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# TRUTH

**WORKERS  
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**ORGAN OF THE TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION USA/FRATERNAL SECTION/FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
FOR A TROTSKYIST CONGRESS REBUILDING THE U.S. SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

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**DOWN WITH THE  
SECRET GOVERNMENT!**

**IMPEACH REAGAN!**

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**  
**OPEN  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

TRUTH o No. 218 o April, 1987

Organ of the Trotskyist Organization of the USA,  
Fraternal Section of the Fourth International,  
For a Trotskyist Congress Rebuilding the U.S. Section of the Fourth  
International

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March on Washington, April 25!

# IMPEACH REAGAN NOW DOWN WITH THE SECRET GOVERNMENT LABOR PARTY

By MARGARET GUTTSALL

On April 25th, hundreds of thousands will march in Washington and San Francisco, with unprecedented support from the American labor movement, in opposition to the Reagan administration and its policies. This march is part of the world-wide upsurge against the ruling class, its policies and the bureaucracies that support it, an upsurge that is just beginning. It has already provoked a profound crisis in the Reagan administration and sent it scrambling for solutions.

*Every serious marcher must sense the power of the labor movement and the opportunity that presents itself.*

Now more than ever it is time for working class organizations to make a common fight to force the House of Representatives to impeach Reagan and put him on trial, to bring down the secret government, for a labor party to lead this fight.

American workers cannot wait for the 1988 elections to make an all out fight to get rid of Reagan and the government he represents. Nor can they rely on the Democratic Party to lead this fight, even the most left Democrats like Jesse Jackson.

Reagan and the racist bosses he represents are planning to use the next two years to try to strengthen their secret government, to find a way to sell this to the American people, while they continue to attempt to suppress the most active sources of opposition to their policies, like striking workers and Blacks.

According to the *Detroit Free Press*, Reagan's attorney general Edwin Meese III, "steered conservative contributors toward North to help him build a private contra supply network.

" One of these contributors, Philip Mabry, said: "Ollie (North) told me, 'If anyone in Congress tries to f--- things up, then we'll go underground with the private sector' ... I then said to him, 'kind of like a government within a government?' He just smiled." (*Detroit Free Press*, March 10, 1987).

Reagan's Tower Commission report calls not for an end to such criminal activity, but for better management. And the Democratic Party fully supported this report. What is more, Democratic Party politicians are using their ties to the unions and Blacks to stop independent mobilizations against Reagan and his policies.

Jesse Jackson, now a prospective Democratic Party presidential candidate, recently flew to Detroit to speak to a workers' rally against plant closings in an effort to channel the workers' mobilization, already breaking into strikes, into lobbying Congress to pass legislation against plant closings. A few days later, when Black and white students at the University of Michigan seized the administration building in opposition to this elitist, racist enclave's policies, Jackson flew in and negotiated a settlement with university president Harold Shapiro that did not include one of the students' major demands. At the same time he dismisses the growing violence against Blacks as simply vestiges of the past; he refuses to recognize the real growth of racism fostered by Reagan and the Democrats. And this is the best we can expect from the Democratic Party in the next two years.

Thus working class organizations must lead the struggle against Reagan, for an independent, mass mobilization to force the House to impeach him and put him on trial. This is a way for working class organizations to continue to expose Reagan, the secret government, and Democratic Party collaboration,

to develop a mobilization to bring them down, to show that building a labor party based on the unions to lead this struggle is not a luxury for the future but a burning necessity.

~~This struggle is a political struggle, not only against Reagan and the Democrats and their agents in the unions, but also against the Kremlin. Gorbachev, leader of the USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, is now offering to sit down with Reagan and negotiate an arms control agreement. At the same time he is instituting reforms in the USSR that will provide more freedom for U.S. and other businessmen.~~

Few journalists failed to note that Gorbachev is providing Reagan with a way out, a way to revitalize and refurbish his failing regime.

An arms control agreement when Blacks are being shot down in the streets by white racists nurtured by the Reagan regime, when the U.S. continues to send money, supplies and arms to the contras in Central America — racist, imperialist mercenaries bent on restoring U.S. power. Freedom for U.S. businessmen in the USSR, while U.S. businessmen in the U.S. try to bust the workers' unions, close plants, and drive thousands of workers and their families into destitution.

Gorbachev's "offer" is worse than irrelevant. It's a betrayal.

While Gorbachev wants to save Reagan, millions of exploited and oppressed do not. An independent, mass mobilization to force the House to impeach Reagan and place him on trial for his crimes, to bring down the secret government, for a labor party to lead this fight and a fight for a workers government is urgently needed.

The Trotskyist Organization, Fraternal Section of the Fourth International, calls on all working class organizations to join this fight. With an alliance for a labor party and labor candidates for office, we can engage millions in this struggle now.

Impeach Reagan now!  
Down with the secret government!  
Labor Party!

## Impeach Reagan: An Interesting Response

By MARGARET GUTTSALL

Several weeks ago the Trotskyist Organization initiated a struggle for an independent, mass mobilization to force the House to impeach Reagan and put him on trial. We see this as a tactic to expose Reagan, his administration, and the secret government they are nurturing, as a way to develop a mobilization to bring them down, and build a labor party to lead this fight.

The response to our initiative has been a very interesting one. While young workers and students, especially Blacks and women, have been very enthusiastic, working class organizations have been largely negative.

The Workers World Party, which supported a Democratic Party candidate, Jesse Jackson, in the last election, and which still considers itself part of the Rainbow Coalition, tells us that the problem is not Reagan, it is capitalism. It says we have to build grass roots social movements against things like U.S. intervention, racism, and plant closings, not a mass mobilization to impeach Reagan, bring down the secret government and build a labor party.

The Socialist Workers Party says something quite similar: the problem is not Reagan, it is capitalism; a struggle to impeach Reagan is a diversion; the workers are not yet ready for a labor party; in any case, we cannot make a common fight for a labor party because our programs are different. The SWP says we should collaborate only in building movements against U.S. intervention, apartheid, etc., like the April 25 march.

The Workers League told us it was opportunist to fight for the House to impeach Reagan and put him on trial because the House is bourgeois and it will just lead to Bush. It also said that the Workers League will not make a common fight for a labor party with the Trotskyist Organization because the Trotskyist Organization is opportunist.

Now the Trotskyist Organization is in favor of building struggles against U.S. intervention, apartheid, plant closings, etc., as everyone knows. We have not only participated in these struggles we have actively led them. But to counterpose the struggle against U.S. intervention, racism, plant closings, etc., to an active struggle to impeach Reagan, bring down the secret government, build a labor party, etc., is absolutely false.

It is necessary to centralize the workers and oppressed peoples' struggles taking place today, to take the offensive against the Reagan administration, bring down Reagan, build a labor party to fight for a workers government. This is the task before us.

Workers World and the Socialist Workers Party do not want to join in a common fight to force the House to impeach Reagan because they do not want to talk to the workers about what they can do right now to get rid of Reagan, the administration as a whole, and the ruling class they represent. They do not want to talk about what the workers can do right now to build an alternative, a workers party, a workers government. For them, bringing down Reagan and the Reagan administration as a whole, is something that will be accomplished by someone else, the Democratic Party through the next elections, or it will not be accomplished at all. Bringing down Reagan, building a labor party, a workers government, is a far off perspective, something for the distant future. In the mean time, lets build "grass roots movements."

Haven't we heard this before? Isn't this what the reformists say? It's a nice idea but it won't happen soon. So let's stick to a nickle more an hour.

The Workers League is not quite the same. It is fighting for a trade union commission of inquiry into the Reagan crisis and a labor party. And the Trotskyist Organization is for both of these things. But to counterpose the fight for a trade union commission of inquiry

to the fight to force the House to impeach Reagan and place him on trial, avoids the necessary confrontation with the Republicans and Democrats in the House. And so does the Workers League's way of fighting for a labor party. By insisting that the Workers League is the only tendency fighting for a labor party, by refusing to make a common fight for a labor party, the Workers League avoids a mass mobilization for a labor party, a real confrontation with the Democratic Party and union bureaucrats.

We find it very interesting to hear that it is opportunist for trade unions to demand that the House impeach Reagan because the House is bourgeois, but it is perfectly all right for the Workers League to demand that the bourgeois courts prosecute another working class organization, the Socialist Workers Party. Marxists do not rely on bourgeois institutions to carry out their demands, but they have always been in favor of using them when they can to advance the mobilization of the working class against the bosses. Thus Marxists have often gone to bourgeois courts, participated in bourgeois elections, bourgeois congresses, and, yes, even made demands on bourgeois congresses. The Workers League thinks it's OK to use a bourgeois court against a working class organization, but it's not OK to try to make use of a bourgeois democratic procedure, impeachment, against the bourgeoisie.

Frankly, this sounds like just one more excuse to avoid a mass mobilization, a real political confrontation with Reagan, the Democrats, and the union bureaucrats.

The response of these organizations to Reagan's crisis is a product of their place in the past period of peaceful coexistence, in which they adapted themselves to the Democratic Party, the Stalinists and the union bureaucrats, in which they became accustomed to coexisting and even collaborating with them, or, in the Workers League's case, in which it withdrew from political struggle and became totally isolated from the masses.

A fundamental political struggle against these policies is necessary to prepare a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the U.S. Section of the

Fourth International, to prepare the vanguard for the coming period of crises, confrontations and revolutions, to build a party capable of leading the American working class to power.

The fight for an independent mass mobilization to force the House to impeach Reagan, to bring down the secret government, for a labor party to lead this fight and fight for a workers government, is an important part of this struggle.

## Jesse Jackson and the 1988 Elections

By FRED MICHAELS

News Item — Jesse Jackson visited Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan recently and attended a dinner to honor the Company's efforts to increase the number of minority suppliers doing business with Ford. He had high praise for Ford who he said was making the minority supplier development program a success.

News Item — In late March, University of Michigan students who were organized in a struggle against racist incidents at the school (see last issue of Truth) called on Jackson to come and help them. Jackson came; he and U of M president Shapiro reached an agreement; students greeted Jackson with chants of "Jesse in '88."

Jesse Jackson just opened a campaign office in Iowa (in preparation for the Democratic caucus meetings there early next year). He is clearly the most well-known of all the Democratic Party presidential nominee seekers.

In the 1984 elections, Jackson began his campaign running as an "independent." After several months, he declared himself a contender for the Democratic nomination.

In 1988, the stakes are much higher. The crisis of the Reagan administration has deepened the crisis of the Democratic Party — the Chicago elections has seen an unprecedented split in the Democratic Party; the number of candidates for president grows daily; on the level of program the Democratic Party cannot offer a single major difference with Reagan.

Because of this political crisis of both parties, Jackson's role in these elections is crucial. He is the only candidate with ties to working class organizations, speaking at workers rallies against plant closings in Detroit and in support of striking meatpackers in Milwaukee. He is the only presidential candidate speaking at the April 25 rally in Washington. He is the candidate of the Democratic Party left-wing.

This article will examine Jackson's line on racism. Future articles will explore other aspects of the Jackson candidacy.

### *Jackson's Line*

In an article for the New York Times on January 28 entitled "Atonement for Racist Episodes is Not Enough," Jackson states that it is not the white people of Forsyth County or Howard Beach that are responsible for the misery that Blacks and the country as a whole is in; it is the corporate rich and its government, the Reagan administration. The white and Black and Hispanic working people actually live and work in more integrated settings, not the rich. "Dr. King's dream is closer to reality in Queens than on Wall Street."

Second, he says that "President Reagan and his administration have combined regressive economics with race conscious behavior." And in so doing, "Reagan has sent a consistent series of [racist] signals across the land." From these signals, combined with Reagan's "regressive economics" white working people and farmers turn to racism.

Third, "we cannot allow short-term efforts to atone for these ugly incidents to become a substitute for a national economic strategy and moral leadership in the White House." Therefore, "We must move beyond the battleground of race-conscious behavior onto the common ground of economic progress."

### *Racism and the Rich*

Jackson's first premise — that the source of racism is the corporate boardroom and Reagan leaves one simple ingredient out — the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party as a whole has been committed to the same program as Reagan. It has been the southern Democrats that have been among Reagan's staunchest supporters; the Democratic and Republican Party programs, more so than at any other time in recent history, are virtually the same.

Jackson omits the Democratic Party from his list because, in being a Democratic Party politician, he supports the American capitalist system. And, in a deeper sense, it is not Reagan that is the source of racism, but this system that is the source of racism. It is this system that produces presidents like Reagan or Carter.

The capitalist system is a set of relations established between the producers of all the wealth, the working class, and the owners of the means of production. This system, as it developed in the US, built a racist structure into itself in order to keep the US working class, (which has become, economically, the most powerful working class in the world), divided and weak. Therefore, racism cannot be overcome until capitalism is defeated.

That is why the civil rights movement, while smashing the structure of Jim Crow in the South, was not able to qualitatively change the situation in the United States for the masses of Blacks. That will never be accomplished as long as capitalism remains. Jackson, a capitalist politician reformer, supports American capitalism as a system, and believes that it can be modified to end racism. That is why he meets with the leaders of one of the most racist large corporations in the US today, Ford Motor Company, and praises their "minority business program."

#### *Racism Overcome By Independent Struggle*

In the article he goes on to say that "Dr. King's dream is closer to reality in Queens than on Wall Street."

To the extent that "Dr. King's dream" means a society where Blacks and whites live together in harmony, this is a lie. Jackson states truisms that poor Blacks and whites stand in the same unemployment lines, fight in the army, etc. But, white workers except Blacks, that is overcome racism, to the extent that there has been an independent working class struggle.

The integration in the workplace, that does exist, has been the result of the political struggle to found and build the unions in the factories in the 30's and 40's. Organized by various communists and independent working

class militants, the racism implanted in immigrant and Southern white workers by the capitalists was overcome in a common struggle against Ford Motor Company, General Motors, US Steel (now USX), and the US government. This was the fundamental breakthrough in race relations in the United States.

The civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's smashed the Jim Crow legal structure in the South with Black people basing themselves on their new-found strength in the US working class. Both movements drew all their strength from the mobilization of the masses, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties, and in the course of these movements, produced new organizations and new leaders openly antagonistic to these capitalist parties.

Thus, this "integration," in reality, working class solidarity, is based on an independent struggle; it can only sustain itself and go forward on that basis. Without such a constant effort it can be eroded. And that is what is happening today.

The incidents in Howard Beach and Forsyth County, in one sense, represent the first signs of the erosion of the gains of these years. The unions are weaker because the leadership has collaborated with the capitalists in concessions and plant closings. White workers are less and less convinced that their survival can be tied only to the trade unions. Racist attackers are emboldened not only because of encouragement from the White House, but because the Black leadership refuses to break from the Democratic Party and build an independent mass movement.

#### *Reform Democratic Party?*

At the end of the article Jackson puts forward his program in these elections. Specifically on the question of racism he says, "we must speak out for racial justice." And, "we must insist on an end to sex and race discrimination in the workplace."

The problem is not the demands themselves. It is Jackson's strategy for attaining them. Not stated in his program, but explicit in his candidacy, Jackson wants to reform American



capitalism by reforming the Democratic Party.

The history of the union movement, of the civil rights movement, shows that this strategy has never worked. In fact, "reforming the Democratic Party" means bringing movements under the control of the Democratic Party and rendering them harmless to the capitalist class. This is the meaning of the "reform" under McGovern in 1972 (the anti-war movement), the "reform" under Kennedy (the civil rights movement) and the "reform" under Franklin Roosevelt (the industrial union movement). Thus, when it has been "successfully" implemented, it has destroyed the independent movements. And, the lesson of all these movements, all based on the working class, is that the reform of American capitalism has only occurred as the by-product of these independent, revolutionary struggles. Their weakness was in ending up "reforming" the Democratic Party, instead of forging a labor party and program.

In the 1988 elections, the US working class, the young fighters against racism, need a candidate for president that bases himself (or herself) on their movement — an independent labor candidate for president, not a reformer to lead them into the graveyard of the incorrigible, capitalist Democratic Party.

## USSR: Gorbachev's Reforms or Political Revolution?

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Gorbachev's new reforms are a real shot in the arm to world imperialism and the Reagan administration in particular, which is badly in need of a transfusion. Gorbachev's new slogan of "openness" (glasnost) means openness to capitalist restoration, not openness to the political revolution boiling below the surface of Soviet society. The timing of Gorbachev's reforms is a lifeline to Reagan as his government staggers under the weight of a political crisis resulting from the Iran/contra affair.

Establishing a class criteria for judging Gorbachev's reforms we ask first, will the reforms aid the workers political revolution or not? The yardstick for answering this question cannot be this or that element raised by Gorbachev and Co. Some who say want to be fooled by the reforms will only concentrate on the "positive" demands and point out how Gorbachev stands for freedom for political parties, (certainly a demand we also support because it would help the workers!), or how the "Manifesto of the Movement for a Socialist Renewal" put out by a section of the Kremlin bureaucracy last year attacks some of the worst abuses of Brezhnev's former cronies.

But the economic (essential) basis of the reforms are basically a call to increase capitalist investment in Soviet enterprises, and of course increase the miseries that go with it: unemployment, inflation, high prices, attempts to turn workers into junior partners with the bosses (capitalist "labor/management techniques") etc. at the expense of the workers and the socialist conquests, elements of which have existed to this day in the USSR.

Socialization of production, centralized planning and distribution, monopoly of foreign trade by the state and collectivization of agriculture, these gains accomplished a rise from barbarism to culture, hurried the Soviet workers into the 20th century. But the socialist conquests do not exist in a vacuum,

not statically, nor timelessly. The Soviet bureaucracy usurped political power from the working class and imposed its own methods of defending the socialist conquests. Their methods, rather than leading to the withering away of the state, have led to the withering away of the socialist conquests. Gorbachev's new reforms would reinstitute the struggle for individual existence as the basis of all "progress" in the USSR.

It is bad enough to hear a barrage of claptrap about reforms toward "democracy" in the USSR and about the melt-down of the iron curtain, but it is worse to see people who should know better tailoring and yeasaying Gorbachev. In the last issue of the *Fourth International* (#122) there was an exhaustive analysis of what the reforms represent and how our former comrade Michel Varga sees the reforms as arising "more and more insistent - to the demands of the workers."

Nor are the reforms the sum of a nice symmetrical equation: a result of pressure from below as well as from imperialism. It is important to be clear on this point. An expectant attitude toward Gorbachev and the reforms, dangerous illusions in Stalinism or in a "wing on the march" of Stalinism leads in one direction: denial of the need for the Fourth International and the program of political revolution. While it is true that Gorbachev is pressured by the stifled but passionate struggle of the working class, by generalized *part* that is "more and more insistent," the reforms do *not* represent in any way a response to the needs of the working class nor do they go toward any kind of "socialist renewal" as stated. Only impressionists who fail to think in class terms, who judge events solely on the basis of appearances could believe in this fairy tale! Here are a few illustrations indicating the nature of the economic program of the Gorbachev tendency within the Kremlin bureaucracy:

"Extend the rights of enterprises on the basis of a total self-financing, permit the

sphere of services and the production of consumers' goods, do not impede the development of private zones within the collective farms, create the conditions for the development of private trade.." (Quoted from *Fourth International*, English edition, #126, "Gorbachev's "Reform" Against the Socialist Conquests in the USSR.")

"In Moscow on January 5 Yuri A. Kislenko, a top Soviet trade official, announced that U.S. and other foreign companies are being encouraged to enter into joint business ventures with Soviet industries." "...the plan provides tax exemption, independence from central Soviet economic planning, freedom to experiment with capitalist labor/management techniques.." "Foreign investors that had signed agreements included 11 U.S. companies.." "Fifteen others are in negotiations." (excerpts from *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, "Soviet bureaucracy in Turmoil", March 1987).

Additionally, in hopes of recreating the impossible, an illusory "peaceful coexistence"—Gorbachev's offer in early March to cut medium-range missiles in Europe is nothing more than a burnt offering to Reagan. If government officials throughout the European democracies see American missiles in Europe as "a symbol of American commitment to the defense of Western Europe" (*Detroit Free Press*, March 1)—that is, defense of capitalism in Western Europe, contrariwise, the presence of Soviet missiles in Europe is seen as a defense of "communism." Gorbachev's new "democratism" is a signal to the imperialist world that he now "sees the light" and is willing to negotiate on those things that trouble capitalists most: planned economy, nationalization of industry, etc., etc., etc.

As stated in our program, the Transitional Program of the Fourth International: "The fascist, counterrevolutionary elements, growing uninterruptedly, express with ever greater inconsistency the interests of world imperialism." "...the ruling layers can insure their positions of privilege only through rejection of the nationalization, collectivization, and monopoly of foreign trade.." Gorbachev et. al, then, express world imperialism "with ever greater consistency"; especially through the reforms.

It was such an understanding of the program and of Trotsky's prognosis, that the first signs of political revolution would be the birth of "free unions" that led the Fourth International to support the formation of Solidarnosc in Poland and fight to orient toward political revolution. Solidarnosc was born in a struggle against unemployment, inflation, high prices, the queue (long food lines) and unbearable social tensions arising from the "reforms" of the Jaruzelski regime. We did not then define our fight inside Solidarnosc according to the tendencies towards capitalist restoration of the bureaucracy and their expression within Solidarnosc itself, but by the *material* basis of the free unions: a fight of ten million workers against social inequality and political oppression, not their "love" of the aforementioned anti-working class scourges.

Once Gorbachev's reforms are fully implemented, the next problem will be the open confrontation of the workers with the results of these reforms. Gorbachev looks to the future: "Democratism without glasnost [openness] does not exist. At the same time democracy without limits is anarchy." (from the "Manifesto"). That is why it will be difficult [implementation of the reforms].

Workers, whose "anarchic" struggle seeks to end the evils engendered by the reforms will be branded "pro - capitalist" by the bureaucracy as were the Polish workers before them. And the US will see its opportunity through its diplomatic agencies, to turn the workers struggle into support for bourgeois democracy, just as it became a kiss of death for the Polish workers!

Once again, we can safely predict terrified petty bourgeois leaderships will come forward to denounce the Soviet workers as they did the Polish workers. Workers World, Spartacist League, and others pointed to CIA, US and Catholic Church involvement in Solidarnosc as an excuse for abandoning the Polish workers struggle and for ingratiating themselves with the Kremlin. Those who define Solidarnosc according to whether the CIA, Reagan or the Catholic Church try to use it, in reality abandon the Polish workers to the *glasnost* of

spontaneity. In reality they are part of allowing the Polish workers to be dominated precisely by the Catholic Church, by false leaders and false programs.

The political revolution is already underway, not by way of the reforms, which in all essentials are reactionary and express the impact of the decline and crisis of world imperialism on the "bureaucratic excrescence" (the ruling caste in the USSR), but by the struggle of the working class against capitalist reforms in a degenerated workers state.

Only a centralized world leadership of the working class can intervene in the fight of the Soviet or Polish workers against this "bureaucratic excrescence" because only the Fourth International has maintained, developed and tested its program and cadres over years of struggle against Stalinism for the political revolution in the degenerated workers states, the socialist revolution in the imperialist countries. Because of this the Fourth International can call the reforms by their right name, and develop a united front policy to solidarize the working class elements against the Soviet bureaucracy for the political revolution.

Our fight today is to make a step forward in building the Fourth International. To this end we want to clarify the nature of the reforms, indeed the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, with all those who call themselves Trotskyist, but who are confused by the seeming "about face" on the part of Gorbechev. This confusion, we believe, just beginning to be expressed by a whole range of parties can only be clarified through political and comradely struggle. Practically, we must develop a common struggle in defense of the Soviet workers, in defense of the gains of October against Stalinism and capitalist restoration.

# Class Struggle in America

By FRED MICHAELS

This new department for Truth, *Class Struggle in America*, focuses the attention of workers and young people on the sharpening struggle between the US working class and the US ruling class.

The intensity of this struggle grows daily from long bitter strikes like that of the USX workers to the growing desire of the autoworkers to stop the layoffs; from the growth of violent right wing groups and the support of the churches to banning books, to the heroic battles of P-9 and other meatpacking workers. We welcome your information and your comments.

**All Out for March 29 and April 25 demonstration against US intervention in Central America!**

UAW Local 2071, the Wayne State University Staff Association, passed a motion in support of March 29 and April 25 proposed by a supporter of Truth and \$1000 was voted to support local members who want to travel to Washington. We urge all Local 2071 members to take advantage of this proposal and join hundreds of thousands of other workers in Washington, and at the local rally in Detroit, March 29.

The information coming out about the demonstration shows that it will centralize all the struggles of the working class going on today — the unions support this action with greater strength than they have any action since Solidarity Day I in 1981. The mobilizations at the campuses will be expressed in this demonstration. The New York Coalition has set a goal of 100,000 from New York alone. Three hundred buses are already reserved. The coalition in Boston has rented a train.

The national office has played little role in the actual organizing — it has not produced any leaflets or posters and has in fact told all the local coalitions to "go ahead" and produce their own literature since nothing will be forthcoming.

But in spite of the leadership, this demonstration will be a powerful expression of the discontent of the working class and youth with the Reagan administration policies in Central America, South Africa and the US.

We urge all working class organizations and militants that support a Labor Party to join the ranks of the demonstration under the slogans: US out of Central America, No Support to Apartheid, Impeach Reagan, and Labor Party!

## The Struggle against GM

These last few weeks have seen an intensification of the struggle against GM's plant closings. As we go to press, 9,000 members of UAW Local 594, the truck and bus plants in Pontiac Michigan, walked off their jobs on March 26 in what the local union president, Don Douglas, claimed is an "isolated dispute." The issues — outsourcing and contracting out of union work to non-union companies, violating contract provisions related to seniority, work rules, job classifications, assembly line speed and health and safety — are problems in all GM locals. And the UAW-printed signs proclaim: "No More Takeaways! No More Givebacks!" Hardly slogans of an "isolated" struggle.

The workers feel that this is the first step in a nationwide struggle against GM.

A rally to Stop the Plant Closings was held at UAW Local 174 on March 21, endorsed by the UAW leadership and sponsored by UAW Local 15 Plant Closing Committee. It was held at this local because the Fisher Guide Plant, a unit of this amalgamated local, is scheduled to close.

Over 2,000 autoworkers and their supporters attended from across Michigan. The Trotskyist Organization and the Revolutionary Workers League worked together at this rally distributing a joint statement with two union resolutions — one on the plant closings and the other on the Reagan crisis (reprinted on page 15). The resolutions reflect the agreements made at the San

Francisco Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference.

These last weeks have seen other actions as well.

A group of workers from the UAW Local 15, the Fleetwood local in Detroit, have filed suit against the UAW for refusing to let the workers vote on a concessionary contract that might have "kept the plant open." This suit is no doubt in part a response to the moves by the leadership of Local 15, Joe Wilson's slate which includes a supporter of the Workers World Party, to demand that Congress pass a moratorium on plant closings.

This suit is obviously a backward response to the attack by GM. It is backward because it blames the union for the plant closings and because the workers believe that by accepting concessions the plant will stay open. The union leadership, by accepting concessions for years and by refusing to wage an open political struggle against this concessionary contract, has weakened the fight against concessions. Now that the mobilization of GM workers against the plant closings is growing, the bureaucrats are forced to respond positively.

The correct way to fight this backward response, which no doubt could have successfully convinced workers to vote down a concessionary contract, is a vigorous campaign to convince the workers not to vote for it, and instead to prepare a national strike of auto to keep the plants open.

Another suit was filed against UAW Local 22, the Cadillac local in Detroit, contending that the workers are not receiving retraining for new jobs. Finally, a group of UAW workers from the Flint/Saginaw area of Michigan, one of the hardest hit by unemployment in the past years and which will be hit hard by the GM closings, picketed Solidarity House demanding "company-wide seniority" for GM workers. After the threat of another picket line, Solidarity House stated that such a demand would be a top priority this fall. A leader of this movement said that therefore, the planned protest would be called off. Such trust in the bureaucracy is completely unwarranted.

The demand would allow laid-off workers from any plant to "bump" workers at other plants and take their jobs. Once again, it is a demand that comes from a certain layer of workers — certainly not the young workers! Seniority rights should be defended, but outside of a total policy of fighting against the plant closings with an action program against the bosses, such a demand actually divides autoworkers.

Outside of the context of a open mobilization, this demand, as with many limited demands, in today's situation could be a brake on the struggle. It could pit older workers against younger workers, that is, divide the union. Divisions in the union are an inevitable result of the UAW leadership's policy of accepting the plant closings. The UAW leadership must stop accepting the closings and concessions as inevitable. This policy is what brings the attack of the auto companies on the workers into the union itself. The action program on page 16, briefly: 1) united support committees for all auto strikes; 2) a national strike of auto; 3) Nationalization of auto under workers control and 30 for 40, is the road forward.

### The Chicago Elections

The Chicago elections demonstrate that the crisis of the Democratic Party has been exacerbated by the crisis of the Reagan government. Only a struggle for a Labor Party can resolve the situation in the working class' favor.

Harold Washington, a long-time Illinois machine Democrat, now mayor of Chicago, recently won the Democratic primary in a hotly contested race. He won with 54% of the vote and over 70% of the residents of the city voting. He received 98% of the Black vote, 10% of the white vote and 50% of the Hispanic vote.

He was opposed by Jane Byrne, former mayor, who ran on an openly racist appeal to whites.

Two other Democrats refused to run in the primary because they want to make sure that there is a racist alternative to Washington in the general elections on April 7. Ed Vrdolyak, chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party, is running on the Solidarity Party ticket.

Thomas Hynes, the county tax assessor, is running on the Chicago First Party ticket. Both have asked the other to withdraw and both say they will be in the race until the end.

The bourgeoisie has succeeded temporarily in dividing the working class of Chicago along racial lines. Naturally, the Trotskyist Organization is not neutral. We support the desire of the Black workers of Chicago to end their oppression. But support for a "dyed-in-the-wool" Democrat, (Washington's proud declaration) despite the fact he is a Black Democrat can only further divide and weaken the Blacks' struggle and the working class as a whole.

National Democratic Party leaders have said they will come to Chicago and campaign for Washington. The current leadership of the working class in Chicago, the union leaders of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the Black leaders, will support Washington on the same grounds.

Important sections of the bourgeoisie, the bankers and financiers, as well as major industrial capitalists, have lost what little fear they had of Washington's mayoralty, and support him.

The SWP has put forward a candidate for mayor, Pedro Vasquez, most probably a write-in. We call on all workers and all working class organizations to support this candidate. This could be the beginning of a struggle for a Labor Party so that, unlike today, the working class of Chicago could speak with one clear voice, instead of not being heard from at all.

#### Anti-Gay Hate Group

The US Postal Service is currently investigating a group for illegal use of the mails. The group, The White Brotherhood of the Iron Fist, has been placing ads in local Chicago newspapers like: Gay Grad student needs roommate. When people respond, their landlords, employers, associates, etc., receive letters warning that these people are homosexuals and that they may carry AIDS and "should be avoided at all costs."

Such cowardly methods are those of extreme right-wing groups which we spoke of in the last issue of Truth concerning Blacks. We vigorously oppose these groups and their hate homosexuals message. The threat to the working class is clear: if they are allowed to do this to homosexuals, next it will be union militants, Blacks, etc. The solution is a well-organized union campaign against the right wing groups, independent of the government, the political wellspring for their existence. The government has already started such tactics against immigrants. (See next story.)

#### Stop the Deportation of Palestinians

The US government is currently trying to deport 8 Palestinians and 1 Kenyan for their support to the Palestinian liberation struggle under a viciously anti-working class law, the McCarren Act. They were seized at gunpoint on January 26 in Los Angeles by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). After protests, a federal judge ordered them freed on bail February 17. They still face deportation proceedings. These individuals must be defended and the charges dropped.

#### The Alabama book banning

A federal judge in Alabama, Brevard Hand, has supported a suit brought by religious forces to remove certain textbooks from the Alabama state school system. The judge supports the incredible allegation of the suit that "godless humanism" is a religion. The legal reasoning is as follows: "godless humanism" is a form of religion; the books teach "humanism;" therefore it is a violation of the separation of the church and state to teach one religion over another in the schools.

The judge, who upheld the Alabama "moment of silence" law for public schools (later overturned by the Supreme Court), organized the parents from that first case to press this suit against the textbooks. That such blatantly political activity is tolerated on the Federal bench is just another sign of the escalation of the class struggle.

Right-wing political groups, threatened by the mobilization of the working class and the

Reagan crisis, feel the need to move into action.

This suit avoids some of the problems of previous suits because it does not mention specific passages and uses a "liberal" argument — the demand for the separation of church and state.

In reality, the banned books state that it is up to the reader, the children and young adults, to make decisions about their personal lives. The suit contends that therefore they are being told "not to listen" to their parents or clergy, and not to "read the Bible" or other directives that would satisfy these reactionaries. Naturally, the suit was brought by parents and churches. No children or student government groups or any of the permitted organizational expressions for young people support the suit.

This is a reactionary suit, and will only result in a worsening condition in the schools and in society at large if it is upheld. We urge all working class organizations to oppose this suit and support its overturn.



**"Irangate" and the Workers' Movement**

Union Resolution Proposed by the Revolutionary Workers League and the Trotskyist Organization

1. Both Republican and Democratic Party politicians are trying to cover up for the Reagan administration and its criminal activity in an effort to save Reagan until they can find an alternative way to continue Reagan's attacks on workers, blacks, and all oppressed people. The unions must not let this happen.

2. Thus we call on all unions to join us in building an independent mass mobilization (meetings, marches, strikes) to:

- Force Reagan out!
- Build a labor (workers') party!
- Run independent labor candidates for president and other offices in 1988!

3. In conjunction with this, the unions should initiate a discussion on a platform for the labor party and labor candidates in the 1988 elections.

**Strike to Stop GM Plant Closings!**

Resolution Adopted by the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Socialist Conference  
San Francisco, December 7, 1986

The participants in the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Socialist Conference support the Labor Notes Plant Closings Workshop's call for a national demonstration against GM layoffs and plant closings and for an emergency national conference to map out the fight against GM. In the framework of this struggle, we will fight for a united front based on unconditional defense of all workers' struggles against concessions (Saturn-type agreements, "quality circles," and international union coercion of local agreements), layoffs and plant closings, and for a platform of practical aid and working-class solutions for these struggles:

1. Defend workers' struggles with broad support committees to organize strike support, mass picketing, and legal defense of workers, unionists, and their leaders arrested and jailed in these struggles;
2. A nationwide auto strike to stop all GM layoffs and plant closings;
3. Thirty hours' work for forty hours' pay; divide work among all workers;
4. Nationalize industry under workers' control;
5. Build a labor party; for a labor-party slate in the 1988 elections; for a labor candidate for president against the Republicans and Democrats.

March 15, 1987

labor donated

TROTSKYIST ORGANIZATION  
PO BOX 32540, DETROIT 48232  
542-7445

REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE  
BOX 1297, DETROIT 48231

## For an Open International Conference Build the Workers International!

Responding to the call issued by the Workers Revolutionary Party of Great Britain, "For an International Conference in 1987 for the Re-organization of the Fourth International", the Trotskyist Organization salutes the WRP and calls on workers and militants everywhere to move with optimism and with definite steps to prepare an international conference of international centers, organizations, and tendencies claiming to represent Trotskyism. Already, our international has responded to the call of the WRP positively (see letter) and is preparing its contributions to this conference.

We believe our optimism is well founded. The crisis of the Reagan administration has created an *international opening* for American workers. The secret government of military adventurers, mercenaries, and arms dealers that has been partially exposed, a government that has been reduced to criminal acts in order to impose a halt to the struggles of oppressed peoples, confirms that the bourgeoisie itself was well aware that the American working class in its entirety could not be expected to support these imperialist policies. When this crisis is considered in the context of a general resurgence and resistance of the working class in the imperialist nations — beginning with the British miners strike, then the mobilization of French students linked to the French working class — it is clear that every action of the American working class against Reagan's policies, including its struggle against the policy of concessions, will be magnified in the eyes of the world. No less important will be the *battleground* of the international conference itself, which represents an effort to resolve the historical crisis of leadership of the working class.

Therefore, we are committed to seeing that the international conference is held, and that it is prepared in the best possible conditions. First, we want to say to our readers, especially those who are sympathetic to our international's fight for an open

international conference, and one that is prepared on the basis of *principled struggle*, and a *real united front against the bosses*, that your support is indispensable! We appeal to you to help us build up the *Workers Fund for the International* so that our political objectives will not be cut short by financial considerations.

Certainly, one of our most extraordinary expenses will be travel — but even this has to be put into a political context. Precisely because the call for an international conference comes out of a real ferment among the organizations claiming Trotskyism, which has had a *truly international expression*, the demands on our English speaking section, namely the Trotskyist Organization, have increased enormously. This new situation has opened up the possibilities for discussions with other tendencies. Recently, one of our members was able to travel to Great Britain and meet with representatives of the WRP. And our readers will know that in December, we were able to send one delegate (only one!) to participate in the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Socialist Conference in California. We can already foresee that our budget for travel, which is absolutely necessary if one is to have meaningful relations with other groups, will be severely strained. Certainly, we will have to do better than one member for the international conference itself as part of our international delegation to the conference.

We have been translating and producing more than two dozen pages of material from our international journal, "The Fourth International", every month. Thanks to the importance that we give to our international journal in the preparation of the conference, we can predict that this effort will still not be enough! Therefore, we need you, our supporters and sympathizers, to rethink what you can give to the WFI on a monthly basis, and if possible, to increase your commitment. And we need more subscribers to the fund!

Along with this appeal, we have also decided to

give more importance to our own effort to keep our readers and supporters informed and educated in relation to these international developments. Thus we are reprinting the call of the WRP, as well as a joint statement issued by several American organizations against arbitrary exclusions from the preparations committee that is being constituted for the international conference. As you will also know, our struggle in the battleground of the international conference is unique. First, in that we have introduced the key question of continuity into the discussion, that is the actual expression in terms of living cadres and organizations that the fight for the revolutionary program has had in the historical crisis of the Fourth International. You will recognize in every aspect of our struggle the lessons of the rebuilding of the Fourth International in 1976 — fundamentally the acquisition of a real international center and leadership. Secondly, in relation to the international conference itself, we have defended resolutely the openness of the conference and the necessity to transform its work into an internationalist workers forum clarifying the programmatic and practical bases of a step forward in the building of the Fourth International. If our position gains in influence, it will mean that the unprincipled regroupments between centers claiming Trotskyism that literally marked the last period (roughly from the early seventies to the eighties) will not be repeated. And this will mean that every new step forward in the construction of the Fourth International will represent a blow against the corruption and betrayals of Stalinism and reformism.

Our approach will be directly translated into form as regards *Truth*. With this issue we will open up a forum of different opinions, of polemics, of reports and letters concerning the preparation of the international conference. Preserving the emphasis we have given to our objective of rebuilding the US section of the Fourth International with a Trotskyist Congress this new forum will mark a distinct change as well. Given that the international conference is now more of an actuality, this also means that greater emphasis must be given to opening up and making accessible to workers and youth our relations with other tendencies. Thus, for

example, we have proposed to the coordinating committee elected by the recent conference in California, a series of three regional meetings in California, the midwest, and the east coast, to continue the debate begun at the conference. The Revolutionary Workers League has already agreed to sponsor with us a meeting in Detroit in May.

To sum up, we are facing a period which by any definition will be extremely important and definitely very interesting to all workers and militants who are concerned with building the Fourth International. The international conference called for by the WRP, to which our international has responded with a definite yes, now represents the primary battleground for us, and for you, our supporters. Gear up comrades, in our movement every contribution counts!

# FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN 1987 FOR THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The Workers Revolutionary Party proposes to all Trotskyists an international conference to discuss the responsibilities of Trotskyist organisations in resolving the continuing crisis of the Fourth International. The resolution of the crisis is an inescapable necessity and responsibility in the face of the decisive changes which have begun in the relationship of class forces on the world arena, changes embracing the political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states as well as the struggles of the working class and oppressed masses against imperialism in the advanced capitalist countries and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

It is these great changes which have both exposed clearly the nature of the crisis in the Fourth International *and* created the conditions for overcoming that same crisis.

The WRP does not in any way consider itself to be in any 'privileged' position in initiating the preparation of the International Conference. We make this call as the result of joint work and discussion with Trotskyists in a number of countries. In 1985 and 1986 the WRP experienced the practical and theoretical results of political degeneration and revisionism in the Fourth International in an extreme form. In rejecting the opportunist politics of Healy, Banda and the North fragment of the old International Committee, the WRP has been compelled to recognise the necessity of a return to fundamentals, to the continuity of the struggle of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, Bolshevism, the October Revolution, the Left Opposition, and the founding of the Fourth International. The explosion in the WRP was part of the historical crisis of working-class revolutionary leadership of the Fourth International. The crisis can be overcome only in that framework.

But the same mighty class forces which lay behind the explosion in the WRP dominate the development of all those organisations deriving from the Fourth International. The challenge is to overcome the isolation of the Trotskyist movement from the working class, as the working class now comes directly into conflict with the capitalist state, and with the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR and the deformed workers' states. As it enters this stage of the world revolution, with the new generation of youth to the fore in both the capitalist countries and the degenerated and deformed workers' states, the working class is forced to tackle the question of breaking from its treacherous reformist and Stalinist leaderships. Already these leaderships are undergoing profound crises and splits. Either they are successfully broken in these new and favourable conditions or they will once again viciously betray.

The split in the WRP concerned the most profound abuse of party members, the abandonment of political principles even to the point of betrayal, and the degeneration of Marxist 'theory' into a crude pragmatic apology for these practices. What became clear in a year of internal struggle on these principled questions was that the shell containing the internal corrosion and corruption of the WRP and the International Committee had been shattered totally by the demands of the miners' strike of 1984-1985, the demands of the working class for revolutionary leadership as a new phase of the world revolution found its expression in Britain.

This is an indispensable lesson. The miners, in their unprecedented year-long strike, confronted directly the capitalist state. They were forced to return to work by the betrayals of the reformist bureaucracy and the Stalinists. Trade unionism had clearly reached its utmost limits. Revolutionary tasks were posed. Those who characterise the miners' strike as a defeat for the working class, one of many such defeats, are wrong. The WRP was forced, in the struggle against Healy, Banda and North, to recognise that this upsurge of the working class in a situation with no way out except proletarian revolution and the successful struggle for revolutionary leadership, was the root of the WRP crisis; and that only by a revolutionary turn to these class forces, international forces, could our theory and practice be developed to overcome the crisis exposed by the struggle of the working class. This meant breaking with every vestige of 'national Trotskyism' and turning to the struggle to resolve the crisis of the Fourth International, at the level of international experience, past and present.

This dialectic is essentially international. We can find the resources to overcome the crisis only at the international level, through a cadre trained at the level of the struggle of *all* the forces now coming forward from fifty years of experience of the fight to build the Fourth International, against the Stalinist attempt to exterminate it and against the revisionist capitulations to that same Stalinism, capitulations which have always sought to liquidate the Fourth International.

In the advanced capitalist countries, the strike movement in France is a powerful continuation of the struggle taken up by the British miners. As soon as the French railway workers strike, they provoke a government crisis and a crisis for the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracy. The mass student demonstrations had already threatened the government, forced a retreat, and heralded a series of mass struggles in which the question of revolutionary leadership is the central one.

But these lightning flashes of revolutionary struggle come together with the new upsurge of the political revolution in Poland, the USSR, China and all countries in which the state power of the working class has been usurped by the Stalinist bureaucracy. There too it is the task of constructing an alternative revolutionary leadership to the Stalinists which predominates.

The workers of South Africa are facing the same necessity of the building of revolutionary proletarian leadership and breaking from the treacherous Stalinist and petty-bourgeois leaderships. In all Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, India and all south-east Asia, the limits of purely 'national' struggles for independence, balancing between imperialism and the reactionary Soviet bureaucracy, have now become thoroughly exposed in bitter experience.

It is because the working class is, in these struggles, at the first stage of a new rise of the world revolution, that the WRP crisis must now take its place as part of the struggle to overcome the long-drawn-out crisis of the Fourth International. The working class, characterised by revisionists and centrists as being quiescent or in retreat, is in fact out in front of the conscious struggle to rebuild the Fourth International. This poses urgently to all Trotskyists the historic responsibility of overcoming the crisis of the Fourth International. This requires an intensive struggle to clarify the present tasks of Trotskyism, the nature of the objective situation, and the balance-sheet of our past experiences in the material context of the international class struggle in its development. This is the basis of the necessary development of the theoretical positions of our movement. We propose an International Conference as a necessary step in that process, from which the urgent task of re-organisation of the Fourth International can go forward on a principled foundation. This is the process which was begun by the International Committee in 1953.

We consider that the political fight for this re-organisation starts from the following principles, and these we will fight to defend and develop before and during the Conference.

1. The resolutions and theses of the first four Congresses of the Third (Communist) International in all its essential strategic principles, in relation to: imperialism, the bourgeois state, democracy and reformism; problems of the taking of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat; the leading role of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry and struggles of the oppressed masses; soviets; work in trade unions; parliamentarism; united front policy.

2. The Transitional Programme and the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, based on the development of Bolshevik organisation and programme, made necessary by the 'definitive passage of Stalinism to the side of the bourgeois order.' We reaffirm on this basis the necessity of building the Fourth International, in opposition to all those who pronounce the Fourth International dead and proclaim the need for a 'Fifth' or 'new' International. The continuity of the Fourth International has been a contradictory process, but it consists in the struggle for the continuity of Bolshevism against Stalinism, and against the liquidationist revisionism which has transmitted this Stalinist pressure into the Trotskyist movement. The same struggle has been necessary against liquidationism into social-democracy and petty-bourgeois national movements. Social-democracy has only retained any force in the working class movement because of the destruction of the Communist International by Stalinism.

3. The theory of permanent revolution, with the hegemony of the proletariat as its essential content. This means the leadership of the working class in the revolution in countries where revolutionary-democratic tasks are posed, as well as in the advanced capitalist countries and the degenerated and deformed workers' states. It means that the democratic revolution 'grows over' into the socialist revolution under proletarian leadership. It means the recognition that the taking of working-class power in any country is the basis of a social formation which is transitional to socialism, a transition which requires the victory of the socialist revolution in a number of advanced capitalist countries. It means leadership of the working class by Bolshevik-type parties. It means rejection of revisionist theories which give priority to the

national revolutionary struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, or which have a perspective of different 'epicentres' of the world revolution — 'sectors' of the world revolution with separate programmes.

4. Defence of the conquests of the 1917 October revolution. Defence of the USSR and defence of the states of Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, etc., against imperialism and capitalist restoration. Definition of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state and of the Eastern European states, China and Vietnam as deformed workers' states. (The WRP's position on Cuba to be urgently reviewed). These states are not identified in their class nature with the Stalinist bureaucracy. This bureaucracy has no 'dual nature' but is parasitic on the workers' state and is 'counter-revolutionary through and through.'

Its international policy, executed through the Stalinist parties of the world as well as through the bureaucracy's state agencies, betrays the proletarian revolution, perpetuates the imperialist encirclement, and thus endangers the conquests of October. Against this, defence of the gains of October coincides directly with the world socialist revolution, a necessity flowing from the international nature of today's economy and the struggles of the oppressed masses all over the world. From this derives the necessity of the Fourth International. Only the Fourth International, building on the struggle to continue and develop Bolshevism against the betrayals of Stalinism and its 'socialism in one country', can carry forward this task. The defeat of imperialism requires a strategy and tactics of breaking the working class from the existing Stalinist and reformist leaderships, uniting it on the programme developed through a century of struggle for Marxism as the theory and practice of the proletarian revolution. That can not be carried out by spontaneously and empirically developing leaderships.

The development of the degenerated and deformed workers' states, their bureaucracies and their national policies — even leading to war between them — and the increasing pressure of imperialism upon them, have already given abundant proof of the falseness of the Stalinist illusions that imperialism would be driven into a corner and collapse, through the steady growth of strength of 'socialist' states within their own borders, accompanied by the growth of 'progressive forces'.

5. Defence of all national-liberation movements and of states which have won their independence from imperialism, against the attacks of imperialism, despite the fundamental political differences between Trotskyism and all bourgeois national and petty-bourgeois national movements. In particular, defence of those under direct military attack or threat of military intervention from imperialism (Nicaragua, Cuba, Libya, Mozambique, Angola, etc.). At the same time, rejection of any formulas which imply a leadership role for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces, or equality between them and the working class in the tradition of Stalin's 'bloc of four classes', as a liquidation of the political independence and hegemony of the working class. Rejection of any permanent or strategic alliances with bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces. This does not exclude joint actions against imperialism, which are essential.

6. The struggle for the defeat of Stalinism and the bureaucracy, and the rejection of all forms of capitulation to and compromise with Stalinism, and the necessity for political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states. Recognition of the Polish struggles of 1980-81 as the renewal of the struggle for the political revolution, which reached high points in East Germany (1953), Hungary and Poland (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). Defence of the revolutionary spontaneity of the Polish working class and of Solidarity, which it produced. Against all conceptions such as 'national unity' (the Walesa leadership), 'self-management' (Mandel), social-democracy (Lambert) which mean reconciling the working class to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

7. Reaffirmation of the Transitional Programme's demand for 'workers' and peasants' government.' The essence of this demand is to elaborate it as part of a programme of struggle which enables the proletariat to break with the treacherous reformist and Stalinist leaderships in the course of the preparation of the struggle for state power. Only in this sense does the demand addressed to these leaderships: break with the bourgeoisie! have a revolutionary content.

8. The struggle to build revolutionary parties of the working class, sections of the Fourth International, in every country, organised on the principles of democratic centralism, and against all theories that the responsibility of revolutionary leadership passes to other, petty-bourgeois or Stalinist, forces or to some 'transitional' form of working-class leadership. Democratic centralism is opposed to all forms of bureaucratic centralisation of the apparatus against the rank and file.

9. Methods of political struggle proved in the experience of the working class, against petty-bourgeois substitutes such as guerrilla-ism, individual terrorism, and 'single-issue' politics. We defend those who fight the bourgeoisie with such methods, but we reject these methods.

10. Condemnation of the method, inherited from Stalinism, of slanders, violence and frame-ups designed to silence and drive out political opponents. In particular, condemnation of the slanders used against M. Varga (B. Nagy), J. Hansen, G. Novack, T. Wohlforth, N. Fields and R. Napuri.

The WRP calls upon all Trotskyist organisations to participate in a Conference on this basis later in 1987, at a date to be agreed. To this end, an international discussion bulletin and a series of meetings will be established, for the presentation and discussion of theses, resolutions and discussion materials.

The WRP calls upon all organisations who agree with this call to participate jointly with us in a committee to prepare the Conference itself, its agenda and its arrangements, and to organise the pre-conference discussion and distribution of documents. This preparatory committee will produce documents for the Conference (without in any way excluding presentation of other documents) and will organise as a matter of urgency the raising of the necessary financial resources.

We ask all such organisations to contact us immediately through:

The Conference Secretary, Workers Revolutionary Party, PO Box No. 735, London SW9, 7QS.

Comrades,

The International Executive Committee of our movement, and all of the sections (PORE, LOR of France, TO of the USA, Bolivian and Antilles Committees of the IVth International), have taken note of and discussed the Call for an International Conference that you have published in "Workers Press".

The International Secretariat has been mandated to contact you right away, and to let you know that we agree to participate in such a Conference through a delegation of the IS and our sections, according to the procedures established by the Preparation Committee of the Conference, in which of course, we would also like to take part.

Our Executive Committee considers as very positive for opening the preparatory discussions the fact that the WRP has synthesized in its Call all of the positions which it intends to defend in the course of such a Conference. We also would like to prepare for you in the shortest possible time a first contribution on our part, similarly under the form of short theses, summarizing the principled bases, advanced by our recent Xth Congress, on which we believe a regroupment of the revolutionary vanguard is possible, with a view to realizing an important step forward in the building of the Fourth International. (To this end, we would like to make available to you a certain number of copies of all of the resolutions of our Xth Congress, which you know about already, for the information of other organizations desiring to integrate themselves into the Preparation Committee of the Conference).

We think that the success of this Conference among the international workers vanguard will depend on its openness, on the greatest possible participation of currents and organizations that claim Trotskyism without exclusion of anyone, such as the United Secretariat of Mandel, the "IVth International-International Center of Rebuilding" of Lambert, etc. as well as national tendencies or groups desiring to participate in the discussion on the problems of the crisis and on the building of the IVth International. We believe that such a Conference can as well become a great internationalist workers forum attracting the attention of many advanced workers in all the countries, opening an important debate in their ranks and facilitating, at the present moment, the practical collaboration of their organizations in the struggle of the classes against imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. In this sense, in the framework of the preparation of the Conference and in order to root it to the largest extent among the workers, we would like to propose to the Preparation Committee a certain number of international campaigns of mobilization and of actions that could be led jointly by the organizations adhering to it, and which could attract others, concerning the defense of the peoples oppressed by imperialism, the struggle for the rights of the Polish workers and workers of other countries subjected to the bureaucracy, etc.

At the same time, we think that one of the most important conclusions of the Conference can be the constitution of an international Tribunal, having the authority of the organizations who vote for this Tribunal, in front of which all of the cases of the utilization of slanders against different groups and leaderships could be denounced, having been an obstacle to free discussion and the respect of workers democracy.

Without a doubt, we will have the occasion to take up all of the details of these questions, and others as well, in the course of the preparatory work of the Conference.

Finally comrades, we send you our fraternal Trotskyist greetings.

For the International Secretariat of the IVth International

G rard LAFFONT

Paris, February 9, 1987.





## SWP Countersuit Against Alan Gelfand

By DAVID MARK

In the March 3 edition of the *Bulletin*, newspaper of the Workers League, it is announced that lawyers for the Socialist Workers Party have filed a motion in federal court that Alan Gelfand make an interim payment of \$101,000 to the SWP. The Trotskyist Organization wants to state up front that the Gelfand trial, including the countersuit of the SWP, places both organizations — and the workers movement at large — in a very dangerous position. It is necessary to submit all claims for damages, and all the aspects of the slander against the SWP to an International Workers Tribunal. Furthermore, all organizations claiming Trotskyism should begin a campaign against the red hunting Judge Pfeitzer.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Gelfand case, it is no honor to have to recount the details. Alan Gelfand, who claims that he was expelled unjustly by the SWP when he argued in the party that its leadership was guided by government agents, filed a suit in federal court in July of 1979 against the SWP. Politically speaking, the responsibility for the court suit lies entirely with the Workers League. The suit was brought before a judge, Mariana R. Pfeelzer, who was notorious for authorizing political surveillance of left organizations when she was president of the Los Angeles police commission. Naturally, the government has merely used the case to drag the name of Trotskyism through the mud (both the WL and the SWP have historical ties to the Trotskyist movement) and further its own aims in the area of domestic spying. The case has yet to reach a final judgement, but the judge has already ruled that Gelfand has failed to prove his case.

At the time that the lawsuit was first filed, our organization defended the SWP against the slanders and the court suit, and clearly identified the allegations of Gelfand and the whole campaign of "Security and the Fourth International", as representing a method of slander completely unacceptable for any organization claiming to represent the working class. It is a question of basic principles —

the Fourth International does not condone either the method of slander (borrowed from Stalinism and capitalist class) nor, still worse, the use of the bourgeois courts by a workers organization to attack another. The precedent which could be set by this case, which revolutionaries have always fought, is the right of the government to determine the membership of a workers organizations.

The Gelfand trial opens up all workers organizations to attack by the government. This is the real issue which the Workers League, despite mountains of slanderous garbage concerning its allegations, has yet to answer!

Utilizing the lawyers approach that has characterized "Security and the Fourth International", David North writing in response to the SWP's motion for damages says, "The Epstein affidavit (SWP lawyer — Truth) exposes the fact that while the SWP is publicly attempting to portray the Gelfand case as an attack on democratic rights, its fight against Gelfand in the courts is being conducting (sic) entirely along anticommunist and right-wing lines."

This rather lame accusation, against an organization that one has charged is controlled by the police, shows that entirely due to its own policy it is now the Workers League itself that is in danger of being attacked by the court. This is the iron logic of the class struggle, having resorted to methods alien to workers democracy, methods borrowed from Stalinism and the bourgeois courts, the Workers League is now itself trapped in the snare of bourgeois "justice".

Once again, the Workers League has been put in this position entirely due to the policy that was initiated by Healy, and that now, is being continued by North and the Workers League. Clinging to a last straw, North now asserts that the SWP's motion for damages should be opposed in order to defend democratic rights. The article by North goes on to quote a motion filed by Gelfand's lawyers in 1983 that if the SWP was "able to obtain fees simply

upon a showing of subjective ill will by the plaintiff...the bringing of meritorious but not automatically victorious civil rights cases would be substantially chilled."

Gelfand (and North) argue, defend the right of the federal government to determine the membership of a working class political organization, or else the precedent of law in civil rights cases may be changed. This is indeed both a "right wing" and an "anti communist" argument.

North then says, "the actions taken by the SWP since the trial could only be taken by police agents who are deliberately seeking to undermine democratic rights through legal actions which have far-ranging implications."

Wrong again. What would the Stalinist CP/USA do if it were taken to court by another workers organization? What would an American trade union do in such a situation (and has done in fact)? Or how about a liberal civil rights organizations such as the NAACP? Are they too "police agents"?

How naive those who supported the Gelfand case, those who advanced it as a central focus of the Workers League activity for more than eight years must be! Dear comrades, the SWP's countersuit is not the work of police agents, it is the predictable response of a workers organization thoroughly permeated by opportunism.

Let us be clear then — what North would have us do is to defend the WL and Gelfand's court suit, an unprecedented appeal for the federal government to intervene in a dispute between workers organizations, because it evoked a typically opportunist response from the Socialist Workers Party. That we most certainly will not do! And the fact is, the Workers League has not won the support of one single organization in the working class movement for the Gelfand case, much less in the civil rights movement. To the contrary, the Gelfand case has only isolated the WL, and now, it has placed it in serious danger.

When the Trotskyist Organization initially defended the SWP against the Gelfand case, we said, "In the Gelfand case...it is certainly

necessary (for the SWP — Truth) to take defensive measures in court. But it is also, and most importantly, necessary to say: *We will not comply with the hanging judge Pfeelzer!*" And we will not therefore, today, support the motion of the SWP against the Workers League!

But it was not "Security and the Fourth International" that prompted us to make this admonition to the SWP in March of 1983 (*Truth #161*) more than four years ago, no, it was simply Marxism. A principled program and method that the Workers League has abandoned in its "theory" of police agents.