overcame its initial resistance to the soviets.

3) “At least in 1905, Lenin’s theory still relegated class organizations to a supporting rather than a central role in the revolutionary process.” I will not undertake to prove the opposite here, since it isn’t really central that we do so and because this review is already too long, filled with too many quotations. I am confident that the opposite of what Farber asserts about Lenin on this point could be clearly established, and once again suggest an exploration of the relevant portion of Lenin’s *Collected Works*. (The *Subject Index* will guide anyone who is interested to entries dealing with the soviets in 1905.) But even if we were to concede this point to Farber, it should be clear from the actions of the Bolsheviks in 1917 (they made no attempt to take power in the absence of real support from the actual organizations of the working class, just the opposite) that Lenin and mainstream Bolshevism well understood the essential point by then: No “vanguard of the working class” can substitute itself for the real organization of the class as a whole.

4) “The Bolshevik support for the soviets did not at the time signify a theoretical and/or principled commitment to these institutions as revolutionary organs to overthrow the old society, let alone as key

structural ingredients of the post-revolutionary order.” This statement is formally true, but Farber clearly misunderstands the essence of the problem. Revolutionary Marxists need a *principled* theoretical commitment to *democratic rights and democratic institutions in general* as part of the transition to socialism. But the soviets in Russia were only *one possible form* that this might have taken. Therefore, a tactical/strategic orientation to the soviets as such was *correct* as opposed to a theoretical/principled one. (More on this question below.)

5) “Authentic democratic revolutionary institutions (e.g. factory committees, soviets, trade unions) are indispensable if successful worker peasant revolutions are to remain democratic. Furthermore, these institutions, rather than the ruling party, should be where power ultimately resides in a worker-peasant state.” Farber will get no argument from me, or for that matter from Lenin on a theoretical plane. But the key word in the second sentence is “should.” Was it *possible* for the Bolsheviks, or any leadership for that matter, to accomplish this under the conditions that prevailed in the Soviet Union during and after the civil war? That is the key question that Farber has to ignore in presenting his schema.

6) For a brief time after July 1917 Lenin believed that “The factory shop committees, rather than the soviets, would now become the insurrectionary organs.” Here we have a confirmation of the understanding I presented above, that Lenin saw revolutionary democracy more broadly than simply through the specific *form* of soviets. When these institutions lost their revolutionary proletarian content, even for a brief time, Lenin looked elsewhere. Revolutionary Marxists of subsequent generations have always believed that this ability to understand and adjust perspectives based on reality rather than preconceived ideas represents a positive feature of Leninism. Farber seems to disagree.

7) “Yet these real objective difficulties cannot by themselves explain why Lenin and the mainstream Bolshevik leadership made, as we say above, a virtue out of necessity and did not seem to be particularly disturbed by the loss of the democratic achievements of the October revolution”; and “there is no evidence indicating that Lenin or any of the mainstream Bolshevik leaders lamented the loss of workers control or of democracy in the soviets.”

To the extent that there is truth in these observations a simple explanation suggests itself. At the time the Bolsheviks were preoccupied with mobilizing their forces for the civil war. Any decline in function-

ing of the soviets was seen as a *purely temporary* byproduct of that war, something that would correct itself when the war ended—especially with the aid of a revolutionary victory in Germany or elsewhere. They did not think, during this period of time, that there was going to be some long-term “loss of the democratic achievements of the October revolution” requiring a profound theoretical analysis (and this is the difference with the NEP, which was a sharp turn in policy requiring a clear theoretical assessment from the moment it was introduced).

One passage from Lenin will serve to illustrate:

It is said that the Soviets meet rarely and are not reelected often enough. . . . In a time as difficult as wartime, when the century-old European constitutions that have become a matter of habit for the West-European people have been almost completely suspended, the Soviet Constitution is in force in the localities to a greater degree than a constitution anywhere else in the world insofar as concerns the participation of the masses in government and in the independent solution of governmental matters at congresses, in the Soviets, and at elections. And if it is still said that this is not enough, and if there is criticism and it is asserted that “it is really a terrible crime if your Central Executive Committee has not met,” well Comrade Trotsky gave a splendid answer to the Bund representative on this score when he said that the Central Executive Committee was at the front. The representative of the Bund . . . said this (I wrote it down), “How strange that the Central Executive Committee was at the front, it could have sent others.”

. . . We have to strain our forces to the utmost and for this reason have to give up our best officials and Central and local Executive Committee members for the front. I am sure that nobody who has any practical experience in administration will condemn us; he will, on the contrary, approve of our having done the maximum possible to reduce collegiate bodies belonging to executive committees to a minimum until, under pressure of war, only the executive committee itself was left, because the functionaries hurried to the front. . . . And if the less frequent meetings of the Soviets for a few months is the price at which this has to be purchased, then any sensible worker or peasant will understand the need for it and will approve of it. (“Concluding Speech on the Report of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars,” December 6,

1919, *Collected Works*, Volume 30 p. 237.)

8) “By 1919, Lenin was proclaiming without any situational qualification whatsoever: ‘Yes, the dictatorship of one party!’” Perhaps Lenin failed to discuss the “situational qualification” to Farber’s satisfaction, but wasn’t it inescapably there in life? After all, most of Lenin’s writings were discussions about *conjunctural* problems and their immediate concrete solutions. Isn’t that the most likely explanation for these words? Isn’t it reasonable to suggest that Lenin is talking here about what was, in fact, true in the Soviet Union at that moment, and what he felt—whether Farber agrees with him or not—had to remain true for the foreseeable future *in this particular case* if the revolution was to survive, rather than proclaiming some universal theoretical truth about *revolution in general*? If that is true then quite a different interpretation is possible for his description of “the attempt to distinguish between the dictatorship of the class and the dictatorship of the party as proof of ‘an unbelievable and inextricable confusion of thought.’” Lenin cannot be held responsible for the fact that Stalin later took advantage of these *situation-specific* words and gave them a generality that was never intended when they were first spoken. But we *can* hold Farber responsible for accepting this Stalinist distortion of Lenin as good coin.

And even if we accept the idea that Lenin did intend this statement as a new, general theoretical conclusion resulting from the Bolshevik experience—overgeneralizing from the pressure of immediate circumstances—it is absolutely false to look for some imagined continuity with Lenin’s previous outlook. That can only be done, as we have seen, by completely misunderstanding Lenin’s general methodology as revealed in the *totality* of his writing and in his entire lifetime of political activity.

Farber as a Lenin Scholar

It seems appropriate, before we go any further, to raise a serious problem with Farber’s scholarship. We can see from the points discussed above that he gives some rather questionable interpretations to Lenin’s words—interpretations that would seem difficult to justify for someone who has truly familiarized himself with the broad totality of Lenin’s thought.

But when we look at the footnotes in his book we discover a possible source for this problem. It happens that a large number, perhaps even a majority, of his quotes from Lenin are not taken from original works but instead come from secondary sources. And

in these cases he fails even to cite the original work, merely informing us of the author from whom he has taken the quotation.

This practice makes it more difficult for anyone to check the context in which Lenin happens to be speaking at any given moment to see if Farber’s interpretation of the texts is a reasonable one. Even more seriously, however, it suggests that Farber himself might never have taken the trouble to check the context of the quotes he uses, or whether the interpretations of them presented by other authors are really valid. Given the endemic lack of rigor—not to mention outright falsification—that exists in historical “scholarship” dealing with Lenin, this ought to give any reader cause to question whether Farber is truly interested in an honest discussion of Lenin’s ideas, or if he is only out to prove a case against him.

Along similar lines, it is important to note that Farber completely muddles, indeed seems not to understand, an essential political distinction between governmental slogans raised by Lenin before and after April 1917. In his section on “The Rise and Decline of Democratic Soviets” Farber discusses what he calls “Lenin’s formulation of a ‘dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry.’” (p. 52) He never tells us where the quoted words come from, however, if they indeed come from Lenin at all. And this is rather important, because Lenin proposed two completely different, though similarly worded, formulas for the Russian Revolution at different times in his political life. Before the revolution in 1917 he advocated the call for “a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry,” by which he meant a *bourgeois-democratic* government to replace tsarism. After April he proposed a “dictatorship of the working class and poor peasantry,” by which he meant a *socialist* dictatorship. These similar-sounding formulations referred to two completely different kinds of revolutions, with different class contents.

Farber, in this section, is assessing Lenin’s understanding of the relationship between the party, the working class, and the peasantry. He speaks as if the words he puts in quotes—“dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry”—represented a proposal for some *actual form of governmental coalition*. But this was never true. Lenin, when he raised either his pre- or post-April formula, was doing so in a way similar to the generic sense in which Marxists use the term “dictatorship” when we talk about “the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie,” or “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” And if Farber wants to assess the impact that *either* of Lenin’s *actual* formulas might have had on his approach to real relations between the classes, or

between the masses and the revolutionary party, he at least has to let us know whether he is talking about a bourgeois or a socialist revolution—that is, whether we are speaking about the pre- or post-April 1917 period. Yet he writes as if the formula he attributes to Lenin had the same basic content both before and after this time.

Our suspicion that Farber truly does not understand this basic distinction is reinforced on page 71, when we read his description of the difference between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks before 1917: “Of course, these two parties disagreed on the kind of central state that should control the economy—the Mensheviks opted for a bourgeois state and the Bolsheviks for a workers’ and peasants’ state.” This is completely confused. There was never any scientific concept in Lenin’s Marxism called a “workers’ and peasants’ state” as distinct from a bourgeois state during this period (or distinct from a workers’ state from April 1917 on). This same formula, of a “workers’ and peasants’ state,” appears again later in Farber’s book, also in a context that clearly indicates he believes it was some sort of scientific formulation being presented by Lenin.

This might seem like a minor point for our present discussion, but it is, in fact, extremely significant. If Farber cannot understand even this basic aspect of Lenin’s thinking—something which has been written about and discussed extensively, and which is probably familiar to many who will be reading his book—how much credibility can the reader give to the rest of his analysis about Lenin’s ideas?

The Civil War and Its Aftermath

While Farber makes a number of correct criticisms of Lenin and the policies of the Bolsheviks during the period of war communism, his fundamentally idealist approach reveals itself in this discussion as well. And this makes it impossible for him to really understand what was happening during this period. For example, on page 213 he says: “I believe that a greater sensitivity to majority wishes might have led the Bolsheviks to modify or avoid altogether many of the disastrous policies of War Communism which were in part inspired by ideology and doctrine (e.g., on the role of the market), rather than solely by what were strictly speaking the imperatives of the Civil War” (p. 213, emphasis added).

If that is true, if Bolshevik ideology on the role of the market was so influential in their practical policy, why did this wait until after the beginning of the civil war to manifest itself? Why didn’t Lenin propose an economic policy of rapid transformation to communism from the moment of revolu-

tionary victory in 1917? Certainly he could have done so had he believed in it.

Farber applies here a too-rigid understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. In this case practice did not flow from theory. Rather, theory was developed *ad hoc* in order to justify practice, to rationalize it as something more than simply an immediate expedient. I can agree completely with Farber that this was wrong. But that does not justify the drawing of profound conclusions about the theoretical flaws of Leninism.

Leninist theory (indeed, all of Marxism) had never anticipated a situation such as the civil war in the USSR: a socialist revolution in an isolated country, economically backward, fighting alone against the combined forces of international imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. Answers to the theoretical problems posed by this reality were, understandably, difficult to come by, and the process was made all the more difficult by a severe lack of time to sit and do leisurely theoretical work. It is not hard to understand why the Bolsheviks made many false starts and drew not a few incorrect conclusions.

But another point needs to be made here as well. Certainly the approach of the Bolsheviks—on a military, political, and economic level—was full of excesses. But what civil war in history has been fought without excesses? It would be instructive to take a look at our own War Between the States as a clear example. Yet Abe Lincoln is not remembered by posterity for the restrictions he imposed on democratic rights during that war or for the excesses of censorship, repression, and military zeal committed in its name. Rather he is rightly appreciated as a great champion of bourgeois democracy. The reason for this lies in what happened in the aftermath of the war—the objectively favorable conditions for capitalism in this country which allowed a reunited republic to expand and flourish. The difference between this and conditions for socialist development in the USSR in the early 1920s should be obvious.

It is interesting to take a look at how Liebman discusses the situation in Russia after the end of the civil war, especially its impact on the possibilities for a revival of soviet democracy:

With the return of peace and the passing of the threat of counterrevolution, many local soviets reappeared in the countryside, and the Soviet government announced its intention of giving up some of the prerogatives it had usurped and restoring the rights of the Central Executive Committee. . . . Moreover, in 1920, elections to the soviets reacquired

some of the freedom that had been characteristic of them at the outset. . . .

The hopes that supporters of Soviet democracy were able to entertain at that moment were not, however, destined to be realized. The worsening of the economic and social situation had done too much damage throughout Russia to make possible any return to the starting point. Counterrevolution flared up again, moreover, with the Polish attack on Soviet Russia and the offensive of the Whites under Wrangel. Finally, and above all, the crisis of the autumn of 1920 and the winter of 1920-21 brought the collapse of all such hopes. With the revolt of the countryside against the Soviet regime, increasing discontent among the working class, the fierce determination of the Communists to remain in power despite their unpopularity, and, last but not least, the ruined state of the economy, the demoralization of the people, the increasing isolation of a devastated country and an exhausted nation, the very basis for a revival of the soviets was no longer present.

For this to become possible a new period of revolutionary advance would have had to begin. But the introduction of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) signified the very opposite. Soviet democracy, born of the upsurge of the masses and the Bolshevik victory, had, as a result of defeats and isolation, finally ceased to exist.

Yet it is precisely in such a context—where, as Liebman clearly reveals, the “basis for a revival of the soviets was no longer present”—that Farber proposes his NPP as some democratic rosetta stone with the potential to overcome the profound effects of defeat and demoralization on the part of the population. This is extremely dubious, to say the least.

What is necessary here is to give more than honorable mention to the objective reality while in fact subordinating it to ideological factors. We must genuinely understand the centrality of material conditions in determining what happened in the Soviet Union. This is the strength of Liebman’s analysis in contrast to Farber’s. It allows us to see the essential point that Farber misses: The soviets did not decline and lose power in the USSR because Lenin plotted to create a one-party state. Rather, Lenin and the Bolsheviks felt they had no alternative but to create a one-party state to defend the revolution because objective conditions made it impossible for the working class to remain active and mobilized, and this was the prerequisite for continued soviet rule.

Farber presents his case for an NPP as if the formal end of the civil war in 1921 meant the real advent of "peace" in the USSR, as if a "normal" political process might be expected to unfold at that point. But it might be useful to turn around an old saying: politics, in the kind of situation described by Liebman, could only have been the continuation of war by other means. If anyone wants a picture of how events might have unfolded under Farber's NPP, they might be able to get a glimpse by looking at the Nicaraguan model. There, even after the formal victory of the FSLN government in the contra war, a continued economic blockade by the U.S., combined with campaign contributions to candidates Washington supported (can Farber claim the imperialist governments would have found no such candidates within parties which formally pledged allegiance to the soviet system in the USSR?), allowed the external counterrevolution to intervene directly into the electoral process just as surely as it had previously intervened militarily.

Understanding Democracy

In the end one has to conclude that Farber simply fails to appreciate the full richness of a Marxist approach to democracy. In his analysis everything is reduced to elections and formal guarantees of individual liberties. These are important, to be sure. But we cannot make a fetish of them. Real democracy cannot be reduced to the question of how many votes the Bolsheviks got, or might have gotten, in one or another election to the soviets, or to some other body. Yet that seems to be the only question that Farber wants to look at on all occasions.

He makes much about the declining support which the Bolshevik government had by the end of the civil war—something that was certainly real. It is referred to repeatedly throughout the book. For example, on page 103 Farber states: "This party was desperately trying to hold onto power without a social base outside of its own bureaucracy or much popular support." And this desire to hold onto power, he believes, is at the heart of all of Lenin's most horrendous "substitutionist" and "undemocratic" errors.

But it seems to me that this whole question should be given considerably less weight. Civil wars and revolutions are, after all, mighty referenda in and of themselves—since they are political struggles as much as, or even more than, military ones. It would be very difficult to contend that the Bolsheviks were victorious during this period *simply* on the basis of police repression, economic expropriation, and military endeavors. The White armies had

far more resources than the Reds in each of these areas. Clearly, despite a significant drop in their popularity, the Bolsheviks still maintained the allegiance of masses of people in the USSR throughout this entire time. The party's victory would have been completely impossible "without a social base outside of its own bureaucracy or much popular support."

Through his NPP, Farber believes, the Bolsheviks should have been willing to turn over the reins of government to other pro-socialist parties. But let us pose a simple problem: How "democratic" would it have been to hold an election to renewed soviets in 1921 or 1922 and determine the composition of a new government based on the result? How, for example, would such democracy measure the missing "votes" of the hundreds of thousands of fighters for the revolution—especially including the most committed and active Bolsheviks—who perished at the front during the civil war itself? How do we take into account the inability of these dead revolutionaries, as well as their still living comrades who are nevertheless away from their workplaces as a result of continuing military activity, to discuss with and influence others in the population?

How do we adjust for the fact that the Soviet working class had, by 1921, been widely dispersed, many returning to the countryside where they could no longer participate in the kinds of collective political processes that led to the October insurrection? What about the poverty, even famine, that reigned in the cities forcing the overwhelming majority who continued to live in places like Leningrad and Moscow to occupy themselves with the simple daily struggle for survival, leaving little or no time for political discussion and debate? Do any of these things constitute objective limitations on how much democracy there would be in Farber's NPP?

Let's pose the question another way: Do we allow the imperialist powers and White Guard a decisive vote in our elections—a vote cast not at the ballot box but by their bombs, bullets, and economic blockade? Can Farber really assert that an election held under such circumstances would represent a free and "democratic" choice of governments on the part of the Soviet masses?

Under such conditions, the desire of the Bolsheviks to hold onto power—far from representing a negation of their belief in democracy—can reasonably be interpreted as a firm commitment to a broader fulfillment of the democratic referendum that had taken place during the 1917 revolution. Farber is entitled to argue with that choice and suggest that a road similar to the one taken by the Sandinistas in 1989 would have been better. (I, for one, have never

argued with the actions taken by the FSLN given the specific conditions they faced.) But it cannot properly be asserted that the Bolsheviks' action in holding onto power was a rejection of democracy—since even a semblance of real democracy was completely impossible as things stood in the USSR at the time, no matter how many NPPs were introduced.

Lenin explained this reasoning to Farber when he declared: "Yes, the dictatorship of one party! We stand upon it and cannot depart from this ground, *since this is the party which in the course of decades has won for itself the position of vanguard of the whole factory and industrial proletariat*" (emphasis added). Lenin was not wrong in describing the Bolsheviks this way. They were not a "vanguard" that had chosen that title for themselves, but a party that was recognized as such by masses of people, which had won the right to use the name through decades of commitment and struggle—including during the civil war. Such a statement, therefore, even if one argues that under the pressure of extremely adverse circumstances Lenin "bent the stick" too far away from a proper, balanced appreciation of the relationship between the revolutionary party and the masses, still contains a profound democratic kernel that represented a real continuity in Lenin's thought—quite the opposite of Farber's interpretation.

In a situation where the genuine exercise of working class power by the working class itself was impossible, the course followed by the Bolsheviks was fraught with problems and they made many mistakes. But Farber's too facile answers hardly provide a convincing alternative.

Contradictions and Difficulties of Revolution

It is a simple fact of life that revolutionaries in power will always be faced with choices in which every possible alternative has both positive and negative consequences. Clearly the question of maintaining Bolshevik power in the USSR after the civil war was such a question. Did their decision to hold on by their fingernails have negative consequences? Of course it did. But what would the consequences have been had they made a contrary choice?

The Bolsheviks could not see into the future. They did not know that they faced decades of isolation without aid from the Western proletariat. It was not unreasonable for them to hope that by holding onto power they could buy enough time for a change in the relationship of forces to rekindle prospects for a revolutionary advance—internationally as well as in the USSR.

And here it is especially useful to remove ourselves from the isolated plane of the Soviet Union and take a look at things from the point of view of the international class struggle. During the very years that Farber suggests the Bolsheviks might have properly ceded power, the German revolution still hung in the balance. A real end to the possibility for a short-term working class victory in that country didn't take place until 1923. What would the impact have been on the German working class had the Bolsheviks stepped down in Russia in response to the demoralization and difficulties confronting the Soviet masses?

We can take up a similar problem with repression. True, one can make a reasonable argument that the Bolsheviks carried this too far, and that a serious price was paid in the credibility of the party and in support for the revolution on account of this fact. But it is useful once again to take a look at Nicaragua as a counterexample. After the revolution of 1979 the Sandinistas specifically rejected a policy of repression against those who had been members of Somoza's national guard. As a result, they too paid a high price in the form of a qualitatively stronger contra army a few years later. To be sure, one can try to find an appropriate middle ground. But we admit to a nagging suspicion that it is easier to strike the proper balance in a book written 70-some years after the Russian Revolution than it was at the time.

In saying this, we return to Farber's overall methodological weakness. He continually abstracts his argument from any real difficulties and contradictions of real revolutionaries functioning in the real world. That is certainly the wrong way to approach the Bolshevik revolution, or any other for that matter.

The Party and the Masses

Farber finds the root of the Bolsheviks' problems after taking power in what he perceives as Lenin's subordination of mass democracy and of the soviets to the leadership of the party. He returns to this theme often. Here is one example: "While it is true that Lenin recognized the different functions and democratic *raison d'etre* for both the soviets and his party, in the last analysis it was the party that was more important than the soviets. In other words, the party was the final repository of working-class sovereignty" (p. 212).

Even posing the question this way (what is more important, the party or the masses?) reflects a completely formalistic approach, a total failure to grasp the *dialectical* essence of Leninism. In a similar case Lenin once suggested that it would be just as appropriate to wonder if a person's right arm or left leg is more important.

Leninism does not conceive of any role for the revolutionary party except in the context of the mass movement and whatever democratic institutions that movement develops. Likewise, it insists that no matter what kinds of democratic mass institutions arise in the course of the struggle, socialism cannot be achieved without a revolutionary party that genuinely deserves and wins the leadership of the mass movement. Neither of these instruments can achieve its goal without the other. Therefore, neither can be subordinate to the other in the sense Farber implies here. Building both at the same time, and especially reinforcing their interactions, is always the essential task.

There can be no doubt that this relationship broke down in the USSR during the civil war years. And certainly that breakdown contributed to the consolidation of the bureaucratic dictatorship under Stalin. But there is no basis whatsoever to assert that this was due to some theory of Lenin's that the party was more important than the masses.

How to Judge Bolshevik Errors?

It is essential, therefore, to understand that this discussion is not about whether soviet democracy suffered severe problems after the initial victory of the Russian Revolution, or whether the Bolsheviks in power made errors. We can certainly agree with Farber that these things were true. What is in dispute is the *source* of those errors and problems, and what conclusions we should draw as a result of them. Farber insists that they flow from inherent flaws of Leninism—in particular on the question of the relationship between the masses and the revolutionary party—and that this *most fundamental aspect* of Leninist theory needs to be discarded. We profoundly disagree. And here lies the key difference between Farber's critique of the Bolsheviks' errors and similar criticisms raised by contemporary Marxists like Ernest Mandel, or by the Fourth International as a whole—even, we might note, by Leon Trotsky himself.

Every revolutionary makes mistakes. The test is not in seeking a blueprint for perfect leadership, but in maintaining our ability to recognize our errors and correct them.

It was striking to me, from this point of view, that in the pages of Farber's book Leon Trotsky's ideas come in for only an occasional specific criticism. Farber refrains from undertaking the same rigorous critique of his role during this period to which he subjects Lenin. At first this seemed odd. After all, both Lenin and Trotsky advocated similar social policies during the civil war period and immedi-

ately after it. (If anything, Trotsky's "centralism" was even more extreme, as in the often cited trade union debate.) Both Lenin and Trotsky defended these policies with equal force, and on similar ideological grounds.

But upon reflection it is not hard to see the reason for the distinction obviously made by Farber. Trotsky lived long enough to critique this period of Bolshevik history, recognizing the process of incorrect theoretical generalization that both he and Lenin had been guilty of. What's more, he went on to wage a fight against Stalin, developing generally correct ideas on workers' democracy—and its relationship to the fight for socialism—that the revolutionary Marxist movement continues to base itself on. Given that fact, it would have been rather difficult for Farber to convince very many people that there was some fundamental flaw in Trotsky's *methodology* on the question of democracy.

Lenin did not live long enough to go through a similar development. He only started to recognize the danger of, and launch a struggle against, bureaucratic degeneration shortly before his death. So Lenin becomes fair game for Farber's critique.

But it is an interesting twist, which Farber will have a difficult time explaining, that Trotsky—precisely after making his own analysis of the errors of that period—became even more profoundly committed to Leninist theory, in particular the Leninist theory of organization, of the vanguard party and its relationship to the class struggle as a whole. He fought for this tenaciously during the rest of his life. How is it that this foremost revolutionary thinker could not see the fatal theoretical flaws in this aspect of Leninism that Farber has now discovered?

One has the sense, in reading Farber's work, that he is searching, somehow, to find an answer to the question that is posed so often to Marxists: How can the socialist revolution provide institutional guarantees against bureaucratization? The proper answer to that question may not be an easy one for people to accept, but it is truthful: There can be no written constitution or legal code that will provide such a guarantee. The only safeguard against bureaucracy is the continued mobilization of the revolutionary mass movement. Once that comes to an end, once demoralization or defeat takes its toll, the danger of bureaucracy exists. That is why the Russian Revolution was defeated by Stalin, and why so many thousands of genuine Bolshevik-Leninists had to go to their deaths in the Gulag rather than give up the fight for real workers' rule and soviet democracy in the USSR. □

Letters

Tribute to George Chomalou

George Chomalou, who died December 4, 1991, will be sorely missed by those of us who had the opportunity to know and work with him.

In a personal sense, George was a warm and caring human being with an engaging smile and a contagious sense of humor. George's blunt and sometimes abrasive exterior only partially concealed his deep concern for people and humanity as a whole, which was the motive force of his life.

George was, above all, a person of great principle. Equally important, he fought hard for the principles he believed in.

While problems of health and employment sometimes caused George to curtail his activities in the mass movement, nothing could detract from his extraordinary grasp of Marxist theory and his determination to defend that theory against all challenges to its continued vitality and relevance.

George enjoyed the give-and-take of political debate. He drew upon a storehouse of knowledge about scientific socialism acquired over decades and he often achieved brilliance in articulating his point of view.

Where his memory was dim or rusty about a particular issue, George "hit the books." He had a large library of Marxist writings and he knew right where to go to get what he was looking for.

But George was no dogmatist. He viewed theory as needing constant enrichment and updating. He was creative and independent in his thinking and showed a gift for applying his basic beliefs to the rapidly changing conditions of political life in our era.

Occasionally, George took positions on tactical questions which proved to be incorrect. When life demonstrated this, he never hesitated to acknowledge his mistake. Frequently a critic of others and of any shortcomings he perceived in the socialist

milieu of which he was part, George also knew how to be self-critical.

One of the things that most distinguished George's political life was his attitude toward activists from other tendencies. He enjoyed visiting and talking with members belonging to a wide range of groups extending from Solidarity, Socialist Action, and Socialist Organizer to the Spartacist League.

The guiding spirit in George's life was his lifelong companion, Sophia. In addition to more than four decades of activity and struggle, they shared a common appreciation of music and culture, and of their Greek heritage.

George Chomalou was a rare breed. He made an important contribution to the cause of the working class, participating actively from the time he was a very young man until his untimely death at the age of 62. We honor George's achievements and we will not forget him.

Jerry Gordon
Cleveland, Ohio

In Defense of Leonard Jeffries

In answering Doug Buchholz's letter, Steve Bloom should be aware that the "Jeffries" he refers to is a professor and should be referred to as such. I have found Bloom's article, as well as his answer to Mr. Buchholz's letter, off the mark.

The importance of Professor Leonard Jeffries's statement on those attacking "multi-cultural education" is the same as the one against racist attacks in Crown Heights, Bensonhurst, and other areas.

This change in education is geared toward all students, but most importantly to Black youth in New York City. For Mr.

Bloom to declare that it is a reformist program is equivalent to attacking the March on Washington Movement which brought the greatest benefits to Black Americans in obtaining jobs.

As a teenager in the Socialist Workers Party, I remember the full support that the *Militant* and the SWP gave to A. Philip Randolph and the March on Washington Movement that he led. We did not attack it as reformist or anything else. That task was taken by the Stalinist sheet, *The Daily Worker*.

Bloom states quite honestly that his own knowledge of currents and trends in the Black community is lacking. Yet he

launches an attack on Professor Jeffries's ideas from a philosophical, ideological, and factual viewpoint, without even presenting a single fact in contention until he answers a reader's letter.

Many Black intellectuals voice the discontent of the Black masses and directly relate to the Black masses. The opposition that the media and the power structure have expressed against Professor Jeffries has projected him as a leader among the American Black masses.

Solomon Grauer
Newark, New Jersey

**The Fourth Internationalist Tendency
held its Seventh National Conference
in Cleveland, Ohio,
February 15-17.
Coverage and analysis
of the conference
will be provided in the next issue of
Bulletin In Defense of Marxism.**

expression of our culture and forms of organization. We demand that we be recognized as Peoples under International Law, and that this recognition be incorporated into the respective Nation States.

8) We denounce the victimization of Indian People through violence and persecution, which constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights. We demand respect for our right to life, to land, to free organiza-

tion and expression of our culture. At the same time we demand the release of our leaders who are held as political prisoners, an end to repression, and restitution for the harms caused us. □

Christopher Columbus—the Facts

Exposing the Truth About the Myth

- At the very first Caribbean island he touched, Columbus kidnaped six Taino Indians.
- He thought he was near India and made plans to conquer all the Caribbean islands and then the mainland. He came in search of gold and power.
- The Caribbean islands were populated by one to four million Taino Indians, a peaceful farming and fishing nation.
- Unable to find enough gold to finance his schemes, Columbus captured thousands of Tainos and sent them to the slave markets of Spain. The Tainos resisted with fishbone-tipped spears, but these were no match for artillery. Columbus demanded that each adult Taino pay a tribute of gold dust every three months, under penalty of amputation of the hands. Many fled to the

mountains but Columbus's men tracked them down with dogs. Rather than be slaves, thousands took poison. In two years over a hundred thousand Tainos were dead, and the survivors were slaves in the mines and plantations. Within two decades the genocide of the Taino nation was complete, and the Spaniards began importing slaves from Africa.

- Columbus was unrepentantly guilty of the genocide of over two million Indian people.
- Columbus abused the Spanish colonists just as he abused the Indians, so the king deposed him and sent him home in chains.
- Columbus invented European imperialism and the slave trade in the Americas.

At the coming 500th Anniversary of the Columbus invasion, let us rediscover the true history of our hemisphere. Let us fight the continuing legacy of conquest and celebrate the 500 years of resistance of all Indian peoples. Let us celebrate a new vision for this continent. □

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