

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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GEORGE BREITMAN (1916-1986)

More Than Half a Century of Revolutionary Dedication

by the Editorial Board of 'Bulletin in Defense of Marxism'

After almost thirty years of unremitting illness, George Breitman died on April 19. He was seventy years old. The immediate cause of death was a heart attack, but he had suffered from a wide variety of ailments, including rheumatoid arthritis, ulcers, and cancer, and had recently survived surgery on his stomach and a life-threatening abscess in his head and neck. Although he was in constant pain whenever he was not asleep, and grew progressively weaker over the past several months, he continued to spend much of his waking time in productive political work, dictating three letters from his hospital bed only two days before his death.

FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE SWP

Breitman joined the Spartacus Youth League in 1935, at the age of 19, and later that year the Workers Party of the U.S., a forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party. From that time until his death fifty-one years later he never wavered in his dedication to building the revolutionary socialist movement. He was a delegate to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1937, and remained a loyal and dedicated member of that organization until 1984. In that year the present SWP leaders--who had developed profound political differences with the historical program of the party which Breitman continued to defend--shamefully expelled him and dozens of his comrades on trumped-up charges of "disloyalty." After his expulsion from the SWP Breitman immediately set out to organize the expellees and to try to save the party and its program. He helped to found the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and was an editor of its journal, the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism.

During his years in the SWP Breitman served in many capacities. He was a

candidate ten times on the party ticket, for offices ranging from State Assembly in New Jersey to the U.S. Senate. He set such a good personal example with his election campaigns that James P. Cannon, the founder of the American Trotskyist movement, referred jokingly to his "perennial" candidacies and suggested that Breitman was going to be regarded as a chronic office seeker. In 1941 he began his first of several terms as editor of The Militant. Except for the two and a half years he spent in the army as a draftee during World War II, he served continuously on the party National Committee from 1939 to 1981, and was several times a member of its Political Committee. He took on the tasks of organizer, branch secretary, financial director, recruiter, educator, campaign manager, and writer, along with many others.

Perhaps his greatest strength was his ability to explain difficult ideas so that they could be understood by people who were unfamiliar or uncomfortable with movement terminology or jargon. He had a knack for seeing opportunities to apply the party's program to the day-to-day life of working people. And he had an informal, unpretentious style in writing and speaking that made it easy for his audience to understand him. These qualities made him an outstanding candidate for office in the party's election campaigns and a particularly effective speaker and educator.

Breitman also helped in many efforts of the party to defend itself or its members from victimization by the government. The most famous of these was the "Case of the Legless Veteran," James Kutcher. The Veterans Administration tried to fire Kutcher from his job as a clerk and take away his veteran's benefits during the witch-hunt years of the 1950s because of his membership in the SWP, despite the fact that he had

lost both of his legs in Italy as a GI in World War II. Breitman, along with others, helped Kutcher in his political and legal campaign against the government's attack. After a long battle, the case was won. Breitman collaborated with Kutcher in writing his book about this experience, and the two remained lifelong friends. Kutcher was expelled from the SWP in 1983, after a terrible slander campaign against him.

In the 1960s Breitman made one of his best-known contributions to revolutionary Marxism when he helped develop an analysis of the profound revolutionary implications of Black nationalism in the U.S. In particular, he became an authority on Malcolm X and wrote The Last Year of Malcolm X, the Evolution of a Revolutionary, a book put out by Merit Publishers in 1967. He also edited, in whole or in part, many of Malcolm's writings and speeches for publication. These included the books Malcolm X Speaks and By Any Means Necessary, as well as the pamphlet Malcolm X on Afro-American History.

In the late '60s, the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance began to gain members from the radicalizing youth on the campuses, in the anti-Vietnam war movement, the Black struggle, and the beginnings of the women's liberation movement. The party was looking for ways to educate its new recruits in revolutionary Marxism. Breitman proposed an extensive project for Pathfinder Press: to collect and publish the writings of Leon Trotsky, who was, with Lenin, the foremost leader of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 in Russia. Breitman chose Trotsky for three reasons. First, because unlike the writings of other outstanding figures of revolutionary history, Trotsky's writings had never been collected and published in a systematic way. Second, Breitman considered Trotsky to be the greatest popularizer of Lenin's ideas, just as Lenin had been Marx's most outstanding interpreter. Trotsky could present the most important ideas of Marx and Engels and Lenin in a way that contemporary young radicals could appreciate. Moreover, Trotsky's own seminal contributions to the Marxist heritage--his theory of permanent revolution, the transitional program, his analysis of nationalism -- were of paramount importance for the revolutionary movements of today.

Breitman took primary responsibility for the project of locating, selecting, translating from many languages, editing, and annotating the massive amount of Trotsky's writings, and shap-

ing it into cohesive form. Ultimately this consisted of fourteen volumes in the series Writings of Leon Trotsky, covering the years of Trotsky's last exile (1929-40). At the same time, he oversaw the work leading to the publication of several volumes of Trotsky's writings on specific countries and political themes--the Spanish revolution and civil war of the thirties, the rise of fascism in Germany, the French popular front, and many others. The result was that revolutionists now have an incomparable resource available to study the history and theory of revolution.

YOUTH AND FAMILY

George was born and grew up in a working class neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey. His mother was a maid for better-off families, and his father was an iceman who carried 50-pound blocks of ice up six flights of tenement stairs in the days before refrigeration. When his father died at the age of 40, George's older sister Celia had to quit school to help support the family. She was by far the most important influence on George as a child. She became a member of the Young Communist League and combined her babysitting responsibilities with her political ones by bringing George to meetings while he was still quite young. It was as a baby brother that he attended a demonstration, with hundreds of Newark residents, to protest the execution of the Boston anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927.

As a youngster, George read voraciously. Mostly he read junk--the hundreds of adventure stories and pulp novels for boys that were the diet of a generation before television turned reading for pleasure into an obsolete activity. But he also read good novels and short stories. His hangouts were his neighborhood corner, which later became known to many as "Trotsky Square" because so many of his gang joined the Trotskyist youth, and the Newark public library. Fifty years later, George still spoke of the Newark public library with affection.

At the age of 16, in 1932, George graduated from Central High School during the depths of the Depression, and joined the ranks of the unemployed. During the summer of 1933 he was often in a playground near his home playing baseball and editing some issues of the playground's mimeographed newspaper. The whole year after he graduated from high school he spent writing a novel about his neighborhood, which he later destroyed. In 1934 George went to Ala-

bama as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal outfit intended to get unemployed youth off the streets. Here he received some copies of The Militant from a neighborhood friend.

EARLY POLITICAL ACTIVITY

After returning to Newark in 1935, Breitman joined the Trotskyist movement and turned his attention to mass work in the unemployed movement. He joined the organization of the unemployed, the Workers Alliance of America, which was thriving in New Jersey with several thousand members. He was soon in the thick of battles to protect the rights of unemployed workers and to gain higher pay on government-sponsored Works Progress Administration jobs. He was elected New Jersey state organization secretary of the Workers Alliance in 1936. In August of that year he was the youngest (at age 20) of seven Workers Alliance leaders arrested and charged with "inciting to riot." They were organizing strikes and closing down WPA projects in Burlington County. Breitman spent a week in jail on that occasion. The charges were eventually dropped, the strikes were won, and the strikers got a 5-cent hourly raise. This is only one incident in scores of such strikes in those years in which Breitman participated. He served as the state Workers Alliance secretary in 1936 and 1937, and then as Essex County secretary. During several of those years he was also editor of the news bulletin of the New Jersey Workers Alliance. He recruited many unemployed workers to the revolutionary movement.

In 1936 the organized unemployed occupied the state capitol in Trenton, forcing the state legislature to abandon the legislative chambers and begin negotiations for improved unemployment benefits. Breitman helped to organize the Trenton siege and later wrote a pamphlet about it.

The unemployed movement of the thirties was the main opportunity Breitman had to participate in the mass movement and to test himself and his politics in action. In 1941, eighteen leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, charged under the Smith Act with advocating the forcible overthrow of the U.S. government, were imprisoned on the day the U.S. entered the Second World War. The eighteen included Felix Morrow, editor of The Militant. Breitman was asked to take over as editor of the paper, a post he held until he was drafted in 1943 and sent to France.

In March 1946 he attended a pre-World Congress meeting of the Fourth International in Paris as an observer. The meeting was broken up by the police, who arrested all the participants. The conference continued in a French jail, but Breitman was released in a few hours and shipped home.

On his return to the U.S. he again served as editor of the Militant from 1946-47 and 1951-53. In 1954 he moved to Detroit, where he worked as a proof-reader for the Detroit Free Press and became a member of the International Typographical Union. He spent 13 years as an active leader of the Detroit party branch, where he founded the Friday Night Socialist Forum which ran continuously from 1954 until 1967. When he left Detroit George returned to New York City where he remained for the rest of his life. He is survived by his wife, comrade, and companion of 46 years, Dorothea. □

Memorial Meeting

A memorial meeting for George Breitman will be held in New York City on Saturday, June 7, 7:30 p.m. at the International Association of Machinists Auditorium, 7 East 15th Street, New York, NY 10003

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By GEORGE BREITMAN

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By the Army of
Unoccupation

by George Breitman

Introduction by Frank Lovell

"The Trenton Siege by the Army of Unoccupation" relates (and records) a dramatic moment in the struggles of the unemployed for their meager relief handouts during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Those were grim days and millions of unemployed workers led grim and desperate lives. But among the organized unemployed many were capable of humor and they experienced moments of triumph, as can be learned from the funny things that happened in Trenton fifty years ago.

F.I.T., P. O. Box 1947
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WHAT SHALL WE CALL THEM?

A New Name Needed for Labor Bureaucrats

by George Breitman

This article was found on Breitman's desk, among other items, after his death. He apparently had taken it out of his files shortly before entering the hospital. Attached newspaper clippings which prompted the article are dated Sept. 21, and Oct. 16, 1963, but the question he posed then remains relevant today. As far as we can determine, it is published here for the first time.

DETROIT--Would some thought and attention result in the coining of a term to describe the misleaders of the labor movement that would be as apt and popular as "Uncle Tom" is for misleaders of the Negro struggle?

If so, let us give it the necessary thought and attention. Because the popularity of the term "Uncle Tom" is not only a result of the long struggle for equality--it is also a weapon in the mass communication of ideas to promote that struggle. It is a weapon of exposure and ridicule, just as badly needed in the unions today as in the Negro movement.

Of course, there are disagreements about the use or misuse of "Uncle Tom."

P.L. Prattis, in the Sept. 21 Pittsburgh Courier, complains that the character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel really was a fine fellow, and that it is unfair to apply his name to compromisers, opportunists, and traitors.

Rev. Albert B. Cleage, in the course of a penetrating article on the dilemma of black leadership in the Sept. 16 Illustrated News, argues that, strictly speaking, an Uncle Tom is one who deliberately and for his own personal gain betrays the Negro's best interests, and that compromisers and gradualists don't deserve the name unless that element of personal gain is involved. (He concludes, however, that gradualist leaders who can't understand the new moods of the Negro masses deserve to be called Uncle Tom, if only as a punishment for being slow-witted.)

The use of the term has now been debated in a courtroom, too. On Oct. 16 a jury in Akron ruled that it is a libelous term when applied to a Negro and awarded Bertha B. Moore \$32,000 in

damages against a Negro weekly, the Cleveland Call and Post.

Mrs. Moore, a local Democratic Party vice chairman and state auto license registrar, charged the Call and Post with falsely reporting that ex-Gov. DiSalle, also a Democrat, had called her an Uncle Tom at a meeting in 1962. DiSalle supported her version by deposing that he had not called her a Tom.

In the five-day trial, Mrs. Moore said an Uncle Tom is one who "sells out" his convictions and others of his race for money, prestige, or political preference. The Call and Post publisher, William O. Walker, argued that the term means "one with whom you disagree" but implies no disloyalty to the Negro race.

The judge asked the jury (all-white!) to decide whether the term was derogatory and imputed to Mrs. Moore "conduct that tends to harm her reputation and lower her in the estimation of the community and deters persons from associating or dealing with her." They decided that it did.

If the Akron jury decision is upheld in the courts generally, it may make people a little more cautious about using the term in writing. But it will not make it any less popular among the Negro masses. They are not much interested in fine points about its history, etc. They know what it means and how to use it appropriately. The Uncle Toms know what it means, too, and how effective it can be; and so do all the aspirants to leadership and influence in the Negro community.

But let me get back to the point I started out with: Can't we find a similarly appropriate name for the present leaders of the labor movement?

As a type, they certainly are

clearly distinguishable. George Meany and Walter Reuther have different styles and different backgrounds. But on the basic things they are alike.

They are as subservient to the capitalist class as any Uncle Tom ever was to his master. They dampen, discourage, and stamp out rank-and-file militancy wherever they can. They believe in, advocate, and practice moderation, compromise with the employers, and gradualism in their most blatant forms. They try to prevent strikes. They restrict union democracy. They are unwilling or afraid to fight racial discrimination. They turn labor into a tail of the Democratic donkey. They defend and support every twist and turn in U.S. imperialist foreign policy. And for their betrayals of the workers' interests, they are rewarded with enough "money, prestige or political preference" so that they constitute a caste separate and apart from the working people in conduct and consciousness.

What should this type of union leader be called?

It was Daniel De Leon, I believe, who introduced the expression "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." Scientifically, this is correct and even good. But it's not the kind of term that rolls off your tongue easily. It's too long. It's not colorful enough. The same criticisms apply to the term

"labor bureaucracy," which seems to be favored by writers for The Militant.

There have been other attempts. "Piecard" is one. "Porkchopper" is another. For some reason they never caught on widely. They are still used in certain unions and cities, but not generally.

I am not claiming that finding the right name for the union leaders will make the labor movement as militant as the Negro movement has become; obviously, more than a new name is needed. But every little bit helps. And if someone can hit on a name for the Meany's and Reuthers as fitting as Uncle Tom, which will help to expose them and lower them "in the estimation of the community" and "deter persons from associating or dealing" with them, he will be doing a service to the labor, civil rights, and radical movements. □

DON'T STRANGLE THE PARTY

*Three letters and a talk
by James P. Cannon*

Introduction by George Breitman

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'MILITANT' COMMITS PETTY FALSIFICATION

The May 2 issue of The Militant prints an account of the life of George Breitman headlined, "George Breitman: lifelong socialist." The subhead reads, "Nearly five decades in revolutionary struggle for world socialism." The two are contradictory.

George Breitman joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935. He remained a socialist and an activist until his death in 1986. If we do some simple arithmetic that comes out to 51 years, slightly more than five decades in the revolutionary struggle. But for The Militant's headline writers, as for the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party which expelled George in January 1984, the last two years of his life don't count. They continue their cynical efforts to read George Breitman--as well as the Fourth Internationalist Tendency which he helped to found and all of the former party members who have been victimized by the political purge that began in 1982--out of the revolutionary movement.

But The Militant and the SWP will never be able to erase the last two years of George's life. In fact, the work he did to help organize the expelled, appeal against the expulsions, and defend the revolutionary Marxist program of the party which is being betrayed by its present leadership will no doubt prove to be among his most important contributions to the revolutionary movement in this country and around the world.

REAGAN'S CRIMINAL ATTACK ON LIBYA

by Steve Bloom

On April 14, 1986, Ronald Reagan struck. U.S. bombers from British bases and from aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean bombed what were characterized as organizing centers for "international terrorism" in Libya. Supposedly, this military adventure was in retaliation for the bombing of a night club in Berlin frequented by U.S. military personnel--an action allegedly carried out under authorization from Qaddafi's government. Other "terrorist conspiracies" organized or inspired by Libya have been charged.

But all of this is a patent fraud. The U.S. administration claims it acted on the basis of irrefutable evidence that the Libyan regime was responsible for what Reagan hypocritically refers to as "terrorist attacks," but it hasn't bothered to make that evidence available to the public. What's more, this latest military escapade, like Reagan's provocation against Libya in the Gulf of Sidra last March, can only increase the hatred of millions around the world for the United States government and everything it stands for, thereby increasing the likelihood of continued retaliation against symbols of U.S. domination around the globe. Ronald Reagan is well aware of this fact.

U.S. HOSTILITY TO LIBYA

The U.S. ruling class doesn't like Qaddafi. He heads a radical-nationalist type of bourgeois regime which attempts to carve out some degree of independence from the imperialist powers. He has severely restricted the possibilities for imperialist exploitation of Libya itself, and has followed a foreign policy of providing aid to a number of genuine national liberation movements around the world and making himself an ally of the USSR. Because of the exceptional influx of oil wealth over the last decade or so, Qaddafi's government has been able to provide some genuine gains for the Libyan masses--in education, housing, health care, and other areas.

The long-range goal of the Reagan administration and its imperialist allies in Libya is to see the reestab-

lishment of a government which is more servile to their interests. But it's hard to see how Reagan's air raid served to advance that goal in any direct sense. If anything, this military strike is more likely to help consolidate support to the present regime--both in Libya itself and in other Arab countries--at least in the short to medium term.

Though Qaddafi is a nuisance to the rulers of the U.S., his government is incapable of definitively breaking the imperialist economic stranglehold on Libya. That country remains firmly dependent on the capitalist world market, and given the current drop in oil prices Qaddafi's room for maneuver is rapidly diminishing. The contradictions faced by this kind of regime are guaranteed to bring it into a severe internal crisis at some point, a crisis that will either force an accommodation with imperialism or allow more conservative forces inside Libya to bring about the overthrow of Qaddafi.

In the past, U.S. administrations have been patient in similar situations. They have relied on the economic laws of the capitalist market which inevitably take their toll, combining this with covert activity in support of reactionary forces internally. They haven't usually considered it necessary to take the risks involved in a direct military assault, which is most often reserved for more serious threats to U.S. interests abroad--like mass revolutions in countries such as Vietnam, Grenada, or Nicaragua.

THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S BIG PROBLEM

Why, then, if it wasn't to "stop terrorism" as the administration claims, and if it wasn't to directly facilitate the overthrow of Qaddafi, did Reagan make his decision to attack? And why did that attack take the form that it did? The answer is that the U.S. ruling class faces a problem which is far bigger than simply how to get rid of Qaddafi. With the real threat to U.S. interests posed by a genuine revolutionary anti-imperialist government in Nicara-

gua, and an insurgency which threatens to put a similar regime in power in El Salvador, Reagan is having difficulty getting the Congress of the United States to take even the minimal step--from his point of view--of appropriating money for aid to the contras.

And Reagan knows full well that his \$100 million aid package for the contras is just the beginning of what's necessary. To seriously attempt to defeat the Nicaraguan revolution and to deal with the insurgency in El Salvador, he will have to use far more than these mercenary forces. He will need to use U.S. planes with U.S. pilots, and probably U.S. ground troops, as he did in Grenada.

The hesitations exhibited in Congress are only a small reflection of the opposition to an escalation of U.S. participation in the Central American conflict which exists in the general population. If Reagan is going to pursue his plans in Central America it is vital for him to soften up the North American people--to begin to get them used to the idea that the involvement of U.S. forces in combat against another country is a natural part of life. His invasion of Grenada in 1983 was the beginning of that process, but it took place so fast and with so little resistance from an already defeated and demoralized Grenadan population that it had relatively little impact on U.S. public opinion. Any military action in Nicaragua or El Salvador would take place under much less favorable conditions.

This requires Reagan to try to turn around the deep-going instinctive opposition to the intervention of U.S. troops in other peoples' affairs, which is a heritage from the Vietnam war. He would like to turn the clock back to the pre-Vietnam era, when the U.S. population unquestioningly accepted the hypocritical rationalizations about "fighting aggression" and "defending peace and democracy" which were used routinely by past administrations to cover their aggressive imperialist military excursions. But turning around this "Vietnam syndrome" will not be an easy task.

Reagan senses a useful foil in Qaddafi's radical posturing. Here, he thinks, is an opportunity to take advantage of the anti-Arab prejudices generated among broad layers in this country around the Middle East over the past forty years, along with the most recent

barrage of anti-Libyan propaganda. Against Libya Reagan hopes to demonstrate U.S. willingness to use its military force while facing a minimum of risk that the attack will spark major protests at home. So far he has been successful. He hopes that this will begin to get public opinion in the U.S. used to the idea that the country's Navy and Air Force aren't sent around the world just for show-and-tell. The Libyan bombardment simultaneously serves as a warning to the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutionaries--along with their potential allies such as Cuba and the USSR.

A DEADLY GAME OF CHICKEN

From this point of view, the escalation of attacks against targets identified with the U.S. in Europe and other parts of the world which has followed in the wake of Reagan's adventure could well have been an expected and calculated part of his planning. These provide new possibilities for the U.S. president to pose as the poor victim of "terrorism"--instead of as its perpetrator which he really is. But now his "credibility" will depend on some further response to "the terrorists," indicating a possible new round of military reprisals against Libya, or against some other country. This, in turn, sets up the possibility for renewed action on the other side, etc. Such a situation can easily get out of hand, and go far beyond Reagan's ability to limit the process--assuming he desires to.

Reagan counts on the bourgeoisie's massive propaganda apparatus, and on minimal losses to U.S. military personnel in the absence of a prolonged ground war, to keep public opinion on his side in his military actions against Libya. But Reagan will still have to deal with the forces in this country which have consistently opposed U.S. policy in Central America, and which have begun to mobilize and educate around what his aggression in Libya is really all about. It is imperative that opponents of U.S. imperialism, supporters of the fight against war and for self-determination of oppressed nations, continue with a campaign to expose the fraud of Reagan's "war against terrorism," explain to the American people what is actually going on, and loudly raise the demand "U.S. HANDS OFF LIBYA." □

LOCAL P-9 ORGANIZES MASS ACTIONS TO BUILD NATIONAL BOYCOTT OF HORMEL

by Tom Barrett

At this writing the meatpackers' strike at Hormel's Austin, Minnesota, plant is entering its ninth month. Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which represents the Hormel workers, has been ordered by the UFCW International Executive Board to end the strike, and faces being put into trusteeship if it does not knuckle under. The strikers are no longer receiving strike benefits from their international union. The AFL-CIO has refused to sanction a boycott of Hormel. P-9 president Jim Guyette and Corporate Campaign leader Ray Rogers are facing criminal charges stemming from a police riot at the plant gates (in which strikers face charges for injuries which the police inflicted on themselves); about a thousand scabs, half of them former strikers, are on the job at Hormel. Under the normal "rules of the game" set up by the bosses and the union bureaucrats the Hormel strike would have to be considered lost. However, P-9 has decided not to play by their rules. The strikers have appealed to the ranks of the labor movement--and beyond the labor movement -- for support. P-9 is appealing over Lane Kirkland's head to workers--and farmers and students--not only to boycott Hormel, but to mobilize in solidarity actions and organize the national boycott in their communities and campuses as well.

Local P-9 sent out an appeal to working people throughout the United States to come to Austin from April 9-12, to join in picketing at the plant, and to hold a mass march and rally on Saturday, April 12. About 5,000 people responded to the call, coming to Austin from all sections of the United States. Unionists ignored their international officials' opposition to the Hormel strike and brought moral--and financial --support to the strikers. Among them were striking printers and mailers from the Chicago Tribune and striking flight attendants from TWA. Also represented were militant farm activists, who added their own boycott slogan, "Don't sell to Hormel!" to the chants raised along the march route. A large contingent came from the Hormel plant at Ottumwa, Iowa, where 505 workers have been fired be-

cause of their refusal to cross P-9's picket line. P-9 supporters came from both coasts and from the Deep South as well as from the Midwest to participate in the protest. The Hormel strike is no longer business-unionism as usual.

BUSINESS UNIONISM

In most unions the working ranks are only spectators in the collective bargaining process--except that the results determine how well they will be able to keep up with their bills every month! The usual pattern is for the local executive board and negotiating committee to arrive at contract proposals way beyond what they will be able to win and use them to demonstrate to the members that they are serious about getting a better contract. Then the union officials and their lawyers sit down with the employers and their lawyers in a hotel conference room, and, after maybe one session of verbal sparring for show, the real negotiations begin--completely behind the backs of the workers who will have to live with the results. The original contract proposals are quickly forgotten as labor and management representatives strive for "industrial harmony."

At Hormel--and in the one-company town of Austin, Minnesota, as a whole--working people believed that industrial harmony was possible, because of the policies of Jay Hormel, who ran the company after his father George A. Hormel's death until his own death in 1956. Jay Hormel witnessed a particularly bitter strike at the plant and resolved that it should never be repeated. He ran the company during a period when the economy made it possible for him to grant major concessions to his employees. Consequently, he pursued a policy of giving them no reason to strike. Hormel employees became the best-paid workers in the meatpacking industry. He provided a guaranteed annual wage and generous fringe benefits, and today in Austin one of the strike slogans is "Jay Hormel cared."

In the recent period the laws of capitalist economics caught up with Hormel, and in the 1970s a drive was

begun to reduce the living standards of the Hormel workers. Hormel originally justified its demand for concessions with the need to build a new, modern plant in Austin. The employees reluctantly agreed, but when management came back again and again demanding concessions, the union members decided they had had enough and elected a militant, anticoncession leadership team as executive board of Local P-9.

Jim Guyette and his associates were elected to fight against concessions, and to the best of their ability they have lived up to their commitment. It is their commitment to the local's rank-and-file members which so infuriates the "labor statesmen" like UFCW president William Wynn. That commitment has led P-9 to embark on a course of action which is a sharp break from business unionism: they have taken their fight outside the hotel conference room, outside Austin, Minnesota, to the working people of the entire country.

MASS ACTION IN AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

The scene at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport on Friday night, April 11, was enough to make any labor skate nervous. Dozens of unionists and activists were disembarking from aircraft and being met by P-9 members who had opened their homes to their supporters from other areas of the country. It was an inspiring scene.

The union hall (a building which is shared by several local unions) in Austin was overflowing with people Saturday morning. Demonstrators from other areas of the Midwest were arriving as was a motorcade of thirty cars and trucks from the Twin Cities. It was quite a morale-builder for the strikers.

The demonstrators marched through the Austin business district, since the Hormel plant was closed. During the march this participant was able to discuss the situation with one of the strikers, a man who had put in over thirty years at Hormel. His one desire was to go back to work just long enough to qualify for his pension. He acknowl-

edged that there was no hope of any improvement in pay scales--the union and management had already agreed to that--but they were not willing to go back without seniority rights and some improvements in the safety conditions. Injury rates at Hormel are the worst in the meatpacking industry. Under the company's proposed rules older workers could be laid off with no respect to seniority at all. A worker who was too young to retire but too old to start a new job could be simply thrown out. P-9 will not settle under those conditions. The strike has been especially hard on the younger workers, those with dependent children and mortgages to pay. The Adopt-A-Family program, through which other local unions, community groups, churches, etc., pay a striking family's bills for a month, was designed to help them, and help them to resist the pressure to go back to work before a settlement.

The march ended with a rally at the VFW hall. Speakers and singers came to the podium to inspire the strikers and boycott activists to continue their efforts. Most importantly, the P-9 members could see that they are not alone, especially as representatives from unions all over the country came with their messages of support--and checks totaling thousands of dollars. In addition, P-9 used the rally to begin organizing a national network of local committees to build the Hormel boycott. An effort on the scale of the United Farm Workers grape boycott is possible, and can make the difference in the outcome of the strike.

A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The most important speech of the rally was given by P-9 president Jim Guyette. He explained that what was necessary to win the strike was the kind of campaign waged by the civil rights movement of a quarter-century ago. He is absolutely right.

Using the conventional trade-union tactics of the post-World War II period P-9 cannot win this strike. American labor has entered into a period of class confrontation, in which the employers are determined to roll back the gains labor made in the boom years of the '50s and '60s. Local P-9 recognizes this reality and is taking steps to make the Hormel boycott a big national campaign. Jim Guyette said, simply, "We intend to win," and by relying on the help of students, farmers, radical activists, and other workers, added to its own strength, P-9 can win.

May 3, 1986



25,000 MARCH IN SAN FRANCISCO ON APRIL 19

by David Gooler

Approximately 25,000 people marched in San Francisco on April 19 in support of the demands: No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; End U.S. Support for South African Apartheid; Jobs and Justice, Not War; and Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race. The march and the rally that followed were organized by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

Because of the warm spring weather the mood was festive, but an underlying seriousness could be noted from the many signs and speeches protesting the recent American terror-bombing of Libya and discussing its implications for further U.S. intervention in Central America, particularly Nicaragua. Participants focused on the issue of Central America and U.S. intervention, and many contingents carried signs linking that situation with the fight against apartheid.

A second major theme was support for working people and labor in the fight against concessions. The march was led by a contingent of striking TWA flight attendants (Independent Federation of Flight Attendants) in uniform. Labor solidarity was also expressed by numerous buttons and placards supporting United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 workers in their strike against the George A. Hormel Co. in Austin, Minnesota. Among other unions represented were Office and Professional Employees; International Longshoremen and Warehousemen; International Ladies' Garment Workers; Professional Workers; Engineers and Scientists; a contingent from Watsonville, California, of striking cannery workers who belong to the Teamsters; Service Employees International Union; Painters; and the United Farm Workers.

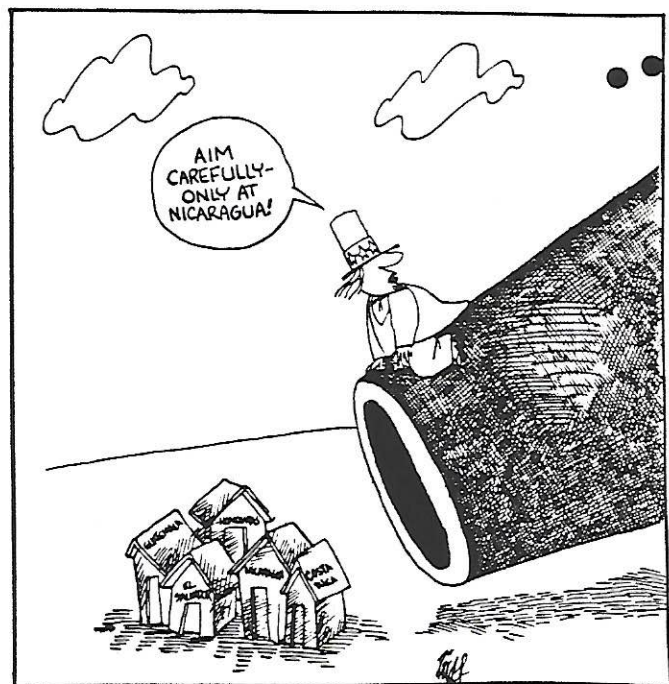
Also marching were organized contingents of Filipino, Korean, Chinese-American, Irish, Palestinian, Native American, and Central American groups.

Speakers from the platform included John Henning, secretary treasurer of the California Labor Federation -- who denounced the Reagan attack on Libya-- and Richard Trumka, United Mine Workers president--who spoke in support of the boycott against Shell Oil as a means of attacking a major supplier of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Trumka also made remarks supporting the strik-

ing Hormel meatpackers. Other speakers were Dolores Huerta, vice president of the UFW, and Milton Wulf, veteran of the Abraham Lincoln brigade. A difference between this demonstration and one which took place on April 20 last year, organized by many of the same forces, was the inclusion of a speaker on the Middle East, Abdeen Jabara from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and an official speaker from the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) of El Salvador, Gustavo Acosta. He was joined by Marta Alicia de Rivera, a representative of ANDES, the National Association of Salvadoran Educators.

The fact that no person spoke from the P-9 struggle was explained by demonstration organizers as resulting from pressure by AFL-CIO officials who are supporting the national leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers. That leadership is trying to force Local P-9 to end its struggle.

Over 100 literature tables were set up at the rally site. The Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean gathered over 50 signatures of people interested in coming to an organizing meeting in the San Francisco Bay Area. □



ANTI-INTERVENTION ROUNDUP

In the face of the ongoing Congressional debate over contra aid, a number of scattered, relatively small, but important demonstrations have taken place so far this spring in cities across the country. These include:

- * February 1, Washington, D.C., 600
 - * March 4, Cleveland, 200
 - * March 15, Seattle, 300
 - * March 17, Portland, 350
 - * March 18, Indianapolis, 50
 - * March 18, Los Angeles, more than 1000
 - * March 21, New York City, 700-800
 - * March 22, Boston, 1000
 - * March 22, Pittsburgh, 200
 - * March 22, Philadelphia, 100
 - * March 23, Twin Cities, 2500
 - * April 5, Los Angeles, 1000
 - * April 13, Washington, D.C., 750-800
 - * April 18, New York, 300
-

A note of controversy

One question that was raised during the course of organizing the demonstration on April 19 was whether a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 should speak at the rally.

Local P-9 is waging a struggle that has national implications for the American labor movement. Its heroic struggle against concessions and union busting by the Hormel company, however, has not been supported by the International UFCW or the AFL-CIO.

Coordinators of the Mobilization realized that having a P-9 speaker would be seen by the local AFL-CIO affiliates, which are a key component of the coalition, as a provocation.

The fight of P-9 is a reflection of a tragic split in the labor movement. Undoubtedly, the majority of members of the Mo-

bilization support the fight of P-9. Some members of the Mobilization, through their unions, helped organize a support rally of over 600 people for P-9 in San Francisco on March 12. This was one of the most successful support rallies anywhere in the country.

Undoubtedly, it would have added to the April 19 rally to have a P-9 speaker. Yet the overriding need to maintain the strong *unity in action* of the coalition necessitated a tactical decision to not push the issue. It would not have helped the coalition nor the P-9 strike to have made the Mobilization a battleground for this dispute.

It will be workers *in their unions* who will settle labor's crisis of leadership and transform the unions into fighting instruments against the employers. This is what the P-9 struggle is all about. —J.R

[Reprinted from Socialist Action, May 1986]

NEW STAGE FOR LAND REFORM IN NICARAGUA

AT THE START OF 1986, a new agrarian reform law was enacted. It codified the changes in distribution of the land that were initiated in practice in 1985 and opened the way for extending them. In the new assemblies of poor peasants getting land, two slogans predominate: "In Nicaragua no peasant will be left without land," and "We want the land and guns, to produce and fight."

In addition, the National Union of Farmers and Stock Raisers (UNAG) is building a first national congress of peasants on this question, which is to take place April 25-26 in Managua.

The tone has been set. Defence of the revolution against the military campaign of the contras and access to the land for thousands of families are the two sides of the policy of the Sandinista revolutionary leadership.

The following article on this process is from the March 29 issue of *La Breche*, the French language newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (PSO/SAP), Swiss section of the Fourth International.

CHARLES ANDRE UDRY

The agrarian reform is central to the social and political transformations in Nicaragua. It could hardly be otherwise given the weight of the agricultural sector. Some 50% of the economically active population are employed on the land, and they produce 80% of the volume of products. Four-fifths of Nicaragua's exports are agricultural.

The agrarian reform does not involve only the forms of redistributing the land (individual plots, cooperatives, state farms) but also access for the rural population to services (health, education, technical aid). Finally it offers dignity: "being able to go to the banks and make yourself at home and not just be hustled out," "the right to discuss prices without facing repression" — that is the way this big transformation looks to small farmers.

When it took power in July 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) opted for an original

This article on new agrarian reform measures in Nicaragua is reprinted in full from *International Viewpoint*, April 21, 1986.

road in applying agrarian reform. That was for various reasons. They included the following: the type of alliance forged in the struggle against Somoza (involving middle peasants and capitalist peasants), the role of the middle peasants and the small capitalist peasants in the production of export crops (coffee and cotton); the demands of rebuilding a country devastated by civil war and the urgency of getting a productive effort from these layers of export producers; the scarcity of professionals and technical resources; the necessity of getting financial aid from diversified sources in order to stave off financial strangulation by imperialism; the conclusions drawn from the difficulties encountered by other agrarian reforms. Finally, the FSLN knew that the United States would launch a military counteroffensive. That happened in 1982.

So, at the beginning, only the property of Somoza and his clan were confiscated. It was transferred to the People's Property Sector (APP), which amounted to nationalization. The holdings of the Somozaists were concentrated in the production of sugar, rice, tobacco and large-scale stock-raising. This initial measure, therefore, represented a

blow to the very big, often absentee, landlords (*latifundistas*).

On the other hand, the capitalists remained very powerful in the production of coffee, cotton, and in large-scale stock-raising, which are major sources of foreign currency.

The Sandinista government is going to offer easier access to credit, including for big producers. It is lowering land rents for the benefit of various types of tenant farmers and sharecroppers. It is taking control of the export of agricultural products and organizing a distribution circuit to supply the peasants.

At the same time, the government is encouraging peasants to organize to defend their interests, first of all in a common organization. Then the agricultural laborers will have their Association of Workers on the Land (ACT), and the small and middle peasants will have their UNAG, which was set up in May 1981. (1)

The course of the FSLN's agrarian reform

In July 1981, the first agrarian law was enacted. One of its objectives was to go after big landowners who were not producing enough. This law made it possible to confiscate land left lying fallow by owners

1. *The UNAG has 124,000 members, who produce 65% of the coffee, 68% of the meat, 60% of the cotton, 83% of the maize, 98% of the beans and all of the vegetables produced in the country. This union brings together small individual farmers, as well as those organized in cooperatives; middle-sized land owners, some of whom employ agricultural wage earners; and some big capitalist landowners. Last year, the cotton planters in the Chinandega region, who had previously belonged to the Supreme Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) joined UNAG. While maintaining this unity in the name of an "alliance of producers," UNAG aims above all to defend the interests of the small peasants. This is apparent from the statements of the chairperson of UNAG, Daniel Nunez, who said late in January: "UNAG must be the eyes and the heart of the poorest peasants and an indefatigable force acting on their behalf ... We want this to be clear once and for all for everybody, our main strength lies in the cooperatives among the small producers."*

holding more than 350 hectares of land on the Pacific Coast and 750 hectares on the Atlantic Coast. (2)

The tracts expropriated will increase the stock of lands distributed to production cooperatives and to service and credit cooperatives (which do not produce in common but cooperate in receiving technical assistance and credits).

Thus, Nicaragua has an agrarian structure in which state ownership is in the minority. However, around the APP, big agri-industrial projects have built up, which have not always delivered the results counted on.

Alongside the APP, an associative sector has taken form. At the end of 1985, these cooperatives occupied 19% of the land, the same as the APP. There also remained a strong, heterogeneous private sector, in which small and middle peasants (holdings under 140 hectares) occupied 38% of the land, and big landowners, 24%.

In 1983, especially in the east and north of the country, the Sandinista government speeded up the handing over of land titles to the poor peasants. In many cases, it simply legalized "wildcat" land occupations. Between 1981 and 1985, land was distributed in various forms (cooperatives, individual ownership, ownership by ethnic communities), to 47,000 families in the central zone (Matagalpa, Esteli, Chontales), to 20,000 families in the Pacific zone (Leon, Managua, Masaya) and 8,400 in the Atlantic zone (Zelaya, Rio San Juan). (3)

The 1981 agrarian reform law was becoming a real obstacle to poor peasants and agricultural workers gaining access to the land. It could have endangered the defence of the revolution by undermining the regime's peasant base. (4)

The new law, which is the result of experiments in various regions (including Masaya), removes the threshold of 350 and 750 hectares above which uncultivated land could be confiscated. In fact, a lot of landowners with less land left a part of it fallow.

From now on, big landowners who do not plan for more or less efficient production can be expropriated. In some cases, this can be done without compensation. In others, compensation will be given in the form of Agrarian Reform Bonds. The amount of the compensation will be calculated on the basis of the last three years' tax statements. So, the tax evaders will get their just deserts!

A weapon for defending the revolution

The land will be distributed in the following order: to tenants and sharecroppers, to landless peasants or those without enough land to provide subsistence for their families, to peasant cooperatives and to families that have lost relatives in fighting the contras.

Agricultural workers employed on state farms are also demanding private plots to grow produce for their own consumption. "Sufficient land" is to be put at the disposition of the Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas and other ethnic groups on the Atlantic coast.

There are several reasons for this new stage of the agrarian reform.

Either "spontaneously," or because the government evacuated them, some 250,000 peasants have left the regions hardest hit by the war. The demand for land could only mount. Left unanswered, it would threaten to disorganize still more the productive effort based on the alliance between the APP, the cooperatives and the multimorph private sector.

If the land were not distributed, the influx of peasants into the cities — above all Managua — would only swell. This would further increase shortages of goods and services and reduce productive work in agriculture.

According to the minister of agriculture, Jaime Wheelock, the agrarian reform has still not answered the pressing problems of 20% of the peasant population who have no land or suffer from a severe lack of it.

The distribution of the land — and of guns to defend it — is a social and political weapon against those inside the country and outside of it who want to strangle the revolution.

The landowners who have gotten generous credits from the national financial system and have taken advantage of this to export their capital or waste it, should be punished. (5)

The Nicaraguan agrarian reform is being carried out in the context of a war economy where a major part of the budget is allotted to the military effort. This complicates what is already by nature a complicated task — the transformation of the countryside.

The new agrarian reform law, therefore, is only one element in

solving a delicate equation. The production and property relations have to be changed in agriculture at tempos and by means that will assure the maintenance and growth of production. At the same time, this process has to be compatible with holding the support of the middle peasants for the Sandinista revolution. It is, moreover, necessary to strengthen the alliance between the workers (both agricultural and industrial) with broad strata of the peasantry in a context where industrial and technical aid to agriculture remains very weak. (6) □

2. Figures provided by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) at the end of 1985 and cited in 'Infopress Centroamericana' January 30, 1986, show very clearly the evolution of the agrarian structure after the Sandinista victory. In 1978, according to a study by the Center for Research and Study in Agrarian Reform (CIERA), the available agricultural land was entirely private and more than half of this (52%) was large holdings. This private sector had been reduced by 60% by the end of 1985. According to the statistical data published in the bulletin of the Agencia Nueva Nicaragua (ANN), published in Paris on March 22, 1986, the big agricultural and stock-raising estates represented only 11% of the country's land under production in 1985; and in 1986, that will be only 9.5%. On the other hand, the small owners with less than 7 hectares, who held 2% of the land in 1979, today hold 30%.

3. Since 1981, the agrarian reform has made possible the distribution of more than 2 million hectares to 83,167 families. This involved expropriating the lands of 490 landowners.

4. The Sandinista leaders, moreover say that the 1981 law "was no longer functional," in particular to meet the demands for land by 40,000 peasant families who had none, or not enough.

5. In this regard, the chairperson of UNAG, Daniel Nunez, proposed that this organization oppose the payment in dollars of export bonuses to farmers. In fact, such currency has gone in large amounts to the biggest producers. Nunez argued that these payments should be made in cordobas, the national currency, and that the government should keep its dollars for building up the infrastructure, for social projects, or for importing agricultural equipment.

6. Putting his finger on the problem of relations between the cities and the countryside, Comandante Victor Tirado said at a UNAG assembly in January that an aspect of the worker-peasant alliance was "to fight speculators, to make sure that supplies reach those for whom they are really intended, that the workers' movement produces products that reach the peasants at a just price and, vice versa, that the peasant movement produces the essential foods and gets them to the workers' movement at a fair price."

International Viewpoint

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A BOURGEOIS JOURNALIST'S VIEW OF REVOLUTIONARY NICARAGUA

by Jack Bresee

Nicaragua/Revolution in the Family, by Shirley Christian, 1985, Random House, New York, 337 pp., \$19.95.

"Many names figure in this book, and since most English-speaking people think that Spanish names are incredibly confusing, some explanation is in order. In fact, Spanish names are very logical and produce much more information than do English names."

With these patronizing words Shirley Christian opens her book on Nicaragua. There may be some doubt, of course, whether "most English-speaking people think that Spanish names are incredibly confusing." But after reading the rest of her book there can be no doubt whatsoever that Ms. Christian is not to be trusted to provide any explanations at all--certainly not about the Nicaraguan revolution.

Nicaragua/Revolution in the Family epitomizes the work of a petty-bourgeois intellectual who is overcome by her own presumed superiority. Its author is concerned with little more than the latest "insiders" gossip from Central America. Even her title reflects this attitude. Christian's approach is that Nicaraguans are all closely related to each other, all part of the same "family." (The actual term she uses is "inbred.") In her view, the revolution is basically the result of ongoing "family" problems, thus all "in the family."

Yet her book has some importance. She is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for her work on the Miami Herald in Central America. Her credentials include articles published in the New Republic and Atlantic Monthly. Christian is now a foreign affairs reporter for the New York Times.

This gives her writing a certain authority, which is used to advantage by the imperialists. Nicaragua/Revolution in the Family is cited frequently as an authoritative source--by liberals as well as by conservatives and reactionaries. It is a literary expression of the same tactics applied by the Reagan administration with its military moves in Honduras at the end of March: "Damn the truth! Full speed ahead!" And it is

a prime example of how the ruling class of the U.S.A. will use every possible method to attack and slander the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and supporters of that government in this country and around the world.

Christian's entire effort has been directed at mystifying rather than clarifying; trying to demonstrate the validity of her own preconceived ideas no matter what the cost to logic and fact. As an apologist for the U.S. ruling class she uses every dirty trick and evasion possible to hide the truth and manipulate the reader's emotions.

The book contains some rather strange "logic." Consider this paragraph from the chapter on the elections:

"Nicaraguans voted amidst claims from the Sandinistas that the United States was preparing to invade, and within a few days of the elections the Reagan administration had demonstrated the capacity to tighten the screws and make the Sandinistas scream whenever it was deemed useful. Pressure tactics that had begun in early 1981 with the cutoff of concessionary wheat sales had progressed to battleships off the Gulf of Fonseca and Atlantic Coast, troop maneuvers in Honduras, the mining of harbors, and overflights by spy planes emitting sonic booms. After the Nicaraguan voting, the United States alleged that Soviet ships arriving in the port of Corinto might be carrying MIGs, the Soviet jet fighters that the United States, for at least two years, had been privately telling the Sandinistas would constitute the straw it would not tolerate. Although those particular crates did not turn out to contain MIG pieces, the Sandinistas made no secret of their desire for high-performance fighter aircraft. Sandinista pilots had been training in Bulgaria to fly MIGs since late 1979 or early 1980."

Such a paragraph is quite typical of what one finds in the book as a

whole. But one feels compelled to ask, what is the point of all of this? Is the reader supposed to conclude that Nicaraguans were not voting under the threat of a U.S. invasion? Are we supposed to believe that the battleships, troop maneuvers, sonic booms are all indications of benevolent U.S. intentions, and the Sandinistas shouldn't look for all the military help they can get--including MIG jets? The facts Christian cites make the FSLN's point rather well, though that was apparently not her intention.

This sort of political analysis is interspersed through the book with a little gossip-column chitchat. Consider Christian's retelling of an encounter with a well-known contra sympathizer in the chapter, "Two who stayed":

"Anyone ringing the doorbell of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro could not miss seeing the words venda patria scrawled in black letters on the wall above the bell. The expression, bedded deep in Nicaraguan history, translates literally as 'country seller.'...The FSLN resurrected the expression and made it part of the repertoire of the turbas that it dispatched to attack the homes, offices, and vehicles of Sandinista critics.

"I guess they are telling me that whoever comes through my door is a venda patria,' Chamorro mused."

This passage in the book goes on to explain how Dona Violeta thought that "there was even a certain stylistic quality to the drawings left on the

walls of the house, indicating, as she noted, that they had not been done by some poor illiterate."

Of course! Poor illiterates, as every bourgeois newspaper reporter is well aware, have no style. One must, we assume, be trained in a proper journalism school to attain a style like Shirley Christian's. And she is still not finished with this episode. The book informs us that Dona Violeta left the drawings on the wall and let her hair go gray for Nicaragua, to be a martyr. "No other women in Nicaragua with enough money for hair coloring would dream of such a thing." The reader, we assume, is supposed to be deeply moved by this sacrifice--which illustrates rather clearly the audience to whom Christian is addressing her narrative.

The low point of her effort is achieved in the chapter on the church. The main points made here are: 1) Most Nicaraguans are superstitious and ignorant but that's okay because they are on the correct side, the side of the church hierarchy--though many keep this a secret. 2) Lots of strange things happen in Nicaragua now that the "infidels" are in power, including a statue of the Blessed Virgin that reportedly "sweats." (FSLN supporters claimed that this particular statue had been dunked in water and then put into a deep-freezer overnight. Christian apparently doesn't consider it proper journalism to investigate the actual facts of the situation, and so leaves open the possibility that a genuine miracle might be at work.) 3) The church hierarchy and the FSLN have a difference of opinion about who should hold power--a point which hardly falls into the category of news.

Nicaragua/Revolution in the Family, despite its defects as a work of literature or a work of journalism, is nevertheless a work to be taken seriously. It illustrates the ruling-class mentality in action as it attempts to find ways to undermine support for the Nicaraguan peoples' struggle. The book will undoubtedly influence some sincere and honest individuals, who don't have access to sufficient information to answer for themselves its lies and slanders. Those who want to help explain the truth to the majority of the people of this country--a majority which, along with the peoples of Central America themselves, is paying the price for U.S. aggression--must arm ourselves by becoming familiar with the arguments and rationalizations of authors like Shirley Christian. □

A pamphlet about an issue debated in the FI between its 1979 and 1985 congresses

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STUDENT ACTIVISM RISING

by Evelyn Sell

Since the end of the 1970s, the media has been proclaiming the death of student activism and popularizing labels such as "The Me Generation" to contrast contemporary youth with the rebels of the 1960s. Typical of such articles was one published in the Los Angeles Times on March 11, 1984, "'80's Activism at UCLA Far Different from Vietnam Era." It began: "On the same day that President Reagan was inaugurated [1981], a small band of liberal UCLA professors reactivated a committee that had opposed the war in Southeast Asia Three years later, the group is surveying the wreckage of its efforts to persuade even a small segment of the 40,000-member campus community to join in the active opposition to U.S. policy in Central America. Its attempt to ignite a Vietnam-era type protest movement on campus...has failed.

"The group's major event of the academic year was sparsely attended. It was a teach-in on Central America, the group's hottest issue this year.

"Featuring mostly critics of U.S. policy, including actress Diane Ladd and a representative from the State Department, the teach-in drew about 450--far short of the 2,000 who packed the first teach-in in the same room against the war in Vietnam in November, 1965."

The same newspaper's March 28 issue quoted from a study called "The Mood of American Youth": "If there was a generation gap in the '60s, it narrowed to a crack in the '70s. It's barely a hairline in the '80s." This study, prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals by Janis Cromer of the District of Columbia Public Schools, explained that high school students had foresworn most political protests.

The launching of about 70 conservative alternative campus newspapers was assessed this way in a December 27 article the same year: "That these publications are blossoming indicates that conservatism, battered by Vietnam and Watergate, is regaining its intellectual and idealistic appeal on campus.... Unlike the radical campus press of the '60s, the new alternative papers cheerlead for 'the system'--capitalism at home, anti-communism abroad--and, in-

stead of denigrating big business, take shots at big labor and government social programs."

Such pronouncements about the rising conservatism of college and high school students proved premature, however. They have been swept aside by developments in the real world. On February 10, 1985, the Los Angeles Times had to reverse gears and report: "In a session reminiscent of the campus anti-war movement of the 1960s, students and teachers from 14 colleges and universities convened Saturday at the University of California, Riverside, and vowed to expand campus involvement in the sheltering of Central American illegal immigrants." This "Campus Sanctuary Conference" attracted students and faculty from six UC campuses (including UCLA), a number of private colleges, three California State University campuses, and the University of Colorado.

The April anti-apartheid sit-in by Columbia University students inspired actions at California campuses such as UC-Berkeley. About 3,000 UCLA students rallied in the largest political protest action on campus since the Vietnam war, according to school administrators. Similar demonstrations took place on dozens of college campuses across the country as part of a "Day of Protest" against U.S. support of South African racist policies.

Thirteen months after the Los Angeles Times gloated over the "sparsely attended" UCLA teach-in on Central America which attracted only 450, a crowd of 1,800 heard linguist Noam Chomsky sharply criticize U.S. involvement in Central America.

Student activism continues to grow in regard to anti-apartheid and anti-intervention issues, and is encompassing others as well. Over 6,000 persons marched in Philadelphia on February 15 in the National Mobilization Against Racism; of these (according to the 2-19-86 Guardian), "Students from all over the East comprised at least half of the crowd, which marched through downtown denouncing police brutality, U.S. cooperation with apartheid, unemployment and the racism that underpins them all." The March 7, 1986, Militant reported

that "some 350 students walked out of class here [Austin, Minnesota] February 21. The majority were high school and middle school students The walkout was organized to protest the school system's attack on the students' democratic right to support United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local P-9's strike against Hormel." A Minneapolis supporter of P-9 strikers told this writer that a busload of students went to St. Paul to protest the governor's calling out of the National Guard against the strikers, and some campus meetings have been held about the Hormel strike. On the West Coast, 1,000 high school students boycotted or left classes March 7 to demonstrate support for striking teachers in Burbank, California.

The California NOW Activist reported that there were delegations from almost 50 California colleges and universities at the March 16 National March For Women's Lives--West Coast. The publication of Los Angeles NOW carried an article entitled "College students march again for feminist issues." It was estimated, "At least 50 per cent of the West Coast participants in last month's National March for Women's Lives were college recruits.... NOW recruited students from more than 300 college and universities" for the action. NOW president Ellie Smeal predicted, "March organizing is just the first step for them. They clearly care about our issues." (April 1986, NOW L.A.)

A recent poll of college students' attitudes toward national issues shows the potential for even greater activism in the months ahead. The survey concluded that "student responses tend to be politically to the left of the general population's" according to the March 1986 issue of Newsweek on Campus, the only magazine for college students produced by the staff of a major national publication. College students were asked the same set of questions posed to national population samples in 1985. There were significant differences on crucial issues. For example, 60% of the college students thought the government spent too much for "national defense and military purposes" while 46% of the general population felt such expenditures were too high. When asked how best to reduce the federal budget deficit, 59% of the students chose "cut defense spending" over "increase some taxes...or make additional cuts in non-defense spending." In comparison, 44% of the general population chose cutting defense spending. The majority of students (56%) felt the chances for nuclear

war were increased by the nuclear arms buildup; a minority (33%) felt nuclear war was more likely if the U.S. fell behind the USSR in nuclear weaponry. The national population was more evenly divided: 43% favored greater U.S. buildup; 41% felt nuclear arms buildup increased chances for a nuclear war. In regard to South Africa, 52% of the students and 42% of the general population thought the U.S. government should use economic sanctions to increase pressure for a change in apartheid policies.

The differences between student attitudes and those of the general population are not new or surprising--but they do show that there is no basis for assertions about student apathy or rising conservatism. The attitudes expressed and the various protest activities taking place indicate that student activism will continue. Although firm predictions cannot be made about how far, wide or deep it will go, the U.S. government will certainly provide more fuel as the ruling elite steps up its attacks abroad and its demands for more sacrifices at home. The potential exists for a new period of student radicalization which could surpass that of the 1960s. In considering that possibility, a comparison is helpful--helpful but limited since we will not simply see a repetition of the '60s.

The young people of the 1960s burst out of the period of the 1950's political repression, post-World War II economic prosperity, and long-established social patterns: "Negroes in their place," women in the kitchen, homosexuals in the closet, and youth in silent submission to authority. Young people who are now 20 years old were born into an America already shaken by a vigorous and ascending civil rights movement. The consciousness of youth now 15-20 years old has been affected (whether they are aware of it or not) by the struggles and victories of the liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, by the Vietnam syndrome and Watergate, and by a lifelong fear of nuclear war. (Studies over the past fifteen years have shown that most young children were deeply worried about a nuclear catastrophe.) The framework for today's activists rests on a foundation of a general radicalization which persists; hard-won gains have been weakened by reactionary forces, but general attitudes and expectations are very different today than they were in 1959 or 1969. The "jumping-off place" for students today is higher up the mountain.

There was a generation gap between the rebels of the '60s and those of the

1930s; most student activists and young radicals either dismissed the "old left" as irrelevant to the "new realities" or didn't know about the battles and heritage of the 1930s. Today there is a closer and more vital connection between the 1960s and 1980s activists. Most youth have some knowledge about the movements that caused so many changes from 1955-1973. Their information comes from numerous television programs, articles, films, and firsthand accounts. Veterans of the liberation struggles and the anti-war movement are still alive today and are in contact with young people in a variety of ways: speaking at rallies and meetings, marching together in demonstrations, common membership in organizations. A portion of today's young protestors are the students or the children of rebels from the '60s. For example, one 19-year-old freshman at UC Berkeley, arrested during an anti-apartheid action, explained, "My mom was very proud. She went through the '60s."

A development which is a welcome change from the 1960s is the positive contact of today's students with workers and their organizations. Rank-and-filers, union officers, and national labor leaders are involved in the anti-apartheid and, to a lesser extent, the anti-intervention movements. The media cannot play up counterdemonstrations of "hard hats" as it did during one period in the movement against the war in Vietnam. On the contrary, rallies and meetings feature unionists who have returned from visits to Central America in order to present eyewitness accounts of the accomplishments of the Nicaraguan revolution, and to speak out against the repressive Duarte regime in El Salvador. There are many labor committees carrying out tours of U.S. and Central American trade unionists, campaigning for imprisoned labor organizers in El Salvador, and showing that "Labor solidarity has no borders." Some of these committees are organized independently while others are subcommittees of unions. The April 20, 1985, mobilizations involved many labor contingents proudly identifying themselves with banners, signs, and union jackets and caps. Links are being built between labor and students through this sharing of common concerns and activities. Such connections were not as readily available during the 1960s.

There is a noteworthy similarity between the student activists of the '60s and those of today. Both generations were aroused by a revulsion against racism. The earlier generation was initially inspired by Blacks battling the Jim Crow system in the South,

and then by antiracist struggles and ghetto uprisings in other parts of the country. Today's generation has responded to the Black majority's fight against South African apartheid. In addition to their moral outrage and empathy with their African sisters and brothers, Black youth clearly have a personal stake in the eradication of homegrown racism and the myth of white superiority sustained by racist systems in other parts of the world. For white youth--who make up the majority of campus protestors against apartheid today and who played a prominent role in the sit-ins, freedom rides, etc. of 20-25 years ago--it is primarily a matter of moral passion: a crusade against injustice, an attempt to make democratic ideals real. The power of such sentiments have moved other generations and should not be underrated in considering what is impelling students into activity today, and what will continue to motivate them in the period ahead. □

DOCUMENTS

FROM THE STRUGGLE IN THE SWP AND THE FI

PERMANENT REVOLUTION, COMBINED REVOLUTION, AND BLACK LIBERATION IN THE U.S.

by Larry Stewart

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the Fourth
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Tendency

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FUSION CONFERENCE CREATES NEW SOCIALIST GROUP - 'SOLIDARITY'

by Bill Onasch

At a convention held in Chicago over the Easter weekend March 28-30, three socialist organizations--International Socialists (IS), Workers Power (WP), and Socialist Unity (SU) -- completed a nearly year-long process of regroupment by fusing into a new organization. Claiming two hundred members in 17 cities, the new group chose the name "Solidarity." They will continue to publish the bimonthly magazine Against the Current, formerly put out by supporters of Workers Power. The magazines of IS (Changes) and SU (Socialist Unity) have been incorporated into it.

The convention was attended by nearly two hundred, many of whom were not members of any of the fusing groups. A number joined Solidarity before the conclusion of the convention. Many of those present were activists in the feminist, anti-intervention, and trade union movements. Workshops on these movements provided a valuable exchange of information.

PROGRAM

While this convention obviously struck a responsive chord among many socialists anxious to see a reversal of the trend of fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary left, the gathering accomplished little of substance outside of the formal establishment of the new group. No national action campaigns of any kind were projected. Participation in the mass movements was left to the initiative of local branches.

Nor, despite the quite diverse views of the regrouped currents, was there much substantive debate on political issues. The fusion was based on the adoption of a quite limited "Founding Political Statement," which consciously avoided any discussion of controversial subjects. This was deferred until the unity could be cemented through a period of comradely collaboration.

One result of this decision was that it made for a very dull discussion, consisting mostly of platitudes about unity, liberally sprinkled with "mea culpas" about past sins of "sectarianism."

The "Political Statement" consensus seemed strained only around its support to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the Nicaraguan revolution. Some forces in IS find any support to the Sandinistas unacceptable. The majority of IS and WP members, though having various assessments of the FSLN (many see it as revolutionary nationalist) joined with the Fourth Internationalists of SU to assure an overwhelming majority for supporting the Nicaraguan regime against U.S. imperialism. The organization as a whole has no position on the class character of the Nicaraguan revolution or of the Sandinista leadership.

The statement likewise remains silent on the class nature of the Soviet Union, China, or Eastern Europe. It does not attempt to analyze Stalinist parties or bureaucracies. Nor are Cuba and the Castroist current dealt with. These are quite sensitive issues to IS and WP members, many of whom come out of the tradition of Max Shachtman, who led a split from the Socialist Workers Party and Fourth International in 1940.

The Shachtmanites renounced defense of the Soviet Union during World War II, arguing that Stalinism represented an exploiting class, no more progressive than Western imperialism. They called for a "third camp--neither Washington nor Moscow." After leading his group into the Socialist Party in the 1950s, Shachtman moved far to the right, going so far as to support U.S. intervention in Vietnam. A left wing that resisted this capitulation later founded International Socialists. Workers Power was created by a split from IS in 1979.

ELECTORAL POLICY

Solidarity's "Political Statement" reaffirms the principle of giving no support to bourgeois parties or candidates including, specifically, the Rainbow Coalition. But no plans were discussed as to how to intervene in the 1986 elections. Some participants favor exploring support to formations such as the Peace and Freedom Party and Citizens Party. No one raised the possibility of supporting campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party.

Solidarity is not a new Leninist organization. It specifically rejects such a role. The new group seeks to continue the process of "regroupment," uniting heterogeneous forces. It will function with a minimal degree of centralism, and branches will make all fundamental decisions about their own priorities.

The comrades of Socialist Unity, with the agreement of the organization as a whole, have formed a "Fourth International Caucus" to retain their fraternal relations with the Fourth International. A representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International gave greetings to the convention and a leader of the Mexican section, the PRT, spoke at a solidarity rally held in conjunction with the convention. In addition to the F.I.T., observers were present from two Fourth Internationalist organizations in Canada--the Alliance for Socialist Action (English Canada) and Gauche Socialiste (Quebec). Non Fourth-Internationalists were also there from the International Socialist Organization, North Star Network, Revolutionary Socialist League, and Socialist Party.

F.I.T.'S OUTLOOK

The F.I.T. decided at its February national conference not to participate in the fusion process. This was not because we reject in principle the concept of "regroupment" nor because we think that the members of Solidarity are unfit as revolutionists. Regroupments, fusions, splits, are all part of the dynamic process that will lead to the construction of a mass revolutionary workers party in this country and on a world scale. Many, or even most, of the present members of Solidarity may some day be part of a broad revolutionary vanguard formation in the U.S.A.

But we do not see regroupment as being the priority task of Fourth Internationalists in the United States at the present time. And we don't believe that a fruitful regroupment can ever be brought about by ignoring crucial disagreements over program and theory. Such questions are especially important right now, when the main challenge facing us is the revising of our fundamental theoretical and programmatic traditions by the leadership of the SWP. Our number one task must be the defense, enrichment, and elaboration of program. Solidarity is taking precisely the opposite approach in subordinating programmatic questions to their organizational project.

Solidarity's regroupment ignores the biggest concentration of revolutionary socialists in this country--the membership of the Socialist Workers Party. The F.I.T. still considers the SWP to be a revolutionary party, and we continue to press the demand of the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International that all Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. be reunited in the SWP.

Solidarity is also hostile to the comrades of Socialist Action--another expelled opposition group. Of course, both the SWP and SA have stated their disagreement with SU's regroupment process. But if Solidarity is serious about a genuine nonsectarian regroupment effort, they must try to find a way of relating to the hundreds of revolutionists organized in the SWP and SA.

The F.I.T. believes that whatever differences we have with the fusion process undertaken by Solidarity, there is still the basis for constructive collaboration with that organization in class-struggle activities. We look forward to united front efforts in the feminist, anti-intervention, and trade union movements wherever our goals and activities coincide. □

PERMANENT REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

by Paul Le Blanc

Paul Le Blanc is an historian and activist in the Central American solidarity movement. His book is not only a scholarly and well argued defense of the applicability of revolutionary Marxism to events in the world today, but is also a full and inspiring account of the "mobilization of an entire people."

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua is available by mail for \$3.00 per copy or \$1.80 each for orders of three or more. Write to FIT, P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009

LETTER TO A FORMER MEMBER OF SOCIALIST UNITY

by Paul Le Blanc

Dear Tom,

You've told me that when you attended the founding convention of Solidarity, a new socialist organization which includes supporters of the Fourth International, several old friends and comrades asked about me and expressed disappointment that I was not involved in the new organization. This has stirred me to set down my thinking in a letter to you, though in a sense this letter is also written to other Fourth Internationalists who have joined the new group. Perhaps it will also be of interest to others who share your and my desire to see genuine revolutionary socialist unity in the United States. Therefore, I hope you don't mind if this is an open letter so that others may also read it -- and respond to it, if they wish.

In 1983, when you and I were driven out of the Socialist Workers Party, because of our loyalty to the Trotskyist program of the Fourth International, we joined together with others in starting an organization called Socialist Action because we felt it was important for there to be an organizational expression of that program in the United States. You and I shared a belief that Socialist Action, however, must not project itself as a new party competing with the SWP, that instead there must be a process of programmatic clarification so that the rebuilding of the Fourth Internationalist movement here could proceed on a sound basis. We both believed that we must not merely reaffirm old "orthodoxies," but must critically examine why it was that the SWP -- long priding itself as the guardian of "orthodox Trotskyism" -- had entered such a crisis which led to its abandonment of Trotskyism. We believed that Trotskyism itself must be looked at with fresh eyes, in light of new American and world realities (such as the impact of economic restructuring, the rise of the Central American revolution, etc.), so that it might be enriched and become a more valuable resource for those who would change the world. Unfortunately, the majority leadership of Socialist Action saw this sort of thing as a revisionist

diversion from their project of creating an "orthodox" competitor to the SWP, and it chose to combat our "revisionism" through a mechanistic interpretation of democratic centralism, which resulted in a new split.

At that point, you and most of the comrades in the Socialist Action minority chose to form Socialist Unity, while I chose to join another grouping of expelled members of the SWP -- the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. You were surprised that, although we had shared so many of the same ideas, I found myself unable to join in your new project. As I tried to explain to you then, I didn't agree with the "rapid regroupment" orientation which seemed to be an essential element of SU's perspective. I'm not opposed to left-wing socialists of different organizations talking with each other and working together; nor am I opposed to several socialist organizations fusing into a larger and stronger organization if there is a sound political basis for this. But I felt, and still feel, that first we need to take stock of what our experience in the SWP has been, what the lessons are -- what should be rejected or retained or refined in our "traditional" program. Such programmatic clarification is a more immediate priority, at this time, than either the party-building tasks of Socialist Action or the regroupment efforts of SU. Because this is in harmony with the perspectives of the F.I.T. (and because the F.I.T., like SU but unlike the SA leadership, has a positive and nonsectarian attitude toward the actually existing Fourth International as well as toward the actually existing revolutionary movement of Central America), I concluded that my place is now in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

The "rapid regroupment" project has finally culminated, after several months, in a fusion of SU with International Socialists and Workers Power into a new organization called Solidarity. I want to repeat what I've told you before -- I hope your project turns out well. I sympathize with the stated goals which

have brought the three groups together: to help create an effective and numerically significant revolutionary socialist current in the working class, animated by a commitment to workers' democracy and political independence, in solidarity with liberation struggles from Central America to South Africa to Poland, but also a force in the class struggle of our own country. I say this despite my serious reservations about the nature of your fusion process, which appears to me not to have seriously come to grips with political differences (on Leninism, on the world revolutionary process, on American realities and struggles, on strategy and tactics) among the merging groups. I don't believe it's important to achieve such clarity for the purpose of establishing 100 percent homogeneity. It is important, however, in order to advance the political thinking of all revolutionary militants on what are the realities that we face in the struggle for socialism, and to establish a clear understanding of how revolutionary socialists can advance that struggle, on what to do now and in the coming period to best realize our goals. Also, if it turns out that the merging groups of Solidarity have deeper differences over such things than you are inclined to acknowledge in the initial flush of unification, then the unity might be short-lived.

I don't think that it's necessary for all of us to be in the same organization before we can talk to each other about the kinds of political questions I've just alluded to. I look forward to discussing them with you -- with all the members of Solidarity -- over the coming period, as we engage in the common struggle in defense of the Central American revolution and against U.S. intervention, in the struggle against South African apartheid, in the defense of democratic rights and workers' power in the workers' states that are oppressed by Stalinism, and in the struggles of the workers and the oppressed of our own country.

I hope that Solidarity's stated commitment to a nonsectarian approach will be reflected in a refusal to adopt a dismissive attitude toward revolutionary socialists outside of your ranks, particularly those organizations which are part of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States -- the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and by far the largest of all, the Socialist Workers Party. I suspect that the mass revolutionary socialist party that we all hope for will ultimately find within its ranks

militants from all of these organizations, and from your own -- as well as many more who are not yet involved in the socialist movement. All of us will have something to learn, and all will have something to contribute. But we will have to come together around a clearer understanding of the road forward than has been developed so far. So while we cannot afford to write each other off, neither can we afford to gloss over serious differences. Only by discussing these differences and by submitting them to the test of events will we be able to achieve the political clarity which must be the basis for a durable unity.

I want to discuss certain differences here. But first I want to note what I see as important common ground between the F.I.T. and the comrades of the Fourth Internationalist Caucus which has been formed within Solidarity: we are loyal to the program of the Fourth International, under whose banner we hope all revolutionary socialists and class-struggle militants will ultimately rally. Inseparable from this, we identify with the traditions of Bolshevism and genuine Leninism -- although on this crucial point there may be important differences of interpretation. For us in the F.I.T., the Leninist perspective on the party involves a commitment to the primacy of revolutionary program, an understanding that revolutionaries must be united around such a program in a cohesive organization in which democracy and centralism dialectically interact to ensure a vibrant activism. I would like to think that after further discussion and experience we will find ourselves standing on common ground in this regard -- but we shall see. Yet there are other points on which, at present, we seem more clearly to disagree. I want to address myself to a couple of these.

The F.I.T.'s orientation is grounded in the proud traditions of an indigenous American Trotskyism, which constitute an invaluable resource that revolutionaries in the United States cannot afford to ignore. I know that some members of SU in the past scoffed at the notion of "American Trotskyism" as some kind of provincial dilution of Trotskyism's internationalist essence, a chauvinistic "national conceit." But that is a profound mistake. Take the founder of organized Trotskyism in the U.S., James P. Cannon, whose roots were in the left wing of the Socialist Party in its heroic years, in the Industrial Workers of the World, and in the pioneer days of the American Communist Party. The late Harry Braverman (hardly an uncritical

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admirer) later recalled that Cannon "spoke to us in the accents of the Russian revolution and of the Leninism which had gone forth from the Soviet Union in the twenties and the thirties. But there was in his voice something more which attracted us. And that was the echoes of the [American] radicalism of the pre-World War I years, the popular radicalism of Debs, Haywood and John Reed. And he spoke with great force and passion." Surely this is too valuable to shrug off.

But this was further enriched -- in Cannon and his comrades of the Trotskyist movement -- by fifty years more of experience in the workers' movement and the revolutionary struggle within the United States. We in the F.I.T. believe that well into the 1960s and 1970s, despite serious weaknesses, it was the Socialist Workers Party which most effectively reflected these traditions in a variety of struggles in the United States. I don't want to minimize the "serious weaknesses," which ultimately contributed substantially to the crisis of the SWP that was brought on by the current leadership's moving away from the revolutionary program and from democratic organizational norms. Some of these (pre-1979) weaknesses have been discussed at least somewhat in the material by Cannon in Don't Strangle the Party, as well as in articles in the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism by George Breitman, Evelyn Sell, Frank Lovell, myself, and others. There is certainly a need for additional critical analysis. That is a necessary part of retrieving and adding to the heritage of American Trotskyism, which should be one of our basic tasks. Our understanding of the past will help to shape what we do now and what we do next.

I must say, I get the impression that many of the SU comrades never seemed to think this was very important, and some seemed inclined to regard the tradition of Cannon as a negative factor, an albatross, perhaps even as a source of the current crisis in the SWP. I've heard positive aspects of the party's history -- including fairly recent achievements that I witnessed, such as the SWP's role in the antiwar movement of the 1960s and early '70s -- dismissed by certain individuals in and around SU in terms and tone befitting a sectarian opponent, the context of such remarks being regroupment discussions taking place in Pittsburgh with members of IS and Workers Power. Such dismissal -- whether of the passive or active variety -- disturbs me very much and has, in my

opinion, negative implications for developing a Trotskyist movement here which is rooted in American realities and radical traditions. I hope this will be overcome in Solidarity's Fourth Internationalist Caucus. It may also be a fruitful area for discussion between members of that caucus and the F.I.T. This is important because of its implications for future activity.

Another serious disagreement (perhaps not unrelated to what I've just been discussing) involves an immediate practical question -- the ENC. We in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency feel that the activists of Solidarity, and the organization as a whole, should join with us and others in the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. But the general attitude of Solidarity's Fourth Internationalist Caucus seems to be one of hostility toward the ENC.

In order to build an effective opposition to U.S. imperialism and counterrevolution in Central America, we need to create a nonexclusionary united front with an anti-intervention focus, which includes important sectors of the labor movement, which has a mass action perspective, and which is politically independent of the capitalist parties. This is the view of the F.I.T., but I know that you and at least most of Solidarity are in agreement. Unfortunately, despite other undeniable virtues, the bulk of the leadership of the present anti-intervention movement doesn't see things that way. All too often, there is a concentration on lobbying and electoralism, and also an unnecessary and unfortunate counterposing of material aid, moral witness, refugee work, etc. (all worthy activities in their own right) to mass action against U.S. intervention. The ENC constitutes an important network of activists within the larger movement who are guided by the mass action orientation. I have heard that some members of Solidarity (particularly its Fourth Internationalist Caucus) are saying that ENC members aren't really involved in the "actual movement." But I know for a fact that this isn't true in Pittsburgh, in Cleveland, in Minneapolis, in New York, in Philadelphia, in Los Angeles, and elsewhere. We are active, and in some cases prominent, in a variety of organizations and coalitions that have been doing serious anti-intervention and

solidarity work. In the context of real, ongoing antiwar efforts we are trying to win others to the perspective that you and we share, which happens to be the basic perspective of the ENC.

Our experience has been that simply working in the so-called "mainstream" anti-intervention organizations on an individual or local basis cannot, by itself, change the course of those organizations. Although the ENC has not been as effective as we would like it to be in facilitating this change, we believe that it has potential for contributing substantially to the development of a mass action, politically independent, and labor-oriented anti-intervention movement. It has already done some good work along these lines. Nor does it counterpose participation in the ENC to involvement in other antiwar formations.

If Solidarity wants to put forward a coherent argument for a better alternative, then it should do so. Frankly, I think its members should become serious and thoughtful participants in the ENC, thereby helping to make it a more effective force within the anti-intervention movement. This is very important for the future of the anti-intervention movement, for helping to end U.S. intervention in Central America. But it is also important, I think, because socialists must seek ways to work together even when we cannot be part of the same socialist organization.

Our goal must be, of course, to create a revolutionary organization that all of us will be part of. Through our different efforts to clarify our understanding of the revolutionary program, and through united efforts to implement aspects of that program, we can contribute to a durable unity among revolutionary socialists in the United States. I hope that you, as well as the Fourth Internationalist Caucus and Solidarity as a whole, will help advance such efforts, as I myself intend to do.

The two of us have never stopped working together and talking frankly about politics to each other even when we found ourselves -- after twelve years -- in separate organizations. Nothing has changed the high regard we have for each other. Nevertheless, let me state what you already know: I look forward to working with you and talking with you now and in the future.

Comradely,
Paul

ORGANIZING AGAINST U.S. INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Draft Resolution Adopted by F.I.T. National Conference (Part 2)

[The following is the second and final portion of the anti-intervention resolution adopted by the Third F.I.T. National Conference, February 1986. The first part appeared in Bulletin IDOM No. 30]

SOURCES OF WEAKNESS FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

SOURCES OF STRENGTH FOR THE ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

In taking up the challenge to forge a united movement which can carry out massive mobilizations, anti-intervention forces need to take advantage of the weaknesses of the U.S. government and build on the strengths of the opposition movements at home and abroad.

The "Vietnam syndrome" continues to be a powerful influence in American political life. Both the U.S. government and the overwhelming majority of Americans want to avoid "another Vietnam" in Central America, but for different reasons.

The government, and the ruling class it serves, wants to avoid getting involved in a war which is not supported by the U.S. population (which provides the labor for producing war supplies, the human bodies for the military forces, and the tax revenues to pay for everything). It wants to avoid a war waged against an armed people determined to fight for many years to achieve their liberation. The U.S. imperialist giant does not want to suffer another military and political defeat. These are problems which have limited the options open to the U.S. government over the past 10-12 years.

It was certainly not "good" politicians elected to Congress who hampered interventionist efforts of Washington during that time. Congressional committees easily approved Reagan's 1981 decision to secretly support the contras' attacks against Nicaragua. The CIA rapidly increased both the numbers of contras and the scope of their operations. These covert activities were revealed when the mines exploded in Nicaraguan harbors early in 1984--a U.S. planned and aided contra operation from beginning to end. The publicity helped educate for the protest that forced

Congress to cut off funding to the contras in mid-1984. Reagan's attempts to resume this aid were stymied by further revelations, particularly by the outraged reaction to the October 1984 news about the CIA manual instructing contras on how to kidnap and assassinate Sandinista officials. In a December 23, 1984, editorial, the Los Angeles Times points out:

"Any military moves against Nicaragua would be unacceptable from a political and diplomatic point of view, alienating the United States from friends and allies all over Latin America and Europe. It would also be foolhardy from a military point of view. A blockade would not just stretch the Navy thin but also the number of Soviet Bloc ships now sailing into Nicaragua's ports would make it risky. An invasion would be nowhere as quick and easy as Reagan's adventure in Grenada. Most military analysts agree that it would be long, bloody and unpopular in this country. Lyndon B. Johnson was the last President to painfully learn how an unpopular foreign war can undermine a domestic political mandate."

This type of criticism does not indicate any great divisions within the ruling class--or its spokespersons and servants--about ultimate goals. But it does show that, from time to time, there are tactical differences on how best to achieve the economic, political, and military aims of U.S. imperialism. (For an analysis of the imperialist war drive, see the documents adopted by the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International.) The servants of capitalism in government and the military are sometimes forced to acknowledge errors in order to better accomplish long-range objectives. That's why one of the U.S.

planners of the harbor-mining scheme stated afterwards, "The whole thing was a fiasco." A senior official who helped run the contra operation admitted, "We discovered we had done the whole thing backwards. We decided to take the action before we had achieved a national consensus on Nicaragua. We should have received a consensus first."

That consensus has still not been achieved. Even while arguing for his amendment which opened the door to sending U.S. troops into Nicaragua, Representative Foley stated that an ABC-Washington Post poll showed that 76 percent of Americans oppose U.S. military involvement in Nicaragua. In April, 1985, the Los Angeles Times reported: "The Vietnam experience has colored Americans' perceptions of future conflicts and made the nation hesitant to involve troops or money in bolstering other countries Because of the shadows cast by America's loss in Vietnam, the 2,446 people polled in a nationwide television survey overwhelmingly opposed U.S. military intervention in Israel, El Salvador and Nicaragua--and fear that Nicaragua will turn into another Vietnam."

In addition to the "Vietnam syndrome," another source of weakness for U.S. imperialism--as well as a source of strength for the anti-intervention movement--is the continuing courageous struggles carried on by the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean. The many thousands who have been forced to flee to the United States give living proof of the crimes against humanity committed by their governments abetted by the U.S. These victims display the razor cuts, mutilations, and other marks of torture. They testify about the disappearances, assaults on unionists and land reform organizers, and lack of elementary democratic rights in their countries of origin. They are playing a role in the U.S. very similar to that of the runaway Black slaves who escaped to the North in the years before the Civil War, and the sanctuary movement identifies with the Underground Railroad of that period.

Firsthand accounts have deeply af-

ected a wide range of North Americans: trade unionists, labor committees and labor-based groups, religious institutions, students and faculty members, oppressed minorities, and human rights activists. They have demonstrated through a wide variety of protests that they are unwilling to support crimes committed by Central American regimes supported by and acting as agents for U.S. corporate interests. They are not willing to pay the price of the escalating aggressions: lives lost and ruined in covert or official wars, and the expenses of the growing military budget which sucks monies and resources out of production and programs to meet human needs. This unwillingness to back the policies of the U.S. government provides a strong basis for building an anti-intervention movement which can mobilize the massive numbers necessary to alter unpopular policies.

Over the past year strong links have been forged between the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements in the United States. Both are concerned with defending human rights and supporting self-determination. They marched together on April 20, and on October 11 and 12. Anti-intervention activists played a significant role in the committees organizing the October anti-apartheid events. Solidarity organizations helped build these events. Anti-intervention contingents swelled the ranks of the marchers in Los Angeles and New York. Members of anti-intervention groups initiated the call for and helped build the successful anti-apartheid rallies in Philadelphia and Cleveland.

The upsurge of the struggle of Blacks in South Africa and the support movement in the U.S. increases the problems of U.S. imperialism and, thus, impairs its ability to focus resources on its attacks against Central American and Caribbean peoples. In addition, the South African government has greatly helped the arming of dictatorships in Latin America. Faced with the necessity of coping with the Black struggle at home, the apartheid regime is less able to provide aid and comfort to the repressive governments in Central America.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

Despite the inherent and conjunctural weaknesses of U.S. imperialism, the ruling class has great reservoirs of power to draw from, including its immense propaganda and military machines, and its governmental apparatus. To counter that kind of power, the anti-

intervention movement needs to marshal all of its resources in combined efforts for maximum impact.

The major obstacle to building a united movement which will carry out mass actions is the pressure to stay out of the streets altogether and get into

Democratic Party politics--particularly into the Rainbow Coalition--or else to build mass actions only where they coincide with the interests of the "radical" wing of the Democratic Party. Anti-intervention groups have devoted their energies into election campaigning in previous years and, as the 1986 elections draw nearer, the appeal to "stop Reaganism!" becomes stronger and stronger--even though Democratic Party politicians have consistently betrayed past promises. CISPES, for example, has put great energies into electoral activities in previous years and has explained that it has "a strategic alliance with the Democratic Party." There are no signs that this alliance has weakened despite the Democrats' votes for aid to the Duarte regime.

Stalinist and other reformist forces involved in the anti-intervention movement also have an orientation toward the Democratic Party and the Rainbow Coalition. Support for "progressives" and the liberal wing of the party has long been a feature of both Social Democratic groups and the Communist Party. Even those with a more radical coloration in the past are now touting the prospects for gathering "anti-imperialists" together within the Rainbow Coalition. For example, this was the perspective offered in Frontline, the newspaper expressing the views of Line of March. The May 27, 1985, issue carried the second of a two-part article by Melinda Paras and Ann Schwartz, "Building a Coalition for Peace and Justice." The authors warned:

"We are at a key juncture in the people's movement where we will either remain with one-shot solidarity movements, or take a major step forward toward an ongoing coalition for peace and justice which can actually mobilize the broad base whose politics it represents A left-center coalition which is united around the politics of peace and justice needs to be formalized and made permanent at this key juncture A greater unity is already being developed among the forces within the left wing of the peace movement that substantially overlaps many of the perspectives of the Rainbow Coalition."

Experience has proven over and over again that such realignment attempts within the Democratic Party, or efforts to win significant demands through the Democratic Party apparatus, have led to a diversion from the struggle. The results are the burn-out of activists, and the derailment of groups and individuals into long-lasting involvement in the political shell games of the major capitalist parties.

The gains won in the past came from independent struggles organized on a united front basis and relying on the mass strength of the movement seeking changes. The task now is to convince the anti-intervention movement of this strategy. This will not be accomplished easily or quickly. It will take patience, persistence, and organized efforts on the part of those who are already convinced of the need for such a strategy.

BUILDING A MASS ACTION WING WITHIN A UNITED ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

Over the past eighteen months the core of a mass action wing has coalesced within the anti-intervention movement in the course of organizing and holding the two national gatherings of the Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC).

On May 20, 1984, some thirty Cleveland area labor, solidarity, academic, and other community antiwar activists met to discuss the growing danger of U.S. government intervention despite the opposition of the majority of the people of the United States. They agreed that the most urgent need was to unite all opponents of U.S. government intervention in order to mobilize the kind of massive expression necessary to stop the war against the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean regions. Toward that end, they constituted themselves as

a committee to contact similar groups, and their own organizations around the country, about the feasibility of coming together in an emergency national conference "to educate and to plan specific national actions against U.S. military intervention."

The first conference was held September 14-16, 1984, in Cleveland. Of the 650 who registered, 175 were trade unionists; the bulk of the other participants came from solidarity and peace groups, minority and women's rights organizations, along with unaffiliated students, senior citizens, and members of religious groups. The role of unionists was particularly significant in terms of the very large number of endorsements, participants, speakers, and organizers of the various conference sessions. The conference voted to call upon the peace and anti-intervention

movements to sponsor demonstrations on April 20, 1985, in major U.S. cities. The Continuations Committee elected at the conference became a member of the Steering Committee of the national coalition which formed very soon after: the April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice.

The ENC was able to play a significant role in the development of the April Actions coalition on both the national and local levels. As a result of the ENC's efforts, anti-intervention demands comprised the first point of unity on the national call. When the leading national groups tried to cancel the April 20 mobilizations--on two different occasions--ENC Continuations Committee members and supporters rallied support for the actions which helped convince the national coalition to proceed. From the beginning, the ENC proposed that local coalitions be given voting status at meetings of the National Steering Committee--a point which was won after the local coalitions took on a life of their own, began attending national meetings, and came to the financial rescue of the faltering national center. At the local level, ENC supporters helped initiate and build the coalitions, ensured support and participation, and accepted leading organizational responsibilities.

The Second Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Military Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean was called to maintain and deepen the unity achieved on April 20 "in order to mount ever larger and more powerful mass mobilizations in the fall and to further strengthen the entire movement." This conference was smaller (479 attended) reflecting the general disorientation within the anti-intervention movement and the active opposition of those who rejected a mass action perspective. Nevertheless, the gathering in Minneapolis during June 21-23, 1985, showed that a solid core of activists were willing and able to build support for a mass action wing. The list of endorsers, conference organizers and speakers, and participants proved that the labor component of the ENC had been strengthened. The June conference took a necessary step forward by forming the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean (ENC or Council).

This organizational step was needed in order to provide continuity for more effective and consistent building of a mass action wing--such developments do not come about through wishful thinking alone or through a haphazard process.

The formation of the Council was very quickly proven to be warranted when the National Steering Committee of the April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice voted overwhelmingly against calling mass actions in the fall. Instead of moving forward on the basis of the momentum gained through the very successful April 20 mobilizations, the leadership of the national coalition stepped backward by deciding to function as a "network" and by supporting activities already planned by other groups as a substitute for the objectively required mass actions. As a result, almost all of the local coalitions around the country were dissolved or weakened so greatly that they have not been able to function effectively. The National Steering Committee projected spring mobilizations for April 26, 1986, but the smaller Administrative Committee decided (at its November 15, 1985, meeting) not to call spring actions in 1986.

The fact that national fall mobilizations were not called in 1985 and that the projected 1986 action has been cancelled shows that a mass action strategy has not become a part of the ongoing life of the anti-intervention movement nor of the movements allied with it. The April 20 actions may have placed mass mobilizations on the agenda but the authoritative groups in the movement have tabled such efforts. The challenge remains: to unify all those who will actively oppose U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, and to win this united movement to the strategy of independent mass actions.

At this time, the only national grouping persistently and patiently working to win activists to this strategy and to unite the entire anti-intervention movement is the ENC. At its September 7, 1985, National Steering Committee meeting, the Council recognized that it was "swimming against the tide" in pursuing these goals. It was noted that pressures were mounting on all activists in movements for social change to get into the Democratic Party's 1986 election campaigning. Tied in with this were the arguments for "multi-issue" coalitions by those intent on building "peace and justice" formations and rejecting mass actions against U.S. intervention in Central America as a "single-issue" project not in keeping with the needs of the times.

While recognizing these problems, the Steering Committee voted on September 7 to send an "Open Letter to the U.S. Anti-Intervention Movement" calling upon the hundreds of groups involved to establish a united national coalition.

The ENC has received a positive response to this open letter--which indicates it is in tune with a layer of anti-intervention activists.

Of course, there are always differences in principles, goals, strategy, and tactics within any movement made up of diverse elements. Many individuals and groups currently active in the anti-intervention movement do not agree with all or part of the purposes and principles adopted by the ENC: a focus on Central America and the Caribbean, non-exclusion, democratic decision-making and procedures, a nonpartisan policy in the political arena, a commitment to building mass actions as the Council's central activity, and a special emphasis on "mobilization of the trade union movement, including its rank-and-file members, while trying to win workers generally to the anti-intervention cause."

Disagreement has been voiced with the ENC's focus on Central America and the Caribbean, for example. Why not feature the nuclear weapons freeze as well? Why not include the Middle East where U.S. intervention is so blatant and dangerous? In its written material and its conferences, the ENC has pointed out the interconnections between U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean, nuclear weapons, and the complex issues involved in the Middle East situation. During its relatively brief existence, the ENC has learned that wide support for one demand does not necessarily correspond with wide support for another demand--even when they are interconnected. Adding inter-related issues does not lead to building a broader or larger grouping but actually serves to narrow and shrink the grouping ready to act on the question of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

The acute danger of a major U.S. war is most pronounced in Central America. The stepped-up attacks against Nicaragua are key to U.S. interventionist strategies all over the world. If the Sandinista government survives, all

struggles for self-determination (including that of the Palestinians) are strengthened. If the U.S. cold-and-hot warriors can be stopped in Central America and the Caribbean, they will find it much more difficult to intervene in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world.

In addition to honest disagreements, the ENC faces a covert campaign of injecting false issues. The Council is accused of being "divisive" because it acts as a "rival" organization, "competing" with already established groups--although the ENC is composed almost entirely of persons who have been and remain active in many different solidarity and anti-intervention organizations. The ENC is essentially a caucus within the broader movement, a mass action caucus functioning like any current trying to win people over to a particular idea. Leading members of the Council are attacked personally for having "a hidden agenda"--the kind of accusation which can never be proven or disproven but which creates unwarranted suspicions. This is a diversion from the openly stated program, purposes, and principles of the ENC for uniting the anti-intervention movement to carry out effective action to stop the U.S. war in Central America.

In January 1986, the third national conference of the ENC was held in Los Angeles, California. This proved to be the smallest of the conferences to date, and the small attendance reflected both the general decline in the anti-intervention movement at the time, as well as the results of the slander campaign within the movement against the organization. Nevertheless, a number of gains were made at the L.A. conference, including important new affiliations, and the decision on the programmatic level for the ENC to participate in the anti-apartheid movement in order to try to make the links between the struggles for self-determination in Central America and the Caribbean, on the one hand, with the similar fight of Blacks and other "non-white" nationalities in South Africa.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency reaffirms its commitment to building the ENC in order to advance a mass action strategy based on a united front approach. We are convinced that this is the correct response to the objective conditions created by U.S. imperialism as well as the appropriate response to the subjective conditions currently prevailing in the movement opposing U.S.

interventionism. As long as the need for mass actions exists, there must be a conscious, organized effort to ensure that mass actions take place. No one but the ENC is playing that role at the present time.

As revolutionary socialists we have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the working class as a whole. This identification extends be-

yond national borders; it is an international identification with working people and the oppressed around the world. We have an elementary responsibility to do everything we can to help the revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean. As socialists in the United States we have the special responsibility of thwarting the counter-revolutionary aims of the ruling class here--the most powerful ruling class in the world and the major barrier to the victories of the struggling peoples of Central America and the Caribbean.

We have been involved in a variety of anti-intervention activities and groups within our unions, labor committees on Central America, solidarity organizations, and local coalitions. These activities will continue as part of our efforts to help build a mass action wing in a united anti-intervention movement. There is no contradiction between our continued involvement in all such groups and our commitment to advancing the work of the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean. In fact, all Council members need to strengthen their participation in a wide range of anti-intervention and allied organizations. This will help the reaching-out process which is essential for winning more activists to a mass action strategy.

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency

has shown in practice that it can cooperate on a nonfactional basis with political parties and currents holding different positions on many important questions. We can "agree to disagree" on other questions while we work together to combat the interventionist policies and war drives of U.S. imperialism.

The effort of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency to help build a powerful anti-intervention movement in the United States continues the best traditions of the Socialist Workers Party in the fight against imperialist war--especially in the Vietnam era. It is also part of a central campaign of the Fourth International, the world party of revolutionary socialists. At its 1985 World Congress the Fourth International adopted a resolution on "The Central American Revolution" which noted:

"What is at stake in Nicaragua and El Salvador is of exceptional importance. Consequently for workers and revolutionaries throughout the world, for those who are fighting against imperialist remilitarization, it is of primordial importance to aid the victory of the revolutionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean and to ensure the unconditional defense of Cuba and Nicaragua....More than ever, solidarity with the Central American revolution is a central task for the whole of the Fourth International." □

STATEMENT BY THE ENC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The April 14 air attacks against Libya were barbaric acts of aggression which were properly condemned by virtually the entire world.

Reagan seeks to justify the raids on the grounds they were legitimate acts of self-defense in retaliation for Libyan government terrorism. But the U.S. government has yet to produce a shred of evidence to document this alleged terrorism. And even if such evidence were available, it would never justify the uncivilized action of dropping bombs and the mass killings of Libyans, including children.

The U.S. government today practices state terrorism on a scale that dwarfs the incidents of terrorism taking place in other parts of the world. Leading cases in point are: U.S. support for the Nicaraguan contras, who have murdered over 5,000 people, and U.S. support for the Botha apartheid government in South Africa.

The U.S. bombing of Libya was timed to get contra aid through Congress. Reagan hoped to create a wave of hysteria on the eve of the vote that would preclude anyone from opposing the Commander in Chief.

We believe the entire U.S. anti-intervention movement should denounce the raids and participate in protest mobilizations demanding: "Stop the Bombing of Libya!" "U.S. Hands Off Libya!"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ARNE SWABECK

by James P. Cannon

On March 13 Arne Swabeck died in Los Angeles at the age of 96. Swabeck was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party, and before that of the Communist League of America (Left Opposition), the forerunner of the SWP which was formed by those expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 for "Trotskyism." Swabeck remained a member of the SWP until 1967, when he was expelled for violations of party discipline. For some years before that, he had been developing differences with the program of the party--in particular with its analysis of the Chinese revolution and the nature of Maoism, which Swabeck identified with revolutionary Marxism. Two letters by Cannon stating his attitude toward the party's procedure concerning Swabeck's diverging political views and infringement of discipline are reprinted in the recently published pamphlet "Don't Strangle the Party."

Birthday parties in ordinary life are pretty much the same, but this gathering in honor of Arne Swabeck is different, a sort of upside-down birthday party.

For most people a birthday is a good excuse to lay off and eat cake and let others do the work. It was characteristic of Arne to book himself for an educational lecture at a branch meeting on his birthday, so that the celebration had to be held up until he finished his party chores.

This birthday party is different in another respect, too. Usually friends assemble to present gifts to one who has passed another milestone, the implication being that he needs something to help him up the hill that gets a little steeper every year. Here the birthday celebrant is the giver and the assembled guests, present in person or in spirit--all his party comrades throughout the country and throughout the world--are the grateful beneficiaries.

What we offer him tonight, in the way of trinkets and mementos, are not so much for his benefit as for our own. They are intended not as material gifts to sustain him, but rather as receipts, as acknowledgments of all that he has given to us, to help us, to instruct us by his teachings, and above all to inspire us by his example, and thus to

sustain us in the long fight for socialism to which our lives, like his, are committed.

This is a gathering of friends. The word "friend" is one of the biggest words ever spoken, but it is often used too lightly. Friendship formed in fair weather is an unknown quantity. It takes the test of adversity to measure its true value.

We used to have a saying in the old IWW, that you never know a man until you have been in jail with him, or broke and on the bum with him. That was just another way of saying that you can't really tell what a man is made of until you see how he conducts himself when the road gets rough, when the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune fly at him from all directions.

Such were the conditions under which I first got acquainted with Arne Swabeck 32 years ago at an underground convention of the Communist Party. We met as comrades of a persecuted band at a rough spot in the road. We have travelled together ever since, always sticking together, with our eyes on the goal ahead, no matter who else might falter and fall by the wayside. In the course of the long journey we came friends.

The road we have travelled together has had many twists and turns; we have seen and experienced many things, and the goal we saw 32 years ago is clearer than ever in our vision; but we haven't found a smooth road yet. They don't run that way this side of socialism.

The firmest bond of sustained personal association is allegiance to com-

(Tape-recorded greetings read at party for Arne Swabeck, Sept. 4, 1953, Chicago. Published in The Militant, Sept. 21, 1953.)

mon ideas and ideals. That is what makes the difference between someone you know and someone you can depend on in hard and heavy struggle. That is the iron bond which unites Arne Swabeck with those who celebrate his triumphant birthday tonight.

It has united some of us with him over the long stretch since the pioneer days of American communism; and this association, in turn, has maintained the unbroken continuity of the movement, its tradition and its leadership. This allegiance to common ideas and ideals unites the old guard with the party youth--the leaders of tomorrow.

Arne Swabeck has always believed in this primacy of ideas and taught others to believe it. He took Marxist theory seriously, studied it attentively, and taught it to others. That has been his chief service to the party, and especially to the younger generations of the Chicago branch, who have learned from him and who gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness at this birthday gathering tonight.

But the lesson would be barren without its correlative. Our theory is a guide to action, not only for the party but for each individual member. It is only by action that one can give valid testimony to his theoretical convictions. Faith without works is dead. The true revolutionist lives and acts the way he thinks and talks.

Here, too, Arne Swabeck has set us the perfect example. He has taught us, by the consistent example of his entire life, what it really means to be a socialist, not only in theory, but also in practice; not only in words but in deeds.

The true art of being a socialist consists not merely in recognizing the trend of social evolution from capitalism to socialism, and striving to help it along and hasten on the day. It consists not merely in the prophetic vision that life will be better and fairer under socialism; that human nature, crippled and deformed in the class society, will assert itself and change for the better; and that people in the socialist society will be different and better.

The true art of being a socialist consists in anticipating the socialist future; in not waiting for its actual realization, but in striving, here and

now, insofar as the circumstances of class society permit, to live like a socialist; to live under capitalism according to the higher standards of the socialist future.

The comrade whom we honor tonight has helped to teach us this art of being a socialist by the method of the good teachers who teach by example: by living a socialist life himself.

His contributions and achievements in many fields of work have been gratefully acknowledged here tonight. But his greatest achievement of all, that which we honor above all, is the simple fact of his consistent socialist life--not just on special occasions, but every day in the week and twice on Sunday.

And that is the main reason he has turned out such good pupils, who in turn have become teachers, here and in other sections of the party. For Arne has taught not only from the books, important as that is, but also from life, by the example of his own life.

I understand that the Chicago branch has decided to demand less active work from Arne in the future and give him more time for writing. You can afford to do that now, precisely because he has done his work as a leader well--by the highest socialist standards, not as an individual performer, crowding others from the stage, but above all as a teacher, teaching and inspiring others by precept and example.

Those who have been so taught and so inspired--and that includes every one of us--will be well able to take care of things if Arne obeys the command of the branch to ease up his strenuous activity a bit. This is not an underestimation of his leadership, but the highest possible compliment to it; for the best socialist leaders are those who teach and inspire others, and prepare them to take their place.

If the leaders do this, as Arne Swabeck has done so well, and still stick around to lend a hand once in a while, it is all the better. The comrades of Local Chicago are doubly fortunate in this respect. They have the benefit of his past teaching and example--and still have Arne, too. Thus equipped, they can confidently face their great future.

In toasting Arne Swabeck, and all that he stands for, they are saluting their future victory. □

JEAN VAN HEIJENOORT (1912-1986)

by Alan Wald

Jean van Heijenoort, secretary to Leon Trotsky from 1932 to 1939, died at the age of seventy-three in Mexico City on March 25, 1986. In 1977 he had retired from the Philosophy Department at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and for the past several years lived in Palo Alto, California, where he was editing the papers of the logician Kurt Godel.

Van Heijenoort was born on July 23, 1912, in Creil, France, and attended the Lycee St. Louis in Paris. He became a radical at the age of fifteen, and about 1931 joined the French Trotskyist group, the Communist League. He was the first adherent who had not been expelled from the French Communist Party or Young Communist League.

In October 1932, at the age of twenty, van Heijenoort arrived in Prinkipo, Turkey, to begin seven years of service with Trotsky as secretary, translator, and bodyguard, in Turkey, France, Norway, and Mexico. This ended in November 1939, when he traveled to New York City on a political assignment for a few months. In May 1940, after a group of Mexican Communists led by David Alfaro Siqueiros assaulted the Trotsky household with machine guns and murdered an American guard, van Heijenoort volunteered to rejoin Trotsky's staff at once. But Trotsky urged that he stay in the United States. In August 1940 van Heijenoort was teaching French in Baltimore when he read in the newspaper that a second assassination attempt had succeeded.

For the next several years van Heijenoort, known under the pseudonyms "Marc Loris" and "Daniel Logan," served as secretary of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, which was located in New York City during World War II. Throughout the early 1940s he contributed copiously to Fourth International, theoretical journal of the Socialist Workers Party, especially on matters pertaining to Western Europe. He also participated in an internal party literary discussion on the nature of dialectical materialism.

In the mid-1940s, van Heijenoort supported a political tendency led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow which

switched its allegiance to Max Shachtman's Workers Party in 1946. In the autumn of 1947 van Heijenoort read a paper on the one hundredth anniversary of the Communist Manifesto to a group of friends and political associates, in which he argued that, despite the reasonableness of Marx's predictions in 1848, the political incapacity of the working class had been definitively proven to be an inherent and not a conjunctural weakness. The paper was published in the March 1948 Partisan Review as "A Century's Balance Sheet" under the pseudonym "Jean Vannier."

Van Heijenoort subsequently departed from radical politics and devoted himself to an academic career. In the 1950s he joined the Department of Mathematics at New York University, and in 1965 he became a member of the Philosophy Department at Brandeis. A 1967 book published by Harvard University Press, From Frege to Godel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic, earned him a national reputation. In 1978 Harvard University Press also published his book of recollections, With Trotsky in Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacan.

From the 1950s, van Heijenoort directed the cataloging and organization of the Trotsky Archives at Houghton Library, Harvard University. Until his death he cooperated with scholars and others doing research into Trotskyist historiography--especially after 1980, when a section of the archives which had been closed until then, at Trotsky's request, was opened to the public. □

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N.Y. TIMES TELLS SOME OF THE TRUTH ABOUT LENIN AND STALIN

I thought readers of the Bulletin IDOM would be interested in an article which appeared in the April 21 New York Times. Written by Serge Schmemmann, it deals with modern life in Lenin's home town of Ulyanovsk in the USSR, and with the construction of a "Lenin Memorial Complex" there.

Toward the end of the article Schmemmann discusses the differences between "Lenin the icon and Lenin the historical revolutionary." The insights are significant:

"The latter would no doubt have been horrified by the former. Immediately on his death, Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, appealed in a letter to Pravda that his memory not be transformed into a cult....

"The only injunction in history more totally ignored may be Lenin's warning against letting Stalin come to power. It was Stalin, in fact, who set about almost immediately canonizing Lenin. Opposed by many powerful Bolsheviks and lacking public support, Stalin needed to wrap himself in Lenin's mantle of authority, and that mantle needed to be sacred. Stalin's first official biography (later suppressed) proclaimed that 'Stalin is Lenin today,' and on this foundation the tyrant would build his own incomparable cult....

"Stalin's legacy is there in the memorial complex, too. Some of Lenin's closest comrades, Bolsheviks like Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev, all purged and denounced by Stalin, are carefully excised from all photographs and documents on display. Stalin himself is there, but many of the men he crushed remain nonpersons."

A supporter

IMPROVING THE LETTERS PAGE

I wish to make two points. One has to do with the LETTERS page in BIDOM and the other has to do with the article by Dave Riehle in the May issue, on the P-9 strike in Austin, Minnesota.

I urge the editors of BIDOM to more strongly encourage the writing of letters (and by extension, articles) by BIDOM readers from around the country. One of the first things I personally turn to in BIDOM is the LETTERS page. I'm sure others do the same. I am somewhat disappointed when I see only two or three short letters. I believe the

LETTERS page can be turned into one of BIDOM's most interesting features rather than simply a "back page" incidental feature. Moreover, it can be made even more interesting if "critical" letters are solicited. BIDOM is first rate as far as polemics against other political currents are concerned (even this can stand further extension to polemics with such "left" currents as the Guardian, Nation, In These Times, as well as revisionist or incorrect tendencies within the ranks of the Fourth International).

The interest engendered by the above measures can be still further enhanced by some self-criticism. One example of this self-criticism (within the FI) is the reference made by Steve Bloom in the May issue of BIDOM in the article, "Revolutionary Marxism and The Fourth International." Under the sub-heading One Problem, Bloom says, "He [Mandel] insists on following the recent practice of the central leaders of the majority of the FI which makes an identity between the concept of the 'workers' and farmers' government' and the schematic, incorrect application of this term by the Barnes and Percy-Lorimer currents."

While this criticism of one of the central leaders of the FI is correctly done in the context of overwhelming support of Mandel's article, it is criticism nonetheless and it is thereby more interesting, educational and clarifying.

My point is to encourage greater participation and more critical contributions from a greater diversity of readers and to avoid the impression of an "elitist" group of writers confined to a narrow circle.

Let me go on to a criticism of the Dave Riehle article also in the May issue (although I agree with him on his main line). On page 11 Comrade Riehle says, "P-9 already has its worshipers and its fainthearted critics, as well as its open enemies. Contrary to both, P-9 is neither a model of strike organization and class combat, nor a failure created by the shortcomings and mistakes of its leaders. All those things can be learned, corrected, and improved upon. As important as they are, they are secondary and derivative. The workers who support P-9, and are inspired by them, know this instinctively."

All this may very well be true, but Comrade Riehle does not help anybody by simply making this assertion. He owes it to his readers to spell out "the shortcomings and mistakes" of the leaders so that we know precisely what he's

talking about and thereby "learn, correct, and improve upon." In this writer's opinion Comrade Riehle's statement as it stands can only undermine the acknowledged superiority of P-9's leadership.

I also differ with Comrade Riehle in his appraisal of the bosses vis-a-vis the P-9 international bureaucracy. On page 12 he says, "However, it is certainly not distressing the packing bosses that the main union they have to contend with is being discredited in the eyes of the workers. Unlike the UFCW bureaucracy, they are quite capable of working both sides of the streets [?] in pursuit of their own interests. If they can't attain their objectives in collaboration with their 'partners' in the International, they are perfectly willing to cut their throats if the opportunity presents itself. This is something the Wynn leadership has undoubtedly pondered, and accounts in large part for their frenzied opposition to P-9."

The Wynn leadership, like any union bureaucracy, is "frenzied" when they think they are losing their hold on the union membership and possibly losing their cushy jobs by being replaced with a militant leadership, not by any fear that the bosses will "cut their throats." The bosses need that bureaucracy more than ever, for it is their strongest support. It will be a mark of the rising class consciousness of the workers when they are ready to fight their greatest immediate battle, the class collaboration between the bosses and the bureaucrats.

A reader
New York

ANOTHER TROTSKY WORK

I appreciated the "Guide to Trotsky's Books in English" compiled by Sam Gregory in the May issue. I was unaware of the youthful works published by New Park.

I thought you might like to know of another work of Trotsky's from the pre-1917 period that was not mentioned. It is only a 32-page pamphlet, so you might have chosen to exclude it from a list of books. It is: "Chapters from My Diary," undated publication -- probably 1918 -- published by The Revolutionary Age, Boston.

This was Fraina's publishing outfit, and they advertise in this pamphlet two pamphlets by Fraina and The Revolutionary Age "issued every Saturday by Local Boston, Socialist Party."

The pamphlet consists of an anecdotal

account of Trotsky's activities and of general politics from Aug.-Dec. 1914. This seems to have been written by March 1917. The pamphlet also contains the text of an open letter that Trotsky wrote upon his expulsion from France in October 1916 to Jules Guesde, a Socialist minister in the bourgeois government.

I have a xerox of this, made from a crumbling copy I found in the depths of Widener Library at Harvard.

I would be glad to pass on a copy if you are interested.

Yours in solidarity
Massachusetts

NUCLEAR ACCIDENT IN THE USSR

As this issue of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is being prepared, the world has learned of the worst disaster at a nuclear power station in history, in the Soviet Ukraine. Details are still sketchy, but it is clear that a massive amount of radioactive material has been released into the atmosphere as a result of an explosion and fire at the plant. This cloud of fallout has already had effects reaching far beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

This accident underlines the extreme dangers connected with nuclear power everywhere in the world. These plants cannot be run safely, no matter what social system builds and operates them. They should be shut down wherever they currently exist and no more should be constructed. The accident also sheds light on the callous attitude of the bureaucratic clique which runs the Soviet government towards the health and safety of the masses of people. Of course the U.S. ruling class and its spokespeople are taking full advantage of the incident to distract attention from their own reckless disregard for human welfare in pursuit of profits from nuclear power, and as fuel for anticommunist propaganda efforts.

An article in our next issue will explore these and related questions.

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