

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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SOVIET BUREAUCRACY IN TURMOIL

by Frank Lovell

Current political developments in the Soviet Union are signs of economic instability and deep social unrest. They indicate sweeping changes in the economy and the society that are destined to evoke responses in the capitalist world from both the ruling class and the working class. The ruling class has responded almost reflexively in all the major capitals of the Western world, sending signals to the Soviet bureaucracy that it is ready and willing to invest in industrial enterprises inside the Soviet Union provided capitalist property rights are recognized and protected.

Capitalist Investment

In Moscow on January 5 Yuri A. Kislenco, a top Soviet trade official, announced that U.S. and other foreign companies are being encouraged to enter into joint business ventures with Soviet industries. Kislenco revealed that negotiations with capitalist investors have resulted in a plan to protect their investments. According to a *New York Times* report, the plan provides tax exemption, independence from central Soviet economic planning, freedom to experiment with capitalist labor/management techniques, free access to both the Soviet home market and the world market, and joint ownership.

Kislenco said that a new law, "broadly worded," will allow foreign investors to hold a 49 percent equity in Soviet industrial facilities, and will describe tax regulations. He said such matters as labor-management relations, prices for labor and raw materials, and financing would be worked out in individual contracts for each joint venture.

Foreign investors that had signed agreements included 11 U.S. companies, among them the Monsanto Company, Occidental Petroleum, and SSMC Inc. (Singer sewing machine). Fifteen others are in negotiations. Kislenco said U.S. government restrictions on the export of advanced technology to the Soviet Union and on imports of joint-venture products to the U.S. are serious obstacles to be overcome.

If this joint-venture plan materializes as projected it can undermine the state monopoly of foreign trade in the USSR and open up paths for reestablishing private ownership in the means of production—conceivably even threatening socialist property relations in the long term.

Bureaucratic Waste

Such desperate measures are dictated by the terrible wastefulness and inefficiency of the

bureaucratic apparatus, and by deep social unrest. These factors are also the stimulus for recent political reforms proposed by Gorbachev. A pledge to combat the inertia of the bureaucratic system is what brought Gorbachev to the top almost two years ago in the power struggle within the Soviet bureaucracy. He promised to drive out the bureaucratic drones and eliminate waste.

At a closed meeting of Soviet writers, on June 19 last year, Gorbachev exposed the crisis of the bureaucracy and the turmoil within it. What he said has not yet been published in the Soviet Union but notes taken at the meeting have been published in Europe, first in Italy and later elsewhere. Excerpts first appeared in the *New York Times* on December 22. Even these snatches reveal the convulsive state of the bureaucratic regime. He told the writers, "a very profound and serious struggle lies ahead." Why? "Take Gosplan. For Gosplan there exist no authorities, no general secretaries, no central committees. They do what they want. The situation they like best is for someone to come into their private office and ask for a million, for 20 tractors, for 40,000—to beg them."

Gorbachev said, "We have very many people who take advantage of their position. Nothing is exploited as much as official position."

He said, "Our enemies . . . have begun a campaign against our leadership using all means, including terror. They write about the apparatus that broke Khrushchev's neck, and about the apparatus that will now break the neck of the new leadership."

"The economy is very disordered," Gorbachev said. "We lag in all indices. In 1969 we had a problem in Stavropol—what to do with meat and milk. We were awash in butter. Today there is nothing. The relations between money and goods, income and goods have been lost.

"We have forgotten how to work. Not only that, we have forgotten how to work in democratic conditions. This is very difficult.

"Not a few people are drunks, profiteers, embezzlers, but mostly, of course, bureaucrats, those people who do not want to part with their rights."

What must be done?

"Those who think that we can restructure in a month or two are naive!" he said. "This has taken shape over years and will demand massive efforts and titanic labors. If we don't involve the people nothing will come of it. All our plans depend on influencing the people."

He invoked the Leninist tradition. "Why do I constantly sit with volumes of Lenin, looking

through them, looking for approaches? Because it is never too late to consult with Lenin."

He talked about meetings of the Politburo. "There are clashes, arguments," he said. "For two, three years we postponed things, but now we want to act."

Bureaucratic Dilemma

These revelations of Gorbachev grasp at the problems facing the Soviet bureaucracy. Yet the bureaucracy is incapable of reconciling these problems. It doesn't know how or where to act. "The restructuring is progressing with great difficulty," Gorbachev said. "We have no opposition party. How then can we control ourselves? Only through criticism and self-criticism. Most important—through glasnost (openness). We're learning here, too. We're restructuring everything, from the General Secretary to the rank-and-file Communist. Democratism without glasnost does not exist. At the same time democracy without limits is anarchy. That's why it will be difficult."

This is the terrible dilemma of every bureaucrat. They call upon the masses for help to make their system work. They speak in the name of democracy. But they don't want to give up their privileges. Proletarian "democracy," if properly controlled, is alright. But too much decision-making by the mass of people becomes "anarchy."

Ferment

Since Gorbachev made his appeal to the Soviet writers a series of important developments occurred as the old year closed out. On December 20, Gorbachev phoned the exiled dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov to inform him that his cruel exile to the isolated city of Gorky where he had been kept under virtual house arrest since 1980 was ended. Sakharov was invited back to Moscow to resume his work as a physicist. Also Sakharov's companion, Yelena G. Bonner, was released and invited back to Moscow. She had been convicted of anti-Soviet activities in 1984 and is now pardoned. The Sakharovs were welcomed in Moscow by friends and well-wishers and immediately made public a list of dissidents still imprisoned. He announced, at the same time, that he did not wish to become the organizer and leader of a dissident movement in the Soviet Union.

Almost simultaneous with the announcement that Sakharov and Bonner were released, the Soviet press agency Tass reported riots in Alma-Ata, capital of the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. Several hundred students were said to have been involved in anti-Russian rioting. Roy Medvedev, the well-known author and critic of the bureaucracy, was reported from Moscow as having speculated that the unusually frank report of the rioting may have been an excuse by the bureaucracy to begin a more extensive crackdown on political cronyism among ethnic Kazhaks and send a warning to ethnic minorities in other republics.

Another example of the palsied hand of the bureaucracy and efforts by the Gorbachev faction to "restructure" is the open discussion of public issues in the Soviet press. This centers upon disputes, wrangles, and delays in the construction of hydroelectric power plants and irrigation projects. Such projects involve adjoining republics in the USSR and are complicated by conflicting national interests and cultural heritage.

Trotsky's Heritage

In his efforts to cut a path through the welter of bureaucratic confusion and sloth, Gorbachev said he consults the writings of Lenin. He should also spend some time with the writings of Trotsky, where the problems and dangers created by the bureaucracy are dealt with more extensively. Lenin was only beginning to devote full attention to the alarming growth of the bureaucracy in 1923 and had formed a bloc with Trotsky at that time to curb the bureaucracy which had already found its representative inside the Bolshevik party in the person of Stalin, who as general secretary of the party was protecting bureaucratic privileges.

Lenin died in 1924, before the struggle against the Stalin degeneracy could be organized, and Trotsky was left almost alone in the top leadership of the Bolshevik party to continue the tasks that he and Lenin had set for themselves. For the next sixteen years, until his assassination in Mexico by an agent of Stalin, the unremitting struggle against the reactionary policies and political crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy was continued by Trotsky. His collected writings, all of which are available to the Gorbachev faction in the bureaucracy but almost unknown to the Soviet public, trace the degeneration of the Soviet state under the impact of the rising bureaucracy from 1923 to the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the start of World War II in 1939.

In 1936 Trotsky, then in exile, wrote his most famous analysis and indictment of the Soviet bureaucracy, *The Revolution Betrayed*. There he made a prediction: "On the historic order of the day stands not the peaceful socialist development of 'one country,' but a series of world disturbances: wars and revolutions. Disturbances are inevitable also in the domestic life of the Soviet Union. If the bureaucracy was compelled in its struggle for a planned economy to dekulakize the kulak, the working class will be compelled in its struggle for socialism to debureaucratize the bureaucracy."

Much has happened in the last half century to confirm this.

Trotsky's prediction was written as the Spanish revolution was unfolding and the civil war was beginning. He hoped that a successful working class revolution would change the course of history even at that late date. He did everything in his power to help organize the revolutionary struggle in Spain, but it was defeated and fascism came to power there.

The civil war in Spain coincided with the monstrous Moscow frame-up trials during which the most prominent leaders of the Russian revolution were castigated as "Trotskyite/Fascist agents" before being shot. Trotsky was tried *in absentia*, sentenced to death.

World War II and Its Aftermath

In 1937 Stalin ordered a massive purge of the Red Army. In May of that year Marshal Tukhachevsky, the commander-in-chief, was arrested and executed without trial along with most of the experienced generals. This was followed by the arrest or execution of 25,000 officers, one-third of the total.

Such was the weakened condition of the Soviet military command when the Stalin-Hitler pact was signed in August 1939, signaling the start of World War II. In less than three years the war had engulfed the world. During the next three years millions were slaughtered, whole cities in Europe and Asia destroyed. Much of the old prewar productive facilities in the advanced industrial countries were razed. The Soviet Union suffered 20 million casualties. Its industries were shattered. When the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the "age of barbarism" that Trotsky had warned against arrived with newly discovered fury. Remnants of the imperialist regimes in Germany and Japan submitted to "unconditional surrender" under control of the victorious armies of U.S. imperialism and its allies. But there was no peace.

The Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin had been allied with U.S. and British imperialism after Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Stalin thought this alliance would continue after the military defeat of the Japanese/German challenge. But British and U.S. diplomacy turned upon the Soviet Union in its weakened condition, expecting to force it to grant concessions necessary for the rebuilding and stabilization of the capitalist system throughout the world. The Soviet bureaucracy could not make such concessions. The Cold War began and the Soviet Union found itself isolated from the capitalist world, much as it was in the first decade of the Russian revolution.

Advances and Retreats

This time, however, the Soviet Union was not alone. New revolutionary flames flared up to distract, weaken, and frustrate the imperialist powers. In 1945 the working class of France and Italy were on the verge of seizing power in those countries, but here Stalin was able to help rescue the capitalist system and restore capitalist-controlled governments through the influence of the Communist parties in those countries that responded to Stalinist diplomacy.

This was not the case in Yugoslavia where the wartime partisan movement had played an independent role in the defeat of Hitler and was deter-

mined to establish a government independent of the native fascist collaborators. After some initial hesitancy, the Yugoslav Communist Party under the leadership of Tito took power. And because of the growing tension between the imperialist powers and the Soviet bureaucracy, the Red Army that had occupied Eastern Europe in the final stage of World War II remained as an occupation force and eventually set up bureaucratically controlled buffer states to protect the borders of the Soviet Union against capitalist military expeditions and trade encroachments.

In 1949 the Chinese revolution rolled over all of old China, an unexpected and shocking blow to the plans of U.S. imperialism which then turned most of its attention to the East, launching a largely unsuccessful war against Korea in 1950. This was followed by the adventure in Vietnam in collaboration with French colonialism in the early stage and culminating finally in 1975 in the ignominious defeat of a purely U.S. occupation effort.

In 1959 a popular revolution in Cuba ousted the U.S. puppet government of dictator Fulgencio Batista, established a workers' and farmers' government under the leadership of Fidel Castro, and brought the proletarian revolution to the continents of America. The beachhead on the island of Cuba expanded to Central America and the Caribbean when, in 1979, revolutionary struggles in Nicaragua and Grenada toppled U.S. supported dictators and established popular governments.

These developments and others throughout the colonial and semicolonial world provided the necessary time for recovery and rebuilding in the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the terrible devastation of World War II. Soviet science made rapid strides that amazed the world with the launching, in 1957, of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I. This achievement was a measure of the modernization of Soviet industry, despite the heavy hand of the bureaucracy which remained in firm control and seemingly intact despite the ravages of war.

Fissures in the Bureaucracy

But by this time cleavages in the bureaucracy were beginning to appear. When Stalin, the blood-thirsty tyrant in the Kremlin, died in 1953 his heirs divided in a fierce faction struggle in which Khrushchev emerged the victor. Some other contenders were shot or otherwise disappeared. In 1956 Khrushchev exposed some of the crimes of Stalin, "rehabilitated" some of the most prominent victims who had been murdered, and released thousands of others from concentration camps. There were signs at that time of a new awakening of intellectuals, students, and workers in the Soviet Union.

This antibureaucracy sentiment and striving for greater individual freedom extended to the states of Eastern Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, where mass uprisings occurred during this period and were brutally suppressed. During Stalin's time the Yugoslav government under Tito

had severed its ties with Moscow. And later the Sino/Soviet conflict, resulting from the divergent needs and interests of the bureaucratic castes on both sides, led to a rupture of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Beijing. The mass of people on either side was not involved.

This series of developments within the Soviet orbit strengthened the hand of a regrouped right-wing faction in Moscow, fearful that relaxation of bureaucratic controls would lead to a genuine working class revolution against the bureaucracy. Khrushchev was removed from office in 1964, replaced by Brezhnev, the cautious and conservative bureaucrat. For nearly twenty years dissidents were hounded, initiative suppressed.

By 1980, with the rise of the magnificent Solidarnosc movement of the Polish working class, it was clear that a new resurgence was in the making and that important sectors of the new so-

cially powerful Soviet working class would sooner or later become affected. That time has now arrived. Within the context of this post-World War II history of the Soviet bureaucracy and the world-shaking events that have impinged upon it, the full meaning of the current alarm and frantic efforts of the Gorbachev faction becomes understandable.

When he says "the society is ripe for change," Gorbachev knows what he is talking about. He knows change is coming. He hopes to influence the direction of that change.

Today's Realities

In a recent article on Soviet culture and the new *glasnost* or political openness (*Dissent*, Winter 1987), Roy Medvedev tells about a popular play in Moscow, *The Dictatorship of Conscience*, which

From the *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1987:

Soviets Stress Lenin's Criticism of Stalin

MOSCOW (UPI)—In an apparently unprecedented move, a Soviet newspaper Sunday published V. I. Lenin's deathbed denunciation of dictator Josef Stalin and equated the fierce struggle waged by the founder of the Soviet state with the one being fought by leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The article, in the English, French and German-language editions of Sunday's Moscow News, was the sharpest to date in an accelerating process of de-Stalinization and the boldest linkage of Gorbachev with Lenin, who is revered with almost religious devotion.

The article quoted Lenin's letters, known as his "Last Testament," about efforts to overcome the pressing issues of the day, such as the problem of nationalities, the cumbersome state apparatus and stagnating bureaucrats.

Urged Party Overhaul

The letters called for an overhaul of the Communist Party and government structure to combine centralized government with "expanding democracy everywhere in all spheres."

Editor Yegor Yakovlev of the Moscow News said the documents describe "what was going on then and at this moment in this country."

In the letters, which Lenin dictated from his deathbed, he attack-

ed Stalin as having the "fatal" qualities of being spiteful, rude and in too much of a hurry.

"Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a secretary general," Lenin wrote. "That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post."

Stalin became general secretary of the party in 1922, and later became supreme ruler of the Soviet

'Lenin was right, tragically right,' the editor wrote.

Union after defeating rivals in a power struggle. Lenin, who headed the government but held no formal senior position in the party, died in 1924.

Lenin said Stalin's flaws could not be considered a "negligible detail, for it is a detail which can assume decisive importance."

"Lenin was right, tragically right," Yakovlev wrote.

Western diplomats believed it was the first time that a Soviet

newspaper has published the letters, which were contained in a 1961 edition of Lenin's collected works, although Stalin has come under increasing criticism under Gorbachev.

The article equated Gorbachev's struggle to crank up the stagnating bureaucracy and to breathe new life into every aspect of the society with the battle Lenin waged in the first years after Communist power was established in 1917.

Gorbachev's speeches have shown increasing frustration with the pace of reform.

Members of the artistic and scientific communities recently have debated whether democracy is possible in the Soviet system and note as a positive first step the criticism of Stalin.

Attack on Bureaucrats

It followed by days an article in the monthly literary review *Novy Mir*, in which a leading writer launched a broad attack on what he called home-grown socialist bureaucrats for resisting changes.

It also criticized the excesses of Stalin, whose purges led to the death of tens of thousands of innocent Soviets.

One Western diplomat called Sunday's article indicative of the "free-for-all" in the latest process of de-Stalinization, begun by Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev in the 1950s.

he says takes up the contrast between Lenin's ideas and what has happened since his death. One of the characters, called the "Outsider," is played by the author who gets into the argument and invites audience participation. In one of the early presentations, a spectator argued: "My grandfather was a socialist and a Menshevik. He was executed in the 1930s. We talk a lot about democracy these days. But experience tells us that there can be no real democracy as long as there are no opposition parties."

The Soviet people have learned, conversely, from one generation to the next that without an organized opposition there can be no democracy, not even the freedom to protest. But when this freedom is suppressed, forbidden by law or by an uncontrolled and illegal police apparatus, the opposition forms and develops underground.

Some efforts are now being made to control illegal arrests. A January 8 report from Moscow (Philip Taubman, *New York Times*) says several high ranking KGB officials were dismissed for the illegal arrest last year of a Soviet newspaper reporter who exposed government corruption in a coal mining region of the Ukraine. The arrest was made in collaboration with and at the behest of the corrupt mining officials. The head of the KGB, Viktor Chebrikov, announced "additional measures to insure the strict observance of law in the activities of the state security organs." These "additional measures" are not specified. Nor is it known whether this comes as a result of the factional struggle within the bureaucracy or organized opposition to the bureaucracy, or a combination of both. What is clear is that news of such developments, as its meaning begins to be better understood, is bound to have profound repercussions in the organized labor movement, and the radical and socialist movement, in all capitalist countries. Workers in the U.S., especially those in the conservative union movement, have been led to believe that the Soviet bureaucracy is an inevitable consequence of the 1917 workers' revolution against the czar, and they are constantly told that the bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union is communism. An uprising against the bureaucracy will destroy this crude amalgam.

But illusions about the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy among the working class of the capitalist world are more complex. Millions of workers and peasants, especially in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, look to the Soviet government for military and financial help in their struggles against imperialist oppression. They also look to the Soviet government for political guidance, which is usually connected to whatever other assistance they may receive. This "political guidance" is the class-collaborationist politics of the bureaucracy, an extension of Soviet diplomacy which seeks peaceful coexistence with the capitalist nations and is presently offering to open the borders of the Soviet Union to private enterprise and capital investment. The revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy by the Soviet working

class will reestablish solidarity with the workers throughout the world and bring the full weight of the gains of the 1917 Russian revolution behind the struggles for national independence and social transformation everywhere.

International Solidarity

Workers in the capitalist world also have an opportunity to repay, to some extent, their debt to the working people of the Soviet Union. Their struggle to establish the first workers' state and their tenacity in defending it against the fascist invaders during World War II has inspired workers in many lands, at different turning points of the class struggle, to wrest concessions from their employers and to overthrow their oppressors. Unquestionably the working people of this world are better off today as a result of the victorious revolution than they would otherwise be. They are now afforded an opportunity to help the Soviet workers and poor peasants in their struggle to overthrow the bureaucracy and reestablish a workers' democratic government.

In Britain the movement for solidarity with Soviet workers began to form when the first news of the developing struggle against the bureaucracy was reported. The December 19 issue of *Socialist Action*, weekly newspaper of the British section of the Fourth International, carried a report on plans for an international campaign to exonerate the victims of the 1930s Moscow Trials. It says these plans were discussed at a meeting held in the House of Commons on December 3, under the auspices of Eric Heffer MP. It goes on to say that the purpose of the meeting was to launch a broad campaign in the British labor movement to demand the rehabilitation of prominent Bolsheviks who were murdered during the Stalinist terror. "This rehabilitation would include Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky, as well as including Tukhachevsky, and others," it said.

This is a worthy cause that will surely be taken up by workers' organizations in many other countries. The success of the campaign worldwide will stimulate interest in the voluminous writings of Leon Trotsky on the permanent revolution and scientific socialism, as well as his penetrating analysis of the origin and character of the Soviet bureaucracy.

When Trotsky drafted the transitional program for socialist revolution, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, in 1938 he included a section on the Soviet Union and the problems of the transition there. This draft program was adopted later that year at the founding congress of the Fourth International and remains the basic programmatic guideline for that world organization. At the time he wrote, Trotsky was acutely aware of the divisions within the Soviet bureaucracy and knew about the different factions. He understood and tried to explain that the privileged strata of Soviet society which the governmental bureaucracy serves and upon which it

rests was not a homogeneous mass. There were many divisions within it. These divisions were also expressed in the governing circles, as is the case today.

Trotsky entertained no illusions that the bureaucracy was capable of self-reform. Its grip on the economy and the government could be broken only by a revolutionary uprising of the Soviet workers, according to his analysis.

A Program for the USSR

The programmatic demands for the Soviet section of the Fourth International at that time included the following: 1) against social inequality and political oppression; 2) for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press; 3) return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content . . . drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets; 4) legalization of soviet

parties; 5) revision of the planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers; 6) reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged; 7) replace the reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy by the policy of proletarian internationalism. Down with secret diplomacy!

This section of the *Transitional Program* ended with a declaration: "There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses in insurrection—the party of the Fourth International.

"Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin!"

"Long live Soviet democracy!"

"Long live the international socialist revolution!"

The best service the workers' movement throughout the world can render to the peoples of the Soviet Union today is to help insure that these inspiring and prophetic words reach the ears of the Soviet workers.

LEON TROTSKY
THE CHALLENGE OF THE LEFT OPPOSITION
(1923-25)

Speeches and writings by the leader of the anti-Stalinist movement at the beginning of its fight for revolutionary internationalism and workers' democracy in the Soviet Union

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(1926-27)

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BEHIND THE CHINESE STUDENTS' DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY

by Tom Barrett

The "resignation" of Hu Yaobang as chairman of the Chinese Communist Party on January 16 is the culmination of a crisis brought about by student demonstrations for increased democracy and political rights in the People's Republic. The efforts at technological modernization encouraged by Deng Xiaoping—who holds no official post but is China's acknowledged political leader—has brought about demands for increased freedom of thought. That is a necessity for any technological advancement.

Deng's policies have created a contradictory situation for the Chinese bureaucracy, and it is one which the replacement of a party chairman will not even come close to solving. It is ironic indeed that the student demonstrators, their faculty advisers, and even Hu Yaobang himself were the strongest supporters of the changes in Chinese society which Deng Xiaoping has been advocating—as they interpret them. This included the curbing of the bureaucracy's control over economic matters and the turning of that control over to a university-educated professional management. The purpose of this change is to facilitate technological advancement and a higher standard of living for the Chinese people.

One can only speculate on the 82-year-old Deng's actual motives. He has been a central leader of the Chinese Communist Party since before the 1949 revolution whose entire political education was in the school of Stalinism. He is a wily veteran of intrabureaucratic battles. Deng's general concept of revolution is as a military conflict between armies, such as took place between the People's Liberation Army and Jiang Kaishek's pro-imperialist troops after World War II. "Proletarian revolution" is little more than a May Day slogan for Deng and his fellow bureaucrats.

Deng, however, is not simply concerned with the bureaucracy's privileges. He is, by all accounts, genuinely interested in technological modernization in China and in improving the standard of living of all Chinese. These are a matter of self-interest for the bureaucracy as a whole, since any failure to raise the standard of living of the masses can lead to social unrest and instability, which is to be avoided at all costs.

The Chinese revolution of 1949 was largely, at least in the programmatic conceptions of the Chinese Communist Party, a matter of patriotism rather than a result of the class struggle. The current Chinese leadership continues in that tradition. They have little concern for Marxist theory, which they were never really taught anyway, and are proceeding pragmatically, doing whatever seems to work to improve the Chinese economy.

Democratic Aspirations in Chinese History

For a generation now, it has been fashionable among academic apologists for right-wing, nationalist, and Stalinist dictatorships to characterize democracy as a particularly Western or even Anglo-American political concept, which has little or no relevance in other cultures. Some have even gone so far as to accuse those who criticize the lack of democracy in other countries of a kind of "cultural imperialism," grouping them with the missionaries of a century ago who attempted to impose the Christian religion on the people of Africa and Asia. "Cultural" arguments belittling the importance of democracy have been used to justify dictatorships of all shapes, sizes, and colors—Italian and German fascism, South African apartheid, the shah of Iran's regime, the Maoist Cultural Revolution, and even, for a brief period, Pol Pot's barbarism in Kampuchea.

Such an approach seems most credible when applied to the complex history and political culture of China, especially since few non-Asians know enough to dispute it. China, after all, was already an ancient civilization when Anglo-Saxon tribesmen were battling Picts, Scots, and Britons for the land now known as England. Furthermore, China suffered intensely at the hands of "enlightened, liberal" England and the United States during the period of the "Open Door."

Nevertheless, democratic aspirations are not new in China, in spite of the fact—or maybe because of the fact—that its people have never enjoyed political freedom or participated directly in government. Progressive-minded Chinese intellectuals, many of whom were English- or American-educated, opposed Western domination during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without defending the rotten Manchu monarchy or the all-powerful Confucian bureaucracy. They saw in European technology a means of alleviating China's terrible poverty; they saw intellectual freedom as a necessity for technological advancement, and they recognized political democracy as a precondition for intellectual freedom, just as the student demonstrators do today. Among these intellectuals were the founders of the Chinese Communist Party.

Intrabureaucratic Struggle

After the end of the U.S. "police action" in Korea in 1953 China was able to turn its attention to its own domestic agenda and begin the process of pulling itself out of the terrible economic hardships created by over a century of imperialist

exploitation. China, like so many other countries emerging from underdevelopment, faced a shortage of skilled management personnel. Prime Minister Liu Shaochi—and his protege, Deng Xiaoping—favored encouraging the development of this layer and giving them control over the expansion of China's industry and agriculture. For a brief period in the 1950s, freedom of thought was encouraged under the slogan, "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom."

As a consequence of the war against Japan and the civil war against the Kuomintang, however, a significant section of the Chinese Communist leadership was made up of military leaders. This included Mao Zedong himself. These leaders felt their authority threatened by the turn towards domestic development and the growth of a new managerial elite. In 1966 this section of the bureaucracy went outside the party and mobilized students against Liu and the majority CCP leadership in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Its authority was reasserted; Liu fell from power and Chinese development was set back immeasurably. Deng Xiaoping was imprisoned during this period.

After Mao's death, Deng and his associates gained control of the Communist Party. Mao's successor, Hua Guofeng, was eased out in 1981; Mao's closest associates during the Cultural Revolution, the so-called "Gang of Four," which included Mao's widow Jiang Qing, were put on trial for crimes up to and including murder. Jiang Qing was sentenced to death, though this was later commuted. Since then, China's leaders have attempted to get economic development back on track after a ten-year interruption.

In July 1986, then party chairman Hu Yaobang specifically attacked Mao Zedong in a speech which was published on the front page of the *People's Daily*. It is widely believed that Hu's speech provided an inspiration for the student demonstrations of December.

Students' Demands, Bureaucracy's Response

The wave of demonstrations began on December 9 in Hefei, in Anhui province. Hefei is the site of the National University of Science and Technology, where the managerial elite in which the Chinese leadership has placed its hopes is being trained. From Hefei the demonstrations spread to Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing. The largest—50,000—was held in Shanghai on December 21.

The next day the Shanghai city government banned demonstrations without a permit; Beijing's did the same thing, in addition forbidding gatherings in Tiananmen Square. The party-controlled press began a campaign to discredit the students, accusing them, among other things, of being "Taiwan agents." On January 1, the students in Beijing reasserted their right to protest, in a dramatic march which began at Beijing University and swelled its ranks as it passed other campuses in the city. The police were unable to keep them out of Tianan-

men Square; the march ended at the Monument to the People's Martyrs, where student leaders spoke on the need for socialist democracy.

The bureaucracy was not swift in reasserting its authority; it was, however, decisive. So far there have not been reprisals against the students themselves. Instead, the bureaucracy has blamed prominent intellectuals for "instigating" the students. The former vice president of the National University in Hefei, Fang Lizhi, was expelled from the Communist Party, as was *People's Daily* journalist Liu Binyan. Then, on January 16 came the most dramatic announcement of all—the ouster of Hu Yaobang from his post as chairman of the Communist Party, to be replaced by Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang. Hu was blamed for allowing Fang, Liu, and other reform-minded intellectuals to influence the students. The press campaign against "bourgeois liberalism" has continued unabated, calling for the reassertion of "discipline" within the Chinese CP.

Chinese Pragmatism

In 1971, then National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger became the first U.S. official to visit China since the 1949 revolution. He arranged for President Richard Nixon to meet with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in China the following year. Since then, there have been assessments and reassessments of the Chinese state, especially after Mao's death. In 1971 the largest Maoist organization in the United States, the Progressive Labor Party, labeled China as "capitalist," announcing that "workers will smash Nixon-Mao-Zhou axis." Since Deng's ascension to power, other Maoist organizations, who were attracted by the "anti-imperialist" rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution, came to the defense of the Gang of Four when they were put on trial and have denounced Deng in the same terms in which he was denounced in the 1960s—as a "capitalist-roader."

China's unapologetic support for the United States in foreign affairs combined with its encouragement of private enterprise and foreign investment has caused some to question whether a workers' state still exists in China. Some political tendencies who view world politics in terms of a "camp" struggle between "imperialists" and "anti-imperialists," rather than from a class point of view, are not sure to which "camp" China now belongs.

The truth is at once less dramatic and more profound: bourgeois rule has not been restored in China. The encouragement of private enterprise—which mainly affects agriculture—is not the same as the restoration of "capitalism."

In one sense, capitalism was never "abolished" in China or in the Soviet Union either, for that matter. Both the Chinese and Soviet workers' states must trade in the international economy, which remains dominated by imperialist finance capital. The economic laws which world capitalism

imposes on any national economy competing to trade with other countries, therefore, apply to workers' states as well.

This is one reason why socialism cannot exist within the borders of a single country. When the working class achieves state power it can take a number of measures to advance and defend its own economic interests—up to and including the abolition of the domestic capitalist market. This has happened, in a limited and sometimes deformed way, on one-third of our planet.

But even the best-intentioned revolutionary leadership cannot always do everything it would like to improve the living standards of its people. The revolutionary dedication of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, for example, is unquestioned; but the harsh reality of imperialist world domination has seriously limited their ability to rebuild Nicaragua for the benefit of its working people. The country's difficulty in obtaining adequate loans, the disruption of coffee production caused by the contra war, and the need to devote a disproportionate amount of the country's gross national product to military spending have all undermined the construction of a more humane society. Capitalism's apologists point to these problems and claim that "socialism does not work." But considering the obstacles faced by workers' revolutions—including, in most cases, Stalinist misleadership—it is not surprising that they have problems. Perhaps more surprising is that they have survived at all.

In some situations, the continuation or return of private ownership in designated sectors of a postrevolutionary economy may be the wisest choice for a workers' government to make. The Bolsheviks made such a choice in the Soviet Union in 1921 when they introduced the New Economic Policy, or NEP; Nicaragua has also done so, and since 1976 China has been proceeding in that direction as well. Of course, this does present dangers, especially if the policy is continued for too long, or if there are too few controls. But the decision to implement a more "liberal" economic program does *not*, in and of itself, indicate that the class nature of the state has changed.

The Chinese bureaucrats' decision to turn away from an economic policy based on ultraleft slogans was a positive step; however, they have replaced their ultraleftism with pure, unadulterated pragmatism. And the problem with pragmatism is that its vision is limited. It takes into account only the immediate problem, and does not consider longer-term consequences.

One long-range possibility, as mentioned above, is that opening China to foreign investment will undermine the basis of the workers' state. This is only dimly perceived by the bureaucrats who hold power in the People's Republic. The provision for special privileges in certain sectors of the Chinese economy can create the growth of social layers which can become allies of the Western bourgeoisie in its effort to overthrow workers' rule in China. While such a counterrevolution is not on

the immediate agenda, it remains a long-range goal of world imperialism.

The bourgeoisie does not like to commit its capital without state power to defend it from its class enemies. No banker wants to tie up funds in an industrial enterprise when the threat exists of simply having it expropriated by an already existing workers' state. This problem has, in fact, been discussed openly in U.S. financial journals in their comments on Deng Xiaoping's reforms.

The kinds of measures which could truly instill confidence in the Western bourgeoisie about investing in China would require a violent struggle to overthrow the present Chinese state. The Stalinist bureaucrats would resist such a counterrevolution because they want to defend their own power and privileges—which are based on the existence of socialist property relations in China. For now, they can only hope to attract the more adventurist capitalist elements with a pledge of their own good will.

The Chinese leadership has also failed to take into account the effect its new policies would have on the political aspirations of the Chinese people, especially on the university students who are being educated to manage the Chinese economy and bring about the technological advancements which all agree China needs. Technological advancement requires freedom of thought, experimentation, creativity. Yet the bureaucracy cannot allow such freedoms in the scientific or technological sphere, since free discussion at this level would threaten to flow over into political life. This, in turn, would endanger their domination over society as a whole. The student movement, as we have seen, has already made the leap to demands for general political liberty which the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party fears so greatly.

Thus the stage is set for the kinds of flip-flops and contradictory policies which have occurred. The latest crackdown solves nothing, for increased freedom of thought and discussion remains necessary for China's economic development. That freedom cannot be restricted to a managerial elite; the working class must also be involved, since it is the key to the productive process, which represents an even greater threat than did the student demonstrations. As we have seen in Poland, when workers demand a say in the management of the workplaces, it is a small step indeed to raising a complete challenge to the bureaucracy's power and privileges.

The faction in the leadership of the Chinese bureaucracy has unleashed a process which it cannot control. How long it can balance between the contradictory tendencies, how long it can survive remains an open question. But, as Trotsky said over a half-century ago about the USSR, ultimately the bureaucratic caste will fall—either to counterrevolution or to a revived working class completing the tasks of the socialist revolution that were begun in China as a result of the overthrow of the bourgeois state at the close of World War II. ■

Letter to Compatriots:

AGAINST THE REGIME'S REPRESSION OF PUBLIC WILL IN DEFENSE OF THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

The mass movement "against the bureaucracy, for democracy" initiated by university students in major cities in China has entered a new phase of struggle. We are in full support of the demands and struggle of the compatriots, and we salute all democratic militants on the front line who fear not the autocratic power, who disdain bureaucratic repression, and who persist in the struggle.

At present the CCP is trying under all pretexts to limit and deprive the rights of the Chinese people. Its maneuvers include:

- warning the masses that "the reform of the political system can only be conducted under the leadership of the Party," hence negating the people's right to be master;
- stipulating contingent regulations concerning demonstrations and rallies, hence depriving the people of the constitutional rights by means of administrative measures;
- sowing differentiations in the mass movement, in particular desperately preventing workers and citizens from joining the demonstrations.

Late developments show that the CCP also resorts to slander and distortion of the democratic movement, whipping up "public opinion" to prepare for an escalated repression.

This reactionary deed of the CCP should be denounced by the whole world. We protest and warn against the CCP's repression. The consequence of any repressive measure against the people will fall back on the repressor!

Under the CCP's bureaucratic rule, the people's freedom of speech, publication, rally, association, demonstration, and protest has never materialized. The Constitution is a ridicule of the people.

Although in recent years the CCP has bragged of rectification of the Party and eradication of corruption, in reality the bureaucracy's extended privileges, abuse of power, corruption, degeneration, trampling of law, and flagrant evil deeds have reached the stage of ruining the country and the people. The CCP rises above the state and the people, and has become the main obstacle to socialist construction and practice of democracy and law. The contradiction between the bureaucracy's

privileged rule and the people has become the major contradiction in China.

History has taught the people that whichever bureaucratic faction assumes power and whatever promises they pledge, they are all hostile to the democratic demands of the masses.

The only road for the struggle of the Chinese people "against the bureaucracy and for democracy" is to take the road of the masses and disregard all political illusions for any faction of the bureaucracy.

The Chinese people are beginning to take independent action and expose the myth of reform by the bureaucracy.

At present, the broadest mass mobilization is necessary to wage a frontal struggle with bureaucratic repression. Demand must be made for the CCP to at once rescind all repressive regulations, to stop persecuting the masses, to release all people arrested for their exercise of their constitutional rights, and to formulate measures and provide resources and facilities to help citizens exercise their constitutional rights, so that the principle of socialist democracy can be truly practiced.

The crux of the present struggle is to resist bureaucratic repression and defend the citizens' exercise of constitutional rights. On this basis, a series of demands should be concretized—the real practice of freedom of speech, demonstration, association and formation of political parties, and the publication of people's journals. These should form the basis for the unfolding of the next phase of the movement.

We call for the solidarity of the people of the whole country, for grouping workers and peasants around the democratic movement by linking the demand "against the bureaucracy and for democracy" with the demands against inflation and for the defense of the people's livelihood. People's organizations (such as student unions, trade unions, peasant associations, political and academic organizations) independent of the bureaucracy should be widely established throughout the country, which can start with political discussion by the people and can develop into national mass organizations with democratic goals. They will struggle for the end of bureaucratic rule and the practice of socialist democracy.

We also appeal to the Chinese living in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and overseas to try all possible means to actively support the struggle of the people in the mainland, hence contributing to China's democratization. ■

December 31, 1986

This statement by the Revolutionary Marxist League, a Fourth Internationalist organization based in Hong Kong, appeared in the December issue of its magazine, October Review. The translation is by October Review.

VOTE IN THE PHILIPPINES: BIG VICTORY FOR AQUINO GOVERNMENT

by Steve Bloom

The overwhelming vote on February 2 in the Philippines in favor of Corazon Aquino's draft constitution marks an apparent end to the period of extreme political instability which has existed in that country since the combined popular revolution/military uprising which overthrew the hated Marcos dictatorship and installed Aquino in power last February. Approval of the constitution took place by a reported 80 percent margin, with a very large proportion of the electorate participating. This is clearly a big defeat for the extreme right—which called for rejection of the charter and has been attempting to reassert the authority it lost when Marcos was deposed. The vote is also a blow to the workers' movement, which had an opportunity during the same period to develop itself as an alternative to the "democratic" bourgeois regime, but was unable to do so.

Aquino's appeal during the campaign around the constitution was based on her own personal popularity, as the one individual most clearly associated in the consciousness of the masses with the fight against Marcos, and on a desire for stability. She portrayed a "no" vote as a vote for continued unrest and chaos. This had considerable impact in a situation marked by three failed attempts at a military coup within a year, the last coming only days before the voting.

Dilemma for the Left

The left in the Philippines was not unanimous in its attitude toward the referendum. While virtually all organizations took a friendly approach toward Aquino in the early months of her rule, the clear shift of her policies to the right after she shook up her cabinet last November convinced some, like the KMU (May First Movement, the largest trade union federation in the country today), to take a stand against ratification. Also opposed was the National Democratic Front (NDF), the coalition of forces which supports the New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla movement, although there was not unanimous agreement among its cadres on the matter. Still other groups, like the socialist organization Bisig, called on Filipinos to vote for the constitution as a means of counteracting the threat from the right.

The problem which organizations in the Filipino workers' movement faced was a result of the evolution of their own positions, as well as of the concrete political situation, since the time of the February revolution. No group on the left posed a viable class solution to the crisis in the country at any point following February. No one raised the possibility of a government coming to

power which would be genuinely representative of working people and poor farmers as an alternative to the bourgeois rule of Aquino. Her continuation in office was incorrectly presented as the only viable option besides a return of the right wing.

This idea was particularly strong up until November of this year, when some shift in the attitude of the left did take place. But even during the political crisis which developed at that time, mass organizations—like the KMU—pledged themselves to support Aquino in order to defend the democratic gains made after the overthrow of the dictatorship.

The general policy of giving "critical support" to Aquino meant, for example, that no Filipino left group raised the demand for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The workers' organizations went along with a commission handpicked by the president for the task. Nor did they urge the mass "people power" groupings, which had developed in the course of the insurrection against Marcos, to become better organized, build themselves independently from the new government, and fight actively for democratic and transitional demands consistent with the needs of the workers and poor farmers—demands which include land reform, the ouster of U.S. military bases, repudiation of the foreign debt incurred by the old regime, etc.

An effort along these lines would have created the possibility for a proletarian revolutionary alternative to grow up in the Philippines during the last year. But instead of taking steps which could lead to the formation of an independent working class center of power, the mass organizations tied themselves completely to the new government. The initiative in the situation was ceded to Aquino. As a result she was able, despite her extremely weak political base at the outset, to balance between the more conservative bourgeois elements on the one hand, and the masses of workers and poor peasants on the other, in order to consolidate her rule.

Even when significant sections of the left did decide to go into opposition to Aquino and to the new constitution, they suffered severely from this all-important fact that there was no concrete alternative they could offer. The leftist opponents of the constitution were not even able to present as much as the right wing—who had at least developed their own power figure in Juan Ponce Enrile, ex-minister of defense under both Marcos and Aquino. A simple negative statement doesn't offer much of a program around which to mobilize masses of people after a prolonged period

of instability like the one the Philippines has been passing through.

In the absence of a working class pole which could claim the necessary popular authority as a viable governmental option in the short term, the working class movement of the Philippines was faced with a severe contradiction in the referendum. Aquino's main argument gained considerable credence: the new constitution, with its six-year mandate for her continued rule, seemed to be the only choice besides anarchy in the country or the return of a dictatorship.

Others on the left, who endorsed the constitution, reacted to a different side of the same problem. They recognized that it would be difficult, if not impossible under the circumstances, to distinguish themselves from the right wing if they called for a vote against the charter. They feared that a significant negative vote would put more wind in the sails of the reactionary forces.

Thus the only choices which could be made by the Filipino left were either to be ineffectual or unprincipled. A simple protest vote against the constitution entailed the danger of emboldening the far right. But the alternative was to call for an endorsement and institutionalization of rule by the "democratic" wing of the bourgeoisie.

This unfortunate state of affairs was not created primarily by some clever maneuver of Aquino. It was set up by the failure of any sector of the workers' movement itself to develop and advocate an independent political perspective among the masses for most of the period following the ouster of the dictatorship.

Shooting of Demonstrators

The overwhelming mandate for Aquino which the vote represents was even more noteworthy given the shooting deaths of 18 demonstrators in Manila on January 22. They had been part of a march, according to the *New York Times* estimated at 10,000 people, demanding action by the government on land reform. The demonstration was fired on by police and military troops.

At first it appeared that this massacre would create an extreme crisis for Aquino. Polarization in the country sharpened. A number of the government's more moderate supporters openly criticized her policies and began to disassociate themselves from her rule. For example, Maris Diokno, a government negotiator in the peace talks with the NPA, resigned and stated that she "found it increasingly difficult to defend the position of the government." Leaders of Aquino's commission on human rights also quit. Left-wing groups, such as Bayan, an umbrella coalition of forces, registered sharp criticisms. And peace negotiations were broken off by representatives of the NPA/NDF.

But the reaction of the masses themselves seemed to be more subdued than it had been in November, when Rolando Olalia—chairman of the KMU and of the Partido ng Bayan—and his driver Leonor Alay-ay were assassinated by right-wing

thugs. Estimates of the number at Olalia's funeral ranged up to 300,000, which represented the largest political demonstration of any kind in the history of the Philippines. By contrast, a protest march held three days after the January 22 killings drew a considerably smaller crowd; again according to *New York Times* reports it was around 15,000.

Despite dire predictions of violence beforehand—which, it was expected, would seriously exacerbate the crisis of the Aquino regime—the demonstrators marched without incident. Aquino ordered police to remove barricades and let them pass. She invited a delegation to the presidential palace. Bayan drew back from its earlier criticism of the president, stating that it did not consider Aquino personally responsible for the killings. On the whole, it is now clear, Aquino's authority in the country suffered little as a result of these events.

Right-Wing Failure

Then, on January 27, the day after Aquino defused this newest crisis on her left, she was faced with another attempted coup by forces within the military backed up by right-wing elements in the civilian population. As in previous coup attempts, the reactionary officers failed to mobilize sufficient support and were easily overcome. Unlike in the past, however, Aquino has pledged to take severe reprisals against those who were involved in the uprising. It seems likely that she now has a sufficient power base to do so, whereas before she felt compelled to mollify the right-wing elements, and those involved in conspiracies got little more than a slap on the wrist.

The failure of the reactionaries in the Philippines to reassert their power—despite a significant base of support both inside and outside the military and despite the position for a prolonged period of Enrile, their most outspoken advocate, within the government itself—makes it clear that these elements have not been able to generate much support from the counterrevolutionary apparatus of U.S. imperialism. As long as the Filipino left is unable to mount any serious challenge, Washington has a stake in supporting "democracy" in the Philippines.

Backing Aquino improves the U.S. government's image both domestically and internationally, and makes its continued economic exploitation of the Philippines easier. Under Marcos, the rise of the guerrilla struggle was a serious danger, which Washington hopes can now be defused through a more "enlightened" bourgeois rule. It is gambling that Aquino can maintain sufficient support among the masses to take away the base necessary for the NPA to operate and win recruits.

Washington's firm commitment to Aquino was underlined when it blocked an effort by the ex-dictator, now enjoying a plush exile in Hawaii, to return to the Philippines. On hearing of Marcos's chartering a private jet to take him back to the country—in an apparent effort to link up with the

most recent coup attempt and rally the right-wing forces—U.S. government officials announced that they would physically block him from leaving the country.

Of course, Washington's commitment to "democracy" in the Philippines will last only so long as that "democracy" protects imperialist interests. No doubt the CIA will maintain links with Enrile and other reactionary leaders in case the situation takes a turn for the worse. But with the victory of the constitutional referendum and the now seemingly secure hold of Aquino on the reins of power, at least for a time, there is no reason for the U.S. government to play its right-wing card. Its main problem has been restraining Marcos, Enrile, and the military officers who have not been willing to sit and wait patiently as a standby force.

Negotiations with NPA

All of this creates the context for the breakdown of peace talks between the Aquino government and the NPA. Those discussions began shortly after the president's cabinet shakeup, when she was trying hard to cement relations with a more conservative element among the ruling classes. In order to impress them, the president took a new "hard line" against the insurgent forces, which included ruling out in advance any substantive concessions in the negotiations process.

In the weeks immediately after December 10, when the 60-day cease-fire between the government and the guerrillas started, the NPA and NDF went on a propaganda offensive—staging demonstrations, opening public offices, appearing on TV and radio, etc. By all accounts they had a big impact on the consciousness of many Filipinos. Yet this was not translated into any immediate mass pressure on Aquino to give ground in the talks. The killings on January 22 made it politically impossible for the NPA/NDF to acquiesce in the government's charade any further.

It is unclear at this point how all of this will actually affect the cease-fire, which is due to expire on February 8. So far, both sides have apparently continued to observe it.

The new "democratic" rule, if Aquino is able to maintain it, will continue to put pressure on the NPA. If it seems possible to effect change through the system, through electing better officials or peacefully appealing to "Cory" for a change of policy, it will be more difficult for the guerrillas to explain to the masses, on whom they depend for support, why the military struggle continues to be necessary. In particular, Aquino's resounding victory in the constitutional plebiscite creates the basis for a strong propaganda offensive by the government, in which it will try to portray the rebels as antidemocratic, unwilling to submit to the overwhelming popular mandate for the present regime.

Whatever happens in the political and military war, however, Aquino's likely course is to continue her movement toward more traditional ruling-class political alliances and political practices. This, in turn, will probably mean increased pressure on the entire workers' movement and on the left as a whole, up to and including a renewal of severe repression. Any serious military campaign against the NPA will need to entail a crackdown on the radical civilian left as well. The new "get tough" policy against the right-wing military conspirators provides Aquino with a perfect cover for such an effort: the ability to appear even-handed.

Future Events

Though her immediate crisis seems to have abated, the future of the Aquino government and of bourgeois rule in the Philippines is far from secure. The basic economic and social problems which gave rise to the guerrilla insurgency in the first place, which have generated other strong currents on the Filipino left, remain unresolved. Finding solutions will be very difficult given the general state of the national and international economy which Aquino must confront.

Though the mass movement of the urban workers seems to have ebbed for the moment, it remains to be seen whether this represents a relatively prolonged downturn which will afford the Filipino bourgeoisie a period of comfortable stability, or merely the calm before another storm. A most important fact to remember is that the Filipino workers and poor peasants have *not* suffered any decisive defeat. At worst they have been outmaneuvered by Aquino. The extremely volatile situation could easily revert to one of acute crisis.

Though the guerrilla movement faces new difficulties in the present circumstances as discussed above, these are only relative and not absolute. This is particularly true given the likelihood of a continued rightward drift by the government which may well break down the illusions that now exist in its democratic character.

The actual substance of Aquino's electoral victory in the constitutional plebiscite remains more a vote of confidence in her promise for the future than in her performance up to now. It is also, as we have noted, a reflection of the absence of any real alternative generated by the left—which might otherwise have provided the masses with a genuine choice. The problem which the organizations of working people and their allies in the Philippines face today remains one of creating a viable working class political pole, and of demonstrating to the masses of the Filipino people that this pole constitutes the only force which can bring true democracy and national independence from imperialist domination. ■

February 3, 1987

FRENCH WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST CHIRAC

by Rafael Sabatini

Over the past several months France has experienced a particularly sharp intensification of the class struggle. In its first serious challenge since taking office in March 1986, the right-wing Chirac government suffered a severe setback when massive, democratically organized mobilizations of students forced the withdrawal of socially regressive educational legislation (see article, "French Students Force Government Retreat," *Bulletin IDOM* No. 38). Shortly after that victory, in mid-December, railway workers widened the gap opened by the students with the longest rail strike in France since 1968. They were followed by walkouts of other public-sector workers in the beginning of January.

The employer of all the striking workers was also the government. This gave the strike wave an unmistakably political character. The workers emulated the students not only in their bold resistance against the austerity program of the right, but also in their determination to organize and control the strikes themselves, through rank-and-file committees.

Bureaucracy Under Attack

As is the case in the U.S., reformist and class-collaborationist misleaders in the French workers' movement have long posed serious obstacles to struggles on both a political and trade union plane. Thus, the most significant feature of the recent strike was the fact that for the first time in years unauthorized rank-and-file committees were formed which coordinated and administered the effort. Furthermore, for the first time *ever* these strike committees were organized and coordinated on a *national* level. This marked a shift in the relationship of forces in favor of the workers and their allies, against the bosses and their government; but even more significant was the breakthrough it represented in the relationship between the workers and the trade union bureaucracy.

The strikes against the state-owned railway system, the SNCF, began on December 18, only days after the victory of the students. The main issues involved were proposals being made for a reduction in bonuses, increased forced overtime, unfavorable adjustments in the interval between shifts, wage disputes, and—most importantly—a proposal to institute "merit" rather than seniority as the standard by which promotions would be granted. The proposed takebacks by the government occurred against a backdrop of steadily worsening conditions for railway workers over the past five years. As for all public-sector workers in France, wages

on the railroads have failed to keep pace with inflation during this period.

On January 5, electrical and gas workers went out on strike. They had not seen a pay increase since March 1985, suffering a seven percent loss in buying power over this period. Over the next two days, postal employees—a traditional bastion of worker militancy—struck, as did transportation workers throughout the Paris region. Workers in these industries were inspired by both the militancy of the railway workers and their mistrust of the union bureaucracy. Like the action on the railway, these strikes were also organized from the bottom up.

By January 12, rail workers had begun to return to work after scoring a partial victory—winning their main demand with the withdrawal of the "merit" proposal. However, they failed to win on other issues.

General Assemblies, Strike Committees, Immediate Recall

The strike wave began as a wildcat action by workers from the Paris-Nord depot. A depot is the basic unit of the SNCF. There are 94 such depots throughout the country. The fact that this particular depot included many nonunion workers, coupled with their relatively young age (30-35 years), was actually *conducive* to the strike. In fact, throughout the strike the most heavily unionized depots were the most difficult to incorporate into the strike network.

On a local level, general assemblies of the striking workers elected strike committees, whose members were subject to immediate recall in the finest traditions of proletarian democracy. The initial response of the Communist Party-controlled union confederation, the CGT, was to denounce the strike and issue a leaflet against it. However, rank-and-file pressure and the sheer size of the actions soon forced the CGT to give official sanction to the strike.

Nevertheless this strike and those launched by other public-sector workers were marked by constant betrayals and underhanded maneuvering by the bureaucracy. Throughout the strike the CGT leaders constantly counterposed unity at the top to the autonomous rank-and-file struggle being organized at the base. On January 6, when the strike was well in hand and there was no danger of its being outflanked, the CGT, hoping to regain some of its lost prestige, called a seemingly militant demonstration in support of the workers.

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

by Evelyn Sell

This year's bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution will include lots of praise for "the genius of our Founding Fathers who wrote such a marvelous document." In fact, the creation of the Constitution was the result of a much more complex process which provides valuable insights for revolutionary socialists today. A crucial element in the events of two centuries ago—still critical in our own times—was the power of democratic demands to unite, mobilize, and radicalize masses of people.

The struggle for democratic rights was a central feature of the rebellion which gave birth to the U.S. Constitution: the American Revolution of 1776. This was the first successful colonial uprising of the modern era and one of the great classical bourgeois democratic revolutions. The phrase "bourgeois democratic revolution" is a shorthand way of describing a complicated and contradictory process which resulted in the destruction of feudal institutions and privileges and the creation of capitalist nations.

The process was complicated because it transformed all facets of society: the instruments and methods of production, social relations, political and legal institutions, religious organization and theory, forms of art, and the ideas and psychology of human beings.

The process was contradictory because it joined together conflicting class formations; the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, and working classes had to forge an alliance in order to overthrow their common enemy, but each class in this coalition had different needs and goals. So, at the same time that the common enemy pushed them together, their divergent interests tended to pull them apart.

Each class played its own special role in the battles against feudalism. Bourgeois elements provided the leadership and, along with a section of the petty bourgeoisie, the ideological justifications, literary skills, and oratorical rhetoric. But the bourgeois grouping was very small. It needed the petty-bourgeois and proletarian elements to provide the numbers, physical power, social weight, and fighting army. The bourgeoisie was able to rally the other classes behind its leadership by promising to do away with feudal privileges and restrictions in order to institute

broad political, social, economic, religious, and legal benefits and freedoms for everyone.

Different Reality

That was the promise. But the intention was to fulfill only the first part of that pledge: the overthrow of feudal relations and institutions. The aim of the bourgeoisie was not to establish democratic rights for all people but to remove all restrictions on the freedom of capital to develop, and the ability of the bourgeoisie to become the new rulers of society by breaking the power of the aristocracy and established church. The goal of bourgeois privilege conflicted with the popular support needed to overthrow feudalism. This head-on collision between ends and means brought constant friction between the class partners in the antifeudal front.

Some measure of democracy was the price the bourgeoisie had to pay for mass support—and, in typical boss fashion, the bourgeois rulers have cheated every time the paycheck was due. Once they gained power, the bourgeoisie went through a metamorphosis. Its character changed from revolutionary to counterrevolutionary. From being the leaders of a movement for democratic goals, the bourgeois forces became the vanguard of reactionary groups—ignoring, chipping away at, and assaulting democratic rights.

Here's how this general process played itself out on American soil during the eighteenth century.

The policy of the British Crown and Parliament was to use the American colonies as producers of raw materials for English industry and as consumers of English factory products. Colonial merchants and manufacturers were dissatisfied with the mother country's restrictions on trade and production. Colonial landholders, both large and small, were dissatisfied with feudal limitations on the sale and inheritance of land, and dissatisfied with royal prohibitions against westward expansion.

After George III became monarch in 1760, the escalating demands of the king and Parliament began to unite the various class forces in the colonies. During the prerevolutionary period, 1765-75, most colonists were united around the demand that they have the same rights as Englishmen. Some years after he had written the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson explained that there was nothing new or original in the ideas expressed. He was right. The document that

This is the first in a series of articles on the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. The second will take up the struggle to reaffirm and extend democratic rights. Again, it required a revolution: the Civil War of 1860-65.

formally opened the American Revolution was a repetition of the arguments used by John Locke to justify the English revolution of 1688. It was no coincidence that the most-English colonies were in the vanguard of the American rebels.

As we know, the colonists' claim to the rights of Englishmen was not honored by the British rulers. The political organization of the colonies prevented self-government. The Crown appointed a governor and council to oversee each royal colony. A constant tug-of-war went on between these royal officials and the assemblies elected by the Americans. The colonists were impelled toward independence in order to achieve their democratic demands.

Threat to the Wealthy

Pro-British Tories warned the rebels that they were unleashing powerful social forces which they would not be able to contain, that the common people would get so fired up over revolutionary slogans that they would overthrow not only British rule but the American upper classes as well. These fears of a dual revolution were well-founded. The demand for self-government was a double-edged sword—one side cutting into British domination, the other side cutting into the privileges and power of the American oligarchs who dominated colonial assemblies. These assemblies fought royal officials—and, at the same time, another tug-of-war went on between the assemblies and the great mass of people who were not able to vote or participate in such bodies. Only a very small number of colonists actually voted for or held office in the assemblies due to stiff property qualifications which favored an elite few.

In Pennsylvania, for example, only eight percent of the rural population were qualified voters while in Philadelphia only two percent could vote. Commercial and large landed interests dominated the assembly. This body rejected the rule of the Royal Governor and Council but the assembly itself was rejected by the small farmers in western Pennsylvania and the town artisans.

Events in Pennsylvania confirmed the worst fears of the conservatives who warned of the dangers of revolutionary fervor. The oligarchy of wealth was swept away when the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 eliminated the previous property requirements and established general manhood suffrage.

Throughout the war with England and the setting up of the new U.S. government, a spectre haunted America—the spectre of Democracy (to paraphrase the opening line of *The Communist Manifesto*).

In the Carolinas, the major class frictions were between the people in the backwoods area and the tide area aristocracy. The western pioneers were not adequately represented in the colonial assembly and were forced to bear heavy taxes levied against them by the East Coast planters. The large landholders were able to rally the frontier

population against the British Stamp Act—and then found they had done their job too well. United to resist British tyranny, the frontier residents decided they could use that strength against their "Crafty and cruel Oppressors" at home. Calling themselves Regulators, they set up their own courts and refused to pay taxes—using the anti-British slogan, "No taxation without representation!" This revolt was crushed in 1770 by British armed forces backed up by the frightened Eastern planters.

The struggle in New York had repercussions on all the colonies. The assembly there was controlled by wealthy merchants. At the beginning of the revolutionary movement, most of the merchants allied themselves with the rebels and even aided the Sons of Liberty, the most radical of the revolutionary forces. The merchants felt confident they could control and direct the movement. They learned differently during the colonial boycott against British imports.

The success of the boycott placed the merchants in a vicious vise: they were pressed on one side with the loss of trade and profits; they were pressed on the other side by the growing influence of the masses in the boycott movement. In 1770 the New York merchants decided to break the boycott. They got up a petition demanding an end to the boycott and secured signatures from 1,200 of the wealthier citizens. The radicals tried to halt this maneuver by marching in the streets with protest banners but the merchants attacked them with their walking sticks and broke up the demonstration. Tremendously encouraged by their victory, the merchants threw open the ports to British ships.

For years after, the New York merchants felt the effects of their betrayal of the popular cause. Travel in the colonies was extremely hazardous to their health. In Connecticut, for example, innkeepers posted the names of their New York guests so people could take appropriate action. One New York importer traveling in New Jersey was "genteely ducked to cool his courage."

All of the colonial merchants were cast under a cloud of suspicion because of the New York events. When the First Continental Congress met in 1774 and called for a new boycott, it was decided to set up local committees under popular control because the rebels did not trust the merchants after the New York betrayal. These local committees of safety and inspection went so far as demanding to see the ledgers and invoices of merchants to make sure they were not scabbing. (As you can see, the "Open the books!" demand in the transitional program has a precedent from the first American Revolution.)

Class Conflict in the New Nation

Clashes taking place after the military victory over England influenced the content of the U.S. Constitution and helped secure the basic democratic freedoms listed in the Bill of Rights.

As a Patriot leader wrote to a friend years later: "You and I did not imagine, when the first war with Britain was over, that revolution was just begun."

As the war against England drew to a close, the conservative wing of the Massachusetts rebels attempted to make sure that they remained in power as the rulers of the new nation. In helping to draw up the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, John Adams included provisions to make it even more difficult for the poorer classes to play a role in government by raising property requirements for voting fifty percent higher than before the revolution. Adams argued that without such restrictions, there would be no end to suffrage demands—women would ask to vote, then boys over twelve years would ask for the same rights as their mothers, and so on throughout the population.

The small farmers in western Massachusetts, who had been the backbone of the Revolutionary War, protested their exclusion from political power. They organized county conventions where they swore they would not pay taxes levied by legislatures in which they had no voice; they called for the abolition of the Massachusetts Senate; and they demanded revision of the Constitution.

To add injury to insult, the postwar period brought great economic hardship to the small farmers. Many were jailed because they could not pay their debts, and many lost their farms through foreclosures. When the Massachusetts legislature adjourned in 1786 without taking any action on the farmers' petitions, discontent mounted sharply. Armed farmers began to close down the courts so judgments couldn't be passed against impoverished debtors. In one town they not only broke up the court sitting but opened the jails and released all the prisoners. The revolt grew until three-fourths of the farmers were involved. The situation was so serious that General Knox, secretary of war for the Confederation, was sent to Massachusetts to raise a militia. In a 1787 battle, this armed force won a decisive victory over the farmers led by Daniel Shays, a destitute farmer who had been a captain in the revolutionary army.

Shays Rebellion shook up the leaders of the new nation. Many responded by calling for a military dictatorship. It was obvious that the social turmoil inherited from the revolution against England and the economic problems plaguing the new nation could not be adequately handled by the loose association of states bound together by the Articles of Confederation. The same month that Shays Rebellion was put down, the Congress called for a convention to revise the Articles.

Almost all of the delegates to the Philadelphia convention represented the conservative wing of the old revolutionary party. None of the fiery radicals of 1774—Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Tom Paine, Sam Adams—were present. The delegates met in sessions so secret that they didn't even keep complete records of their proceedings. Al-



though Congress had explicitly instructed them to confine their work to revising the Articles of Confederation, the delegates decided to junk the Articles and create a new constitution based on completely different principles.

Basic Agreement

History courses in our schools stress the many disputes and compromises that took place. Far more important were the essential agreements on the basic nature of the new political and legal system. We're told how wonderfully clever the delegates were in setting up three branches of government to insure checks and balances. They were clever—in establishing a structure to protect the government from the popular will. They diversified the method used to elect the three branches so that each body was further removed from popular control. They staggered the terms of office so that no sweeping changes could ever take place at any one election. Having secured the national government in this way, they gave the president power to intervene militarily in any domestic insurrection in order to block popular revolts at the state level.

The system, in its totality, was constructed to maintain the status quo and divert the energies of the masses by passing the buck from one branch of government to another. It creates the illusion of government by the people while preserving the real dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It was and is a marvelous scheme for thwarting social change.

Having created this wonderful machine for minority rule, the delegates were faced with the problem of setting it into motion. They had been mandated to submit their proposals to the Congress

but they didn't want to do that because they figured Congress would not approve a constitution that put it out of business. So they pulled off a coup d'etat by going around the established government bodies and appealing directly to the voters. But that posed a new problem. They wanted to maintain property qualifications for voting and holding office—but two-thirds of the voters were small farmers who had already repeatedly revolted against such requirements at the state level. In order to win support for the new constitution from these voters, the delegates were forced to drop property provisions (although they agreed with John Jay's sentiment, "The people who own the country ought to govern the country.").

When the constitution was submitted to special conventions for ratification, heated debates took place. In favor of the proposed constitution were: merchants, manufacturers, private creditors, holders of public securities, large landholders,

and slave owners. The small farmers in the western areas were opposed. In order to win their approval, state conventions promised that the constitution would be amended to include the democratic rights demanded by the farmers.

The Constitution formally became the law of the land in 1789. But continued agitation resulted in the adoption of the first ten amendments two years later. The Constitution represented the triumph of the rising American capitalist class against British mercantile interests and against feudal relations and institutions. The Bill of Rights represented the gains of the democratic struggles against property interests. We celebrate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution in 1987—but 1991 will mark the bicentennial of the Bill of Rights as an official part of the Constitution. That time difference shows how difficult it was to achieve formal recognition of basic democratic demands. ■

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FROM THE F.I.T.

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

Write: F.I.T.
P.O. Box 1947
New York, N.Y. 10009

We reprint below the text of the call for the April 25, 1987, national march on Washington. Organizing efforts are now under way in most cities around the country for this action and for a sister demonstration on the same day in San Francisco. Readers of the Bulletin IDOM are urged to get involved in these activities.

AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S.

Our government's policies in Central America and southern Africa are morally wrong and violate our nation's democratic ideals. They violate fundamental rights to self-determination, liberty, and justice. They betray our own democratic ideals. They risk deeper U.S. involvement in bloody and costly foreign wars while the needs of our unemployed, homeless, farmers, and children go unmet. They reflect a militarization of our foreign policy that increases the risk of nuclear war.

These policies must be changed. But these policies will be changed only if our policy makers in Washington know the depth of our opposition to them.

So we must show them. Nonviolently. Forcefully. With passion. Together. In a united witness by tens of thousands of citizens.

JOIN US IN A MOBILIZATION ^{FOR} JUSTICE & PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA & SOUTHERN AFRICA

Washington, D.C.

Sunday,
April 26, 1987
■ Interfaith Worship Service
■ Training in Non-violence

Saturday,
April 25, 1987
March and Rally

Monday,
April 27, 1987
■ An Event in which some will
engage in Non-violent Civil
Disobedience

RELIGIOUS

Sr. Luise Ahrens, M.M.
President, Maryknoll Sisters

Sr. Helen Amos, R.S.M.
President, Sisters of Mercy of the Union

The Rev. James E. Andrews
Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Archbishop Anthony Sablan Apuron
O.F.M., Cap., Archbishop of Agaña, Guam

Sr. Kaye Ashe, O.P.
Prioress General, Sinsinawa Dominicans

Asia Bennett
Executive Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

Rabbi Balfour Brickner
Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, NYC

The Rev. Arie R. Brouwer
General Secretary, The National Council of Churches

The Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church

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Provincial Director, Sisters of the Holy Names

Sr. Margaret Cafferty, FBVM
Congregational Superior, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Rev. Ben Chavis
Executive Director, Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ

Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB
Prioress of Mt. St. Benedict

Bishop C.D. Coleman
Senior Bishop, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Philip R. Cousin
Eleventh District, African Methodist Episcopal Church and President, The National Council of Churches

Bishop James R. Crumley, Jr.
Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Maurice J. Dingman
Catholic Diocese of Des Moines

Bishop Paul A. Duffey
The United Methodist Church

Bishop Nicholas D'Antonio, O.F.M.
Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans, La

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United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

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Fourth Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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Catholic Diocese of Covington, Ky.

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General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Bishop Joseph L. Inesch
Catholic Diocese of Joliet, Ill.

Rev. Jesse Jackson
President, The National Rainbow Coalition

Rev. Joseph E. Lowery
President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Bishop Raymond A. Lucker
Catholic Diocese of New Ulm, Mn

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Dr. Doris Anne Younger
General Director, Church Women United

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Owen Bieber
President, United Auto Workers (AFL-CIO)

Kenneth T. Blaylock
President, American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)

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President, International Molders and Allied Workers Union (AFL-CIO)

William H. Bywater
President, International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine Workers and Furniture Workers (AFL-CIO)

Cesar Chavez
President, United Farm Workers of America (AFL-CIO)

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President, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union

Dolores Huerta
Vice President, United Farm Workers of America (AFL-CIO)

Georgianna Johnson
President, Local 1199—Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees Union, RWDSU (AFL-CIO)

Keith W. Johnson
President, International Woodworkers of America (AFL-CIO)

James M. Kane
President, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)

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President, District 65, United Auto Workers (AFL-CIO)

Frank D. Martino
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William Wynn
President, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (AFL-CIO)

WE ISSUE THIS APPEAL BECAUSE:

In Central America, our government is:

- Escalating its terrorism and war against the people and government of Nicaragua through CIA-directed Contra forces.
- Providing massive economic and military aid to a government in El Salvador that is bombing its own people, repressing the church and human rights workers, and protecting those guilty of gross violations of human rights.
- Transforming impoverished Honduras into a gigantic military base for use by U.S., Contra, and other foreign forces.
- Granting military aid to the Guatemalan army that is responsible for widespread massacres, the use of strategic hamlets for population control, and the highest rate of disappearances in the Western Hemisphere.
- Rejecting opportunities to end the conflicts through political settlements providing security for all.
- Implicating us all in the killing of innocent men, women, and children.

In southern Africa, our government is:

- Continuing to support the South African government through a sanctions policy that contains major loopholes that among other things allow U.S. companies to reinvest their profits and make short-term extensions of credit.
- Persisting in intelligence cooperation with South Africa's military and security forces even as those forces repress and torture people, including church, trade union, United Democratic Front, and student leaders.
- Supporting South Africa's economic strangulation of its neighbors by refusing to provide those neighboring countries major economic support and by cutting off aid to Zimbabwe because of its criticism of U.S. policy.
- Refusing to push South Africa to end its illegal occupation of Namibia.
- Allying itself with South Africa in its war against Angola by providing covert aid to the rebel group UNITA.
- Supporting repression against legitimate representatives of the people of South Africa and Namibia.

-
- **Support peace and freedom in Central America and Southern Africa**
 - **Stop the U.S. war in Central America**
 - **Stop U.S. government and corporate support for apartheid**
 - **Stop U.S. aid to the Contras. Stop U.S. aid to UNITA.**

New York Mobilization Office
310 West 43rd Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10036
212-315-2933



'LOW INTENSITY WARFARE' AND THE U.S. ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

by Mary Scully

In 1985, during their retrospectives on the tenth anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam war, bourgeois political commentators were shameless in their attempts to rewrite the history of that episode of U.S. history—in particular by trying to reduce the powerful U.S. antiwar movement to a mere postscript. This was conscious disinformation. Imperialism and its defenders have a political problem. They know full well that a huge section of the American public remembers how this country was torn apart by the Vietnam war. They would like us to forget.

People in this country have developed a deep antipathy toward U.S. intervention in other parts of the world, and that attitude has been cemented even more strongly by such things as the Agent Orange controversy and the shabby treatment of Vietnam veterans. In addition there remains a sizable army of thousands of activists in this country who continue to organize actively against U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the Caribbean, Southern Africa, the Middle East, and other places where Washington tries to prop up reactionary governments or overturn popular revolutions.

The majority opposition to foreign military adventures is an invaluable political asset for antiwar activists. It is a political advantage we can build on and strengthen in organizing against intervention in Central America. For the Pentagon, for the Reagan administration, and for the U.S. ruling class, however, this "Vietnam syndrome" is a serious liability—an obstacle to carrying out their plan to militarily protect the economic and political interests of imperialism.

Propaganda Offensive

The U.S. rulers face a real predicament: They have to push back a powerful advance of popular revolutionary movements in Central America. They employ as much military force as they feel they can get away with and prepare for greater intervention. They also attempt to maneuver around popular opposition by hiding their involvement. At the same time they have launched an intensive propaganda offensive here in an effort to erode the "Vietnam syndrome" and exorcise the ghost of the Indochinese war.

To conduct this propaganda campaign, which consists simply of lies and chicanery, the imperialists have called on the Pentagon, its various think tanks, and the highest officials of the government. In a completely cynical way they are

out to sell a bill of goods to the American people. They want us to believe that they have developed a new military strategy called "low intensity warfare" which can contain and destroy popular revolutionary struggles around the world without the introduction of U.S. troops.

Discussion of this new strategy has been extensive. In January 1986, at Ft. McNair, Caspar Weinberger, George Shultz, and Patrick Buchanan addressed a two-day conference on the subject. Numerous studies have been undertaken by the Pentagon, manuals have been published by various branches of the armed forces, and articles have appeared in military journals, popular magazines, the daily newspapers, and most publications opposed to U.S. intervention in Central America. What does it all amount to?

The term "low intensity warfare" comes originally from distinctions the Pentagon makes in warfare ranging from civil disorders to nuclear war. While hailed as the most radical breakthrough in military science since the Macedonian Phalanx, it is in fact little more than what used to be described as "counterinsurgency warfare." There is little new about it, and it is not a military breakthrough. In fact, it is basically the same thing as the "Vietnamization" championed by Richard Nixon, as his solution to the Indochinese conflict—a scheme which led to a complete disaster for U.S. policymakers.

The main purpose of the massive public-relations campaign around "low intensity warfare" is to confuse the American people and demoralize antiwar forces. The hope is to defuse popular protest against a real, escalating U.S. involvement on the basis that U.S. troops themselves will not be needed.

Unfortunately, significant antiwar forces have swallowed the bait. In response to Washington's campaign, a discussion has emerged during the past year within the U.S. Central America movement. The implications are serious, because they affect how the anti-intervention movement will respond to the war in Central America. Whatever the chicaneries of the imperialists and the absence so far of U.S. troops, there is still a U.S. war against the peoples of Central America, and it must be vigorously combated through massive street demonstrations.

If anything stands out in the debate on "low intensity warfare," it is the method and misdirection employed by certain activists in arriving at their conclusions. Their most dangerous mistake is in paying too much attention to what the imperial-

ists say and not enough to the realities of the war in Central America which is anything but low intensity.

If we judge by any of the usual military indicators, Central America is a high intensity war. massive U.S. military aid to the Duarte government of El Salvador, the regular bombing of civilian targets in that country, the invasion of Grenada, CIA mining of Nicaragua's harbors, U.S. airstrips in Honduras, troop and naval exercises in the area, contra aid, and the evidence coming out about the Iran-contra scandal. These do not indicate only limited warfare, but represent inescapable proof of a large scale conventional military buildup, with plans for more if current efforts fail.

In the face of such evidence, some activists still maintain that Reagan is sincere when he says his administration wants no Vietnam war in Central America—which is another element in the imperialist propaganda offensive. Reagan, of course, is sincere in the sense that he doesn't want another defeat for U.S. imperialism. But if he were able, he would certainly not hesitate to use U.S. ground troops in another military conflict.

Those who take the "low intensity warfare" line for good coin exaggerate the importance of words. They are frightened into believing that the U.S. government has the upper hand in Central America and that we must be on the defensive. In fact, however, it is the U.S. government which is being dealt blows by the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran peoples and the movement in this country must be on the offensive, demanding that U.S. resources not be used to thwart the right to self-determination.

It is unfortunate that some activists keep looking for answers in the wrong place. The Vietnam syndrome is what the imperialists have their eyes on, and that is where the antiwar movement should be looking as well.

Conservative Attitudes

When antiwar proponents of "low intensity warfare" argue that no movement can be built because no conventional war is in the offing, they ignore the actual realities of the war in Central America, and reveal a deep pessimism in their own attitude toward the American people. Pointing to the Reagan presidency as the positive proof, they place great stress on what they consider the right-wing political climate prevailing in America. According to them, anticommunism is on the rise.

But the political climate today is actually far more favorable for antiwar forces than that preceding the Vietnam era. The Vietnam protest movement was built in the trail of the McCarthy witch-hunt, when anticommunism rose to fever pitch. Despite a barrage of red-baiting, the movement grew to massive proportions and changed the face of American politics.

National polls today consistently show that despite Reagan's lies about the Nicaraguan "free-

dom fighters," nearly 75 percent of Americans are opposed to contra aid. Rather than being heartened by this news, the pessimists in the anti-intervention movement point to other polls indicating that close to 50 percent of Americans polled don't know which side the U.S. is on in Central America. But that should not discourage antiwar activists. In reality it indicates the potential for building a movement. Put simply, a lot of Americans don't know and don't care whose side the U.S. government is on, but they still don't want to go to war. As people become more educated about what is actually at stake in the Central American conflict, we can expect antiwar attitudes to become even firmer and more decisive.

The biggest problem facing the antiwar movement today is not the conservatism and anticommunism of the American people, but the pessimism and confusion of antiwar forces which should be providing leadership. The April 25 action called for Washington D.C. and the West Coast promises to be an important step forward in overcoming that problem. But it took a new leadership (an initiative by trade union and religious leaders who had not previously been active participants in the anti-intervention movement, but who got together and issued the call for April 25) to break through the logjam which led to a two-year gap in the holding of coordinated national demonstrations in opposition to Washington's policies in Central America.

It's not hard to appreciate why there has been a reluctance to organize mass demonstrations up to now, since a significant part of the old leadership of the movement has been arguing a dangerous position: that little or nothing can be done to stop the "non-war" in Central America that has killed thousands of people. We can understand how, in the past, material aid campaigns for Nicaragua or for the FMLN in El Salvador, which should have been built *along with* and *as a complement* to mass demonstrations against U.S. intervention, were instead *counterposed* by many to building a broader effort to stop the war.

The truth is that antiwar forces have been mobilizing for years. Eighty-five thousand have signed the "Pledge of Resistance," thousands are involved in material aid campaigns and in the sanctuary movement. April 20, 1985, saw tens of thousands marching in the streets. This shows what is truly possible.

It is the duty of the antiwar movement in this country to unite these forces, mobilize them, and build a movement to force the U.S. out of Central America. Let's not be fooled by the government's "low intensity warfare" scam. ■



NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

5. Primary and Secondary Feelings

Yeva was the secretary of the Komsomol cell of the TsOM (Central Uniform Factory, later to be the Odessa Garment Factory). In that winter of famine of 1921, we both turned eighteen. To me and to her, it seemed awkward to take walks in the evenings. How could we do this? By missing club? We expressed our feelings only through a quick glance exchanged as the entire cell came crowding into the club, blushing if anyone gave a knowing grin.

The romances of my friends were simple and chaste. We repudiated parental or any other sort of surveillance. When has surveillance ever achieved its aim without causing some unforeseen complications, demanding new surveillance? Komsomol members never said to friends: "If I get married . . ." To fantasize about marriage was considered petty bourgeois.

We didn't condemn the low neckline because we were poor—on the contrary, it was more economical than a closed collar—but because of the generalized repudiation, verging on puritanism, that is characteristic of the dawn of every revolution (just as the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary period rejected everything to do with the nobility). It was impermissible for the Komsomol woman to do anything reminiscent of the bourgeois snarling of a suitor. You could sing, yes, since choral singing was proletarian. But you could not dance, since it was bourgeois to dance in pairs.

We had fun in our own way. December 31, 1921, there was a citywide Komsomol evening. It consisted of a report on the international situation in the past year and choral singing. In addition, refreshments were offered: a very small sandwich of black bread and butter with jam and a glass of tea with a caramel. Several kids from Peresyp district (never without Semka Lipenzon and Vanka Kudlayenko) for a joke gathered in the buffet room and pretended they wanted to carry away all the refreshments. The girls began to shout at them and they laughed and ran away. The Peresyp region in general was distinguished by devil-may-care dispositions. An external and unflinching sign of a Peresyp Komsomol member was a traveling cap pushed to the back of the head (the cap was then worn the way Lenin wore it, pushed up and back) and the collar went unbuttoned.

At daybreak on the first day of 1922, I accompanied Yeva home and declared my love to her. She did not want us to kiss.

Yeva was not able to please. She did not know the art of dressing. She wore a baggy coat and rabbit's fur cap with ear flaps which in my view suited her. Most likely, our girls thought wrongly about themselves in those years.

In 1977, a manuscript totaling hundreds of pages arrived in this country from the Soviet Union—the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, who was in his middle 70s at the time and living in Moscow. His work consists of a series of nine "notebooks" which describe his life as a Ukrainian Jewish revolutionary militant. He narrates how, as a teenager inspired by the October revolution, he joined the Communist Youth, tells about his participation in the Red Army during the Civil War years that followed 1917, his disenchantment with the developing bureaucracy under Stalin, and his subsequent experiences in Stalin's prison camps.

To the very end of his life Baitalsky remained devoted to the ideals of the October revolution. He says that he is writing "for the grandchildren" so that they can know the truth of the revolution's early years.

The first installment and an introduction by the translator, Marilyn Vogt-Downey, appeared in Bulletin IDOM No. 36, December 1986.

When girls get together, and one of them turns to her friends, she says: "Gals" (or as they now say, "Girls"). But in those days, it was otherwise. The cell of the TsOM would get together—it didn't include a single lad. The secretary would declare: "Quiet, guys! I consider the meeting called to order."

* * *

I remember such detail of our way of life then: how we lived in one room with Tanya Seminskaya—she, Rafa, Kostya Grebenkin, and I. Tanya was an old Odessa Komsomol member—that is, not really old, but young, rosy-cheeked, and rather nice looking. Unlike us, she was terribly tidy; we forgave her this harmless weakness. She dragged into the room a primitive, clumsy wooden folding bed; brought in clean bedsheets, a blanket, and a pillow, and forbade us to touch her bed things. When we lay down to sleep, she ordered us to turn away and she herself lay down in her bed totally undressed—she was afraid of lice. We turned away. Neither Kostya nor I nor Rafa ever tried to look at Tanya out of the corner of our eye. She knew that we were honest and undressed peacefully, without hurrying. Later, she commanded: "Now it's okay to look!" And we would continue our conversation, of course, about our work. Tanya was at that time also a secretary of a district committee, in Peresyp; Rafa was secretary of the Moldavian district committee and Kostya of the Privokzal district committee. So there was that to talk about.

. . . The time came for the Home for Worker Youth on the corner of Karl Marx and Zhukovsky Streets to acquire a nice appearance. We started to scrub the stairs; to take baths at appointed times. We no longer covered ourselves with overcoats.

The first family pairs in our Home were Rafa and Maryusa and Borya Zilbershtein and Emma. Emmochka Subotskaya was very handsome. Tall and stately, she invariably played the queen in our often repeated operatic dramatization in which, on the order of the jealous king, the page who has fallen in love, as usual, is executed. She sang well; the role of the queen suited her as though it had been written especially for her.

Borya and Emma got an apartment in the same stairwell on which the Komsomol Provincial Committee was located. In Emmochkina's apartment we never felt like guests. A grandmother did the housework. How she was related to them I don't know, but everyone knew her as "Grandmother."

This small woman with snow-white hair moved noiselessly about the room seating at the table everyone who came to see her children. She remembered everyone's name. And particularly those who during the time of the underground struggle against Denikin had come for secret rendezvous to her place, the poor, humble dwelling of a hired mourner of the Odessa Jewish undertaker's guild. Bathing the dead, the grandmother kept faith with the living. She outlived Borya. And many of those whom she hid during those underground years died before she did, remaining just as she had known them.

The life of Borya and Emma passed right under our noses. She was pure and transparent and it was unthinkable that they might sometimes quarrel. Emma and Borya? A fabrication! It could not be!

Emma never married, not during the many years that Borya was in prison, nor after he perished. Now he has been posthumously rehabilitated, but Emma is not recognized as his wife: their marriage was never registered.

. . . Once I chose a quiet winter evening and asked Yeva to leave the club for a moment. On the porch, I said: "It's time for us to get married." She answered soberly that it would be better to wait—well, for at least a year, until she finished her studies at the provincial party school. In principle, she did not object. Even in matters of love she functioned in a principled way.

She was sent to the party school. In childhood, she had not managed to study—her father, who died as the revolution began, was the poorest of the poor Jewish tailors. He left seven children. Not having known a bright day from the cradle, Yeva had a reticent and awkward character. But I loved her and that was enough. And every evening, after work and club activities were over, I walked from the Dzhutov factory to Sadovaya Street, to her school. The streetcars weren't running. By that time, Rafa, Maryusa, and I (the "inseparable threesome") had moved from the Moldavian district to the Privokzal district. I worked at the Dzhutov factory in the shop, and was secretary of the Komsomol cell.

At that time the secretary of a factory cell was not freed from production work. I took to factory work with enthusiasm. Many of us, former students in the secondary school, considered it our duty to go to work in order to "immerse ourselves" not only in the Komsomol but in the workers' cauldron. Even now, this does not seem to me an eccentricity relevant only to those times. Physical labor strengthens not only the muscles. In those years, to work physically was not called working like a mule. This phrase was thought up significantly later. We took pride in working.

* * *

My days were divided into three unequal parts. The largest part went to the factory and the district club; the next largest was spent in walking, hasty meals, and sleep; and the smallest part, with my love. Our rendezvous happened as follows: out of breath from running, I fly into the room where the party school students are sitting over their books. They quietly let me have a space at the table next to Yeva. In a low voice, we exchange a few words and she again becomes absorbed in her book.

"I have a question for you," she suddenly says. I wait with trepidation, thinking she'll ask whether I love her. No, she is interested in the formula "money-commodity." I explain it to the extent I can with my limited knowledge and again wait: When will she ask the most important question?

But she does not ask it. Irretrievable minutes fly by to the rustling of pages. The girls one after another slam their books shut and look inquiringly toward Yeva. But I pretend that I am frantically occupied with the formula "money-commodity" and move closer (not to the formula but to Yeva), looking over her warm shoulder at the book. An abrupt movement and she gets up:

"Well, that's enough. It's time for you to go home!"

She agrees to accompany me no further than the stairs. In the square, it was sometimes possible to steal a kiss.

And so it was—every day. In truth, those in love deserve to go to heaven for the suffering endured on the cobblestone-paved streets, along which one has to walk six whole miles for one problematic kiss.

And in the morning, when it was barely light, I would be off to the factory at a run. Komsomol members of my new district were different from those I was used to in the Moldavian district. They seemed to lack the single-minded toughness, similar to the purposeful determination that I saw in Yeva.

One could not detect a great difference between the habits of the Komsomol members of the Privokzal district and the habits of other worker youth of the region. In the club on Stepova Street (where our district committee was located), they had simply not managed to develop codes of behavior; while in my former region, in Moldavia, those codes were longstanding and strict. For example, in the Moldavian district it wasn't because of the fear of disapproval that lovers

wouldn't walk along the streets; it was just simply not done. Of course, this was not because Prokhorov Street was narrow. In the Privokzal district, lovers always walked on Stepov Street, but again, not because it was wide. The reason could be that the Moldavian district was founded much earlier, in 1917, and went through the underground times. And it could be also that 1922 was already much different from 1920. However, it was not so different as to overshadow the characteristic that even today seems to me the main feeling of the Komsomol members of that time—a presentiment of some new, unforeseen, significant accomplishments ahead for me, for you, for everyone. These accomplishments would be very significant! And they would take place only thanks to my participation along with the whole world of exploited and hungry.

With hopes fixed on the future, a feeling of personal participation in the world revolution and a readiness to share full responsibility for it—and it was just about ready to occur—all this uplifted us in all matters. It was like waiting for a train that will take you somewhere to accomplish something great and you happily strain to hear its whistle off in the distance, and then you hear it—the rails are humming, the rails are humming! Don't you notice this leitmotif, as they now say, in all the actions and words of Pavel Korchagin or in the Spanish melancholy of the Ukrainian lad from "Granada"?

This was our primary feeling. And love was secondary. And we tried to emphasize this so that for the girls among us the revolution became the main thing also, and marriage became a shameful aspiration. Unnatural? No, it was absolutely natural for that time. Otherwise, the gains of the revolution could not have been consolidated. And I am describing what we felt without exaggerating.

It was the time of NEP. We accepted it only in the following sense: We are taking a few steps back in order to make a new running jump forward. Today was only the preface to tomorrow. The Odessa Komsomol members arranged a torchlight procession, not anti-NEP but anti-NEPman in character.¹ Several impassioned youths in a fit of temper smashed the window in a restaurant in Deribasov Street. The well-known Maksimov distinguished himself by his audacity and lack of restraint. We usually called him Maksimchik, but more often "the mad Maksimchik." He gladly accepted this name.

I will tell about a girl from Dzhutova, because of whom I stopped wooing Yeva. She was very pretty, but . . . she wore a white pinafore at home and she called me Mishenka. In the Komsomol, the boys were called primarily by their last names. No one called me by my first name, not even Yeva. The girls were called by their first names—that was a strange fashion, but there is no accounting for fashion.

Rafa (this was of course his last name, not his first) and Maryusa, using a simple abbreviation from the first four letters of my last name, made a certain one-syllable nickname for me which

all my old friends remember. Our "inseparable threesome" loved abbreviated nicknames—that was how we expressed our affection. For example, Rafa and I often called Maryusa "M'r's," leaving out all the vowel sounds in her name.

The white pinafore affected me as a red cloth affects a bull, and the warm little "Mishenka" made me furious. To me it sounded like a petty-bourgeois lisp, the very thing we so despised. My romance ended very quickly. After hearing Mishenka repeated several times, I said that I could no longer bear it, and I left.

But I had already lost Yeva. Having finished the provincial party school, she applied to go to Kherson, far from me. I threw myself into my work. Just at that time, preparations were begun for the publication of *Molodaya Gvardia* (Young Guard). Rafael enlisted me and evenings and nights I sat with him working out plans for this completely new Komsomol project. He demanded that I be recalled from the factory. Splitting my time in two was good for neither the cell work nor the newspaper. Maryusa, who undoubtedly had more literary talent than either of us, had a cold attitude toward our newspaper. She resolutely refused to have any part of it.

To make up for it she—now alone—was all the more passionately drawn to the regional oral newspaper. We also had one in Privokzal. No matter whom the oral newspaper ridiculed, we never considered getting approval beforehand. Anyone who would have proposed that we show a satirical piece to the provincial committee beforehand ("Doesn't it go a little too far?") would have been considered a little nutty, and we would straightaway have done a venomous satire about that person. *Molodaya Gvardia*, by the way, never submitted its material to the provincial committee for approval.

Bureaucratic weaknesses, as distinguished from ordinary human weaknesses, cannot take a joke. Those who have been infected with bureaucratic weaknesses begin to hate the truth about themselves. No matter how much "A Dig" cracked jokes about Misha Yugov's having once leaped over a table (we even wrote a short humorous ditty and sang it in the club), this bantering did not undermine the true authority of a leader, but strengthened it; and not his "prestige," but his moral and ideological influence.

And the fact that he was least of all concerned about his prestige had a stronger impact on us than if he had guarded it. We knew that he was educated, talented, and ours. He belonged to all of us, and we were his equals. This was not the pretense of equality but genuine, proletarian, Communist equality. ■

[Next month: "Husbands and Wives in the Komsomol!"]

NOTE

1. The NEP (New Economic Policy), adopted in 1921, allowed a limited growth of free trade in the Soviet Union. It stimulated the development of a class of better-off peasants and merchants, known as "NEPmen."

THE LIBERATING INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (Part 6)

by George Breitman

3. The SWP, Then and Now

A byproduct of the preparation of these talks, which required that I read the minutes of the Political Committee, the National Committee, and the founding convention of 1938, most of them for the first time this year, was an almost involuntary comparison between the state of the party in 1938 and the state of the party now. I should warn you that these comparisons are drawn from data that is fragmentary at both ends, and that they inevitably reflect the special or subjective concerns I have about certain aspects of party life. And since they have little to do with the overall title of these talks and some of you may feel you were brought here through false advertising, I hope you will feel free to leave now or whenever you realize you are not interested.

First of all, I should say that I am making comparisons between organizations that are roughly the same size, although I think the SWP and YSA together are a little bigger than the SWP and YPSL were between the founding convention in 1938 and the split with the Shachtmanites in 1940.

I have noticed a tendency among some of the younger members, when they look at the older members who have survived from the 1930s, to forget that the older members were once as young, energetic and inexperienced as they are or were. So I will compare the age levels, since a normal revolutionary party will be a young party. At the 1938 convention age data about the delegates was not reported, probably not collected. But it was reported the following year, at the 1939 convention, when it could not have been much different from 1938. The average age of the regular delegates was 28½, of the alternates 30. Comparable figures at our convention last year were not given but an estimate based on those that were given is between 26 and 27 years for the regulars, and between 25 and 26 for the alternates. So the age levels of the membership are not much different.

The age levels of the central leadership were wider apart, but not as much as you might expect. Cannon was 48 in 1938 but he was exceptional. Shachtman was 35, Abern 40, and most of the other PC members were in their 30s, I would guess. Their average might be between 35 and 40, while the average of their successors today might be between 30 and 35. Not a big difference. The central

leaders of 1938 had had a longer experience in the movement, which of course is important, but qualitatively this is hard to measure or compare.

There are no statistics about the class composition of the party in 1938. But I think I should caution you against a tendency to imagine that the differences were greater than they actually were.

In those days, when the depression was eight or nine years old, the occupation a person was going to end up with was harder to foresee and more dependent on accident. A college graduate might be working as a bus boy and might have jumped at the chance to work on an assembly line; it was only when the war liquidated unemployment that things got sorted out and it turned out he was going to be a school administrator or a sales executive. This distorts the picture a little so far as comparisons go.

Anyhow, class composition varied considerably from branch to branch. In Newark, where I was city organizer, we had four branches; one of these was made up entirely of workers, most of them unemployed or working on WPA jobs, and most of them Black; in the other branches, perhaps one-fourth belonged to unions; the great majority were college-age youth who couldn't afford to go to college and were either unemployed or holding low-paid jobs because at the moment there was nothing else. This was probably a more proletarian local than some others, including the New York local.

Trotsky, as you may know, was very dissatisfied with the class composition of the SWP, and he felt vindicated two years later when the split of the petty-bourgeois opposition headed by Shachtman and Burnham cost us around 40 percent of our membership. He kept pestering the SWP leadership with his solution, which was to reduce to the status of sympathizers all members who failed to recruit a worker in six months. The leaders thought this was too drastic and preferred to concentrate instead on colonization of members into industry. And in fact, in the next few years, especially when the war began and jobs became available, a considerable proportion of the non-proletarian members who did not leave with the Shachtmanites was successfully colonized.

An artist became a steel worker, a young woman who had studied to be a musician became an electrical worker, a student became a seaman, and so on. But this transformation was the result of politics, of decisions by the party and by the members involved, and transcended class based on birth or accident. And even if we had useful figures, there's not much to be gleaned from a comparison of the relative class compositions that does not

The concluding portion of this talk, the last one of the three Breitman gave in 1974 at an SWP educational conference, will appear in our next issue.

begin with a firm understanding of the primacy of politics and concreteness.

An area in which I regret to report no progress is our almost total lack of interest in cultural problems and questions. Reading through the many long resolutions of our 1938 and 1939 national conventions, I noted sadly but without surprise that although the word "cultural" appears three or four times, neither in our resolutions, nor in our press, nor in our political or theoretical work did we display the slightest interest in cultural change or struggle, or any except the most superficial interest. Despite our urban location, we have always had more to say about agriculture than about culture.

This was one of the weaknesses of our movement at that time—its oneness, its bias or blindness to everything except the most obviously political or economic aspects of life in the United States. This one-sidedness can be explained and, for the beginnings of our movement, to some extent it can even be justified. But I hoped that this defect would be corrected some day, and at the first Socialist Activists and Educational Conference four years ago, when Mary-Alice Waters made some remarks about the so-called cultural and sexual revolutions, I welcomed them and said:

"The sickness of a society that has outlived its usefulness takes many forms, and millions enter the radicalization process at personal and cultural rather than social and political levels. The beginning of the breakup of the authority of American capitalism can be seen in changing attitudes to morals, in revaluations of sexual norms, in the many varieties of escapism we can see around us. To better understand this breakup and its political significance, we ought to pay more attention to the cultural superstructure, beginning with our press. Perhaps the next time we have a conference like this we can have a full session on this question."

This is the fourth conference we've had since then, but there's never been a single talk or class on any aspect of culture. Our press confines itself for the most part to reviews of books and movies, and often gives the impression that they are printed only when there is a hole to fill.

It took us one-third of a century after his death before we printed one of Trotsky's books on culture, but it is underread and underpromoted in our party and it would never occur to our educational department to prepare a study guide for it or recommend its use in party classes.

I had hoped that the present generation of the party, itself very much shaped by the rapid cultural changes since World War II, and sensitive to the problem of workerism, would fill this gap that my generation left in our outlook and analysis. But it hasn't happened yet, and it's difficult to discern any signs of progress.

One of the indisputable disadvantages of our party now as compared to then is that we do not have the benefit of Trotsky's advice and help. The only word to describe their value is enormous. Of course, since he was not in this country, his suggestions were not always practicable, but on the other hand, his physical distance from the problems and pressures sometimes gave him a broader and better view, as in the Ludlow and labor party questions. In

addition, he sometimes tended to think things could be done faster than actually proved possible, which must have been upsetting or exasperating to the comrades involved. But on the whole he was the wisest of teachers and the most loyal of collaborators, and this collaboration was fruitful for both our party and the International.

We haven't had the advantage of direct guidance by Trotsky for a long time. But as partial compensation we have the benefit of a much greater volume of his writings in English, available to all of us, than anybody had in any language in the 1930s. We can still learn much from Trotsky through these writings, if we take the trouble to study them and their method—from Trotsky's writings and from the writings, activities, and example of those who have continued his work during the last third of a century, starting with Comrade Cannon.

Another counterbalancing factor, which constitutes a big plus for us today, is the fact that the SWP leadership is now more homogeneous, more united, than it was in the 1930s. Reading the 1938 minutes convinced me, reconvincing me, that our central leadership at that time included several exceptionally talented and even brilliant people—but people who give the impression of sometimes pulling in different directions. Not all the time, not most of the time, some of the time. The Cannon leadership set out to correct this after Trotsky's death, not in an arbitrary or mechanical way, and the long-range effects have been very positive and noticeable. Our leadership now not only knows how to work as a unit, as a team, but it does it almost automatically, without having to think or strain about it. The consequences can be detected in all areas of party life if you know how to look for them, and they are good in virtually all respects.

Another area of big contrast between then and now is our electoral work, as I've already said in *The Party Builder*. The differences are bigger than between night and day, and they are qualitative as well as quantitative. If I dwell on this too much, it is because I was one of the few ardent advocates of electioneering at that time, long before the central leadership awoke to its opportunities. And since I was usually wrong when I differed with the National Office, I take satisfaction in calling attention to the few times I was right.

Most of the comrades looked down their noses at election work in the '30s; they weren't opposed in principle, but they didn't see how revolutionaries could take it seriously or devote precious time to it. Most of our few so-called election campaigns consisted of announcing a candidate two or three weeks before election day, and printing an article in our paper urging a write-in campaign for Comrade So-and-So (usually Cannon). They never bothered to tell readers how to cast a write-in vote, and even our own members didn't know how. It was the closest you could come to complete abstentionism in electoral activity without renunciation of our principled position.

I had learned better during our sojourn in the Socialist Party, and the other comrades there had the same opportunity to learn better, but most of them shut their eyes to this side of the SP experience, or never opened them. In all of 1938 we had only two places where we even tried to run candidates of the new party—in the mayoral primary in St. Paul at the start of the year, and in

congressional and state legislative races in Newark. In the first case we had to settle for a write-in vote, I think, and in the second we actually went out and got petitions, got on the ballot, and got a respectable vote.

(Minnesota, one of the few places where we were interested in elections, was of course the model center of our party for trade union work; and at the founding SWP convention the New Jersey party's work in the unions and unemployed movement was cited as being the next best—a circumstance I find worth mentioning, because I think a branch's attitude to election work is a good index to its political health and sagacity and its real attitude to reaching outward and talking to people other than ourselves.)

Our record was so bad that when the National Committee had a plenum at the end of 1938, it adopted a resolution which was printed in the *Socialist Appeal* under the title "Political Committee Rapped on Election." This resolution criticized our failure to try to get on the ballot where it was possible, put the responsibility on the Political Committee, and directed it to correct the faults shown in the 1938 elections. But there was little improvement until around the end of World War II.

In 1948 we ran our first presidential campaign and the change really began to sink in. But it was interrupted by the cold war and deepening isolation in the '50s, and we did not really get back into stride until our 1968 campaign. Since then the progress has been monumental, in every respect. And all this will be seen as only a tune-up for 1976.

Finances, or rather financial woes and worries, are frequently reflected in the 1938 minutes. Comrade Cannon's *History* told of the poverty under which the movement tried to operate in its earliest years. We were bigger in 1938 and the financial situation was probably better then, but not much better considering the fact that we were trying to organize a party rather than a faction.

Several times the minutes report that a competent member of the staff has had to be laid off—the national labor secretary, an editor, etc.—because we could not find the \$15 a week they and their families needed to live on. A report is made that the party car can be sold for \$60, with the money to be allocated for field work in Michigan and Indiana. \$60 was a lot of money then. A report is made in January that we are going to send \$30 to the International Secretariat. When Cannon tells Trotsky in March that the sum sent to the IS had by then risen from \$30 to \$50, Trotsky is overjoyed: "Oh, that's very, very good."

When it is decided to send two delegates to the founding conference, a big campaign is launched in May to collect \$1000 for their expenses. The money comes in slowly. When half is raised, Cannon sails off, but Shachtman has to wait. In July he is still waiting, and in the end some members have to take out a loan to get him onto a ship. Of course \$1000 then was a vastly different magnitude.

Trying to make allowances for the inflation and the very different economic situations of the two periods, I have asked myself if it was possible to make a comparison of the levels of financial responsibility to the party between the membership of then and the membership of today. That is, taking the different circumstances into account, was the party membership as ready in those days to make financial sacrifices as it is today? I finally decided, reluctantly, that I could not answer this question with any assurance, but I will tell you my impression, based on memory rather than the minutes: today's membership, which I think performs very well in this area, compares favorably with that earlier generation.

Related to finances and what it says about the membership's morale is the size of the party's staff, or the number of full-time workers. I don't call them professional revolutionaries, for as I understand that term it applies to a larger part of the membership, including those who are not on the party staff but who make themselves available to the party where and when they are needed, whether on the staff, in a factory, on a campus, or wherever. So I am referring now only to the number on the staff. And I do that because it is a most significant index of the fighting capacity of the party, the best quantitative measure of the party's ability to turn word into deed, to carry out our decisions effectively, to intervene in a serious way in the class and national struggles that will take us beyond radicalization to revolution.

As I've already said, the size of our movement at the end of the 1930s, party and youth combined, was approximately the same as our present size, perhaps a little less then, but approximately the same. Not in the minutes but in an internal bulletin of that period, in a speech by Comrade Cannon after a trip to France in which he compared the SWP with the French party in 1939, I was able to find a figure about the size of our national staff of that time, including full time workers in the various branches. And the figure was —approximately—one-sixth or one-seventh of the size of our full-time staff now.

The membership size is approximately the same, the size of the staff is between six and seven times as large as it was then. Thinking about this ratio may make you more conscious, as it did me, of what a powerhouse, relatively, our still small movement is today—and of what a powerhouse it is, relatively, compared both to our opponents in the radical movement in this country and to the revolutionary movement in other parts of the world.

I think you know that I am not emphasizing this ratio in order to encourage complacency or smugness. I do it in order to heighten consciousness about the uniqueness of certain of our accomplishments, the moral being that not only is more possible now, but also that more is expected of us than of our predecessors. ■

DON'T STRANGLE THE PARTY

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

\$1.25

Introduction by George Breitman

WRITE: F.I.T., P.O. Box 1947, New York, N.Y. 10009

A STRATEGY TO END THE WAR

Why Mass Action? A Strategy for Stopping the U.S. War Against Nicaragua and Ending U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Issued by the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean (ENC). P.O. Box 21672, Cleveland, Ohio 44121; 17 pages, 75 cents.

Activists in the anti-intervention struggle will find this informative little pamphlet to be an invaluable tool. Simply written and crammed with facts, this booklet is published by the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean.

It can be useful in either making the case for the strategy of mass action while speaking to those already opposed to U.S. policy in the region, or in arguing the general case for opposition to U.S. policy before an audience not yet certain of its position.

The pamphlet is divided into four major sections. The first part discusses the need for mass action in the light of the U.S. House of Representatives vote to approve the Reagan administration's proposal for \$100 million to aid the counterrevolutionary contra rebels in Nicaragua.

In this section the pamphlet advocates the building of mass demonstrations as a means of effectively opposing the undeclared U.S. war against the people of Nicaragua. The authors of the pamphlet readily admit that to date mass demonstrations around the issue of opposition to U.S. policy in Central America have not been either as large or as effective as they might have been. The reasons for this are twofold: First, there was no

authoritative national coalition to coordinate the mass demonstrations. Second, significant forces within the anti-intervention movement were not convinced of the need for mass action. Instead, many of these forces pursued small group lobbying or civil disobedience.

The second section factually and forcefully details the growth and expansion of U.S. military activity in Central America. A centerfold map graphically portrays why the entire region is in danger of exploding into war.

The third portion of the pamphlet emphasizes that U.S. policy in Central America should be seen against the backdrop of 150 years of sending troops to prop up reactionary and oppressive dictatorships in order to preserve a favorable climate for U.S. business interests. The anti-labor nature of this policy is further evidenced by the desire of U.S. capitalists to preserve Central America as a haven for runaway shops. Some recent beginnings of outspoken labor opposition to U.S. policy in Central America are cited.

The publication concludes with a call for a strategy of mass demonstrations to effectively oppose U.S. policy in Central America. In order to make these actions a reality the pamphlet calls for a broad national coalition and for the unification of the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements around a program of mass action.

This small booklet should be in the hands of every activist seeking to win new converts to opposition to U.S. policy or trying to promote mass action in local coalitions around the country. ■

Reviewed by Mark Weber

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MOVEMENT, THE BLACK BELT THEORY, AND SOCIALISM A Stalinized View

Self-Determination and the African-American People, by James R. Forman. Open Hand Publishers, 1981, Seattle; 82 pages.

James R. Forman, in a seemingly very serious, detailed, and scholarly manner, has taken up an important question in his thesis "Self-Determination and the African-American People." In it he embraces and promotes the "Black Belt theory"—supported by the Communist Party USA from 1928 to 1944—as a current solution to the problems of Black liberation in the United States. This theory asserts that Black people in the U.S. should take up a claim to specific territories in which they are concentrated and oppressed as a nation, supposedly located in a geographical area from

southern Maryland through the eastern part of Texas.

Forman's thesis concludes that "autonomy and self-determination under existing arrangements of power is possible for the oppressed . . . nation and its national minority areas." He proposes that the various representatives of the African-American nation and these "national minority areas" should *now* begin negotiating with the United States government for their autonomy as a separate nation. He also extends his autonomy umbrella to all immigrant groups that make up national minorities. These include, but are not limited to, people of color: Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Filipino, Vietnamese, Greeks, Italians, Ukrainian, and Polish-Americans. "Immigrants from the white race

are also national minorities. They have the right whenever possible to reunite with their nation or live in peace as national minorities in the United States and other countries."

The book continues: "Autonomy now . . . is a new theoretical position in the history of politics in the U.S. and international affairs and the literature on self-determination of nations. . . . This concept attempts to provide an answer to the problems of the people of the world caused by the forcible importation of human beings from Africa into the New World and into the United States. Its implementation will greatly aid the cause of world peace, human rights and the self-determination of nations."

Tradition of the Communist Movement

To support his thesis on self-determination—in the name of historiography—Forman presents as a model the USSR and the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party's program through the 1917 revolution. "The right of nations to secede from any oppressor government" equals self-determination, and nations have "the right of autonomy under a bourgeois democratic republic or . . . under socialism."

However, Forman is in error when he attributes a primary role in correctly applying self-determination to Joseph Stalin. Even worse is his failure to understand the implications of Stalin's own theory, which gave primacy to "building socialism in one country" at the expense of all struggles for national liberation and socialism throughout the world. It was this theory which was responsible for destroying the Communist International, not simply, as Forman asserts, "leaders who betray." Browder, Lovestone, and other leaders of the CP in the United States were instruments of Stalin's policy. The Left Opposition, Trotsky, and Cannon anticipated the consequences of Stalin's theoretical revisionism and fought for 15 years to change the policies of the Communist International, before they organized the Fourth International in 1938.

Forman also warps the historical record in repeating the Stalinist slander against Trotsky, the Left Opposition, the Fourth International, and the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S. He must be charged with a lack of objectivity and credibility—with a one-sidedness in favor of a Stalinized version of history that is now even being questioned within the USSR and China.

To support his contentions about the Trotskyist movement, more than 20 citations on 18 pages—in a pamphlet of only 82 pages—are used to attack the positions of the Socialist Workers Party, Leon Trotsky, and the Fourth International. On page 67 he resorts to outright slander by charging the Fourth International and the SWP with destroying organizations and parties that were attached to the Third International. He distorts the primary differences between Stalin and the Left Opposition and charges the Trotskyists with

abandoning the established Bolshevik position on self-determination.

In developing his approach, Forman traces the history of the Communist International and the position of the CP-USA on autonomy and self-determination. He does this fairly accurately and in detail, but does not give an adequate explanation for the twists and turns and contradictions that developed. Having failed to understand the internationalist program of the Left Opposition as against Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," Forman is left with a faulty, three-point conception: 1. bad leaders betray to the bourgeoisie, 2. Communist parties do not educate their membership the way the bourgeoisie educates its workers, 3. Trotskyists do the work of the bourgeoisie by destroying Communist parties and nationalist struggles for self-determination and independence.

It is unfortunate that Forman sees the struggle of the Russian Left Opposition, Trotsky, and the SWP in the U.S.A. incorrectly as primarily a struggle against the Black Belt theory and not as a struggle to save the internationalist character of the Communist movement, for the defense of proletarian democracy, and against Russian national chauvinism. Whether he has simply been misinformed or is choosing to overlook the facts, his analysis will mislead his readers and constitutes a grave disservice to the movement.

Stalinist Conception of Nationhood

Forman supports Stalin's definition that a people or race are a nation whether they want to be or not. Forman charges Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement with betraying the struggle for Black liberation because they defined African-Americans as a race and did not believe they were a nation. Quoting Trotsky he says "the Fourth International did not 'obligate the Negroes to become a nation: whether they are is a question of their own consciousness, that is what they desire and what they strive for.'"

Forman goes on to "charge" Trotsky and the SWP with rejecting the Black Belt theory. Instead they supported the right of Blacks to define their own character as a people through the process of struggle for liberation and socialism. Here his portrayal of the SWP's position is essentially correct. And in this process, according to the SWP's view, if Blacks sought to separate as a nation this should be their right, with the revolutionary socialist party supporting their struggle rather than trying to define its parameters.

It is quite clear that there is a double-think construct in Forman's definition of self-determination. Self-determination seems to have taken place for him when the Sixth Congress of the Communist International passed a resolution calling upon the CP-USA to consider the African-American people an oppressed nation in the Black Belt of the South. Self-determination took place when the Communist Party of 1928, made up of less than 30,000 multiracial members (who he believes were

poorly educated), defines for 20,000,000 Black people in the U.S. whether they should separate as a nation, the character of that nationhood, and the forms of their struggle for liberation.

Serious Contradictions

How did Forman come to take as good coin what Lovestone, Browder, and Foster told him about the Trotskyists and the Left Opposition? Did his research just ignore Lenin's testament with its criticism of Stalin and Stalin's role in violating the rights and autonomy of the Georgians in 1922? Did the Bolsheviks make a well-intentioned mistake when they sought to set up Birobidzhan as an autonomous Jewish republic which the Jewish people of Russia showed no interest in? Has anything changed in the United States with regard to the wishes and desires of African-Americans in the 59 years since 1928 and the original conception of the Black Belt theory?

While he defends separation and statehood for Blacks in the U.S., it is rather strange that Forman says nothing in his book about the development of Black political consciousness in the 60s and the development of Black nationalism as a political and social movement in the U.S. Having played such a very important role in the civil rights movement and the struggles against racism and Jim Crow, which he so ably described in his autobiography *The Making of a Black Revolutionary*, Forman says nothing about the development or absence of development of a Black independent political party in the U.S. He knows, from his own experience, that the existing Black leadership has a dual loyalty, which includes supporting the system of capitalism through its two established parties.

Perhaps Forman's failure to discuss the Black Power, Black Nationalist movement in the U.S. is a deliberate decision, for here he would be confronted with discussing the political practice of the Socialist Workers Party at a time of real struggle and at a time when a leadership arose from the Black masses themselves as a result of their confrontation with the racist system of Jim Crow. The thrust of that struggle was not for separation but for equal rights. What was the position of the SWP and Trotskyists on such questions as school desegregation, lynch-mob violence, affirmative action, etc.?

These were (and remain) burning questions which arose out of the struggles of a people who sought to overcome their hundreds of years of oppression. On each of them Fourth Internationalists in the SWP played an exemplary political role. The SWP was, in fact, one of the few groups which supported the right of Malcolm X to be heard—by sponsoring forums where he spoke and publishing his speeches—even before he became

recognized as a national figure. At that time the Communist Party was joining in denunciations of Malcolm as a demagogue, and a racist in reverse.

Has Forman the "revolutionist" forgotten the class struggle or does he really believe that in this most powerful imperialist power in the world, under capitalism, the American ruling class is going to roll over and play dead and just negotiate with the existing Black leadership for a separate republic? The Native American Indian movement has had a little experience with negotiations and with this government, as well as with separation and nation-building projects. It has even had some bourgeois judicial basis for claims against the United States. Yet their experience is not too promising, to say the least. Even assuming the U.S. ruling class went along with Forman's scheme for separation, does he really believe they will allow anything more liberating than what is now provided on the reservations? Or perhaps we will see a North American variety of "bantustans"—the version of "self-determination" provided by apartheid in South Africa.

Forman's proposals fit in well with the USSR's policy of detente, or "peaceful coexistence": Nations can federate, no nation can oppose another, nations have a right to make economic arrangements of mutual benefit without interference. This is a liberal, idealized version of relations between states that exists in some nether land, not in the real world controlled by imperialist powers which dominate economically less developed countries. Even in the workers' states of Poland, China, Yugoslavia, etc., the International Monetary Fund has leverage which can affect the standard of living of the working class.

Revolutionists should not seek to define the character of the struggle for the masses of African-Americans. We should support their right to determine for themselves their leadership and the character and parameters of their struggle. That is what self-determination should mean. That was and still is the implication of the theoretical position of the Trotskyist movement not only in the United States but in Poland, Nicaragua, Venuti, El Salvador, etc.

The struggle for the self-determination of oppressed nations, above all, cannot be considered in the context of a single national interest. The experience of the revolutions in Cuba, Vietnam, Grenada, and Nicaragua, among others, demonstrates the necessity for the support of the international working class movement. The fight for national self-determination in the present-day world is an inherent part of the struggle for socialism and for a world socialist system. This represents a profound verification of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. ■

Reviewed by Haskell Berman

Thirty-Hour Week

The following letter by me was published in the Newark Star Ledger, December 6, 1986:

The General Motors announcement that it is laying off 29,000 without any reduction in its total output of cars should give us pause to reflect. Experts on automation in industry say that a 50 percent cut in employment is possible without total national output being reduced. This is because in the past several years new plants more fully automated have been built and older plants are being phased out.

What is the answer to this grievous threat of severe unemployment?

For one thing, the labor union movement should set as its top priority the demand for a shorter workweek—a six-hour day without a cut in pay. Industry can afford this cut in hours of work without a pay cut because automation permits companies to double their profits by reducing their personnel, whereas reduced hours of work would prevent layoffs.

The demand for a shorter week, unfortunately, will have to be forced on the union leadership as well as the companies. These leaders, getting very comfortable salaries, are reluctant to rock the boat, regardless of their members' needs.

In addition, a movement to make the 30-hour week the standard for workers should be initiated. Many years have passed since the eight-hour day was introduced, and no one can say that improvements in production since then have not worked to help corporations amass fabulous profits. Only a shorter workweek can extend employment and prevent disastrous unemployment.

A national 30-hour workweek will require action in Congress. I doubt that the Republican or Democratic parties would champion such a demand. Therefore, the unions and American people will have to organize and field their own political party, a labor party, to accomplish what the Constitution guarantees—the general welfare of the people.

Joe Carroll
Newark, N.J.

1937 Detroit Municipal Elections—a Response

In his letter about the "incomplete content" of George Breitman's overview of changing positions and attitudes within the U.S. revolutionary workers' movement on the labor party question, Nat Simon contends (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 38) that Trotskyism "discredited itself at the height of the CIO upsurge by opposing a proposal by Walter Reuther that the UAW run a labor slate in the forthcoming (Detroit) city elections." The year was 1937. Consider the political climate at the time, the ties of the top CIO leadership to the

Democratic Party, the disorientation of the radical wing of the labor movement, and the level of political consciousness of the working class.

1) At the second convention of the UAW in South Bend, Indiana, in April 1936, a resolution calling for the formation of an independent farmer-labor party was adopted unanimously. John L. Lewis then notified the UAW leaders, through his lieutenant Adolph Germer, that if they failed to endorse Roosevelt for reelection to a second term that year the CIO would not give them a promised \$100,000 for an organizing campaign in the auto industry. In the closing five minutes of the convention a resolution endorsing Roosevelt was adopted without discussion.

2) In the 1936 general election Roosevelt received full support from the CIO and most of the AFL, organizationally through Labor's Non-Partisan League nationally and the American Labor Party in New York, and financially through contributions to the Democratic Party which included half-a-million dollars from the United Mine Workers to Roosevelt's campaign fund. Both LNPL and ALP were set up early in the year to garner votes for Roosevelt in November.

The Communist Party also stumped for Roosevelt in its own special way, by running Browder for president with the campaign slogan "Defeat Landon at All Cost." Landon was Roosevelt's Republican opponent. "At all cost" meant vote for Roosevelt.

3) In the 1937 Detroit city election the UAW voted to enter its own "labor slate": Patrick H. O'Brien for mayor; Tracy Doll, Richard Frankenstein, Walter Reuther, Maurice Sugar, and R.J. Thomas for Common Council. Doll, Frankenstein, Reuther, and Thomas were UAW officials. Sugar was the UAW attorney. I don't know O'Brien's political background and orientation, but the candidates for Common Council (with the exceptions of Frankenstein and Thomas) were allied more or less with the Communist Party fraction in the UAW which, at the time, was coming into conflict with the faction headed by Homer Martin who was UAW president. All these candidates claimed to favor "independent political action," but none of them were enthusiastic about forming a labor party.

4) Walter Reuther stated his position as clearly as he could, and was quoted by the *Detroit Times* (part of the Hearst newspaper chain), as follows: "As an automobile worker, as a union official, as a member of the Socialist Party, and as a patriotic citizen of Detroit, I pledge myself to the service of all the people of the city."

5) All discussion about a labor party at that time, mainly confined to radicals within the unions, was whether such a party would be reformist or revolutionary. The Trotskyists, while members of the Socialist Party, believed that the left wing of that party would become the future Bolshevik party of the U.S. and that if a labor party developed it would be purely reformist.

6) In an analysis of the 1937 election results, B.J. Widick (then a Trotskyist writing in the November 13 issue of *Socialist Appeal*) quoted

the opinion of a CIO political strategist on the effectiveness of the UAW slate: "In Detroit, we took a beating because our inexperienced union leaders made the issue too much of a labor versus capital dispute."

In light of these facts it seems to me that Nat Simon's conclusion that the Trotskyists discredited themselves in this situation is at best an overstatement of the case.

James Gorman
New York City

Socialist International and Central America

Some months back when I received the October issue of the *Bulletin IDOM* I decided I must write a note in protest concerning the article "Socialist International Caves In on Central America" by Jack Bresee. I was truly surprised to read that the delegates to the Socialist International Congress, held in Lima, Peru, "caved in" not only on El Salvador but on Nicaragua too.

The main reason for my surprise was the fact that here in Canada the trade union-based New Democratic Party (NDP), the Canadian affiliate to the Socialist International, has up until now at least taken a very strong position in support of the Nicaraguan revolution and the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

Bresee's article was so much at variance with what I know of the NDP's policy that I tried to check out what the NDP representatives actually did say there.

There was nothing in the bourgeois dailies, which one would have anticipated would rub their hands in glee at the party leadership's betrayal. But the paper of the Manitoba NDP where the party is in office carried what would appear to be the verbatim record of NDP leader Ed Broadbent's address to the Lima conference. Some parts of the speech are poor, even very bad, but the *central line of support for the right to self-determination* is crystal clear. In the name of the Socialist International Broadbent concluded his talk: "We will stand united with Latin Americans in their insistence on shaping their own destiny."

One of the realities of today is that many parties of the Socialist International are mass parties and are responding to varying degrees to the worldwide anti-U.S. imperialism sentiments that I know you are inspired by and want to familiarize the U.S. working class with. The U.S. left is not alone and should seek to inspire the American workers with such developments as the labor party here in Canada.

Ross Dowson
Toronto

Mathematics, Science, and Dialectics

Jack Bresee's review of *Mathematics and the Search for Knowledge* (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 37)

by Morris Kline is imbued with a real appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics and more broadly of science, but it raises some important questions about the relationship of mathematics, science, and dialectics.

In one sense the development of mathematics is an illustration of dialectics. Its development through a resolution of its own inner contradictions as well as in response to external forces (contradictions) imposed on it by society.

In another sense mathematics and science, which in their method depend so much on the procedures of formal logic, pose a contradiction to dialectics. Consider for instance the formal logical principle that X is either A or not A, which forbids contradictions, and the dialectical principle that X has contained within it both A and not A and develops through the contradictory struggle between them.

Saying it another way: in formal logic contradictions are taboo. In dialectics they are the essence of things.

There are answers of course, but there has been a paucity of analysis of the contradiction between formal logic and dialectics.

Some avenues that could be explored are:

1. The dialectical principle that all things are in a state of flux does not preclude that some things change slowly and some quickly. For some purposes the slow changes can be considered as fixed, and the formal logical laws apply to them.

2. Even in the study of changing systems there are some entities that remain constant. For instance, the *mass* of a body during mechanical motions that are slow compared to the velocity of light. As a result, certain laws of motion can be derived for systems of such *masses*, which remain true in spite of the fact that these systems are in constant motion.

3. In mathematics, the calculus is a study of changing quantities. Here we have a real fusion of formal logic and dialectics.

Of primary importance in the calculus is the study of functions, which keep their form during a particular process. These are the aspects of constancy in the midst of change.

4. All systems are made up of sub-systems and sub-sub-systems. For instance, the human body is a system made up of a nervous system, a circulatory system, a digestive system, a glandular system, a skeletal system, and more.

Each of these systems can be studied in itself and also in its interactions (contradictions) with the others. Laws can be discovered for each system and for the interacting systems. The human system which is the embodiment of them all is in its turn part of a social system, or, better, one of the classes in the social system.

There is real need for more study here. Scientific method can achieve new insights from dialectics, and dialectics must learn to appreciate the importance of formal logic.

Abe Bloom
Wheaton, Md.

CORRECTION: A number of errors were introduced into the endnotes for Paul Lee's article, "A Study of the Evolution of Malcolm X's Black Nationalism" (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 36), while it was being prepared for publication. We are printing below a corrected text of those notes:

1. Milton D. Morris, The Politics of Black America (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 96.
2. Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; paperback edition New York: Dell, first printing January, 1964), p. 20.
3. Malcolm X in discussion "A Choice of Two Roads," with Bayard Rustin (New York: WBAI-FM, Nov. 7, 1960). Author's transcription of audiotape of the same title (Los Angeles: Pacifica Tape Library BB 3014, no date).
4. "The Muslim Program" regularly appeared on the back of the NOI's paper, Muhammad Speaks, starting in early 1963.
5. Quoted from the press statement as read (and slightly revised) by Malcolm X at his news conference at the Park Sheraton Hotel, New York. Author's transcription of the WBAI recording of this excerpted on Chris Koch's documentary on Malcolm X (New York: WBAI-FM, 1965), released as A Retrospective (Los Angeles: Pacifica Tape Library BB 3084, no date). Compare with the version printed in Malcolm X Speaks, Selected Speeches and Statements, edited with prefatory notes by George Breitman, New York, Merit Publishers, 1965, p. 20, titled by Breitman "A Declaration of Independence."
6. FBI summary report in microfilm, Malcolm X: Surveillance File/17 Feb. 1953 to 1964 (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., no date).
7. In an interview with an unnamed National Staff member of U.S. News & World Report (March 30, 1964, p. 39), Malcolm again advanced his modification of the NOI's ostensible objective ("The only real answer is for our people to go back to Africa"), and also referred to its standard, nebulous alternative: "If the Government does not let us go back to Africa, then we should have a black nation here." Typically, he avoided giving any specificity to the latter, but he did express the hope that it could be in Florida or California. "I like it where the weather is warm," he advised.
8. He said this in his press statement of March 12, 1964, in Malcolm X Speaks, p. 20.
9. The former assistants were Henry X and Joseph X, respectively the then assistant minister and "appointed administrator for the New York area" of Muhammad's Mosque of Islam No. 7, Harlem. The New York Times (Nov. 8, 1964, p. 48) reported: "They said it was Malcolm who injected the political concept of 'black nationalism' into the Black Muslim movement, which they said was essentially religious in nature when Malcolm became a member."
10. From "The Ballot or the Bullet," a talk given by Malcolm X at a Congress of Racial Equality-sponsored symposium in Cleveland, April 3, 1964, in Malcolm X Speaks, pp. 38-39.
11. Malcolm X, press statement, March 12, 1964, in Malcolm X Speaks, p. 20. Here again Malcolm was referring to his interpretation of "Mr. Muhammad's program," with its purported emphasis on Africa. That this was, in fact, his interpretation was made explicit three days later in remarks at a school boycott support rally at the Milbank Center in Harlem on March 15, 1964. He asserted there: "I'm a believer ... and follower of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad ... I ran into some obstacles in the Nation of Islam, and I feel that I can best serve the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's purpose and program and carry into existence why I feel, I understand concerning his objectives better on the outside than I can on the inside." (His emphasis.) Author's transcription of newsfilm soundtrack of this rally included in the motion picture Malcolm X (Warner Bros., 1972).
12. Quoted by Marc Crawford in Life, March 20, 1964, p. 40A.
13. Pages 62-63.
14. El Hajj Malik El Shabazz/Malcolm X to reporter-columnist James Booker, May 11, 1964, in New York Amsterdam News, March 27, 1965, p. 11. The editorial introduction mis-dated this letter as May 10, 1964.
15. See, for example, talk at OAAU "homecoming rally," New York, Nov. 29, 1964 in By Any Means Necessary, Speeches, Interviews and a Letter by Malcolm X, edited by George Breitman, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1970, pp. 136-137; and extract from question period of talk at HARYOU-ACT forum for Domestic Peace Corps, Harlem, Dec. 12, 1964 in Malcolm X Speaks, pp. 210-12.
16. Quoting remarks made at the Press Club, Accra, Aug. 28, 1964 in Daily Graphic (Accra), Aug. 29, 1964, pp. 8-9.
17. Malcolm X used the analogy himself in an interview with writer-photographer Gordon Parks on Feb. 19, 1965, two days before he was assassinated. Commenting on his travels abroad—which comprised just over half of his final, independent year—Malcolm said, according to Parks, "Everybody's wondering why I've been going back and forth to Africa. Well, first I went to Mecca to get closer to the orthodox religion of Islam. I wanted first-hand views of the African leaders—their problems are inseparable from ours. The cords of bigotry and prejudice here can be cut with the same blade. We have to keep that blade sharp and share it with one another." Life, March 5, 1965, p. 29; reprinted in John Henrik Clarke, ed., Malcolm X: The Man and His Times (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 121-22.
18. Interview by "Sad Sam" Amuka, Spear (Lagos), Jan. 1965, p. 15.
19. Peter Bailey (Robert Martin interview, Civil Rights Documentation Project, New York, Sept. 4, 1968), Ralph J. Bunche Oral History Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Wash., D.C., p. 49.
20. "The Socio-Political Philosophy of Malcolm X," The Western Journal of Black Studies, 3 (Winter, 1979), 253.

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