

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

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

The F.I.T. was created in the winter of 1984 by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because we opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than half a century. Since our formation we have fought to win the party back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective and for our readmission to the SWP. In addition our members are active in the U.S. class struggle.

At the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International, the appeals of the F.I.T. and other expelled members were upheld, and the congress delegates demanded, by an overwhelming majority, that the SWP readmit those who had been purged. So far the SWP has refused to take any steps to comply with this decision.

"All members of the party must begin to study, completely dispassionately and with utmost honesty, first the essence of the differences and second the course of the dispute in the party. . . . It is necessary to study both the one and the other, unfailingly demanding the most exact, printed documents, open to verification by all sides. Whoever believes things simply on someone else's say-so is a hopeless idiot, to be dismissed with a wave of the hand."

—V.I. Lenin, "The Party Crisis," Jan. 19, 1921.

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FILIPINO MASSES OVERTHREW MARCOS

Statement by International Executive Committee, Fourth International

Fifteen days after dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier took flight from Haiti, Ferdinand Marcos had to flee ignominiously from the Philippines. U.S. helicopters had to come and rescue him, together with his entourage, so that he could escape from the presidential palace, which was surrounded by the insurgent population.

After huge and continual mobilizations, sometimes of a million people, Manila was in fact, and had been for several days, occupied by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. They were determined not to give up before achieving the departure of the man who had thought himself master of the country for twenty years. Growing numbers of soldiers showed no will to break up these mobilizations, and even a readiness to join the crowds themselves.

We owe the overthrow of Marcos in the first place to an extraordinary popular and democratic mobilization. Without this, the moderate opposition would have remained powerless, the White House would not have let its protegee fall, and the officer corps would not have become divided as it did.

For the last few years, growing sectors of U.S. imperialism, of Philippine big business and the middle class, and of the Catholic hierarchy in the country, had sought an orderly transition towards a regime which would more adequately serve their interests. The political instability of the Marcos regime accelerated after the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in August 1983. The system of power established by Marcos under martial law was undermined by a deep economic and social crisis. The pro-imperialist elite in the Philippines was more and more deeply divided. A popular mass movement of workers, urban poor, and peasants came into mounting conflict with the regime. The revolutionary left and the guerrilla forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines --the New People's Army-- experienced rapid growth. In the eyes of imperialism it was vital to reunify the ruling

elite and reform the army officer corps--corrupt and hated by the population--in order to more effectively combat the upsurge in the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle. It was all the more vital because of the key strategical importance of this Southeast Asian archipelago, which houses the two main U.S. bases abroad--Subic Bay and Clark Air base.

This policy was a failure. Marcos rejected any meaningful compromise. The U.S. administration was not able to overcome its internal divisions. The February 7, 1986, elections, which were to finally create the conditions for a restabilization of the regime and the start of an orderly transition, led to a face-to-face confrontation between the Marcos regime and the opposition forces. It was thus in a situation of a major, open political crisis that the departure of Marcos came to be seen--in Washington and Manila--as the only solution.

The overthrow of the dictator is a victory won by the Filipino people. It opens up a new stage of political life there. But the current government will try to deny the Filipino people the fruits of this victory. Around the charismatic personality of Corazon Aquino, new president of the Philippines, there is a bloc of conservative forces that is reflected in the composition of the new government. Won over at the last minute, Juan Ponce Enrile, who was the moving spirit in the martial law policy, is again minister of defense.

Jaime Ongpin, new finance minister, president of the Benguet Mining Corporation, is one of the main spokespersons of the business world. Salvador Laurel--vice president, prime minister, and minister for foreign affairs--was a long-time ally of Marcos and represents UNIDO, a conservative political formation linked to the landowning oligarchy. Many presidential advisors are Jesuit priests, advocates of reform but deeply anticommunist.

As for General Fidel V. Ramos, chief of staff of the armed forces, he

is well known for his links with Washington and the Pentagon. The role of a few personalities known for their defense of human rights can only, in these conditions, be seen as marginal. U.S. imperialism, strengthened by the pro-imperialist character of the new regime and the support of the powerful Catholic hierarchy, will do everything to restabilize its domination over the country.

The democratic and anti-imperialist movement is thus going to have to continue to organize and struggle for its aims. The Philippine army is divided. The policy of President Reagan--which supported Marcos right up to the eleventh hour -- has awakened a deep nationalist feeling in the Philippines against the long-standing colonial power. The population has experienced what its strength is when the masses mobilize. Marginalized during the election period and the weeks which followed the February 7 elections, the popular forces of the left and revolu-

tionaries remain deeply rooted. The economic and social crisis requires a mass struggle independent of the government.

The democratic and anti-imperialist struggle continues. The Fourth International reaffirms its support for the popular, democratic, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary forces in the Philippines. Alongside the Filipino people, we demand the immediate and unconditional release of all the political prisoners--without any exceptions--who have courageously fought against the dictator Marcos; the repeal of all anti-strike laws and decrees; the recognition of independent trade unions; the dismantling of the repressive apparatus and the various landlords' private armies in the countryside; the bringing to justice of those responsible for torture and summary executions; the reestablishment of all democratic freedoms; and the removal of the massive U.S. air and naval bases from the Philippines.

February 28, 1986

SUPPORT DEMANDS OF COURAGEOUS HAITIAN PEOPLE

Statement by International Executive Committee, Fourth International

The Fourth International hails the courageous people of Haiti, who, through their mobilizations over the last months of 1985 and first months of 1986, brought down the hated dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and its gang of murderers, the Tontons Macoutes. The toppling of this U.S.-backed dictatorship -- the second oldest in the Americas--opens for the first time in many decades the opportunity to organize open political and trade union activity by the oppressed and exploited working people of Haiti.

The new military-civilian junta in Haiti, largely handpicked by Duvalier from among his cronies just hours before his flight, is now trying to deprive the Haitian people of this hard-won opening for democratic political organization

and activity. We stand beside the Haitian workers and peasants in their demands that the torturers and murderers of the Duvalier tyranny be brought to justice and punished; that all political prisoners be released; that all political exiles be allowed to return to Haiti immediately; and that an end be put to all police and army attacks on popular demonstrations and meetings.

The massive U.S. military presence in the Caribbean looms as a danger to the gains that the Haitian people have conquered and are now fighting to consolidate and extend.

We demand: No U.S. military intervention in Haiti! No imperialist pressure on Haiti! Imperialist forces out of Haiti!

March 1, 1986

COMBINED CHARACTER OF SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION UPHELD BY FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'S TOP COMMITTEE

Executive Committee Rejects SWP's New Revisionist Policy;
Reiterates Demand for SWP to Readmit Expelled Members

by Steve Bloom

At a meeting held from February 23 to March 2, 1986, the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International discussed a series of important political questions facing the international revolutionary Marxist movement today. Primary among these was one which has begun to play a major role in the debate over theory and program in the United States and in the FI as a whole--the question of the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa and the nature of the revolution which is necessary in that country to guarantee Black equality and independence from imperialist exploitation. The disagreement within the International about whether to maintain our appreciation of the applicability of the theory of permanent revolution, a debate which has been going on since the U.S. Socialist Workers Party leadership openly announced its rejection of that theory in 1981, has now led to widely divergent analyses of the South African revolution.

In August 1985, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes gave a report to the SWP National Committee which proclaimed that the freedom struggle in South Africa could not be considered anything more than a basic struggle for democratic rights--a "democratic revolution"--with the goal of establishing a South African nation state free from white domination. Such a revolution, Barnes declared, would allow for the creation of "modern classes" in South Africa for the first time. Until such a development takes place, he asserted, any talk of "socialist revolution" or the establishment of a "proletarian dictatorship" in South Africa should be dismissed as ultraleft nonsense. (Barnes's report is published in New Internationalist, Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 1985.)

The report adopted by a large majority at the IEC projected a qualitatively different analysis. While it was

agreed that the democratic demands of the anti-apartheid struggle represent the key slogans for mobilizing the non-white masses in South Africa today, the idea that the revolutionary mobilization which is necessary to truly win those rights can be limited to some "democratic" stage was emphatically rejected. The report approved by the IEC explained that especially in South Africa--where there is in fact a large and extremely powerful modern working class--the goals of the democratic struggle will not be won without political power being conquered by that working class, in alliance with all other social layers which have an interest in the overthrow of apartheid.

The construction of a revolutionary working class party which can lead this combined struggle--for basic bourgeois-democratic rights and for the liberation of the proletariat from capitalist oppression--was understood as a central task by the IEC majority. None of the existing organizations in South Africa are able to play the role of such a leadership at the present time, though many different organizations make essential contributions to the anti-apartheid effort.

The approach of Jack Barnes and the U.S. SWP was presented to the IEC in the form of a verbal report upholding the "democratic revolution" viewpoint, although the actual text from New Internationalist itself was not put to a vote. The delegates at the IEC meeting rejected the line of this counterreport by a wide margin. The representatives of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and Socialist Action supported the majority position on this question (Socialist Unity had an observer present but no vote).

In addition to adopting the overall political analysis described above, the IEC pledged itself to a major campaign

by all sections of the FI to organize active solidarity with the South African freedom struggle. This will include participations in campaigns for divestment and sanctions, and active solidarity with COSATU--the South African trade union federation formed a few months ago.

ORGANIZATIONAL SITUATION IN THE U.S.A.

Of special importance to Fourth Internationalists in the United States, the IEC once again took up the organizational problems stemming from the political purge of the Socialist Workers Party. From 1982 to 1984 the Barnes leadership of the party expelled all known or suspected opponents of its proposed changes in the party's traditional theory and program. This purge has led to the formation of three organizations made up of individuals who were its victims--the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.), Socialist Action (SA), and Socialist Unity (SU).

At the time of the world congress of the FI in January 1985, the expelled members (then organized in only two groups, F.I.T. and SA) were recognized as being in full fraternal solidarity with the International (Fourth Internationalists in the United States are prohibited from joining the FI due to reactionary legislation) in the same status as those who remained members of the SWP. The congress delegates agreed that the expulsions from the party had been unjust and undemocratic, and demanded by an overwhelming vote that those who had been expelled be readmitted. Failing this, it was agreed, fraternal relations would be maintained by the United Secretariat with both F.I.T. and SA.

Since that time, the SWP has repeatedly refused to implement the motion adopted by the world congress, and this IEC was faced with a decision about how to respond to such a flagrant disregard for the opinion of the highest body of the Fourth International. A motion was adopted (see box) which strongly condemned the SWP's inaction, and called on it once again to reverse the purge and readmit the expellees.

The IEC also faced a problem of deciding how the FI should relate SU, which was created in the spring of 1985--after the world congress--as a result of a split in SA. The motion adopted on this matter recognized SU in the same capacity as F.I.T. and SA--that is, as representing individuals in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International who should be readmitted to the

MOTION ON SWP NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF WORLD CONGRESS DEMANDS

Adopted by a majority of the IEC

The IEC notes that after having expelled members in disagreement with its political and programmatic orientation, and by methods unworthy of our movement, the SWP leadership has refused to implement the demands of the Twelfth World Congress. It recommended to the August 1985 SWP convention to reject these demands, which it did. In so doing it has shown how little it makes of the supreme body of the International.

The IEC reiterates the condemnation already expressed by the world congress and ratifies the public declaration approved by the United Secretariat on October 5, 1985. [See Bulletin IDOM No. 25, December 1985.]

As long as the SWP does not retreat from these methods, its political and moral authority will be in question.

The IEC denounces the SWP leadership for this flagrant violation of the elementary communist norms of our movement.

SWP. It was felt that this decision was necessary given the political reality of the divisions within the Fourth Internationalist movement in the U.S. since the expulsions. But the IEC also stated clearly that the world congress motions could not be interpreted as meaning that there was some automatic right for new groups which split off from F.I.T., SA, or SU to be recognized simply because they were made up of individuals who had been expelled by the SWP.

CENTRAL AMERICA

One of the highlights of the IEC was an informational report from a leader of the Mexican PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International) concerning the present situation in Central America. The report discussed some of the developments in El Salvador, but it focused on recent changes in the Nicaraguan land reform law resulting from the active mobilization of tens of thousands of peasants in the countryside. These changes have resulted in a sweeping

reorganization and acceleration of the process of distributing land, and many estates that had previously been exempt from the process are now included. The owners of these estates are being reimbursed for the seizure of their land in long term "agrarian reform bonds."

Priority for redistribution of land is given to those who presently work for landowners, landless members of cooperatives, families of those who have died in the war, and Indian communities. This last provision is particularly important because it has helped improve relations between the Sandinistas and the Indian communities of the Atlantic Coast. The land reform has become an important weapon in the war against the contras as well, because the availability of land for those who are willing to work it is being used as an incentive to relieve the massive refugee problem in Managua--which has created a major strain on the Nicaraguan economy. In addition, at the same time that peasants get title to the land, they also get a rifle with which to defend it.

The State of Emergency decree in Nicaragua was also the subject of some discussion at the IEC, in particular the attitude which sections of the Fourth International should take in their press and in discussions about suppression of the right to strike. It was pointed out that in fact this aspect of the emergency has not been implemented, and there has been no action taken against workers in a number of strikes which have actually taken place since it was declared.

OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES

The discussion at the IEC of the current state of the international fight for women's rights was the first such discussion in the leading bodies of the FI since the adoption of a resolution on the question at the 1979 World Congress. Two informational reports were made, one on the state of the women's movement in Europe and one on the situation in Latin America.

Though there are significant differences between the specific issues and demands raised by women's organizations in these two parts of the world, both reports stressed that women, organizing as women, around demands specifically concerning women's needs, continues to be an important part of the political scene. This is true despite the ruling class's austerity drive and its overall attacks on working people-- which are focused most sharply on women both as an oppressed sex and as a specially exploited part of the workforce.

It was also pointed out that women continue to be in the lead of those fighting around broader social issues in all parts of the world--for example the women's peace movement, or the organization of miners' wives during the British coal strike, or the leading role of women in the campaign around the "disappeared" in many Latin American countries.

On Iran, the resolution approved by the IEC presented a balance sheet of the revolution since the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. This included a discussion of the counterrevolutionary role played by the Khomeini government during that period, and the struggle of the workers and peasants of Iran to organize independently of the regime, and of other pro-bourgeois forces, to fight for an extension of democratic rights and for their own government which could truly win independence from imperialism.

The meeting also initiated a discussion on the Indochinese revolution and the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party. There was an exchange of several different viewpoints presented to the IEC, with an understanding that the discussion will continue both internally, with the publication of a discussion bulletin, and publicly in the pages of the press of the International and its sections.

Both the resolution on Iran and the report on South Africa will be published in the press of the FI after they are edited. □

panorama

de centroamérica y el caribe

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WORKING CLASS REVOLUTIONARIES OF 1886

Albert Parsons and His Comrades

by Paul Le Blanc

From a prison cell in 1945, American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, discussing future work that he would like to do, wrote to a friend: "Of all the literary projects laid out, the one closest to my heart is the book on labor leaders, and of that, the chapter on Parsons. I have long felt a strong compulsion to do justice to the memory of 'the dear little man' who stands above all others in my affection." [1] Unfortunately, Cannon was unable to realize this project. His own deep roots in the radical tradition of the American working class, and his rich experience as a revolutionary, would have enabled him to appreciate more profoundly than many the qualities of Albert R. Parsons.

Among radical labor activists of the 1870s and 1880s, Parsons was almost without equal. An effective trade union and political organizer, orator, writer, and editor, he would inevitably have played a major role in making the left wing of the labor movement a force to reckon with throughout the United States, as he was already doing in Chicago. The forces of capitalist "law and order" recognized this: thus he and three of his comrades were executed, and the movement he led in Chicago was savagely repressed. This is the hundredth anniversary of the "Haymarket affair" which led to their martyrdom. It is a good time to remember Albert Parsons and his comrades.

Characteristically, liberal writers have been inclined to deplore the killing of the Haymarket martyrs but to also argue that they were hardly a threat to anyone since "scarcely more than fifty or seventy-five 'wage slaves' attended their 'mass meetings.'" [2] In fact, they regularly drew hundreds and sometimes thousands to their activities, and they led demonstrations for the eight-hour workday which brought Chicago to a standstill. More than simply honoring their memory, perhaps we can learn something from them.

In 1883 Albert Parsons was invited to address the West Side Philosophic Society of Chicago. He was well known as a leading labor radical. They were the

"elite": millionaires, judges, and generals, and their beautifully dressed wives and daughters. Perhaps those who invited him thought this a splendid opportunity for a dialogue. Or perhaps it was merely an unusual entertainment. Surveying his audience, Parsons began:

"I am not in the habit of speaking to men and women dressed in such fine raiment. The men I speak to nightly are the hard-fisted, greasy mechanics and laborers of our city, with the smell of shavings about their clothes. They wear no broadcloth -- their constant struggle is to keep the wolf from the door. The women I speak to are those who work from ten to twelve hours a day for a pittance, and must be satisfied with an ordinary dress. But it is these greasy mechanics and these poor women that weave your broadcloth, your silk and satin; that shape into form your costly bonnets and feathers, and grind into exquisite beauty and shape the jewels I see about me, but which they cannot wear."

An eyewitness later recalled: "With these preliminary remarks, he secured the closest attention to one of the most eloquent, cutting, and defiant speeches I ever heard." [3]

THE MAKING OF A REVOLUTIONARY

This remarkable person had a remarkable past. Born in 1848, he grew up in Texas and while a teenager joined the Confederate Army during the Civil War. But when the war ended, he became an outspoken Radical Republican, defending Black people's rights and the social reforms of Reconstruction. He married a beautiful dark-skinned woman named Lucy Gonzales, who claimed Spanish and Indian ancestry and who may also have been partly Afro-American. After a few years, however, the Republican Party betrayed Blacks and poor whites by abandoning the Reconstruction program and allowing the well-to-do white racist elites to return to power throughout the South. An important aspect of this development was the use of massive violence through

groups like the Ku Klux Klan. In 1874, Albert and Lucy Parsons fled Texas.

Arriving in the booming industrial city of Chicago, Parsons found work as a printer. A talented speaker and organizer, he soon became a leader in his local of the typographical workers union. He was also drawn into the Knights of Labor, the eight-hour movement, and the Workingmen's Party of the United States (WPUS), the first significant socialist party in this country, founded in 1876. Lucy also joined the WPUS and began to participate in the work of the labor movement.

There is a common misconception that the socialist movement of this time was made up exclusively of German immigrants who spent their time wrangling over radical doctrines brought from the old country, isolating themselves from American workers and ignoring American realities. It is true that a majority of those in the left wing of the labor movement were German, but "the American working class" was made up largely of immigrant workers, and the largest immigrant group in the U.S. at this time was German-American. A careful examination of the history of this period confirms Nathan Fine's assessment: "The intelligent and educated German worker and the idealistic intellectual brought their socialism with them to America. Immediately upon landing they set themselves the task of organizing their fellow-countrymen and then reaching out for the native and English-speaking workers.... That socialism did not make greater strides in the leading capitalist country is no fault of the tireless and conscientious German-American wage earners, the pioneers of Marxism in America." [4]

One commentator has suggested that the influence of such people on Parsons "is an early example of the tendency of American leftists to look outside themselves for revolutionary guidance." [5] One could argue that there is also a strong tendency among American leftists to denigrate "foreign doctrines" and glorify "negative pragmatism." With Parsons we have the case of a Texan who came to Chicago where he was influenced by P.J. McGuire (a socialist speaker from New York City), George Schilling (a Chicago-based German-American), Thomas J. Morgan (originally from Wales), and others who were influenced by the theories of Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle (German Jews), by the experiences of the German and British labor movements, etc. Because he was not a closed-minded provincial, Parsons became a socialist. Because the realities of

capitalism, against which he was rebelling, were confined neither to Texas nor Chicago nor the United States, this openness to "outside influences" made sense.

The great labor uprising of 1877, a spontaneous mass strike which drew many thousands of working people into its vortex in cities and towns throughout the country, had a profound impact on Parsons. The Chicago WPUS called a rally at the height of the upsurge, and Parsons found himself addressing a crowd of 20,000 in Market Square. He skillfully drew upon the rage and excitement of the assembled workers, integrating it with a class-struggle analysis, and outlined a clear and dramatic strategy:

"Let us reduce the hours of labor to one-half and then form a combination, and then demand what wages we want. In order to do this we have to combine in some kind of labor organization.... Let us understand our position. If we reduce our hours of labor, the bosses and capitalists will immediately purchase another machine to replace us. Let us then, immediately, reduce the hours of labor once more, and in that way we can keep pace with them. (Voice, 'We can, every time.')

...Let us remember that we are the working classes of America. Let us give the politician to understand that we don't want him about. We have no votes to give to the Republican or Democratic party. (A voice -- 'Or the greenbackers either.')

Let us remember that Democratic, Republican and Greenback parties are composed of the bosses of the country. (Voices, 'you bet,' and 'hear, hear.')

...Let the grand army of labor say who shall fill the legislative halls of this country."

Parsons concluded by emphasizing the revolutionary nature of this strategy: "We take out of their hands the means by which they now enslave us. Let us not forget the fact that all wealth and civilization comes from labor, and labor alone. Let us not forget that while we work ten hours a day the capitalist puts the value of seven hours of it in his pocket. It rests with you to say whether we shall allow the capitalist to go on, or whether we shall organize ourselves. Will you organize? (Cries, 'We will.')

Well, then enroll your names in the grand army of labor, and if the capitalist engages in warfare against our rights, then we shall resist him with all the means that God has given us." [6]

Yet in Chicago, as elsewhere, the police and army violently suppressed the uprising. Parsons was promptly fired and blacklisted, then briefly arrested. He

A FABLE

by Albert Parsons

A farmer had gathered his herd of sheep into a pen preparatory to shearing them of their wool. Finally, one sheep, becoming more bold than his timid comrades, seeing the farmer standing at the gate with his long shears in his hand, addressed him thus:

"Pray, sir, why do you huddle us together in this style? Will you not let us out to play and gambol on the hillside? It is hot, dusty, and dry, and very uncomfortable to be cooped up in this pen."

Farmer: "Certainly, certainly. But before I turn you out I must shear you of your wool."

Sheep: "Pray, sir, what harm have we ever done you that you should now take the covering from our backs, and leave us unprotected to the storms of winter and the heats of summer?"

Farmer: "You ungrateful wretches. Have you no sense of gratitude for the many favors I have always shown you? If it were not for me how could you exist at all? Don't I furnish you the green

pasture upon which you browse and play? Besides that, when I shear off your present coating of wool are you not permitted by my generosity to graze upon my fields and soon supply yourselves with another coating?"

The rest of the timid and thoughtless herd overhearing the conversation immediately set up a great "hurrah" for their supposed benefactor, and one and all calmly and patiently and with apparent satisfaction submitted themselves to the process of being "fleeced of their wool."

Moral: When capitalists and their lying preachers, teachers, and politicians set themselves up as the benefactors of their wage-slaves, and begin their long-winded discourses upon the "harmony" of capital and labor, you may be sure that they are merely preparing their wage-slaves for a quiet submission while they "fleece" them of their labor product.

-- From the Alarm, a labor paper edited by Parsons, 1884-86. Reprinted from April 23, 1950, Militant.

was told to "go back where you came from" and that if he tried to "make trouble" in Chicago he might be strung up to a lamppost. Instead, Parsons and his comrades increased their efforts. Thanks to the strong base they had in the trade union movement, the Chicago socialists actually elected four socialists to city council in 1878 and got 12,000 votes for their mayoral candidate in 1879. The capitalist politicians began to respond by using fraud to eliminate socialist candidates. Workers were also being severely pressured to "vote the right way" by their employers.

The socialists faced a challenge of a different kind with the election of Democrat Carter Harrison as mayor. A very rich and highly sophisticated businessman, Harrison actively sought support in the immigrant working class neighborhoods. He assumed a prolabor posture, and on occasion referred to himself as "somewhat of a socialist." Although he was a strongly probusiness mayor, and allowed his police force to use strong-arm tactics against striking workers "when necessary," he backed some labor reforms and was not above appointing certain "respectable" socialists to positions in his administration. Not surprisingly, some Chicago socialists went over to the Democratic Party.

A majority held firm, however, and even became more militant. Parsons was among them. They wanted socialism, not crumbs and rhetoric. Yet by 1880 the socialist movement was facing a crisis. In 1877 the WPUS had been transformed into the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), after some members split away in order to concentrate exclusively on trade union organizing. Some who remained believed that simply through utilizing the electoral process socialism could be voted into being. When it became clear that this could not be easily achieved, they decided to make an electoral deal with the reform-capitalist Greenback Labor Party. Many, including Parsons, believed that this was a betrayal of principle. They also began to argue that the workers would never achieve socialism -- or even successfully resist the repressive measures of employers and the government -- unless the workers armed themselves, a step which they openly began to advocate and carry out. The SLP split, with the bulk of the Chicago socialist movement sharing the standpoint of Parsons and the man who was to be one of his closest comrades, August Spies, the editor of the socialist daily Arbeiter-Zeitung.

In the fall of 1883 a convention was held in Pittsburgh to unite into a

new organization the revolutionary-minded activists who had left the SLP. Its name was the International Working People's Association (IWPA), which within two years was to have 89 sections in 17 states, with a membership of 12,000. It had eight newspapers -- a majority in German, one in English -- with over 21,000 subscribers. Its strongest centers were in Chicago, where Parsons and Spies were the dominant personalities, and New York City, which was under the sway of Johann Most.

ANARCHISTS OR MARXISTS?

Most was a refugee from Germany, formerly a member of parliament from the German Social Democratic Party. Critical of the party leaders' moderation, he carried on a factional fight which soon degenerated into personal attacks, bloodcurdling phrasemongering, and violations of party discipline. Upon his expulsion from the party, Most gravitated toward the followers of the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. While not fully embracing anarchism, he incorporated into his positions support for individual terrorism ("propaganda of the deed"), denunciations of organizational centralism, and a demand for the total abolition of the state. Upon arriving in the United States, Most presented himself as the most revolutionary interpreter of the ideas of Karl Marx, yet he also played a major role in popularizing many anarchist notions within the American movement.

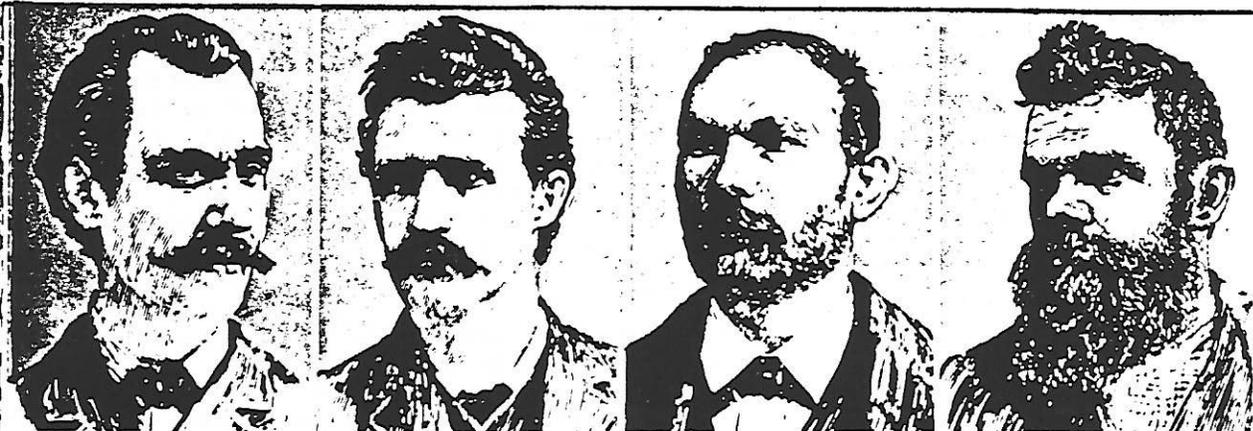
At the Pittsburgh convention, a statement was adopted, the "Pittsburgh Manifesto," which blended ideas from the Declaration of Independence, the Communist Manifesto, and anticentralist conceptions of Bakunin, all in an intransigently revolutionary tone. Yet there were differences in attitude with

in the IWPA. As one leading member of the Chicago IWPA later recalled: "One time the Pittsburgh program with which many were unsatisfied was discussed. Spies explained: 'The Pittsburgh program is secondary, our program is the Communist Manifesto!'...Spies had Parsons, Gorsuch and other Americans around him in the office of the Arbeiter-Zeitung on whom he impressed the basic teachings of the booklet." [7]

Parsons himself was to argue that "the IWPA was not founded by Bakunin." He traced its ancestry back to the First International, adding: "The distinctive feature of the manifesto of the Pittsburgh Labor Congress was opposition to centralized power, abolition of authoritative, compulsory or force government in any form. This is why we were, and are, designated anarchists....The IWPA is not in opposition to Marx....The first publication ever issued by the IWPA was written by Marx and Engels." [8] This was the Communist Manifesto, of which 25,000 copies were distributed in one year.

A study of the Alarm, the English-language paper of the IWPA, reveals many more positive references to Marx than to Bakunin. Parsons noted: "We are called by some Communists, or Socialists or Anarchists. We accept all three of the terms." He defined anarchy as "a condition of society which has no king, no emperor, president or ruler of any kind. In other words anarchy is the social administration of all affairs by the people themselves." [9]

A posthumously published volume prepared by Parsons is entitled Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis. The book is divided into two parts. The first offers an explicitly Marxist analysis of capitalism, with lengthy extracts from the Communist Manifesto and Capital. It also offers an outline of American history from colon-

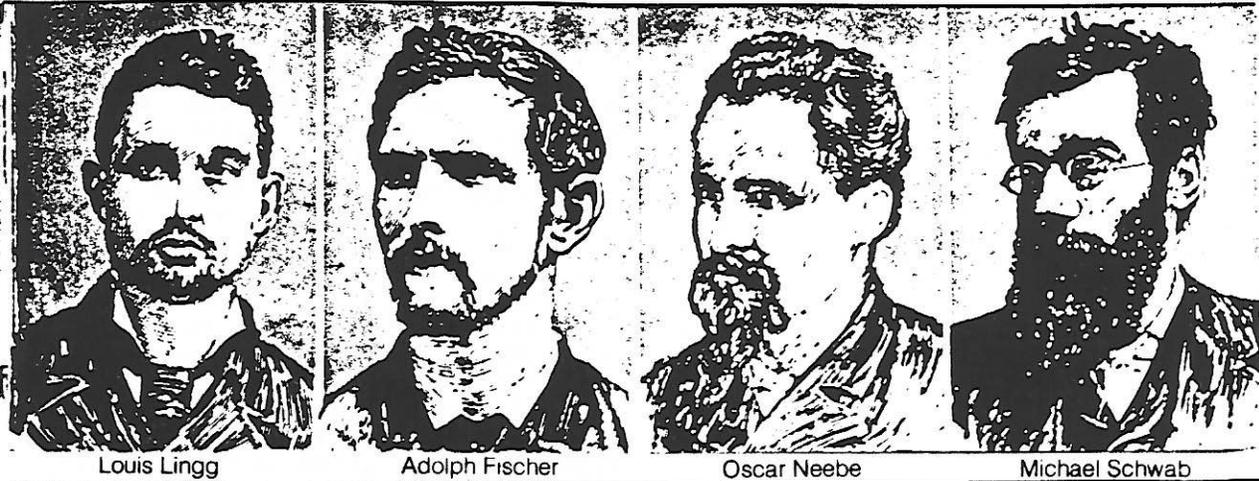


Albert Parsons

August Spies

George Engel

Samuel Fielden



Louis Lingg

Adolph Fischer

Oscar Neebe

Michael Schwab

ial times to 1886, in which Parsons attempted to apply Marx's materialist conception of history to the United States. The second half of the book contains extracts from speeches of Parsons and his codefendants at the Haymarket trial, followed by several anarchist essays by Peter Kropotkin and others, condemning the institution of the state and describing a stateless communism. These explicitly anarchist selections were undoubtedly appealing because the Marxist analysis of the state -- set out briefly in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program (published in the 1890s) and reconstructed in Lenin's State and Revolution (1917) -- was not available to most socialists in this period, among whom the statist orientation of Lassalle had some influence.

Thus, it's misleading to simply label people like Parsons and Spies "anarchists." The word had a different connotation for them than it does today. The sharp differentiation between socialism and anarchism developed only in later years. In fact, they were far closer to revolutionary Marxism than were the moderate leaders of the SLP.

Perhaps more useful than reflecting over labels, however, is to look at the living movement which these revolutionaries helped to lead.

THE CHICAGO MOVEMENT

Friedrich Sorge, a German-American comrade of Marx and Engels, was fiercely critical of both the SLP and of the IWPA as represented by Johann Most. But his attitude toward the Chicago IWPA was different:

"Only the Chicagoans maintained a certain agreement of views and tactics, stayed in close touch with the trade unions and other organizations, and secured themselves great respect and importance among the working population

of the city. This they took advantage of on various occasions and made the bourgeois authorities very uncomfortable.

... At the head of the Chicago anarchists, indeed of the Chicago workers at that time, stood intelligent and energetic people. The Germans August Spies and Michael Schwab, the American Albert Parsons, the Englishman Samuel Fielden, supported by many others, were active and untiring agitators and the first three also served as writers and editors of the Arbeiter-Zeitung and Alarm. To the aforementioned characteristics must also be added great courage, loyalty of conviction, and untouchable personal honor." [10]

The Chicago IWPA had 1,300 members, including an English-language section of about 90 people. Parsons and Spies estimated that it had about 20,000 supporters in the city, which my research indicates is a plausible claim. The twice-monthly Alarm had a regular circulation of 2-3,000 per issue, not counting 90,000 free copies distributed each year.

The Alarm was a lively paper, filled with reports on strikes, demonstrations, and meetings; extensive correspondence and articles from working class readers; stirring and fact-filled social commentaries; speculative opinion pieces and educational articles on revolutionary theory. A variety of outlooks jostled each other in its pages. Parsons later explained: "They sent in their articles -- Tom, Dick, and Harry; everybody wanted to have something to say, and I had no right to shut off anybody's complaint. The Alarm was a labor paper, and it was specifically published for the purpose of allowing every human being who wore the chains of monopoly to clank those chains in the columns of the Alarm It was a free speech paper." [11]

While this made the Alarm an exciting paper to read, it also meant that many incendiary statements -- including openly terroristic threats against the capitalists -- were printed. The defenders of capitalist "law and order" were later to make use of this to victimize the movement.

The Chicago IWPA distributed about 400,000 books, pamphlets, and circulars over the course of one year. In addition, it often sent leading members on agitational tours as far west as Omaha, as far east as Pittsburgh, and as far south as St. Louis. In Chicago itself there were frequent open-air meetings on the lakefront, public lectures, parades, rallies, picnics, concerts, and festivals. These were often organized with great creative flair and an audacious and militant humor which appealed to large numbers of working people. One distinctive characteristic of the movement was the large number of saloons identifying themselves as "socialist," with special meeting rooms, left-wing literature, and in some cases even people who were paid to read aloud from IWPA papers to interested customers. Yet unlike many currents in the early labor movement, the IWPA was not for men only. "The trouble with these damned socialists," commented Police Captain John Bonfield, "is that they always have their wives and children with them. I wish I could have three or four thousand of them in a bunch, without their families, and then I would make short work of them." [12] But the revolutionaries didn't operate like that. The Chicago IWPA encouraged women to participate

fully in the movement, among the most visible of whom were Lucy Parsons and the assistant editor of the Alarm Lizzie M. Swank.

One factor which gave the revolutionary movement great weight in Chicago was its deep roots in the trade union movement. There were about 250,000 wage workers in the city, perhaps 30,000 of whom were organized. About half of these were in the 22 unions affiliated to the Central Labor Union (CLU). Founded by members and supporters of the IWPA, its goal was the "destruction of the existing class rule by all means necessary -- i.e., by energetic, relentless, revolutionary, and international action." [13] While the CLU's membership consisted primarily of immigrants, it should be remembered that over 40 percent of the working class and almost 70 percent of all union members in Illinois were foreign born. Not satisfied with working exclusively among skilled workers of the craft unions, however, the IWPA also pioneered in reaching out to unskilled workers and the unemployed.

According to Friedrich Sorge, Chicago had "a very cosmopolitan population, one-third of which is German, almost as many Irish, and also Scandinavians, Italians, Poles, Czechs, French, and so forth. It is the undeniably meritorious accomplishment of the Chicago anarchists to have brought into this marvelous mixture of workers of all nationalities and languages a certain order, to have created affinity, and to have given the movement at that time unity and goals." [14] □

(TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE)

NOTES

1. James P. Cannon, Letters from Prison (Merit Publishers, 1968), pp. 278, 324.
2. Harry Barnard, The Eagle Forgotten: The Life of John Peter Altgeld (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1938), pp. 76, 77.
3. George Schilling, "History of the Labor Movement in Chicago," in The Life of Albert R. Parsons (Lucy R. Parsons, 1889), pp. XXII-XXIII.
4. Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928 (Russell & Russell, 1961), p. 90.
5. Richard Schneirov, "Albert Parsons and the American Origins of May Day," In These Times, May 2-8, 1979.
6. Labor Standard, August 19, 1877, p. 1.

7. Friedrich Sorge, Labor Movement in the United States. A History of the American Working Class From Colonial Times to 1890 (Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 211.
8. Carolyn Ashbaugh, Lucy Parsons, American Revolutionary (Charles H. Kerr, 1976), p. 58.
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14. Sorge, p. 210.

LABOR RESPONSIBILITY TO CENTRAL AMERICA

A Letter to 'American Teacher'

by Haskell Berman

One would expect from a teacher's union publication like American Teacher, in a critical analysis of any educational system, a wholistic historical perspective that draws conclusions or descriptions from many sources, facts, and observations and presents arguments from different viewpoints of testimony. The October issue's article "Schoolbooks Sandinista Style," by David Dorn and Xavier Zavala Cuadra (condensed from the Washington Post of August 18, not August 8), was a propaganda piece that very superficially and crudely put together a few unrelated ahistorical facts to build a case that educational reform in Nicaragua by "the Sandinista regime does not respect intellectual freedom, pluralism, due process and free speech." As evidence they cite a speech by Minister of Interior Tomas Borge in which he describes the regime's educational philosophy as the need to educate the new generation in the values of the Sandinista revolution, and they point to some government produced texts that praise the FSLN and use military objects like grenades to teach math.

Dorn and Cuadra in contrast claim that American textbooks reflect "traditional" values such as pluralism, due process, and the right to free speech and that public schools are safe from being used to promote a specific political ideology or purpose.

It would have been to the benefit of free speech and intellectual freedom for the union paper to print the reply to this article by the ambassador of Nicaragua, Carlos Tunnerman, 12 days later on August 30, in the Washington Post.

A few cogent facts are important that he cited: 1. Two UNESCO awards have been made to Nicaragua for its literacy

campaign and for integrating humanistic values in its educational reform. 2. Since the Sandinista revolution under the FSLN all education, public and private, from primary through university, is free and is supported by the state. 3. The regime under the FSLN subsidizes 240 schools that are church affiliated and are free to impart religious teachings.

Dorn and Cuadra's contention that American schools promote no political ideology in its "traditional values" is faulty. Each society teaches through its educational system those values and that ideology that support and uphold its social, political, and class structure. Each day in U.S. schools children salute the flag and recite the pledge of allegiance. Values anathema to minorities, women, and labor, and pro big business, have been prevalent in the traditional values taught. Competition, sexism, consumerism, egocentrism, separatism, authoritarian dependence are some others that are not always enumerated overtly but are endemic to the structure as well as the texts.

Dorn and Cuadra fall short in pursuing what real values have emerged from Tomas Borge's stated educational philosophy. Borge explains "the need to educate the new generation ... in the values of the Sandinista people's revolution," "to form the personality developing and capable of promoting and contributing to the transformation process that builds a new society." The authors fail to ask what real social values are the Sandinistas, the revolution, the FSLN promoting? How much of this is "Marxist-Leninist" rhetoric and how much is reflected in concrete change and deed? What actions of the party and/or state reflect its proclaimed philosophy? What class interests or social strata do these values/deeds serve?

The Sandinistas have promoted the abolition of capital punishment[1], instituted a nationwide campaign to wipe out illiteracy[2], codified the right of all political parties to exist and campaign freely[3], the rights of workers to organize into trade unions[4], and

Haskell Berman is a member of Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Local #3. When he submitted this letter to his union journal in answer to an article published there, the editor rejected it on the grounds that the issues he raised had been discussed sufficiently.

the rights of peasants for land[5]. They have devoted their scarce resources to education and health services. They have introduced and built child care centers to free rural and peasant women for study and work. They have campaigned publicly against sexism, machismoism, and racism and promoted a respect for other peoples and their cultures. They promote the love of work, working for the general welfare, respect for one's country, and a willingness to make sacrifices for establishing Nicaraguan independence and providing for its self-determination. They have initiated cultural regional autonomy and direct representation for the Miskito, Sumo, and Rama peoples (a first for any Central American country)[6]. These are some of the values and deeds reflected in the revolution, the transformation process proclaimed by Tomas Borge and the Sandinistas. These derive from a 40-year struggle for freedom and independence by the Nicaraguan people against corruption, dictatorship, and many invasions by U.S. armies which sought to uphold dependent undemocratic regimes.

Today they continue to struggle to resist the contra terror campaign that is once again based on U.S. support and intervention.

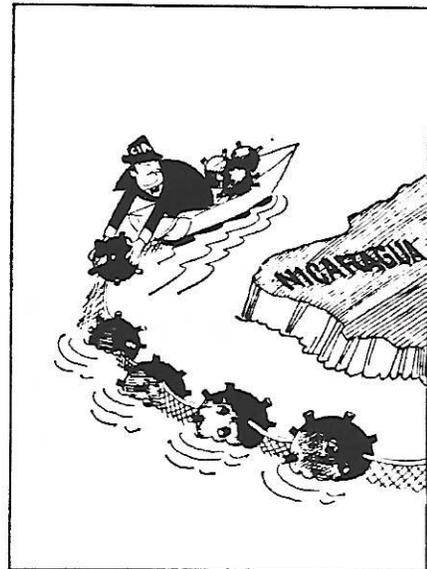
In Nicaragua, war and military items do reflect the daily life-and-death experiences of the youth and illiterate adults whom their educational system targets. In a country where the median age is about 20, where 57 percent of the rural population in 1979 was illiterate, where many youth over 14 have experienced the use of arms, it is not at all strange or inappropriate to find that teaching materials and texts for primary grades use some objects and subjects with which youth and new student adults are familiar, like chickens, grenades, and body counts, and not footballs, VCRs, and condominiums.

Between the values of democracy which we proclaim in the U.S. and the deeds practiced in foreign policy in Central America, do we pass the test of defending the rights of all people and nations for their self-determination?

Contra terror has been initiated and supported through funds from our taxes, as well as the covert and overt CIA interventionist activities. Congress last spring agreed to provide "humanitarian" aid of \$27 million which is now going to transport and clothe those carrying on a destructive war against the Nicaraguan people and against a government that they have freely formed and chosen with the sacrifice of their blood and through open elections. It is

rather hypocritical to attack the Nicaraguan government and their people for taking emergency measures in their own defense whether those measures are military or educational.

In July and August of 1984, twenty-eight members of unions from Philadelphia visited Nicaragua on a tour sponsored by the Philadelphia Labor Committee for Human Rights in Central America. Four of us were members of the AFT (three from PFT Local #3 and one from Local #2023). Included were members of seven international unions of the AFL-CIO and three local union presidents. The itinerary which we planned and were able to carry out enabled us to visit and interview both opposition and pro-government leaders of the press, professional organizations, and trade unions. We traveled hundreds of miles to four cities and visited educational institutions, factories, day care and health centers. We had a two-hour interview with the minister of education who helped initiate the literacy program and we were shown and given sample texts and workbooks used, and found them to be educationally appropriate. We watched thousands queue up with enthusiasm to register patiently for what many considered their first free elections. When questioned people spoke frankly and freely. All political parties had campaign billboards and posters. Each presidential candidate's party who registered was provided with \$300,000 (U.S.)



for campaigning and was guaranteed by law specific equal time slots on radio and television[7].

We heard the freely expressed criticism of the Sandinistas by their opponents, the leaders of the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CNT). We posed sharp questions about the emergency decree to the Sandinista leaders of the CST union and the FSLN. They defended the ban on strikes as an emergency war measure which the government had no intention of retaining once the external threat of destabilization ended. (On August 5, 1984, the ban on strikes was lifted and reimposed on October 15, 1985.)

In contrast with the image portrayed by the antilabor Reagan administration and the big business press we found that Nicaraguan society was not totalitarian, that the government was confident enough to freely arm the people and hold elections in the face of a constant external economic and military campaign to destroy it. Eighty percent of those eligible went to the polls and

65 percent of those voted for the FSLN and its candidates.

This is not to claim that Nicaraguan society is perfect. It is a very small country facing extreme problems of development, compounded by the economic pressure of a U.S. embargo, and a threat of invasion, while it faces a real war of contra terror.

The recent AFL-CIO convention initiated a dialogue within the U.S. labor movement on labor's view of U.S. Central American policy. It is hoped that by open debate and discussion a more truly independent labor perspective on foreign policy can be developed that defends the interests of working people both here at home and overseas, and not just tail-ends pro-business antilabor interests promoted by a pro-business administration. To that end members of the Philadelphia Labor Committee for Human Rights in Central America encourage teachers and other unionists to travel to Nicaragua and the other Central American countries to see firsthand what those workers and unionists experience. □

NOTES

1. Tomas Borge, "Our Vengeance Toward Our Enemy." The Nicaraguan Reader, Review Ed., 1983. Peter Rosset and John Vandermier, Grove Press, p. 166.
2. Tomas Borge, "The New Education in the New Nicaragua." The Sandinista People's Revolution. Pathfinder Press, 1985, p. 77.
3. Electoral Law -- Council of State, Republic of Nicaragua, 2/22/84 to 4/15/84. Chapter IV, pp. 13-14; Chapter V, Article 34 and 37, pp. 16-17.
4. Jaime Wheelock, "The FSLN is the Organization of Working People." The Sandinista People's Revolution, pp. 273-74.

- 1978 -- 133 unions with total membership of 25,000
1984 -- 3,000 unions with total membership of 250,000

Unions have representation on all legislative and consultative government committees.

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PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

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LABOR RADICALISM IN THE 1920s AND TODAY

by Frank Lovell

The similarities and differences between the radical movements of the 1920s and today can provide an instructive guide to the future recovery of the sick union movement. Today U.S. radicalism is atomized, disoriented, and largely isolated from organized labor. How, then, can radicals be expected to nurture the unions back to health? This was also true in 1920 and the same question applied then. The answer may be found by comparing what is happening now with what happened then.

In both times of crisis the right-wing union officialdom sought to return to the previous time of more harmonious labor-management relations, either unaware of the latent militancy within the working class or hostile to it. The response of the employing class and the government in both instances was and is open hostility to unionism. Throughout the 1920s some sectors of the working class suffered dire poverty during the era of capitalist expansion and prosperity. Today millions of working people seek ways out of their impoverishment. Many of them look to the unions for help.

Like unemployed steelworkers in the Pittsburgh area, many others have tried to form organizations to fight against industrial cutbacks. These radicalizing workers are the advance guard of the great army of dispossessed that will transform the union movement. They will become the new class-struggle left wing in the unions, as did their predecessors in the 1930s.

Signs of this development are what the radical movement must become attuned to, just as radicals of the 1920s had to understand and adjust to similar signs in the decade following World War I.

How are radicals responding?

The crisis of organized labor has caught the attention of the main working class political currents: Social Democracy, Stalinism, and revolutionary socialism. In today's political climate the left Social Democrats -- Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) -- must be considered part of the radical movement. The two wings of Social Democracy -- DSA vs. Social Democrats USA -- are present-

ly engaged in a battle within the AFL-CIO bureaucracy over the issues of union policy. The Stalinists have made their bid to be heard. And Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, has made his contribution, pretending to represent revolutionary socialism.

The struggle within the union bureaucracy was highlighted at the 1985 AFL-CIO convention by the unprecedented public debate over U.S. foreign policy. This debate was sharpened by the existence of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador which is made up of presidents of national unions who are also members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council. They represent a large part of the AFL-CIO's membership. The expectation of left Social Democrats is "a great loosening of discussion" within the union movement as a result of the convention debate last fall.

At midyear the Stalinists published their "draft trade union program of the Communist Party, USA," describing the antiunion tenor of the times and outlining their platform for a left wing within the unions which they prefer to call "Communist and other Left-Progressive leadership" (Daily World, June 27).

In late November, when the AFL-CIO convention opened, the Daily World began a 4-part series by their veteran labor analyst George Morris on the AFL-CIO document, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions." Morris concluded his series with the observation that "making a real turn for a new direction in the labor movement requires the widest ranging discussion possible, involving above all, labor's rank and file."

It is a safe prediction that the discussion will continue through 1986... and beyond. Very likely there will be confrontation and exchanges of opinion before differences are resolved. A fragile alliance of Stalinists and left Social Democrats, such as developed briefly in the CIO movement in support of the Roosevelt administration after the 1936 general election, may be a future possibility. But the unstable

international political situation precludes longterm predictions of this kind.

At the present stage of preparation in the fragmented radical movement it is noteworthy that the Barnes leadership in the SWP looks back to the Communist International for guidance. In December the SWP's National Committee met in New York for three days to consider the present plight of the unions (among other developments), and to compare the situation today with that of the 1920s. Barnes was reported to have told the gathering that all the talk about "deindustrialization taking place in the United States and a shrinking of industrial jobs is false" (Militant, Dec. 27). (He hadn't at the time had a chance to see the congressional report, released two months later, which revealed that plant closures in 1979 through 1984 had destroyed 11.5 million jobs. Nearly half of all workers displaced in this way were in manufacturing industries -- auto, steel, industrial equipment, textile, and apparel.)

Barnes went on to say that in order to understand current problems it is first necessary to study the union policy of the early Communist Party in the 1920s, before the 1929 economic collapse. "Militants in the 1920s and early 1930s talked much the same as we [in the SWP] do today in the unions," he said.

Barnes also saw some differences. He said, "Revolutionists waged a determined struggle for industrial unionism" in the early days. Now, however, there is no concrete form like industrial unions that can be proposed for the labor movement. "We explain the need for a class-struggle left wing in the unions," he said, "but that is not an organizational form. It includes tasks, a perspective for a fighting labor movement, but not a clear organizational form. We can't draw a picture of what the class-struggle left wing will look like. It's different than fighting for industrial unions."

The only perspective for a fighting labor movement, as outlined by Barnes, is anti-apartheid and antiwar activity which is the scaffolding that can help vanguard workers in the preparatory building process. "We are fighting for a political and social movement," he said, "everything else is temporary."

What was different in the 1920s?

There are plenty of lessons from the radicalism of the 1920s, but to discover them it is necessary to learn what happened. Part of the problem is that labor historians have done more to

confuse the record than clarify it. This is especially true of the history of the U.S. Communist Party and its connection to the Comintern. Stalinist falsification of CP history has not made the historian's job easier.

In a recent review of the historiography on the CP, Michael Goldfield notes that most authors find different reasons for the CP's periods of success and failure, few agree on which were the successful periods, and most hold inconsistent views. Goldfield's essay appears in The Year Left, 1985, an American socialist yearbook, published by Verso and distributed by Schocken Books. He provides valuable insights into the CP's early history, drawing on the writings of James P. Cannon, a founder of the CP and American Trotskyism. Cannon's History of American Trotskyism is quoted on the authority and influence of the CP at the close of the 1920s: "The CP entered the thirties -- the period of the great radical revival -- as the dominating center of American radicalism. It had no serious contenders." Goldfield says the reason is not understood by most writers. "Both the hard anti-communists and the New Left historians tend to downplay the strong indigenous roots of the CP at its origin and throughout the 1920s," he says. "Thus, they fail to take into account the importance of work in this early period to the party's subsequent growth."

It should be added that the work of the early Communists in the first ten years contributed greatly to the future health and growth of the radical movement and the new CIO union movement. But then the CP fell prey to Stalinism, and its harmful influences came to predominate.

LEARNING FROM CANNON

It is a pity that Cannon's extensive writings on American communism and the labor movement of the 1920s and 1930s are not more carefully studied by young radicals who want to understand what is happening in their unions. He was more experienced as a Communist in trade union work than any of his contemporaries. He explained more clearly than anyone else the dynamics of the class struggle in the U.S. in relation to the world revolution of the twentieth century -- from 1917 Russia to 1949 China to 1959 Cuba. His published writings are available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

If more careful attention were paid to Cannon's factual reports most of the distorted and misleading retrospective

accounts of what is imagined to have happened in the 1920s and 1930s could be avoided or corrected. It is true that in the post-World War I years the CP emerged as the dominant organization in the radical movement as a result of the inspiring example of the 1917 October revolution in Russia, and the ideological influence of the Communist International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

It is also true that the idea of industrial unionism was endorsed and explained by all radicals, including members of the CP. Industrial unionism was embraced and advocated by radicals from the time of prewar Debsian socialism and the founding of the IWW in 1905 until the idea finally materialized in the formation of the CIO. It is misleading to give the impression that the CP's advocacy of industrial unionism made it exceptional in the radical movement of the period or was the central aspect of its union work.

CP POLICY IN THE 1920s

For most of the 1920s the CP agitated around three principal slogans in the unions: defense of the Soviet Union, organize the unorganized into industrial unions, form a labor party.

The policy of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) which William Z. Foster brought with him when he joined the CP in 1921 was to work within the existing AFL craft union structure for the amalgamation of the crafts in such industries as meatpacking, steel, maritime, rail, textile, garment, etc.

Coal was organized along industrial lines by the United Mine Workers. But by the end of the 1920s most of the industry was unorganized. The activity of the Communist fractions in all unions in the most healthy period of the CP during most of the 1920s was directed against employer provocations and against collusion between employers and entrenched union bureaucrats. That's mostly what they did in the UMW where they helped with some successes along the way to organize left-wing caucuses and united-front actions. The "save-the-union" movement which ran John Brophy for UMW president against John L. Lewis in 1926 was one of the more notable examples. The CP gained respect through its united-front policy in collaboration with other Lewis opponents at the time.

In 1928 the CP sponsored the formation of the National Miners Union, to compete with the UMW. Its form was that of an industrial union, but it did little to help organize the coal-mining

industry. In fact, it contributed to the consolidation of the Lewis bureaucracy and dictatorial rule over the remnants of the UMW at the time.

The CP in the 1920s was mainly trying to build a class-struggle left wing, and it succeeded fairly well in some instances even though it never dislodged the entrenched bureaucrats. It built radical caucuses in the Machinists, Carpenters, Mine Workers, Boot and Shoe Workers, Seamen, Textile Workers, Pullman Porters, and others. In Garment the goal was the amalgamation of the four AFL unions into a single organization. In 1922 the TUEL established a Needle Trades section and sponsored the Yiddish newspaper Freiheit in competition with the anti-Communist Forward.

The specific forms of the class-struggle left wing was never anything "like industrial unions," as Barnes and other uninformed radicals today guess it must have been. The basic organizational form for building the left wing within the AFL in the 1920s under CP aegis was the Trade Union Educational League.

DECLINE AND DISARRAY

The best intentioned efforts to keep the unions intact in the face of the employers' open shop drive were essentially rearguard defense actions. The union movement continued to decline in membership and influence during the decade.

The radical movement was hit by the Stalinist virus, which was not then recognized or understood. As a result, the radical movement at the end of the decade was in a similar state of disarray as today, but with a more proletarian composition.

The idealism that animated the early Communist Party was insufficient to overcome its isolation. Powerful social and economic forces were at work over which the working class of this country had no control. By the end of the decade the U.S. ruling class would discover that it, too, was unable to control the blind forces inherent in the capitalist system of production.

Cannon has described what happened to the Communists during this period: "In 1923 American capitalism, fully recovered from the economic crisis of 1921, was striding into the first stage of the long boom of the Twenties....The conservative influence of the ascending prosperity on the trade-union movement, and on the great mass of American workers generally, doomed the party to virtual isolation in any case.

"The basic thesis of the Comintern,

that the First World War had signalized the beginning of the dissolution and collapse of capitalism as a world system, was the commonly accepted thesis of all the party leaders. But the extent to which capitalism could profit in the new world at the expense of the old, and furiously expand while the other was declining, was not fully comprehended at the time.

"Later when this conjunctural advantage of American capitalism was recognized, it was mistaken for permanence by the majority [of the CP leadership]. This led to the conservatism of the leadership and the tacit abandonment of the revolutionary perspective in this country. This, in turn, set the stage for the conquest of the party by Stalinism, with its pie-in-the-sky theory of 'Socialism in one country' -- in Russia, that is, not in the United States."

ANSWERS FOR TODAY

Anyone looking for answers to the problems of the modern union movement will not find them in the trade union policy of the Communist Party of 60 years ago, nor in the resolutions of the Comintern after 1923. A good deal more can be learned from specific incidents in the history of those times such as the textile strike which began in Passaic, New Jersey, in January 1926. It was led by Albert Weisbord under the direction of the CP. It went through different phases, lasting nearly 11 months. My previous article, "U.S. Unions in the 1920s and 1980s," quoted William Z. Foster's description of this strike, which remains the official CP version. Here another interpretation of the events is submitted which reveals the difference in those days between the CP union policy and a genuine class-struggle policy.

"This action in Passaic did indeed violate both the letter and the spirit of Fosterite trade-union policy, which the party had followed for years and which had been implicitly supported once again in Moscow," according to Cannon, who participated in the discussions in Moscow and in strike strategy in Passaic. "The Passaic strike really put the party on the labor map. In my opinion," said Cannon years later, "it deserves a chapter in party history all by itself. It revealed the Communists as the dynamic force in the radical labor movement and the organizing center of the unorganized workers disregarded by the AFL unions -- displacing the IWW in this field."

Cannon went on to explain the les-

sons of the Passaic strike. It revealed the effects of Stalinism in the Comintern and the growing conservatism of the party leadership in this country. The official trade union policy of the CP at the time, far from waging "a determined struggle for industrial unionism," was marked by AFL fetishism and a phobia of "dual unionism."

1928 AND THE "THIRD PERIOD"

This matter of an effective trade union policy was one of the issues under debate in the party in 1928 when Cannon and others who disagreed with the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" were expelled as Trotskyists.

This also happened to be the year when the CP's trade union policy underwent a drastic change, a consequence of the sharp left turn taken at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern that year, known as the "third period."

The so-called third period was defined as the "final period of capitalist decline." It lasted from 1928 to 1933, a five-year nightmare. It culminated in the fascist catastrophe in Germany, to which it was a major contributing factor. After that it gave way gradually to the right swing of world Stalinism toward the "People's Front" policy which was officially adopted at the Comintern's Seventh (and last) World Congress in 1935.

During the five years of this truly fantastic "third period" almost everything the CP had done or stood for until then was turned into its opposite. Some apologists for the CP contend that whatever mistakes it made in this period were made in the process of building industrial unions -- experience that proved valuable in the later drives to build the CIO. (These may be sources for Barnes's confusion about the CP's "determined struggle for industrial unions.")

But the supreme task of the hour for the CP was to organize not industrial unions (such as those organized later into the CIO) but "revolutionary unions" (which called themselves "industrial unions"). All fear of dual unionism was brushed aside. The AFL unions were castigated as "social fascist" organizations, hated enemies of the working class. The third-period "red unions" set up by the CP were the creation of policy decisions having nothing to do with the course of the class struggle in this country. Overnight the Trade Union Educational League was transformed into the Trade Union Unity League, consisting of "revolutionary"

unions for all major industries: auto, coal, garment, maritime, textile, steel, etc. This served to disorient uneducated militants who were attracted to the radical sounding slogans of the CP as the Great Depression set in after the 1929 economic crash.

RADICALISM IN EARLY 1930s

This, then, was the situation in the radical labor movement in the early 1930s. In some respects it was a barometer of the union movement, and of the condition of the working class at that juncture.

At the time the moribund AFL unions seemed not to count for much. In 1933 they stood at no more than three million members altogether, and AFL finances were in bad shape.

All the action seemed to be with the radical wing of the labor movement, and especially with the CP which tried in every way possible to impose its proclaimed monopoly of radicalism. It had the prestige and authority of the Russian revolution and the backing of the Soviet government which at that time (before the monstrous Moscow trials of the later 1930s) was very attractive to radicalizing sectors of the working class and student youth.

Even so, the CP was unable to completely intimidate and eradicate the other radical organizations and tendencies: the Socialist Party; the IWW, which intervened ineffectually in some strike situations; the Proletarian Party; the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, headed by A. J. Muste; the Communist League of America, the Trotskyist organization of expelled Communists; the Communist Party (majority group), the name taken by the Lovestone faction after its expulsion from the CP; plus numerous independent radical publications, individuals, sects, and cults.

This was a time of wide-ranging discussion and debate, having to do with the causes of the economic depression, the crisis of capitalism, and the organization of the working class. In some ways it was similar to what is happening today in the radical movement.

For those who were serious about organizing and leading the working class in the victorious revolution against capitalism two issues were paramount: the causes and consequences of the capitalist crisis, and the revolutionary party in relation to the mass organizations of the working class. And overshadowing this was what was referred to as "The Russian Question," which in those days was movement talk to describe

the decline of the Russian revolution and the rise of Stalinism.

TODAY IS DIFFERENT

The big difference between now and the 1920s and early 1930s so far as the radical movement is concerned is that the CP no longer predominates. Over the past sixty years the Stalinist virus has been thoroughly studied and explained. We know what it is now, even if no vaccine strong enough to inoculate its potential victims yet exists.

The Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet government no longer attract radicalizing youth anywhere in the world. The uprising of the Polish working class is more appealing. Genuine revolutionists everywhere seek to spread the flames of revolt to the Soviet Union, with the aim of instituting the new era of socialism which was the goal of the Bolshevik revolution.

There is another important difference for radicals in this country, previously mentioned: even though the radical movement at the end of the 1920s was disoriented by Stalinism and in general disarray, it consisted mainly of working people. This is not true of the radical movement today. It consists mostly of petty-bourgeois radicals having few ties to the working class.

The revolutionary socialist tendency in the working class political movement, as represented by the Socialist Workers Party, has tried persistently for eight years to colonize party cadres and ex-students in industry with little success. These transplants have not adapted well to the foreign environment of factory life, largely because of the party leadership's ill-conceived trade union policy which isolates the party's industrial fractions from union activists.

OUR PROSPECTS

We in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency believe that the revolutionary socialist program upon which the SWP was founded and which it defended until the start of the present decade is destined to attract a new levy of worker radicals and student youth. They will return the party to its original revolutionary course, or they will replace it with a new party that will again raise high the banner of Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

On balance the prospects for the radical revitalization of the U.S. labor movement are brighter now than in 1929. □

THE COMRADES TAKE OVER IN ALEX

The young man was fresh-faced, well spoken, and nattily dressed in crisp gray slacks and white shoes.

"We have made very great progress over the past two weeks," he said matter-of-factly. "I think it can be said that we are now in control of Alexandra. The majority of the people are behind us. The police may control the streets, but we control the people."

Few who watched last week's violence in Alexandra township on Johannesburg's northern outskirts, which ended with an official death toll of 22, will question this assessment. For four days a civil war raged between an army of young student activists on the one hand, and members of the township's municipal council backed by hundreds of troops and police on the other.

By the weekend the councillors and all Alexandra's resident Black policemen had evacuated the township with their families and are now living as refugees in two church halls in nearby white suburbs.

I spoke to some of them there on Friday night and asked when they thought they might be able to return home. "We can't go back to Alex," a policeman's wife replied, as others nodded agreement. "We can't go to any of the other townships either. They (the authorities) will have to build houses for us near the police stations."

Police still patrol Alexandra's streets in armored troop carriers, known as "hippos," because of their top-heavy bulkiness, but they dare not venture into the township on foot. As a hippo moves down one of the rutted streets, all life vanishes in a small radius around it, reemerging as soon as the ungainly vehicle passes from sight. The

range of its control is short and transient.

Meanwhile the youths, known simply as "the comrades," are filling the vacuum of public influence if not yet of actual power. They are organizing into street committees and they move from door to door, persuading, pressuring, and often intimidating the local residents into supporting their struggle for liberation.

Any councillor or resident policeman who has not yet admitted defeat and quit the township is liable to have his house burnt down, or, at worst, be dispatched by the ghastly "necklace" execution--his body pulled through a blazing tire filled with petrol.

"We try to avoid the necklaces, they spoil our reputation," my young informant observed blandly. "But some of the comrades lose their heads when they come across police who have been shooting at them."

As the violence subsides, the security police are beginning to pick up some of the comrade leaders whose names are known. Some will crack under the notorious interrogation methods, leading to more arrests. But the comrades are a huge, anonymous army--a whole alienated generation of under thirties--and there is always someone ready to step in to a vacant plot.

What is happening in Alexandra has occurred in dozens of South Africa's Black townships, especially in the Eastern Cape. Whole councils have resigned, the resident police have pulled out with their families, and the comrades have taken over with their street committees.

Residents no longer pay rent to the government administration boards. Instead the comrades collect fees, conscript troops for their campaigns, decide when strikes and boycotts should be called, take over the organization of funerals of unrest victims, turning them into political rallies, and set up people's courts to try and punish anyone deemed to be assisting the white administration.

Atteridgeville, a township outside Pretoria, has 12 people's courts, with a higher appeal court known as the Advice Office. They hear charges ranging from

We reprint here the text of a report from South Africa printed in the London Observer, February 23, 1986, written by Allister Sparks. Despite the viewpoint of a bourgeois journalist which comes through at times, it gives a good sense of the mass dynamic of the actual revolution taking place in South Africa today.

political collaboration to assault, theft, and even civil cases such as matrimonial disputes.

A Black newspaper published a report last week of the trial of a Mr. Masemola who was charged with the crime of "furthering the aims of the police"--an ironic twist to one of the most frequent charges in South African political trials, which is "furthering the aims of an unlawful organization" like the ANC.

Happily, the newspaper reported that Mr. Masemola was acquitted after his wife and friends gave evidence to show that he wasn't a policeman.

The comrades began organizing in Alexandra only two months ago, according to my informant. They named their central organization the Alexandra Action Committee. By the end of January they had formed 18 street committees, aiming eventually to have one for each of the township's 44 blocks.

A people's court has been set up and heard its first case 10 days ago: a civil matter involving a comrade who abandoned his live-in girlfriend for another but tried to force her to continue working and supporting him. He was warned to stop harassing the girl "or we will take action."

The main task of the committees is to "conscientize" the people, which is the vogue word for arousing their political awareness.

What is the ultimate goal? "Look," the young man replied eagerly, making a circular gesture with his arm to indicate an industrialized sector of northern Johannesburg where he has a well-paid clerical job, "everyone who works here lives in Alex.

"When we have conscientized them all, then at a word from us we can stop all these factories with a strike or cripple the shops with a consumer boycott. That is how the struggle is going to be fought."

When white South Africa established the ghetto townships, it did so partly for security reasons. The townships could be quickly sealed off by the security forces and access to them easily controlled.

Now the comrades are trying to stand that strategy on its head, turning the townships into bases for the revolutionary struggle. □

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FROM THE F.I.T.

*Permanent Revolution, Combined Revolution,
and Black Liberation in the U.S.*

by Larry Stewart **\$1.25**

*George Lavan Weissman's Last Three
Articles* **85¢**

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by Paul Le Blanc, Dianne Feeley,
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*Theses on the Workers' and Farmers'
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and

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*Crisis in the Socialist Workers Party:
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by Cliff Conner **60¢**

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FOURTH INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY HOLDS THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

by David Williams

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency began its third year of existence by holding its third national conference in Cleveland, Ohio, February 15-17. The conference reaffirmed the F.I.T.'s strategic party-building orientation--which is the fight for the reform of the Socialist Workers Party and a reversal of the liquidationist course charted by the party leadership. The national conference also discussed the situation in the Fourth International since the 1985 World Congress, and reaffirmed the F.I.T.'s mass-action perspective in the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements, along with its support to the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC).

The first point on the agenda after the organization of the conference was a report on the relations of the F.I.T. to the Fourth International, given by Steve Bloom of New York. The central theme of this report was the serious threat to the FI from the anti-Trotskyist programmatic and organizational offensive of the SWP leadership and the steps which should be taken by the FI to combat it. The discussion of this point took on added significance because the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International was scheduled to hold a meeting later in February. (See report on the IEC meeting beginning on page 3 of this issue.)

THE FIGHT AGAINST U.S. INTERVENTION

Evelyn Sell of Los Angeles presented the report on F.I.T. perspectives for the anti-intervention movement. The F.I.T. is part of a minority among anti-intervention activists which is presently fighting for the strategy of independent mass action in defense of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran peoples' right to self-determination. A large part of Sell's report focused on the attempt of the ENC to give an organizational expression to that minority point of view within the movement, and its work to turn it into a majority.

Sell presented an evaluation of the ENC's January 1986 national confer-

ence in Los Angeles. The attendance was smaller than everyone involved had hoped, and she stressed that there is nothing to be gained through pretending that the ENC is the broad, authoritative anti-intervention coalition which is objectively needed to defend the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions. However, important new forces were added to the ENC from among those who did attend the L.A. conference, and the serious activists who have been building the ENC all along left L.A. more determined than ever to try to build actions this spring focused around the specific demand of "No Aid to the Contras"--the most immediate concern for supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution right now.

Sell also reported on the retreat from mass action by the April Actions Coalition, which organized the April 20, 1985, demonstrations in Washington D.C. and several West Coast cities, but which has since rejected issuing any call for further demonstrations. In that context she noted the SWP's positive turn toward actively agitating for protests against aid to the Nicaraguan contras, as expressed in Doug Jenness's article in the January 31 Militant, "Action needed against U.S. war in Nicaragua." The SWP has also decided to actively support the April 19 demonstration in San Francisco, called by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice in that city.

WHAT NEXT FOR THE F.I.T.?

The question of F.I.T. priorities in the coming months elicited the most intense debate at the conference. Disagreement centered on what priority to give efforts at a reunification of the three tendencies of the expelled opposition--Socialist Action, Socialist Unity, and the F.I.T.

The reporter for the majority of the outgoing National Organizing Committee, Tom Barrett of New York, concentrated on the situation in the Socialist Workers Party, and what the F.I.T.'s opportunities and difficulties are in the fight to reform the SWP. He

stressed that it remains the F.I.T.'s belief that the road to building a revolutionary party in the United States is "through the SWP, not around it, not above it, not ahead of it, but through it." He detailed the SWP ranks' response to the leadership's political degeneration, noting mixed and confused reactions and the resignation of hundreds of party activists. He especially stressed the almost instinctive desire of SWP members to build mass action, whether against U.S. intervention in Central America, against apartheid, for women's rights, in support of strikes, or wherever else opportunities exist.

Barrett reported on the F.I.T. National Organizing Committee majority resolution's call for "tactical shifts" in the work of the tendency, explaining that these tactical changes are intended to improve the organization's ability to affect the SWP in a positive direction. The fight for the reform of the SWP will not be won quickly. However, as long as revolutionists consider the SWP to be a revolutionary party, and as long as that party represents the overwhelming majority of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States, the battle for the party's reform remains a decisive question.

POSSIBILITIES FOR UNITY?

Barrett reported that the three tendencies which form the expelled opposition have not worked well together to date, and that prospects for reunification cannot be considered bright at the present time (see statement adopted by the conference, "Prospects for Reunification of the Fourth Internationalist Movement in the United States," on p. 27). A genuine discussion among oppositionists is necessary in order to draw the lessons from the party's degeneration, but a discussion with a preannounced goal of fusion would not lead to clarification of the essential political issues.

Reporting for the NOC minority, Bill Onasch of the Twin Cities argued that the results of three SWP conventions since the mass expulsions show clearly that the party ranks, as well as the leadership, have failed to defend the Trotskyist program, and that the F.I.T.'s chances of influencing the SWP's course were severely limited. While agreeing that the SWP remains a revolutionary party, Onasch contended that efforts for the reunification of the expelled opposition had to be made a high priority for the immediate future.

Although such efforts might not be fruitful, he acknowledged, the F.I.T. has the obligation to make a "good-faith probe" of the prospects for reunification.

GREETINGS TO THE CONFERENCE

Written greetings to the F.I.T. national conference were received from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the Alliance for Socialist Action in Canada, and several members of the F.I.T. who could not attend for health or job reasons. Shirley Pasholk of Socialist Action and Dianne Feeley of Socialist Unity were present in person and delivered greetings from their organizations.

After extensive discussion, NOC minority supporters decided to vote in favor of the majority resolution and report, and simply offer amendments to the "prospects for reunification" document. Consequently, the Tasks and Perspectives resolution moved by the majority was overwhelmingly approved. The minority amendments were rejected, and the "prospects for reunification" was approved without fundamental alteration. A third resolution and report presented by Walter Lippmann were rejected by the conference delegates.

LOCAL P-9 SUPPORT

A highlight of the conference was the report by Dave Riehle of the Twin Cities on United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9's strike against the George A. Hormel meatpacking plant in Austin, Minnesota. The F.I.T. Local Organizing Committee in the Twin Cities has been actively involved in support activities for P-9, including the food caravans and mass picketing.

The last point on the conference agenda was the election of a new National Organizing Committee to lead the work of the F.I.T. until its next national conference. Afterward, the new NOC reelected Bloom, Onasch, and Sell as National Coordinators of the F.I.T. □

SOLIDARITY WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

Resolution Approved by F.I.T. National Conference

1. In 1984 South Africa entered its deepest political crisis since the Soweto uprisings of 1976. The struggle of the nonwhite masses has two aspects: first, the Black, Coloured, and Indian communities are fighting for political rights and equality. They are demanding an end to the pass laws, to all forms of segregation, and for equal voting rights, summed up in the slogan: "one person, one vote." At the same time, the working class and its allies are fighting for an end to poverty, wretched housing, substandard education, and inadequate medical care.

2. Racial oppression has existed in South Africa since the first colonization by the Dutch East India Company over three centuries ago. It has taken many forms, but its purposes have always been the same: to force native Africans to work as cheap labor to be exploited by whites, and to assure the ability of those whites to profit from South Africa's natural resources. All talk of "separate development" of the so-called "Black homelands" is a fraud. Areas which are not economically viable have been intentionally set aside as the "homelands," forcing Blacks to seek jobs in industry--especially the all-important mining industry. Though the economy depends on the Black workers, they are citizens of the "homelands," rather than of the Republic of South Africa itself. Consequently, they are forced to carry the infamous "passes," which grant permission to be in white areas. Like undocumented workers in the United States, they are totally at the mercy of the white employers--who can have them deported to the "homeland" if they do not prove to be subservient enough.

3. Though white colonization began in South Africa at about the same time as in North America, it took a different course. There was far less European immigration to South Africa, and the economy was almost exclusively agricultural. The indigenous bourgeoisie did not develop the economic or political strength to establish an independent state.

When diamonds were discovered in 1867 it was British investors who took advantage of the discovery. The vast amounts of capital needed to exploit the gold resources, discovered in the 1880s, could come only from British financiers. The mining camp which was to become modern Johannesburg became populated with a large non-Afrikaner--mostly British--community. The tension between the Afrikaner farmers, known as Boers, and the British colonialists erupted into war in 1899. The result was consolidation of British colonial rule throughout South Africa.

Modern South Africa developed within the British Empire. The British army made sure that British interests were protected. South Africa did not become fully independent until the post-World War II "decolonization." Though politically independent, modern South Africa remains totally dependent on foreign investment.

4. The institutions of racist oppression known as apartheid were begun in the late 1940s. Apartheid actually took away rights which some of the nonwhite communities had previously enjoyed. Blacks in the Cape province had the right to vote until 1936; the Coloured community lost that right in 1948 after the victory of the National Party. The Indian community in Natal province was similarly affected. A series of laws instituted through the 1950s built the oppressive structure which remains in place today--the infamous pass laws, the "Suppression of Communism Act," the "Anti-Terrorism Act," and other laws which deprive the vast majority of South Africans of basic democratic rights.

Apartheid is a particular tool which imperialism has used, from among the many at its disposal, to guarantee the subjugation of the Black population and their economic exploitation by U.S. and British imperialists, as well as by the South Africa bourgeoisie itself. When these forces perceive a sufficient threat to their continued rule as a result of the revolt of the nonwhite masses, they are perfectly capable of making efforts to modify or even abolish

the particular form of exploitation known as apartheid in an attempt to protect bourgeois rule as a whole.

5. The native peoples have fought against white takeover of South Africa since the beginning of colonization. Before the discovery of diamonds and gold the Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho tribes were able, to a certain extent, to stem the small white population's advance. However, between the British victory in the Zulu Wars of the 1870s and the twentieth century there was no significant opposition to white rule.

In 1912 the African National Congress was formed; its purpose was to unite Blacks of all tribes in a campaign for civil rights. Its goals at that time were limited to gradual reforms. The imposition of apartheid after 1948 led the ANC to adopt the methods of direct action. It led, in collaboration with Indian organizations, the "Defiance Campaign" of civil disobedience in 1952, and in 1955, again in collaboration with Indian and Coloured organizations as well as antiracist whites, drafted a declaration called the "Freedom Charter." The Freedom Charter demands equality of races in voting, property ownership, and employment, as well as civil liberties. Revolutionary Marxists support the demands of the Freedom Charter. They are effective demands for organizing mass action, and they expose the reactionary and oppressive character of the South African state. The Charter is not, however, an adequate program in and of itself for the South African revolution.

The Pan-Africanist Congress was founded in 1959, inspired by the anti-colonialist revolutions going on at that time. Unlike the ANC, the PAC rejected collaboration with whites. On March 21, 1960, it staged the peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville. The police massacre (67 dead, 186 wounded) led to the most serious upsurge of Black resistance up to that time. The repression which followed decapitated the PAC, and it has not recovered.

Following the Sharpeville massacre, South Africa's withdrawal from the British Commonwealth and the proclamation of the "Republic of South Africa" in 1961, the ANC dropped its principle of non-violence and established an armed force, called "Umkhonto We Sizwe" (in Zulu, the "spear of the nation"). Its leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were captured in 1963. They remain in prison, and their release is a central demand of the freedom struggle in South Africa today. Since 1963 the ANC leadership has func-

tioned mainly from exile. However, the ANC was instrumental in the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1984. The UDF has played a central role in the current Black upsurge.

In 1968 student council representatives from a number of Black, Coloured, and Asian educational institutions formed the South African Students Association. In 1971 it proclaimed the "Black Consciousness Movement" -- including in its definition of "Black" all victims of racist oppression, that is, Indians and Coloureds, as well as Africans. The Black Consciousness Movement was the inspiration behind the Soweto demonstrations of 1976, and its outstanding leader, Steve Biko, was murdered in police custody in 1977. The Azanian People's Organization and its allies in the National Forum Committee assert that they represent the continuity of the Black Consciousness Movement.

6. After passage of the 1978 law allowing limited trade union rights, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) made a tactical decision to comply temporarily with its provisions prohibiting political activity in order to lessen the danger of repression. This tactical approach allowed FOSATU to grow and consolidate its forces. This year FOSATU joined with the National Union of Mineworkers, the South African Amalgamated Workers Union, and others in forming the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). COSATU has dedicated itself to fighting apartheid as well as fighting for its members' rights on the job, and its formation represents a big advance for the South African working class.

Though some of South Africa's union leaders are influenced by the ANC and others by the National Forum or Black Consciousness Movement, most of them have no connection with any of the existing nationalist organizations. They are an entirely new and vitally important element in the South African Black struggle.

7. Though all of the nationalist organizations have made contributions to the freedom struggle they are all limited by their failure to correctly address the actual relationship between white rule and capitalist rule. The ANC, for example, openly rejects any challenge to bourgeois property. The National Forum, while it criticizes the ANC's rejection of socialist revolution, has tended toward abstention from the struggle for democratic rights.

Revolutionary Marxists are in sol-

idity with all of the existing nationalist organizations, but we do not express a political preference for one over the others at this time. Our support to the campaign against apartheid is unconditional--it does not depend on our agreement or disagreement with its leadership. However, prospects for the victory of the struggle will be greatly improved when its participants come to apply the necessary programmatic understanding. This will occur both through discussion and experience, and Fourth Internationalists seek a process of dialogue and collaboration with all those involved in the fight against apartheid in order to make what contribution we can to this process.

Building the struggle against apartheid is an essential part of advancing an overall revolutionary perspective in South Africa which can combine the tasks of the democratic struggle with those of the proletarian revolution. Today, democratic demands have the most potential for mobilizing South African workers and their allies. The working class is the best and most consistent fighter for these demands, and must lead the revolutionary struggle which alone can truly achieve them. As it fights for its democratic rights, the working class is also putting forward its own demands, anti-capitalist demands, and will need to forge a revolutionary party. In this way, the proletarian revolution against capitalist exploitation flows directly from the democratic struggle, and the two are inseparably bound together.

The Socialist Workers Party has traditionally put forward a similar strategy of combined revolution in the United States, which takes account of the struggle of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities for self-determination as well as the objective necessity for socialist revolution. That general approach is entirely applicable in South Africa, even though the SWP now says it is not.

8. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency seeks to join with others in building mass action in the United States against apartheid. The Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean made a correct decision to involve itself in the fight for freedom in South Africa. The demand for U.S. economic sanctions, especially the slogan "Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua," is an effective one for

organizing broad demonstrations, though of course there are many others. The youth on the college campuses have led the way in this fight so far, and we must aid their efforts.

Nonexclusionary mass action, organized to maximize participation by the student movement and labor, is the best means for revolutionists in the United States to fight apartheid and aid our sisters and brothers struggling for freedom in South Africa.

February 15, 1986

F.I.T. CONFERENCE ENDORSES SAN FRANCISCO APRIL 19 DEMONSTRATION

In approving the anti-intervention report by Evelyn Sell delegates to the F.I.T. national conference voted their endorsement of the April 19 demonstration in San Francisco, called by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice. Sell explained that April 19 would be "an action similar to the April 20 mobilization last year." She stressed, "the F.I.T. National Coordinators recommend that we endorse the April 19 march and rally because of its mass action character and the opportunity it affords to mobilize anti-intervention forces in a united front effort."

Members of the F.I.T. on the West Coast will be active in mobilizing local participation in the San Francisco march. We urge everyone who possibly can to join this important action.

PROSPECTS FOR REUNIFICATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Statement Adopted by F.I.T. National Conference

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been more than two years since the Barnes leadership of the Socialist Workers Party carried out its mass purge of members it knew or believed to be opposed to the sweeping programmatic revisions introduced after the 1981 party convention. During that time, the expelled members have become clearly differentiated into three distinct tendencies, each now in a separate organization. This creates four separate organizational components of the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country--the SWP itself, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and Socialist Unity.

The SWP remains by far the largest of the four, but its decline in membership continues as the programmatic disorientation of the leadership becomes greater. With occasional local exceptions, no effort is made by the party to provide leadership for the mass movement in the U.S. It remains primarily a commentator on the class struggle, chasing after initiatives taken by others.

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency has, for two years, pursued our goal of reforming the SWP, and continues to do so. We have carried out a programmatic struggle in defense of Marxism as well as being active, to the extent we were able given our numbers and material resources, in the class struggle--in particular through the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements, but in other areas as well.

Socialist Action has consistently pursued its original goal of creating an organizational alternative to the SWP. Socialist Unity, whose present members originally subscribed to the goals of SA, now constitutes a separate organization pursuing an objective of fusion with International Socialists and Workers Power.

Ordinarily, tendencies within a single country which are all part of a common international movement would also be part of the same national party. Had that been the case in the U.S. over the past two years we would have had a struggle within that common party over

perspectives for building the revolutionary organization, with a single line being tested in practice. Our present situation, however, represents four lines being carried out in practice by four different groups.

We believe that after two years of experience with this sort of functioning it is appropriate to see what conclusions have been drawn by the four components of our common Fourth Internationalist movement, and if there is any possibility of reversing the process of fragmentation which was imposed on us as a result of the bureaucratic purge carried out by the SWP leadership. It should be clear to all that the present dispersal of our movement creates difficulties for the construction of a revolutionary party in this country. It weakens us within the class struggle; it confuses those who look to our movement for leadership and guidance; and it severely restricts our ability to combat our political opponents effectively.

It would certainly be desirable for us to overcome this obstacle. But truly overcoming it will take a willingness to grapple with the genuine objective difficulties which stand in the way of reunification. We hope that by publishing this statement in the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism we can initiate a frank but fraternal discussion as a first step in such a process. We will make space available in subsequent issues for appropriate replies from the SWP, SA, or SU.

We believe that efforts at joint practical work are important as well, and have made a number of proposals for common projects with other Fourth Internationalists over the past few months. We will continue to do so in the future. We will also respond favorably when we can to proposals initiated by the other groups.

II. OUR COMMON PERSPECTIVES

A. The SWP, F.I.T., SA, and SU all continue to identify themselves in a fraternal way with the Fourth International, prohibited from establishing regular ties due to reactionary legisla-

tion. All four groups continue to be recognized in this capacity by our world movement. This, together with our common history, is the basic tie which binds us together.

B. The three organizations of the expelled opposition all formally defend the programmatic traditions of the international Trotskyist movement. These include the following concepts: 1) the interrelationship of the three sectors of the world revolution, 2) permanent revolution, 3) political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers' states, 4) workers' democracy both at the level of the revolutionary party and in the mass movement, and 5) the transitional method and the application of the united front in approaching the class struggle.

III. OBSTACLES TO UNITY

A. The primary obstacle to the organizational unity of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States remains the expulsions carried out by the SWP leadership, and its refusal to comply with the demands of the 1985 World Congress for reintegration of the expellees. The only way a rapid reconsolidation of Fourth Internationalist forces could be achieved in this country would be through a reversal of this destructive course by the SWP leadership. Were they to agree to the demands of the world congress delegates, it would allow the four tendencies which now exist as separate organizations to coexist within a united party -- as different tendencies coexisted in the SWP in the past, carrying out a normal democratic discussion in the organization as a whole with decisions made by majority vote.

B. Thus, it is essential for the expelled opposition to carry on a struggle for such a reunification with the SWP. We must continue to wage that battle both within the Fourth International and here in the United States. The programmatic and theoretical struggle to defend Marxism against the revisionist and liquidationist international current represented by Barnesism also remains a primary necessity for the organizations of expelled members. Our different assessments of the overall importance of these tasks and how to carry them out was one of the main causes of the initial divisions within our ranks. The experience of the past two years of struggle has not eliminated this diver-

gence of approach, and it continues to be an obstacle to common practical work.

C. One of the prerequisites to any common functioning of the expelled opposition must be recognition of the legitimacy of all components of the Fourth International, despite our profound disagreements. In this regard the attempts by Socialist Action to read Socialist Unity out of the Fourth International because of their dispute about the actions of these comrades while they were in a common group are impermissible. Just as we demand that the SWP acknowledge a common Fourth Internationalist movement in this country despite its leaders' assertions about the "discipline" of the opposition--assertions which many members of the party genuinely believe--so is it incumbent on Socialist Action to recognize SU as part of our world movement, until SU's own actions or the decisions of the International place them outside of it.

D. Important differences have arisen among the expelled SWP members about a correct interpretation and application of the basic strategic principles of Trotskyism we have all pledged ourselves to defend. For example, Socialist Action has adopted positions which see the present revolutionary process in Central America as in fundamental contradiction to the concept of permanent revolution, whereas F.I.T. and SU see this same process as confirming our theoretical approach in a positive sense. Such differences over the substantive meaning and application of program within the international class struggle are far more decisive than purely formal agreements about theoretical abstractions.

E. The F.I.T. has profound disagreements with all of the other components of the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country regarding a correct relationship to the Fourth International as a whole. Our differences with the Barnes leadership of the party are documented and well known. We completely reject their attempts to rewrite the history and overthrow the program of the FI, along with their effort to undermine the International organizationally through maneuvers such as that carried out by their co-thinkers in England, which have led to a severe crisis and split in our British section.

But our differences with Socialist Action and Socialist Unity are also significant. Socialist Action has stated that the present majority leadership of the FI, like the Barnes current,

represents liquidationism within the Fourth International and is not far behind Barnes in abandoning a revolutionary Marxist program. The comrades who make up Socialist Unity, on the other hand, have had a history of accepting in a totally uncritical fashion whatever view is presented by the majority in the United Secretariat.

The F.I.T.'s perspective has been to see the present international majority current as an ally in the fight to preserve the programmatic traditions of our world movement. They have demonstrated their capacity to combat the programmatic revisions and undemocratic organizational practices of the SWP leadership. What differences we have are over subordinate problems of how to apply and explain our fundamental principles.

But we have also defended our own viewpoint within the context of this broader view. For example, from the earliest point of the struggle we urged greater concentration on the programmatic and theoretical fight against Barnesism--proposing that it be carried through in a more vigorous fashion and that those forces in the FI who understood the need to carry it out be organized in an international tendency or faction. Had such a policy been followed, we believe, the present crisis in England might well have been avoided, or at least alleviated. We have also maintained a number of differences on theoretical questions--such as the workers' and farmers' government--where the tradition of the SWP differs somewhat from that of others in the FI. We believe that constructive criticism is an essential component of a serious approach by revolutionists to their international movement (as well as to their national organization).

F. The different experiences of the four tendencies in the U.S.A. have also revealed strikingly different attitudes toward democratic centralist functioning within the revolutionary party. The SWP leadership has begun to openly change its position on this--by rejecting the viewpoint outlined in the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialist Democracy" resolution adopted at the 1985 World Congress. And of course it has in practice rejected any serious concept of democracy in the party through its bureaucratic purge and attempts at ostracism against the expelled members.

The leadership of Socialist Action has demonstrated an inability to grasp the substance of Leninist organization, though attempting -- after their own fashion--to adhere to certain forms borrowed wholesale from the past functioning of the SWP. What the SA leadership has not understood is that democratic centralism cannot be reduced to a specific set of rules and regulations, good for all times and places. In particular, forging unity in action following democratic discussion and decision making is not an automatic process. It cannot be legislated or manufactured artificially, but is dependent on a history and experience with democratic functioning which must be constantly renewed in the life of a Leninist organization.

Socialist Unity, on the other hand, seems to be making an opposite error: reacting against a bureaucratic centralism imposed in the SWP and what they perceive as a similar abuse in SA by moving toward fusion with other forces which consciously reject any form of democratic centralism--in fact reject any centralized functioning whatsoever. SU does so not with an apparent intention of combatting the wrong understanding of the other forces in this process, but rather with rationalizations, generalizations, and one-sided references to the importance of democracy which abandon the historical lessons of the class struggle on the necessary functions of centralism within the revolutionary movement.

G. There are a number of tactical disagreements which have arisen between the four tendencies concerning our practical work within the class struggle in the United States--most particularly within the anti-intervention movement. These do not seem to represent a principled obstacle to reunification, but have obviously created serious frictions and within the context of our other problems have taken on an extra measure of importance. A discussion of these points will continue in the course of working to build an independent, democratic, labor-oriented mass action movement in defense of the interests of working people and their allies in this country and around the world. We look to political convergence in these tasks as the most effective way of resolving tactical differences.

February 17, 1986

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

by Michael Steven Smith

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: The Dynamics of South African and Israeli Rule, Louise Cainkar, editor. Palestine Human Rights Campaign (220 S. State St., #1308, Chicago, Il 60604). 98 pp., \$3.00.

I read this pamphlet while I was on a fact-finding trip to the West Bank and Gaza with a delegation of U.S. attorneys. We were investigating the legal and humanitarian aspects of deportation orders issued against four Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories. The pamphlet gave another dimension to what I saw firsthand.

This is a well-conceived collection of short pieces by Israeli and American analysts (Black, white, and Jewish) written in the finest traditions of political pamphleteering. Its publication is especially timely given the American public's interest in and support of the Black struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the Israeli government's renewal of its "iron fist" measures against the native population it militarily rules. It is especially hard-hitting because it makes the connections.

As Rev. Donald E. Wagner of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign writes in his introduction:

"The parallels between South Africa's system of legalized racism and that of Israel are well-known in academic circles but rarely discussed in the mainstream media, peace community, or halls of Congress. Israel's systematic colonization of Palestine, its strategies to create Bantustans in the Occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, its attempt to delegitimize and avoid the elected leadership of the Palestinians, its brutal tactics of military control and pre-emptive warfare, and its doctrine of racial supremacy all have their parallels in South Africa. In addition, these two settler-colonial regimes have 'found each other,' and have developed a military-economic interdependence."

The four Palestinians the government sought to deport for "security reasons" -- also Nelson Mandela's crime -- have all been outspoken in their resistance to Israeli designs vis-a-vis the West Bank and Gaza. They are:

Hasan Abd al Jawad, a journalist who heads the Bethlehem Press Service and a leader in the Dsheshieh refugee camp;

Ali Abu Hilal, the founder and secretary of the Workers Unity Block, a large organization of 52 affiliated unions of Palestinian workers on the West Bank;

Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi, a dentist who served as city councilman in his West Bank town of El-Bireh until it was dissolved by the Israelis in 1982;

Zaki Abu Steiteh, accused of having made nationalist speeches and singing Palestinian songs at his wedding.

"Palestine Life Under Israeli Apartheid," the subject of a lucid speech Israel Shahak of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights and Hebrew University recently gave in the U.S., is reprinted here.

We had the good fortune of meeting him at our West Bank hotel. He recounted the story of a Palestinian who, along with several friends, had completed construction of his home. To celebrate they had a party and baked a cake, frosting it black, white, green, and red -- the Palestinian national colors. The Israeli army raided the party and arrested the man, who served a prison sentence. They confiscated the criminal cake.

The Arabic language press is even more heavily censored than the Israeli press. Daoub Kuttab, the editor of Al Fajr, told us that to get around the censorship they will submit "scoops" to the Hebrew papers and then reprint them. Even obituaries are scrutinized by the government. The word "homeland" is forbidden in crossword puzzles.

The fundamental Israeli operation though is directed at seizing Arab land. The pamphlet provides excellent ammunition on this score. Fifty-two percent of the land on the West Bank, occupied since 1967, has already been taken from Arabs for the exclusive use of Jews. It is illegal for a Jew even to rent this land to an Arab. The number of settlers in the West Bank is about 50,000, the

Michael Steven Smith, an attorney who practices law in New York City, is a member of the National Lawyers Guild. He has been active in the civil rights and peace movements in the United States.

number of Palestinians there is more than 850,000, that is, 17 times greater, but less than one-half of the land in their homeland is intended for their benefit.

Palestinians in the "conquered territories" are forbidden to draw from their own wells greater amounts of water than those which were drawn in 1967. The military government forbids the opening in the territories of any new factory which will make products for sale to the inhabitants of the territories. Israeli exports to the territories are not only allowed but actually encouraged. At the same time exports from the territories to Israel are, for all practical purposes, prohibited.

Truly former South African prime minister Verwoerd knew what he was talking about when he wrote: "The Jewish people took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there a thousand years. In that I agree with them; Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state."

Attorney Adrien K. Wing organized a delegation from the National Conference of Black Lawyers in March of 1985. Her excellent essay points out that "Israel is the major investor in the South African 'independent' homelands, the 13 percent of the barren land reserved for the 76 percent majority population." And, too, "Israel is the largest supplier of arms to South Africa."

She writes of the same reaction -- "shock" -- that we had of the massive human rights violations. "It comes down to Bantustans in the Holy Land. Conditions of forced migrant labor exist as in South Africa, where the vast majority of the population can't live in areas of their choosing. In the Occupied Territories we found that two-thirds of the labor force must commute to Israel to work every day. They carried identity cards similar to the passbooks required of Blacks in South Africa."

Black congressman from Detroit George Crockett returned from Israel on September 13, 1985, and released a statement which is reprinted in the pamphlet. Crockett stated that his talks and observations had convinced him that the situation in the occupied territories "was desperate and deteriorating." He called for a denial of American funds which allow Israel to settle the West Bank and to "maintain a military establishment in the West Bank and Gaza that functions not just for national defense, but as a finely honed instrument of repression against an entire subject people." □

P.S. Word has reached the U.S. that on January 30 three of the Palestinian prisoners described above (Hasan Abd al Jawad, Ali Abu Hilal, and Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi) were taken from Nablus Prison, where they had been since their arrest three months ago, and set on foot into the Jordanian desert.

Article 49 of the Geneva Accords forbids the deportation of civilians from an occupied territory. Israel signed the agreement in 1949, perhaps being mindful then of the recent experience of Jews under European fascism.

In order to deport the men, Israel relied on a British Emergency Regulation from 1945, which the British themselves revoked. Prior to Israel's establishment in 1948, Mr. Yaacov Shimson Shapira, who was to become the first legal advisor to the Israeli government, said of these laws that "they are unparalleled in any civilized country" and that "even in Nazi Germany there were no such laws."

Protest messages calling for the return of the men can be effective and should be sent to Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the Knesset, Jerusalem, Israel, and to George Shultz, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520, with copies to Attorney Lea Tsemel, 2 Abu Obeida, Jerusalem.

Michael Steven Smith

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DON'T STRANGLE THE PARTY

by Chester Hofla

Don't Strangle the Party, by James P. Cannon. Published by Fourth Internationalist Tendency (P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009) and Socialist Unity (17300 Woodward, Detroit, MI 48203). 1986, 24 pp., \$1.25 (postage included).

The purge that decimated the Socialist Workers Party from 1982 to 1984 was political to the core. The group around national secretary Jack Barnes had decided that the Trotskyist program and traditions were a handicap, from which the SWP should disassociate itself, so that they could more effectively seek an alliance or fusion with the Castroist current in Cuba and Central America.

The problem, as the Barnes group knew, was that many SWP members would bitterly resist a reorientation away from Trotskyism and toward Castroism. How the membership as a whole would react, if there was a fair and full discussion of the issues in accord with past SWP practice, was unknown. The Barnes group decided not to take the risk of such a discussion. It decided to expel those who might offer any opposition to the planned reorientation before such a discussion could be held.

On what basis could they be expelled? The histories of the labor bureaucracy, the Social Democratic bureaucracy, and the Stalinist bureaucracy provided plenty of examples of how to go about this. You don't accuse the victims of your purge of having legitimate differences worthy of discussion -- instead you accuse them of multiple violations of discipline, disloyalty, secret factionalism, etc.

The victims of the 1982-84 purge were not guilty of such crimes and misdemeanors, but that did not help them escape expulsion, because the SWP leadership began to redefine and reinterpret the organizational norms that had regulated party procedures and relations up to then. Some examples:

At one branch meeting the chairperson persistently refused to recognize a member who had repeatedly raised her hand to request the floor; when another member protested by loudly asking why the chairperson was acting in this way, he was expelled for trying to "intimidate" the chairperson. The SWP has a good rule against intimidation or violence among members, but it had never before been interpreted or used to sanction the expulsion of a political opponent.

On another occasion the SWP Nation-

al Committee voted that one of its members had "placed himself outside the party" because he had let another member (not on the NC) read a letter which the NC member had written to the NC, which he asked be made available to the whole membership. This was probably the first time in the SWP's long history that anybody had been accused of and penalized for disloyalty for showing a letter to another member.

When oppositionists and critics pointed out that there were no constitutional bases or precedents for such disciplinary measures, the leadership replied by pointing to a resolution that the SWP had adopted at its 1965 convention, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party." They denied that they were applying "new organizational norms" and contended that they were only enforcing norms approved by the founders of our movement.

In this way the 1965 resolution became an issue in the disputes preceding the 1982-84 purge. One purpose of the pamphlet under review, as George Breitman's introduction in it indicates, is to show that James P. Cannon, the principal founder of the SWP, did not approve or endorse the kinds of interpretations of the 1965 resolution that the Barnes group concocted in order to justify the expulsion of pro-Trotskyist elements in the 1980s.

On the basis of three letters and a talk by Cannon in 1966 and 1967 (that is, after the adoption of the 1965 resolution), this pamphlet also demonstrates that Cannon continued to affirm the democratic centralist character and traditions of the SWP and to oppose efforts to "tighten" or "centralize" the party along the lines that the Barnes group put into effect in the 1980s.

The four Cannon items and the introduction were all printed in the Bulletin IDOM at one time or another, but their impact is greater when they are read together. Readers of the Bulletin ought to get copies for themselves to keep, because this pamphlet is as memorable and well written as Cannon's other writings, and they ought to help circulate it among all who are interested in the problems of building a Leninist party in this country.

Don't Strangle the Party is co-published by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and Socialist Unity, victims of the SWP purge. Socialist Action, another victim, was also invited to be a co-publisher, but declined. □

THE VALIDITY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION (1979)

by George Novack

I propose to speak not about Trotsky, the man of action, leader of a revolution, master of insurrection, war leader, cofounder with Lenin of the Third International, and later founder of the Fourth International. My theme is not Trotsky the doer but Trotsky the thinker, the analyst of history and society, the Marxist politician and theoretician.

It is difficult to do justice to this subject. Trotsky was the most prolific writer of the Marxist movement. His pen was continuously active for over four decades. Thirteen volumes of his collected works were published in the Soviet Union up to his ouster from the leadership in 1926. A complete collection of his writings would total four or five times that number of volumes. He commented on almost every significant political event and question during his adult years.

So I must be very selective. I will focus on five aspects of his thought which seem to me most valuable, pertinent, and enduring. These are his celebrated theory of the permanent revolution; the law of uneven and combined development; his conception of the nature of Stalinism; his views on the Black struggle in the United States; and, last but not least, the evolution of his position on the revolutionary party. Even so, I am leaving out such irreplaceable contributions as his analysis of fascism.

The phrase "the permanent revolution" is better known than its content is understood.

This is excerpted from an article entitled: "Leon Trotsky's Contributions to Marxism," which was printed in the *Militant* Nov. 16, 1979, in the *International Socialist Review's* commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of Trotsky's birth. The evaluation of permanent revolution by Novack, then a top educator in the Socialist Workers Party, was in full accord with the ones made by the SWP and its press ever since the *Militant* was founded in 1928. But this 1979 article proved to be the last one favorable to permanent revolution published in the SWP press by any SWP leader or member.

Although both the term and its meaning can be found in some of Marx's writings, and was anticipated before him by the Babeuvists of 1795 during the decline of the French revolution, it is rightly and inseparably linked with Trotsky. He gave the theory its first systematic exposition in 1905-06 as a result of his analysis of Russia's peculiar social structure and his insight into the dynamics of the 1905 revolution.

Permanent Revolution

This theory flowed from a recognition of two historical facts. The transition from precapitalist to capitalist conditions had proceeded with extreme unevenness in different countries and continents and this disparity of economic and social development entailed epoch-making *political* consequences. It would direct the twentieth century revolutions along a fundamentally different path than the revolutions of the preceding epoch.

From the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries the first-born countries of capitalism in Western Europe and North America, such as the Netherlands, England, France, and the United States had, as a result of their advanced economic and social development, gone through colossal revolutionary upheavals that refashioned their social systems along capitalist lines and more or less organized their political structures in accord with bourgeois democratic specifications.

The nations of East Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East were hardly drawn into this renovation. They had yet to win the national independence and unity, the modernization of their institutions, the large-scale reform of agrarian relations, and the democratic parliamentary regimes won in the West.

There was an organic connection between this underdevelopment of the nations historically retarded in economic and social respects and the more favorable conditions among the major capitalist powers. That fatal link was the rise of the colonial system which formed a cornerstone of commercial and industrial capitalism and was buttressed by imperialism. Foreign capital reaped advantages from the primitiveness of czarist Russia, while the colonies were not so much underdeveloped as superexploited. The

very global expansion of capitalist enterprises that spurred the bourgeois democratic movements that came to power in the West inhibited and prevented the growth and success of democratic movements in the colonial world.

Dynamics of Underdevelopment

Consequently, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the bulk of humanity living in the backward and semicolonial countries were beset by two crucial questions: "How did we fall under the subjugation of imperialism and how can we get out of it?" Trotsky's major theoretical discoveries dealt with these questions. The law of uneven and combined development explains the reasons for the first condition and the theory of permanent revolution is the key to the mode of its elimination.

The bourgeois-democratic struggles against outdated forms of feudal, clerical, slave-holding, and monarchical sovereignty and their precapitalist property relations had already been carried to conclusion in the plutocratic countries. But it had been postponed to the point of almost intolerable urgency in the greater part of the planet. This posed the problem: how were these peoples to catch up with the more privileged and wealthy Western metropolises whose ruling classes exploited and dominated them?

Many mistakenly believed that the countries which had yet to be modernized would follow in the footsteps of their Western forerunners and go forward to liberal democracy under capitalist rule. This still prevails as the propaganda line in official, reformist, and academic circles.

However the backward and semicolonial nations could not duplicate the process of *revolution* experienced by their predecessors precisely because they had been forced into a different pattern of *evolution*. Neither in their economic nor their political development could they reproduce with some delay and minor variations the models provided by the imperialist exploiters.

The theory of permanent revolution clarified the reasons for this anomaly. The roles of the social classes were to be vastly different in the declining senior stage of capitalism than they had been in its progressive junior ones.

The main tasks of the democratic revolution in the bourgeois era were as follows: the achievement of national autonomy and unity, agrarian reform, secularization (separation of church from state), the elimination of precapitalist relations of production, the creation of a democratic state capped by industrialization. These tasks had been undertaken and solved with varying degrees of success under the leadership of radical and liberal elements of the bourgeoisie of the West during their heyday when commercial and industrial capitalism flourished.

However, the forms of bourgeois life and labor

had been stifled and stunted in the backward and colonized areas while remaining yoked together with precapitalist survivals and even revivals, like chattel slavery. Because of their mangled and meager development and fear of the upsurge of the workers and poor peasants on their own behalf, the local bourgeoisies within these countries had no capacity for shouldering the gigantic tasks of revolution and leading the popular masses in all-out struggle against imperialism for a thorough renovation of the old regimes along democratic lines.

Decisive Role of Workers

Trotsky arrived at his highly original conclusions through a concrete analysis of semifeudal, semicapitalist Russia and the dynamics of the class forces disclosed during the defeated 1905 revolution. On the basis of these events he set forth the following propositions:

The liberal bourgeoisie had become impotent and politically bankrupt; when the chips were down it would go over to counterrevolution. The peasantry and anti-czarist intelligentsia could play significant but only auxiliary roles in the revolutionary process. The sole available candidate for revolutionary leadership that could carry the struggle for democratic demands through to the end was the proletariat, a new class that was the special product of the industrial revolution.

Thus the unique alignment of social forces produced by the whole preceding evolution of world capitalism had prepared the conditions, Trotsky deduced, for an interpenetration of successive historical stages in twentieth century Russia. This correlation had two major aspects.

First, because the anticapitalist working class was the paramount political force guiding the upheaval, the democratic tasks appropriate to a belated antifeudal revolution inevitably became intertwined with the tasks of the socialist revolution.

These included the conquest of power by the proletariat at the head of the insurgent masses; the abolition of capitalist private property; guaranteeing of self-determination to oppressed nationalities; the collectivization of agricultural production; the creation of a planned economy and the state monopoly of foreign trade crowned by the institutions of socialist democracy. These accomplishments would promote the most rapid growth of the economy and lead to lifting the standards of consumption and culture, the overcoming of inequalities, the liberation of women, enlargement of democracy on all levels, the gradual elimination of the differences between mental and manual labor and between the city and countryside, the uprooting of alienation in social life, and the removal of the gap between the rich and the poor nations, about which much is said but so little done nowadays.

These desired objectives could be attained in only one way: by extending the world revolution through the establishment of workers power in the most advanced countries where the most highly developed productive forces and the seats of imperialist power were located.

Combined Revolution

Second, the fight for bourgeois-democratic rights and the struggle for workers power, one belonging to the dawn and the other to the sunset of capitalist society, had to be carried out by an alliance of the workers and peasants in mortal combat against the power and property of the unholy alliance of the native bourgeoisie, the precapitalist exploiters, and the foreign imperialists.

The two components could not be separated in time or space; the one grew over into the other as the revolution deepened. The historical opposites were integrated in dialectical dependence. This conception of the revolutionary process and its socialist strategy for czarist Russia—projected by Trotsky in 1906 and indicated as early as his writings of 1904—was put to the test in 1917. It was adopted in principle by Lenin upon his return from exile in April and guided the Bolsheviks' policy leading to their victory in October.

The experience in China in the mid-1920s, where Stalin's policy of supporting the leadership of the national bourgeoisie as the natural leader of the democratic revolution ended in disaster, convinced Trotsky that it was not limited to Russia but was valid for all the economically backward countries.

The validity of its essential ideas has been positively vindicated since World War II by the course and outcome of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Cuban, and Vietnamese revolutions. It is being tested anew in Iran and Nicaragua today.

This conception has found confirmation in the negative by the inability of those colonial peoples that have not combined their struggle for national sovereignty with a victorious onslaught against capitalist property and power to achieve either a stable and durable democratic regime or an escape from the yoke of imperialism. Witness the Iranian revolutionary upsurges of 1906 and 1945-53. And witness the continent of Latin America from Mexico to Argentina and Chile.

In addition to illuminating the road to power and liberation from imperialism, the theory of permanent revolution involves two further theses. One asserts that while the revolutionary forces can be victorious in a single backward country without waiting for any others, as happened in Russia in 1917-18 and Cuba in 1959-60, the revolutionary process cannot be confined within the borders of a single country. It cannot realize its basic aims nor can its full program be

consummated in a socialist order unless workers power has taken hold in the most highly industrialized sections of the globe. This revolutionary internationalist position and perspective is squarely counterposed to the Stalinist national-bureaucratic utopian dogma of building socialism in a single country.

The theory further stresses that the suppression of capitalism does not all at once and equally eradicate all the relations and customs of the past but only overthrows those economic, political, and legal institutions at the root of capitalist domination. After the conquest of power, the worker-peasant revolution is obliged to tackle and remove inherited obsolescences as fast as conditions permit. There's the rub. Experience has shown that this is easier indicated than accomplished, above all in the poor and backward workers states encircled by imperialism where the anticapitalist revolutions up to now have taken place.

* * *

In discussing the principal tenets of the permanent revolution, I have already touched upon the second of Trotsky's contributions to Marxist thought: the law of uneven and combined development. This juxtaposition is not accidental, because the theory of permanent revolution is a particular expression of this more general law. The one is limited to the conditions and problems of the period of transition from the capitalist system to socialism, whereas the other has a far broader application to the entire span of humanity's evolution.

Indeed, Trotsky consciously formulated the wider law of uneven and combined development after elaborating the more restricted conception and as a generalization of it. The successive stages of Trotsky's intellectual enlightenment on this score can be studied in two of his works: *Results and Prospects*, written in 1906, and the first chapter of his masterful *History of the Russian Revolution*, written in the early 1930s.

Uneven Development

The starting point of the law is the empirical observation that the course of history and social life through the ages has not been harmonious, balanced, and symmetrical but characterized by extreme irregularities of all kinds at every step along the way. One of the most dramatic instances of this disparity took place when the aboriginal inhabitants of North America were brought face to face with the white invaders from Europe.

At this juncture, two completely separated routes of social evolution, the products of some thirty thousand years of independent growth in the New World and the Old, encountered and came to grips with each other. People living in

the preclass tribal conditions of the Stone Age collided with newcomers equipped with all the acquisitions of class society from private property to firearms. We know the bloody genocidal result.

Gross differences in development are also to be found, not only between peoples living on different levels of progress, but also within specific social and national structures and their class components.

The American workers, for example, have one of the highest living standards in the world and yet, as a class, are at the lowest stage of political consciousness and organization. They are today the only working class in a major industrial country that has yet to create a mass political organization independent of the capitalist parties, whether of the Laborite, Social Democratic, Stalinist, or revolutionary types.

Moreover, it remains in subordination to the capitalist rulers while only ninety miles from Florida the much weaker Cuban working class has gotten rid of that incubus within their own borders.

Throughout its evolution capitalism by its very nature has given rise to all sorts of economic inequalities: unevenness of development between industry and agriculture; between the first industrialized countries and the colonial and semicolonial dependencies; between different branches of industry; and between different and even adjacent regions of the same country (contrast Appalachia with the Midwest and California).

I have already pointed out that the accumulation of the irregularities produced by the unequal development of capitalist civilization up to the twentieth century set the stage for the new turn in world history whereby the bourgeois forces became antirevolutionary while their antithesis, the working class, has had to take over the progressive functions they previously performed.

The underlying cause of the different rates of growth in history and among the various elements of social life is the faster or slower growth of the productive forces. The resultant differences in economic power impart varying rates and extents of growth to different peoples, different branches of society, different classes, different social institutions and fields of culture.

But unevenness is only the primordial aspect of the total process. The disproportionate development among the diverse sections of society and the various factors of social life has a very important consequence. The contact and coexistence of features belonging to earlier stages of development with those at a later level of development provide the possibility for the merger of elements belonging to both in a combined formation. These hybrids deviate from the normal type and exhibit pronounced peculiarities because of their highly contradictory character.

The periods of transition from one socioeco-

omic order to a higher one have been especially marked by this intermeshing of the old and the new. This held true for the passage from precapitalist societies to the capitalist world system and even more for the present period of changeover from predominant capitalist to postcapitalist relations. Capitalism did not develop in a void but arose, expanded and came to global mastery in incessant and inseparable interaction with precapitalist modes of production ranging all the way from tribalism to feudalism. Despite the disparities in their economic and cultural levels, capitalism welded together in a single system progressive institutions and ideas with primitive and cruder ones. This amalgamation of features appropriate to very different kinds of historical development has generated very peculiar phenomena and produced some surprising turns and twists in history.

I referred to a few of these American experiences in the collection of essays *Understanding History*. In the Carolinas at the time of colonial settlement, a capitalist shareholding enterprise acting under a royal grant tried to establish unalloyed feudal relations, at a time when feudalism had been largely surpassed in England; the scheme didn't work. Later in that same area there was a bourgeoisified chattel slavery in which communistic Creek Indians who held slaves sold their products on a capitalist market, thereby combining three distinct stages of evolution. We've seen a twentieth century president who calls upon a medieval god to bless Washington's war in Indochina and the napalming of women and children, thereby combining medieval superstition with imperialist brutality.

This law provides the key to deciphering the complexities and anomalies of the contemporary revolutions which under unfavorable conditions have had to tackle the democratic tasks left over from the deficient bourgeois era with the socialist tasks necessitated by modern technique and culture. Thus, in order to win national independence from Yankee imperialism, Cuba had to break with capitalism and start on the road toward socialism. This overloading of historical tasks saddled upon the postcapitalist countries should be kept in mind in assessing the characteristics of their progress—and regress.

And the concept of combined development allows us to foresee the possibility of the American workers overcoming their political and ideological backwardness in the coming years with stunning rapidity, forging a mass party to represent their interests, and bringing forward a powerful revolutionary Marxist vanguard in the course of a tempestuous mass radicalization—perhaps even surpassing some more politically advanced working classes of the industrialized West in the pace of their development. □

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