

# THE **GUARDIAN** **SUSTAINER**

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**1977**

monthly  
publication for  
members of the  
Guardian  
Sustainer  
program

**FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR:**

## **Guardian will make it—with your help**

**BY JACK A. SMITH**

These lines are being written late in the evening that we're publishing Vol. 30, No. 1 of the Guardian.

So perhaps because it's a birthday and because just about everyone who reads this newsletter is a close friend of the Guardian I'm going to be as frank as I can.

To begin with, the Guardian has so many irons in the fire these days in its battle for survival and growth that I have no doubt we're going to overcome our present problems as we have those of the past. We must have a half-dozen big projects going plus the usual task of getting out the paper under difficult conditions.

But the toll is enormous on the people directly involved—our rather small staff. Pausing to look around, I see "X", who when the evening is over will have been standing for 16 hours over the art room light table; or "Y" who just left after pounding out 17 pages of copy on deadline, so groggy I wonder if she'll be able to get home okay; or "Z" who spent the day keypunching cards, stuffing envelopes, running errands and now reading proofs till midnight, virtually walking around in his sleep.

And this following a 16-hour workday yesterday and 10 hours the day before. Tomorrow there's our study group after work. Things will be more rational on Friday but Saturday people who don't have research or stories to do will be out distributing leaflets for the Oct. 21 meeting for Wilfred Burchett. I hope they get some rest Sunday and have fun, but household chores or family responsibilities have to be taken care of too. Then it begins all over again.

Overwork and underpay are the natural conditions of things here. And these days, with so many projects afoot, the days seem longer and pay shorter than ever.

### **GOOD REPUTATION**

You've got to believe in the Guardian to work for it. We know, with all our shortcomings, contradictions and mistakes, we're putting out the best left weekly in the country in terms of journalism and independent, revolutionary, Marxist politics. We know we've got a good reputation abroad with the revolutionary liberation movements

who truly depend on us to tell their story to the American people and with some socialist countries who really respect us. We know that many of our 20,000 subscribers and just about all our Sustainers think the paper is tops. We also know that if the paper has reached Volume 30 it's going to reach 40 and just go on publishing until victory.

I repeat: we know this, without the slightest doubt. This knowledge is like a shot in the arm, even during the longest worknights or when the paper's down to the last few dollars in its bank account. Whenever we're in trouble we work harder and come up with projects—and this pulls us out. In general, after a slow start on some of them, our various programs for survival and growth are catching hold. And we sure seem to be working harder than ever.

### **ADVERSITY EQUALS GROWTH**

This combination, plus more help from those of you who have help to give, will get us through difficult times. In fact, during the last decade that the paper has been under cooperative ownership, the Guardian has always grown and expanded as a result of adversity. During this period we've been through times that make the present difficulties seem like a Golden Age. Yet the paper has doubled in size and has increased

its paid circulation.

We've never done it alone, of course. There have always been loyal readers who worked along with us. Sustainers are among our most loyal readers. We need you to work more closely with us now if you can. Our survival and growth programs are good ones. What's required is an extra push from you because we're a handful and you are many.

If you believe in the paper as we do, get behind those programs. Support us in building circulation, Clubs, Guardian news bureaus, our prisoner sub campaign, our typesetting and Marketplace efforts and Burchett's tour. Volunteer some time to the paper if you're in the New York area. Bring people to our meetings. Convince a friend to subscribe. Send news and clippings we should see from your local paper. Help out our bureau and Club people. Donate money if you have any or just write some words of encouragement if you don't.

Confronted by adversity, the Guardian is about to advance, as usual. We're convinced that in the next stage the paper will not only become better and more widely read but its independent, revolutionary Marxist political influence will grow along with it.

Look around. What's out there? Get behind our Guardian, unite and work more closely with us and let's move forward!

## **Survival programs make advances**

**By WILLIAM RYAN**

Good news. Our first Guardian Clubs have been established.

In addition, our mass circulation mailing has been sent out, the Christmas Marketplace will soon be completed, the Guardian Calendar is on its way to the printer, Wilfred Burchett is due to arrive any day for his speaking tour and our Sustainer campaign is picking up motion.

In other words, the great flurry of activity that we reported in last month's newsletter continues—and on top of this we're still putting out an excellent newspaper every week.

Here's a more detailed report on the various projects.

•**Clubs.** Executive editor Irwin Silber has just returned from a highly successful trip to

Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, where he met with a number of friends to help organize the Guardian Clubs. The first two Clubs, in Chicago and the Bay Area, are now officially in operation. Three more—New York, Boston and Los Angeles—will be started soon.

The newly established Clubs are now developing their political unity and formulating plans for theoretical and practical activities of the next several months.

Since the Sept. 7 Guardian report on the Clubs we have had a steady stream of applications for membership and expressions of interest from around the country. If you are interested in joining a Guardian Club, it's still not too late to apply.

*(Continued on page 2)*

FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

## *Guardian Clubs and the 'subjective factor'*

By IRWIN SILBER

"Human beings make their own history," writes Karl Marx, "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." (The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.)

Many people, upon reading the above, will simply accept it as a readily self-evident piece of common sense. As it is. But there are implications in this profoundly dialectical thought which can help illuminate many of the political problems presently confronting our movement.

For instance, it will be readily apparent that most ultra-"leftists" and dogmatists pay little or no attention to the latter part of this statement. Anarchism, the philosophical godfather of most forms of ultra-"leftism," refuses to deal with the idea that history cannot simply be made just as we please. If there is one mistake traditionally made by ultra-"leftists" it is that of substituting their own consciousness for that of the masses. In this sense, oddly enough, anarchism which claims to be the "ultimate" in democracy is actually antidemocratic.

Dogmatism does not pay careful attention to "circumstances directly encountered." It thinks these are unimportant and that reality can be understood simply by applying previously developed theories or mechanically applying the experiences of one situation (or country) to another.

Dogmatism and ultra-"leftism" are thus expressions of bourgeois idealism—the very opposite of historical materialism. Ultra-"leftists" are not more "militant" than anyone else, although sometimes it appears that way. In essence, they represent the outlook of the petty bourgeoisie, not the workers, and their super-"militancy" is nothing more than petty bourgeois impatience and individualism coming to the fore.

Traditionally, the statement by Marx quoted above is cited in the struggle against dogmatism. All well and good, but not enough. What is sometimes neglected or overlooked by many Marxists is the first part of the statement—"Human beings make their own history." For if the methodology of Marxism is essentialized in the emphasis on understanding objective conditions, the revolutionary essence of Marxism is based on the first concept, or what Lenin later was to call "the subjective factor."

Let's put it another way. Some people think there is an inexorable evolution of history, largely conditioned by the development of economic conditions. Basing themselves on this view, they see their task as one of affecting the economic conditions of society. In practice, this is known as the "productive forces" view of history—and it 2—*Guardian Sustainer*, October 1977

leads to passivity and revisionism.

Opposed to this is the view that history develops as the result of class struggle and that nothing will change of its own volition. A new class cannot simply inherit society by virtue of its superior set of productive relations. It must struggle against and overthrow the existing ruling class—a process that takes conscious will, organization and revolutionary violence.

What does all this have to do with the immediate political questions facing our movement, the Guardian and our Sustainers?

Well, the Guardian itself is an expression of the "subjective factor." Those of us who produce the Guardian—along with all those who actively support it—believe that the publication and distribution of this newspaper can affect the course of events. Knowledge and theoretical outlook, we are saying each week with the publication of the Guardian, are indispensable companions of political action.

The belief in the "subjective factor" also underlies the plan to create a national network of Guardian Clubs. This newspaper needs a body of people who are devoted to building the Guardian, expanding its influence, supporting it and promoting its general political line. It will be readily obvious that a network of Guardian Clubs can make an immeasurable contribution in that area.

But Guardian Clubs have an even broader role to play. Looking at the actual "circumstances directly encountered," we find that our movement suffers from many severe weaknesses—among them a continuing underdevelopment in the realm of theory (a historic problem for the U.S. left) and, at the

present, a high degree of localism and small circle mentality. There are other problems as well, but we believe these are among the most important. These are roadblocks which continue to stand in the way of our solving even more fundamental problems, such as the consolidation of a revolutionary political line, the creation of a new communist party and the fusion of communist ideology with the spontaneous movements of the workers and the nationally oppressed and the unity of the multinational working class based on the struggle against racism and national chauvinism.

We see Guardian Clubs as a step in the direction of helping the movement to resolve these questions. In particular, they can help train a body of cadre who, working from a common perspective, will be able to develop the organizational and political unity our movement so desperately needs. In addition, a network of Guardian Clubs can help instill a sense of national (as opposed to local) identity to our movement and—given the particular history of the Guardian over recent years—strengthen its internationalist perspective.

Guardian Clubs represent an attempt to employ the "subjective factor," to act upon "circumstances directly encountered" and do something about them. We cannot wait passively for circumstances to change on their own.

At the least we will have taken steps to preserve and expand this newspaper—perhaps the most valuable propaganda asset our movement presently possesses. If Guardian Clubs did no more, they would be worth the effort. But if they succeed, Guardian Clubs will inevitably do more—how much exactly no one can say for sure.

## Survival campaigns advancing

(Continued from page 1)

•**Burchett tour.** Wilfred Burchett's first North American speaking tour, sponsored by the Guardian, is shaping up to be a whirlwind of activity, including large public meetings, university speaking engagements and fund-raising parties. We've just extended Burchett's stay in the U.S. through mid-December, so we are still filling in scheduling details. The tour will begin with a large public meeting in New York City Oct. 21 to be followed by similar events in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Boston, with various activities in cities in between. We hope that Sustainers in those areas will get a chance to hear and meet Burchett at the public speeches and various fund-raising gatherings. Call us for more information.

•**Circulation.** Our fall circulation campaign

is now well underway. We just mailed tens of thousands of promotional letters to potential new readers, with many more scheduled to be sent soon. We've printed up thousands of Guardian posters to be put up by supporters across the country, and are producing various other promotional pieces.

The most important aspect of our circulation drive is building a network of local circulation agents around the country. The Guardian Clubs will be at the center of that effort but others will be involved as well. In many cities we are starting to bring Sustainers and other Guardian supporters together to discuss Guardian circulation work. A good number of Sustainers have returned the blue cards sent out with last month's newsletter, expressing their willingness to take on various tasks as part of our drive—subscription sales, selling a



*Korean children welcome Frances Beal to Pyongyang Children's Palace.*

## Beal attends 'juche' seminar

By FRANCES M. BEAL

My recent visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) made it clear how little our movement here understands the many accomplishments of the Korean people.

I was invited to Pyongyang to attend the International Seminar on the Juche Idea Sept. 14-18. The only U.S. delegate, I was chosen because of my position as general manager of the Guardian and chairperson of the U.S. Juche Study Group.

The meeting is testimony to the ever-increasing interest in juche, the ideological and theoretical system developed by President Kim Il Sung as the principal guide to the Korean revolution. (Juche can be roughly translated as self-reliance, although the English term doesn't convey the depth and many aspects of juche.)

bundle of Guardians each week, opening commercial outlets, posting promotional material, distributing the Guardian at events and meeting with others interested in circulation work. Others are still needed so let us hear from you.

In addition, we hope that all Sustainers and other readers will take seriously the "each one reach one" slogan and convince at least one person to subscribe to the Guardian. One of the best vehicles for this is the Sustainers' free 6-week trial subscription. Help us out by following up after six weeks and encouraging subscription renewals.

•**Sustainers.** The other big campaign underway is our drive for 150 new Sustainers. After a slow start this is beginning to pick up steam. Experience with previous successful Sustainer drives told us in the first few weeks in the campaign that we needed to impress upon our readers the urgency of our situation. Because the Guardian has not cut back in the face of the

The 190 delegates from over 80 countries represented official government delegations, political parties and social organizations from all over the world. There was a predominance of third world participants with a heavy concentration from Africa—an added indication that the continent is the revolutionary storm center in the worldwide struggle against imperialism.

During the course of the proceedings we visited a number of schools, factories, cultural institutions, social organizations and cooperative farms. Everywhere I went, I witnessed firsthand the profound effects of the juche outlook on the lives of the Korean people. (A series of articles on the Korean revolutionary process will be appearing in the Guardian.)

We witnessed the fruits of this perspective: the tremendous advances made in

crisis—and we don't intend to unless pushed to the wall—but has continued to improve and even launched the ambitious programs discussed above, many readers don't comprehend the necessity of at least 150 new Sustainers to keep our newspaper publishing. Our response has been a frank series of ads which is now getting that message across. You can help us in this most crucial drive by asking your friends who read the Guardian to become Sustainers.

•**Marketplace.** Don't overlook the Guardian Marketplace when you do your holiday shopping this year. Our catalog is now in preparation and will appear at the end of this month.

We'll keep you informed as all of these programs progress, along with some others in the works. So far, the indications are that these efforts will succeed in preventing financial difficulties from forcing us to retreat, and will help us to improve the paper and increase its influence.

agriculture and industry; free medical care and education; dignified employment for each citizen; an absence of poverty and humiliation, and much more.

The most impressive thing about Korean society is the concentration on the subjective factor in the process of development. The juche perspective developed by President Kim places people at the center of all things. People are independent beings, responsible for their own destiny. Objective limitations can be overcome by people, but in order to do this, they must have a high ideological, technical and cultural level. Of these three, the ideological is the most important.

It is also understandable why so much attention is given to education and to the great care and resources devoted to children. In the DPRK children are kings and queens. Everything is done to see that they lead happy, healthy lives; that they grow up to be worthy inheritors of the gains made by the revolution, and that they have the ideological and intellectual capacity to carry on the revolutionary process.

I visited the Children's Palace in Pyongyang and was warmly greeted by hundreds of beautiful children at the entrance. Children were engaged in after-school activities that ranged from art, music and dance to biology experiments. A highlight of this visit was a stop at the military training room where class members were learning to dismantle and put back together rifles and to shoot.

As the U.S. representative I was one of five people chosen to speak at a rally organized by the organizing committee of the Seminar in Support of Korean Reunification at which 20,000 people participated. The presentation condemned U.S. policy in South Korea and called for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and weapons.

### GUARDIAN WELL KNOWN

I was introduced as a representative of the Guardian with a 10-minute presentation speaking highly of the Guardian, praising the paper for its important contributions in supporting not only the struggle of the Korean people, but people the world over who are fighting for national liberation and socialism.

It was quite clear that the Guardian is held in very high esteem and that the paper is well known to the Korean people. Articles from the Guardian are often translated and reprinted in the media there and the struggles of the U.S. people for social and economic justice are well known.

In spite of the tremendous damage and brutal aggression of the U.S. imperialists and the fact that the U.S. government is the main obstacle to the reunification of the country, even the smallest child has no confusion between the U.S. people and the U.S. government.

One last point. A number of delegates, myself included, were fortunate to meet President Kim Il Sung. It was an exciting moment and a great honor.

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# Letters from our Sustainers

This spot in The Guardian Sustainer will be reserved for your letters every month. Try to keep them as brief as possible. All letters will be printed with the author's initials but you must send in the communication with your full name.

## A WORLD IN MOTION

P.J., San Francisco: Something's afoot in the world communist movement and anything the Guardian could do to help explain it would be much appreciated.

The changing alliances are such that it's unclear who will be aligning with whom a year from now and why. The 'Eurocommunists' are splitting from the Soviet Union, China's going off on its seemingly solitary path in terms of what used to be called the socialist camp, Albania has its views, it's unclear what position the various nonaligned countries will take depending on the issue, superpower contention is sharpening and so are recession-exacerbated contradictions among capitalist countries. Then add to this the various liberation movements and how their increasing success will affect world forces. What gives?

## NEW SUSTAINER

D.R., Minneapolis: I haven't got much money—waitressing doesn't bring in that much—but I have a feeling you people have even less. I figured out that if I save only 50 cents from each night's work that's enough to pay for my Sustainer. It seems that's the least I can do to help keep the Guardian going and the movement in this country well informed.

## GUARDIAN CLUBS

I.H., Pittsburgh: After reading the most recent details about how the Clubs will operate (Guardian, Sept. 7), the connection between Guardian support and party-building is clearer to me. Especially now that the Clubs are actually getting off the ground, I am excited about the potential contribution of the Clubs to the development of a cohesive, mature Marxist-Leninist movement in the U.S. I'm looking forward to the time when resources are available to get a Club started in Pittsburgh.

## 'EUROCOMMUNISM'—1

A.R., Chicago: I'm very glad the Guardian published the Wilfred Burchett series on 'Eurocommunism.' It had very useful information even though I didn't always agree with his perspective. I thought the

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series by Irwin Silber last spring was much more on the mark.

One thing, however, bothers me. Although I agree that revisionism is self-defeating for the revolution (take a look at Chile), why is it that there are no strong antirevisionist parties in any of the industrialized countries? The workers seem to be following the revisionists. Why?

## 'EUROCOMMUNISM'—2

T.B., New York City: Having abandoned Marxism, the Italian Communist Party cannot lead the Italian proletariat in storming the palace gates. Burchett may be right: these revisionists may be able to do what no communist party can do—sneak in the back door to power and join the club inside. But the best the Italian proletariat may get from this is a hard lesson in the class struggle. So what's behind Burchett's apparent critical support of these traitors who are evidently prepared to do the dirty work of running the country efficiently for the bourgeoisie, no doubt using their mass party to demobilize strikes and protests which may destabilize the "historic compromise"?

## ETHIOPIA

S.T., New York City: I have been avidly reading your articles on the Eritrean liberation struggle, which have not been matched anywhere, to my knowledge. I wholeheartedly agree with your support of the EPLF. I found your coverage of the battle for the Ogaden region less satisfactory, since it did not acknowledge the now-obvious direct Somali invasion of the area.

A larger weakness in your overall reporting on the Horn of Africa is the lack of analysis of recent changes in Ethiopia itself. I have had a hard time arguing with those who claim that the Ethiopian junta is revolutionary and that profound progress is occurring in the country, since the Guardian has not offered an alternative view.

## PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

L.G., St. Louis: I was glad to see that your principles of unity for Guardian Clubs are sufficiently broad, within necessary bounds, to allow participation by those with differing positions on certain questions which our movement has not yet resolved. There is room for disagreement over whether the USSR is capitalist or not, within the framework of opposing Soviet revisionism and hegemonism.

Regarding the national question, Marxist-Leninists holding opposing views on the

existence of a Black nation should be able to work together in one organization if they agree on the need to take up the special demands of oppressed peoples. Our theoretical differences cannot be overlooked, but only by seeking the widest possible unity will we ever begin to resolve them. In the meantime, there is much work that we can and must do.

## THEORY

N.R., San Francisco: Overall, the 10 principles of unity for Guardian Clubs summarize the unity that can and must be achieved for Marxist-Leninists to move forward. However, I disagree that Marxist-Leninist theory is sufficiently advanced in the U.S. for communists to summarize their theoretical tasks as "making Marxist Leninist theory into a material force... by fusing that theory with the already existing spontaneous struggles..."

At this time, our theoretical tasks primarily involve the immense responsibility of providing a Marxist-Leninist theoretical base that in the future can be fused with the working-class movement. This means struggling to develop the concepts of Marx and Lenin... as well as struggling with the present concrete reality to formulate new theoretical conceptions that apply to advanced monopoly capitalism... Without extensive theoretical work we cannot speak of fusing communism and the working-class movement.

## FUSION

R.S., Oakland: The position of "let's found the party now on the basis of correct political line and then implement a program for fusion" seems every bit as mechanical as "the party will spontaneously develop out of the workers' movement" position. Fusion is happening now (though not to the degree it will after the founding of a true communist party) because there are communists active in rank-and-file struggles who are winning over advanced workers. (This is not to deny the importance of communist organization at this time, but that is not the same as a party.)

The [Guardian's] position fails to demarcate itself from dogmatism... You can't separate political line completely from its material base. If the base is a grouping of intellectuals studying theory... then I think we have a situation conducive to dogmatism. However, if the material base is that of communists engaged in the class struggle then I think we have a situation that makes theory accountable to dialectical materialism. It is from this situation that correct political line will be developed that is capable of organically uniting practicing Marxist-Leninists.