

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) 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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GORBACHEV'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH Its Meaning for the Soviet Union and the World

by Tom Barrett

The occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution has encouraged reflection and reassessment of the socialist project, by both its supporters and enemies. Some of this has been, as one might expect, self-serving and not really intended to improve anyone's understanding. However, much has been thoughtful and serious, attempting to draw conclusions which can be put to use—in countries where the bourgeoisie has been ousted from power as well as in those where it has not. Some of this reflective discussion might have happened in any event, but the policies of "openness" and "restructuring" (*glasnost* and *perestroika*), put forward by Soviet Communist Party general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, have taken the discussion out of the academic seminars and radical theoretical journals and put it before industrial workers, farmers, and students throughout the world.

Because there is no mass socialist movement in the United States, the Gorbachev reforms have had less of an impact on working people here than they have elsewhere. In those countries where workers in their thousands identify with parties claiming to be socialist or communist, political people are reconsidering what, exactly, "socialism" and "communism" really mean.



The week-long celebration of the 70th anniversary in the Soviet Union began with a two-hour-and-forty-minute speech by Gorbachev. Great hopes had been raised, in both bourgeois and left journals in the weeks leading up to this event, that perhaps the Soviet leader would reveal some radical (at least radical for the bureaucracy) perspective

regarding the past and future of the USSR, that he might move to rehabilitate the victims of the infamous Moscow trials of the 1930s. However, though Gorbachev's style and approach were novel, his speech contained little of substance beyond the old, warmed-over, political rationalizations and falsifications which have justified bureaucratic rule in the USSR for years. It did less to set goals for perestroika and glasnost than to set their *limits*.

(A few days after his speech, Gorbachev demonstrated in another way how far glasnost does not go. One prominent advocate of reform, Boris Yeltsin, was removed from his position as secretary of the Moscow CP because he criticized the pace at which glasnost was being implemented.)

Gorbachev acknowledged past political and economic failings of the Soviet state but failed to examine their causes. He recalled previous political debates in the Soviet Communist Party and mentioned by name some of Stalin's most prominent victims—an important, if modest, advance in a country where history is routinely revised and falsified—but there was no real reexamination of the issues in these disputes, even though they remain vitally important today.

Gorbachev's discussion of foreign policy focused on arms-control negotiations with the United States and, secondarily, on improving relations between the Soviet Union and the other countries of the Warsaw Pact. There was no mention of struggles for liberation anywhere in the world—not a word about South Africa, the Philippines, South Korea, the Middle East, or Central America—despite the presence in the audience of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Western journalists have remarked on the contrast between Gorbachev's speech and Nikita S. Khrushchev's speeches to the Twentieth and Twenty-second CPSU congresses: the passion in Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin's crimes was in no way matched in Gorbachev's measured, deliberate report.

A Discussion of Soviet History

In the past, Soviet leaders have pretended that their historical opponents simply did not exist, that they were "unpersons," as George Orwell expressed it. Historical records were rewritten. Photographs were doctored to expunge all memory of those who had fallen afoul of Stalin. Gorbachev's speech broke with that pattern.

The Right Opposition—those CPSU leaders who supported Stalin against the Left Opposition and broke with him only when the New Economic Policy

(NEP) was abolished and the forced collectivization of the peasantry was instituted—fared the best in Gorbachev's reappraisal. Its central leader, Nikolai Bukharin, was given mixed praise for his role in the revolution and in the decade which followed. Among the things for which Gorbachev gave him the most credit was helping to defeat Leon Trotsky!

Trotsky, the Left Opposition, and the United Opposition (the combination of Trotsky's faction with the Zinoviev-Kamenev faction, from 1926 to 1927) came in for harsh criticism. According to Gorbachev: "Trotsky and the Trotskyites negated the possibility of building socialism in conditions of capitalist encirclement. . . . They gave priority to export of the revolution and . . . to tightening the screws on the peasants, to the city exploiting the countryside, and to administrative and military fiat in running society."

This more sympathetic reappraisal of Bukharin, while Trotsky remains anathema, is clearly consistent with Gorbachev's aim of *partial* reform and *partial* democratization, with well-defined limits. Bukharin's rightist criticisms of Stalin's economic policies are safe enough for a bureaucracy which wants to experiment with market mechanisms—and even a little limited "free enterprise"—in the USSR today. However, Trotsky's insistence on popular control of the government and the state by the masses is not a matter which can be safely broached. Some people might get the wrong ideas. Gorbachev is willing to exhibit "openness" for that part of history that can be reexamined safely. The rest will remain closed, as it was before, until it is opened by the actions of the Soviet working class itself.

The general secretary expressed criticism of the forced collectivization in agriculture, though not going so far as to say that Bukharin had been right in his disagreement with Stalin, and failing completely to note that Trotsky, too, had strongly opposed this disastrous policy. He acknowledged that the middle peasants suffered under collectivization, which should only have been directed against the "village moneybags."

Gorbachev considers the "Great Patriotic War" (as the Soviets call the Second World War) to be a glorious period of Soviet history, and in his speech he gave the greatest credit where it is due—to the combat soldiers. However, he praised Stalin's leadership of the war effort, claiming that Stalin rallied the Soviet people and provided the unifying inspiration necessary for victory. He had positive things, as well, to say about the Soviet-German nonaggression pact of 1939.

The name of former Soviet premier Nikita S. Khrushchev reappeared in Gorbachev's report. Gorbachev called for a renewal of Khrushchev's campaign to expose Stalin's crimes and rehabilitate his victims, and to that end he announced the formation of a commission to write a new official history of the Soviet Communist Party. However, Gorbachev also accused Khrushchev of "erratic management," and defended the decision to oust him from power.

Gorbachev's criticism of the economic and political stagnation during the Brezhnev years was

mutated and mixed. While he criticized the poor economic performance and the lack of free political discussion, he pointed also to positive accomplishments, such as the achievement of strategic military parity with the United States.

Unfalsifying the Historical Record

Mikhail Gorbachev is relatively young as Soviet leaders go. He was not yet an adult when the Second World War ended, and he has lived his entire life under the bureaucracy's domination. He has been, quite literally, educated in the schools of Stalinism, and, unlike previous Soviet leaders, has no personal experience as an actor in the events which surrounded Joseph Stalin's rise to power and his dictatorial rule. It is possible that he is simply ignorant about the events he is discussing. But such ignorance on the part of its top leader is in itself a severe indictment of the Soviet system, and cannot excuse the tremendous gap between Gorbachev's historical account and what actually took place during those years.

Gorbachev's criticism of Trotsky was nothing more than a repetition of the old slanders and half-truths to which Trotsky himself responded so often and so well. Trotsky's role as a revolutionary agitator and insurrectionary leader were ignored, as were his negotiation of Russia's withdrawal from World War I and his organization of the Red Army—which saved the Soviet Republic from destruction by combined imperialist and tsarist forces.

Gorbachev says, "Trotsky and the Trotskyites negated the possibility of building socialism in conditions of capitalist encirclement." This is, in reality, a crude distortion, based on the *bureaucracy's* understanding of the term "socialist." The words have a similarity to a position actually held by Trotsky. But this surface similarity has nothing to do with the ideas *imputed* to Trotsky by Gorbachev, who is simply making the same accusation raised as early as 1927—that because Trotsky insisted, as Lenin did, that socialism must be a *world* economic and political system and that the *international* revolution was essential to the survival of the *Russian* revolution, he was a "defeatist" in terms of Russia itself. Trotsky in fact defended the Soviet Union consistently and tirelessly against any and all attacks by imperialist and reactionary forces.

Trotsky, like Lenin and all the great revolutionary socialist leaders since Marx and Engels, was an *internationalist*, and dedicated his life to the liberation of the workers of the entire world. But he understood that there was no contradiction between the extension of the world revolution and building a just and prosperous society in the Soviet Union. In fact, he argued that the extension of the revolution into the more industrially advanced nations would remove the permanent imperialist threat to the very existence of the USSR and bring vital trade and technology to the Soviet Union, as well as peace—a prerequisite to economic development.

Trotsky was an early advocate of the New Economic Policy (which, ironically, Bukharin initially opposed). The NEP removed the screws on the peasants and put a stop to the "city exploiting the countryside," allowing free-market forces, rather than "administrative and military fiat," to rule production and trade in agriculture and light industry. Trotsky understood that this was in no way a retreat from the socialist goals of the revolution, merely a detour made necessary because of the economic backwardness and political isolation of the USSR at the time. Nevertheless, he was also aware that even limited inroads by private enterprise represented a danger to a workers' state.

NEP did outlive its usefulness. Gorbachev acknowledges that the wealthy peasants (called "kulaks" after the Russian word for "fists") had become a problem to Soviet society, but he does not explain how or why. Trotsky did, and criticized the Stalin faction beginning in October 1923 for letting the NEP get out of hand. He urged measures to industrialize the economy in order to create a balance against the kulaks, provide manufactured goods to exchange for the peasants' food products, and ensure that economic control was maintained by the working class through its state.

Trotsky was a superb military and political tactician. In contrast to the caricature of his internationalist views which Gorbachev presented in his speech, Trotsky knew that there was a time to retreat and consolidate as well as a time to go on the offensive. In Germany and China during the 1920s inexperienced Communist parties failed to take the offensive when a victory for the working class was possible, and then committed adventurist errors by launching insurrectionary struggles when the relationship of forces had turned against the working class. Trotsky criticized both of these mistakes. Worse even than the defeats, in his opinion, was the refusal to learn honestly from what had happened.

There are similar problems in Gorbachev's assessment of the Soviet Union in World War II. It is true that the Soviet combat soldiers deserve "all glory," as Gorbachev said, for fighting with incredible courage and tenacity against the better equipped and better trained German forces. This, however, cannot substitute for an analysis of how their suffering during the war (and that of the civilian population) might have been lessened considerably had it not been for the disastrous blunders made by the bureaucratic Soviet government—both during the war and in the preceding years. From the forced collectivization of the peasantry in 1928 through the Molotov-von Ribbentrop pact in 1939, the Stalinist domestic and foreign policies left the country scandalously unprepared for war—politically, economically, and militarily.

The agricultural policies of Stalin seriously depleted food supplies and—ironically in the age of mechanized warfare—the horse population. Because of Russia's rural vastness, horses remained a military necessity—Trotsky estimated that the Soviet army needed one horse for every three men.

Economic mismanagement created shortages in all kinds of goods required by the military—from guns to boots—and the quality of those goods which were produced was extremely shoddy.

Stalinist foreign policy—both the ultraleft "third period" and the class-collaborationist "people's front"—enabled fascism to advance in Germany and Spain. Stalin refused to expose the "democratic" imperialists' refusal to combat fascism in the years leading up to the war. He failed to recognize that British prime minister Neville Chamberlain's "appeasement" policy was simply an attempt to turn the Nazi guns eastward—to overturn the Soviet workers' state.

After Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria had either become Nazi allies or been directly taken over by Germany, the Soviet Union negotiated a "nonaggression" pact with Germany. Stalin naively counted on this diplomacy to preserve peace for the USSR. Even after German troops had entered the Ukraine, Stalin could not believe that Hitler had reneged on the Molotov-von Ribbentrop pact.

And it was in military leadership that the Soviet Union was least prepared, for Stalin had essentially beheaded the Red Army. The purge trials of 1936-38 led to the execution of the ablest of the Soviet military officers, a crime which Khrushchev himself denounced in 1956.

The Moscow Trials—Time to Exonerate the Victims

Gorbachev, of course, has a right to present whatever political viewpoint he likes, as should others in the USSR who hold contrary opinions. He may make political criticisms of Trotsky, Bukharin, Stalin, or anyone else with whom he disagrees. However, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and many others who participated in the Russian Revolution and remained loyal to it did not simply lose a debate over perspectives for the Soviet Union and the Communist International. They were framed up and murdered. Trotsky was sent into exile in 1928 and assassinated by a Stalinist agent twelve years later. Most of the other members of the Bolshevik Political Bureau which led the October Revolution were forced to confess to the most monstrous fabricated crimes, and then executed. This, of course, took place during the infamous Moscow trials of 1936-38. Trotsky, though not present, was the chief defendant.

Gorbachev argues that Trotsky and his co-thinkers had wrong ideas. Should this "crime" carry the death penalty? Does it follow that Trotsky consciously plotted acts of sabotage against the Soviet state or that he was an agent of the Nazis or of the British—as Stalin claimed? Gorbachev was criminally silent about this issue in his speech. He did not even address the ultimate fate of Bukharin, whose *ideas* he partially vindicated. No one can expect the chief representative of the Soviet bureaucracy to accept the political views of the bureaucracy's harshest critic. But it is not asking too much to demand that Gorbachev acknowledge the falsity of the *criminal* charges against Trotsky and

the other defendants in the Moscow trials. *General* denunciations of Stalin's crimes do not substitute (in fact they only serve to further cover up) for a failure to address the *specific* crime committed in the frame-up and murder of Lenin's closest associates in the Russian Revolution.

An international campaign is being organized to exonerate the Moscow trials defendants. (See *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, No. 47.) Although the trials took place half a century ago and the victims cannot be brought back to life, restoring their reputation as revolutionists is important. The campaign to exonerate the Moscow trials victims is not primarily a campaign for the dead, but *for the living*.

The massive repression during the Stalin period, carried out in the name of communism, Marxism, and Leninism, did incalculable damage to these ideas by equating them in the eyes of the world's working classes with totalitarianism and mass murder. In reality, the purges were carried out not to defend Marxist principles, but to expunge the ideas of those who continued to defend a genuine Marxist viewpoint, and any other real or potential critics of bureaucratic rule.

Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Radek, and the other victims of Stalin's purges died because of what they believed. Their frame-ups and executions, along with those of countless thousands of others during the same time period, smothered all political debate, free artistic expression, and even honest scientific inquiry in the USSR *to the present day*. Gorbachev's glasnost campaign is ostensibly an attempt to revive freedom of thought in the Soviet Union, and revolutionists welcome it—however limited the actual reforms may prove to be. But if he cannot admit that the Moscow trials victims were honest revolutionists and did not deserve frame-up and execution, the Soviet people will continue to be understandably careful about what they say, and even about what they think. To talk about glasnost under such circumstances is simply fraudulent.

Gorbachev stated in his speech, "We are for a diversity of public opinion, a richness of spiritual life. We need not fear openly raising and solving difficult problems of social development, criticizing, and arguing. It is in such circumstances that the truth is born and that correct decisions take shape." But it's not enough to mouth such words. If they are true then he cannot refuse to exonerate the victims of the Moscow trials. What, after all, were they guilty of besides "openly raising and solving difficult problems of social development, criticizing, and arguing," in an effort to shape correct decisions.

For genuine proletarian revolutionists limits on freedom of thought and expression are not acceptable, and the campaign for the rehabilitation of the Moscow trials victims is a good way of fighting to explain this point.

'Restructuring' or Political Revolution?

The most fundamental issue facing the workers' states today is not whether to allow limited pri-

vate enterprise in the economy, whether to negotiate arms reduction agreements with the imperialists (both of which might be tactically wise), or even the guilt or innocence of Stalin's victims—important as these things are. The most fundamental issue facing the workers' states today is continued bureaucratic domination. The bureaucracy has seriously retarded social, economic, and cultural development in the deformed and degenerated workers' states, as well as undermining the possibility for revolutionary victories in other parts of the world. Today the problems stemming from bureaucratic rule in the USSR have reached crisis proportions. Gorbachev decries those problems but he has, and can have, no real answer for them.

Thirty-four years have elapsed since Stalin's death. In that period it has been amply demonstrated that Stalinism lives on, and that the Soviet bureaucracy will never reform itself. It must be removed forcibly from power by the Soviet working people, both urban and rural. Though a new Russian revolution will not seek to overturn the socialist economic foundation of that society which was shaped as a result of the October Revolution, it still needs to be organized in the same way that a revolutionary movement must be put together in countries still dominated by the bourgeoisie—through a step-by-step struggle around demands which raise working people's political consciousness and through which they can gain experience and confidence. This is the method outlined in the document drafted by Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," also known as the transitional program. Trotsky explained in 1938:

A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against *social inequality* and *political oppression*. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labor!

The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*. . . .

Democratization of the soviets is impossible without *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties.

A revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!

The reactionary *international policy* of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. *Down with secret diplomacy!*

All political trials, staged by the Thermidorian [a reference to the conservative forces which took power in France in 1794] bureaucracy, to be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development to-

ward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection—the party of the Fourth International!

In light of the discussion taking place in the Soviet Union and other workers' states, Trotsky's words are as relevant as if they were written this year. When contrasted with Gorbachev's November 2 speech they clearly demonstrate how little Gorbachev actually has to offer. However, a new revolutionary movement in the Soviet Union *can* be built on the foundation of struggles which *have* already begun to *truly* reexamine the history and ideas of the old Bolsheviks who were murdered by Stalin. That sort of examination will bring about glasnost and perestroika worthy of the names. ■

November 22, 1987

The Moscow Trials

■ **The first trial.** Called the "Trial of the 16," it opened on August 19, 1936. The main defendants were representatives of the Bolshevik old guard, such as Zinoviev, Kamenov, Evdokimov and Bakalev; well-known personalities such as Pikel and Reingold; Left Opposition activists such as Smirnov and Mrachovsky; and an airforce officer, Dreltser. Ter Vaganian, a writer and journalist; and Goltsmann, a high government official, were also included in the lot.

They were accused of being involved in a "center" charged with preparing and carrying out terrorist attacks against leaders of the party and the country. The prosecutor, Vyshinsky, launched a call to "shoot these mad dogs," these "clowns, these pygmies," these "adventurers."

Although absent, Trotsky was the main defendant, "the soul and organizer of the terrorist bloc," according to the "confession" of one of the accused. On August 25, the sixteen defendants were executed.

■ **The second trial** was held from January 23 to January 30, 1937, before the same tribunal. This time there were 18 defendants, chosen by the method of the amalgam — Piatakov, Radek, Serebriakov, Sokolnikov, Drobnis, Muralov and so on.

The general scheme of the trial hardly differed from the first. The defendants were accused of having rebuilt the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite center." The most absurd charges were heaped on them, going from "mass poi-

soning" to economic sabotage. Only those who had "confessed" were brought before the court. Vyshinsky of course tried to prove that it was Trotsky who was pulling the strings. Fifteen were sentenced to death. But Piatakov, Radek and Sokolnikov got prison sentences.

■ **The third trial** was held from March 2 to 13, 1938. There were 21 defendants, including Bukharin; Rykov; Rakovsky; Krestinsky; Yagoda, the former chief of police; people's commissars, such as Grinko and Chernov; former Central Committee members; officials and three doctors, plus a handful of lowlives and informers thrown in for good measure. They were accused of having joined in a "bloc of rightists and Trotskyites" and of having made a deal with enemy powers through the intermediary of Trotsky aimed at overthrowing Soviet power and dismembering the USSR. Nineteen were executed.

■ **The execution of the generals.** On June 11, 1937, a communiqué announced the arrest and trial on the same day of a group of generals including Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Ubovich, Feldman and other Red Army officers, some of whom had already been under arrest since 1936. It has not been established that a real trial took place. The executions of the generals, which were followed by those of tens of thousands of lower-ranking officers, decapitated the Red Army on the eve of the second world war. ★

THE USSR AND THE CAPITALIST ECONOMIC CRISIS

by Ernest Mandel

The following is an excerpt from a longer article dealing with the stock market crash and the imperialist economic crisis, "A Profound Change in the World Situation," which appeared in the November 23 issue of International Viewpoint:

I will conclude with a third problem. We are in a new world situation, owing to political, economic, moral and ideological shake ups. But there has not yet been a social upheaval. It is clear that this may take time, but the four areas in which there have already been shocks are important enough to justify using the term "a new world situation."

The tragic irony is that this is not fortuitous. It is the historical price that we — and above all the Soviet working class — pay for the crimes of Stalinism.

The tragic irony is that at the very moment when imperialism is going into one of the deepest, if not the deepest, crises in its history and when confidence in the market economy has been profoundly shaken in the West, not to mention third world countries, the virtues of market mechanisms are now being extolled in the Soviet Union. Expanding market mechanisms is presented as the only recourse and only solution to the grave systemic crisis gripping the USSR and its satellite countries. This systemic crisis is so undeniable that it is now acknowledged openly and frankly by the leaders themselves.

Two terrible statistics, cited by Gorbachev himself in his book, capture its gravity. First: one-third of working hours in the Soviet Union are wasted. Second: there are four times more tractors in the USSR than in the USA, but the USSR produces less wheat than the US. This leads to constant shortages that force the Soviet Union to

spend thousands of millions of dollars each year importing wheat from capitalist countries.

These two figures suffice to prove that the crisis is one specific to this regime. The theoreticians who claim capitalism has been restored or that state capitalism exists in the Soviet Union are at a loss to explain this. Stock exchanges have collapsed in all the capitalist countries, but not in Moscow or Peking. There's another economy there, that's clear. Anyone who cannot see this is denying reality. These economies are not playing the same game, according to the same rules, in the same structure.

That does not mean that the USSR's is a perfect economy that functions well. It has its own crisis, its own problems. The Soviet leaders are more or less powerless to deal with them, and don't know which saint to invoke — although they know they mustn't invoke comrade Trotsky, as we've just seen! They are completely disoriented and there will be no big changes. This year, the growth rate of Soviet industry has fallen below the level it had reached in Brezhnev's last year. There is a lot of noise, which is good; a good deal of openness, which is even better; some *glasnost*, which is insufficient. But little has really changed, and nobody predicts real changes in the months and years ahead.

So what do we mean when we say that the world situation has profoundly changed, or is changing profoundly? As I said, we have seen a long period of retreat

of the world revolution, that ended with the fall of Mussolini in 1943. We then had a long, partial rise of the social revolution — complicated, not clear cut and less conscious than that after 1917, but important all the same. The Chinese revolution, the victory of the Cuban revolution, of the Vietnamese and Nicaraguan revolutions — all that has created a different world from 1940, from that of Hitler and Mussolini, and others of the same ilk.

But this slow rise of the international movement has been weighed down by a tremendous handicap, the fact that the two biggest working classes in the world — those of the USSR and USA — have been out of the game for 40 years. That is more than a quarter of the world working class, and its most concentrated contingents — 135 million proletarians in the USSR and 115 million in the United States — who were on the sidelines.

The crisis in itself doesn't change that. Gorbachev alone will change nothing. But the crisis sets changes in motion. Gorbachev has been a trigger and an amplifier for movements whose development means that in the next ten years these two great proletarian concentrations will no longer be spectators on the sidelines.

That is a fundamental change, giving us great hope for a continuation, growth and generalization of workers' action, of the proletarian revolution, of socialism as defined by Marx: the rule of freely associated producers. ★

IT'S HARD TO CHEAT THE LAWS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The Coup in Burkina Faso

by Stuart Brown

On October 15, four years after taking power in the small, impoverished African nation of Burkina Faso, Captain Thomas Sankara was killed in a coup d'état led by one who had previously been his close associate: Captain Blaise Compaore. Sankara, who had been attempting to lead a revolution against the social and economic backwardness of Burkina Faso, is mourned by many both inside and outside the country. Sincere revolutionary fighters can only join in this sentiment. But mourning by itself is not sufficient. It is at least equally important to understand what happened and what factors made this tragic defeat for the Burkinabe revolution possible.

Revolution from Above

In the best of cases revolution in a country like Burkina Faso is extremely difficult. It is one of the poorest, least developed nations of Africa, which is in turn the poorest, least developed of all the continents. There is little or no native industry in the country, and social relations in the countryside continue to be dominated by tribal customs. Under these conditions even a revolutionary government backed by a strong mobilization of the small layer of urban workers and the large masses of rural poor would have an extremely difficult time. In Burkina Faso the problem was made even more difficult by the fact that there was no such mobilization before the Sankara regime took power through its own coup d'état, in 1983. Even afterward there was precious little.

Sankara attempted to compensate for the lack of a popular mobilization by constructing "Committees for Defense of the Revolution," or CDRs. But, in the absence of a self-mobilized mass base the CDRs remained primarily top-down structures and were never able to generate sufficient strength to provide a genuine social base for the revolution. There is no doubt that Sankara developed a strong personal following and that his policies were popular with a significant layer of the Burkinabe population. But that support remained essentially passive. People expected the government to take care of things for them, rather than seeing themselves as active participants in the historical process.

Army as a Social Base

The only real material support of the Sankara regime was the army. That is natural enough when power is achieved through a military putsch, and it meant that Sankara's ability to remain in power

depended on the continued loyalty of the old armed forces—a none too reliable prop during a process of social revolution. Though the army was purged of its most reactionary elements after 1983, its main structure and personnel remained intact.

Here we see one of the primary effects of the attempt of revolution from above. When there is an insurrectionary mobilization of the workers and/or peasant masses which leads to the overthrow of the old regime, a ready-made basis exists for the construction of a new armed force, a new state apparatus, *which will by its very nature be responsive to and supportive of the revolutionary process*. The necessity for such a transformation of the state was recognized by Marx and Engels as far back as the middle of the 19th century as a result of the experience of the Paris Commune, and was later codified in detail by Lenin in his famous study, *State and Revolution*.

In Burkina there was no social base for the construction of a new state apparatus. Even if Sankara were aware of the necessity for this, he had no choice. Not only was he compelled to rely on the old army, but also on all of the other previous institutions of government administration in the country.

Resisting Counterrevolution

The precise dispute which led to the falling out between Sankara and Compaore is not at all clear at this point. Compaore has limited himself to abstract pronouncements about crimes committed by Sankara without stating anything specific and without giving any evidence to substantiate his charges. This is sufficient for us to pass judgment that there is no basis to them—since if there were some testimony would certainly have been produced. But no light has been shed on what was happening behind the scenes that led to the coup. What is clear is that once counterrevolutionary pressures built up and Sankara lost the support of the army, there was no other force which could be mobilized to resist.

This is the greatest tragedy of Burkina Faso. It illustrates once again why proletarian revolutionary methods stress the self-mobilization and self-empowerment of the masses as the key element in any process of social transformation, and why we insist that *there can be no substitute for this*. Even if an unusual historical situation arises where a government sincerely committed to social change is able to take power by some method *other*

(Continued on page 35)

AN APPEAL FOR MOSES MAYEKISO

Brothers and Sisters,

You are invited to join the newly established Committee to Free Moses Mayekiso.

Moses Mayekiso is currently the general secretary of the 130,000 member strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the second largest nonracial trade union in South Africa. He is also one of the founders and a leading member of the trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the chairman of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC), which has organized resistance to attacks by the South African security forces. Through the AAC Mayekiso has worked to link the organizations of the townships with the power of the trade unions.

Because of this activity Brother Mayekiso was arrested along with Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mda-kane, Obed Dapela, and Mzwanle Mayekiso (Moses's younger brother). They are all detained and facing a variety of charges including treason, which carries a possible death sentence. As of now the trial date is set for September 14, 1987.

This appeal was issued in September by the Committee to Free Moses Mayekiso, PO Box 40338, Berkeley, CA 94704. Since then there have been some significant developments. Mayekiso's trial, which began in October, has been recessed until February. In November, Owen Bieber, president of the United Auto Workers, announced that a panel had been established to monitor the Mayekiso trial. The panel includes former attorney general Griffin Bell; former secretary of transportation William T. Coleman, Jr.; Marvin Frankel, a former federal district court judge; former Supreme Court justice Arthur Goldberg; Brooklyn district attorney Elizabeth Holtzman; Eleanor Holmes Norton, former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Yale University president Benno C. Schmidt, Jr.; and three sitting federal appeals judges: Damon Keith, Abner Mikva, and Stephen Reinhardt. According to Bieber, the panel will have one or two members present at the trial at any given time who will "assess the quality of justice being administered." The panel observers will "report back to the full committee and the American public on the proceedings and outcome."

Brother Mayekiso and the other defendants have received strong support inside South Africa. There have been solidarity strikes in protest of his jailing and important labor leaders such as Jay Naidoo, general secretary of COSATU, and Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), have demonstrated and called for their freedom. However, we believe that an international campaign by the labor movement is key to winning their freedom. A successful campaign would not only be a victory for South African workers but a victory for the international labor movement as well.

NUMSA has already extended its campaign to Europe and established a committee in Britain. Our committee has been established subsequent to discussions with the committee in Britain and a leading NUMSA representative. We would like to build a broad nationwide campaign here in the United States. The United States trade union movement can and should play an important role in educating the labor movement about the case of Moses Mayekiso, as well as laying the basis for direct labor solidarity actions between the trade unions of the United States and South Africa. Your individual and/or union local endorsement of the campaign and the committee can play a valuable part in this international effort.

The Committee to Free Moses Mayekiso is a defense organization which is open to all groups and individuals who agree with and are willing to work around the slogan "Free Moses Mayekiso and all victims of apartheid terror!" Participants are free to maintain their political and organizational independence, issue literature and make speeches under their own name(s) in which they may express differences with and criticisms of the positions taken by other committee members. However, no literature may be issued in the name of the committee without the democratic approval of the committee.

Due to the closeness of the trial date and the importance of this case both to the South African and international labor movement we respectfully request a prompt response to our invitation.

Fraternally,
The Committee to Free Moses Mayekiso

NEW GROUP FORMS TO OPPOSE U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

by Sean Larkin

A number of New Yorkers, concerned over the growing escalation of U.S. intervention in the Philippines, have joined together to form a new organization devoted to ending that intervention. Initial organizers include Gerald Horne, professor of history and law, Sarah Lawrence College, and former executive director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers; Dan Meyers, an attorney and counsel to United Auto Workers Local 259; Lester Edwin Ruiz, associate managing editor, *Alternatives: A Journal for Social Transformation and Humane Governance*, and adjunct professor of ethics, New York Theological Seminary; James Lafferty, longtime antiwar activist who during the Vietnam war served as a national coordinator of the National Peace Action Coalition and is presently on

the Executive Committee of the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean; and Jill Dull, a probation officer with the city of New York.

The group's first public activity was a forum on November 12, entitled "The Philippines Today: A Nation at War." It featured presentations by former United States attorney general Ramsey Clark and Lidy Nacpil, executive director, International Relations Commission of BAYAN (a federation of over 1,000 cause-oriented groups in the Philippines with over two million members), and widow of Lean Alejandro, slain general secretary of BAYAN, murdered September 19, 1987. Clark spoke on the history of U.S. intervention in the Philippines; Nacpil spoke on the recent rise of vigilante groups in the Philippines and the growing repression of all groups opposing the Aquino regime.

Approximately a hundred persons attended the forum held at the United Nations Church Center in Manhattan. In addition to those mentioned above, the invitation to the forum was signed by Leonard Weinglass and William Kunstler, two noted international human rights lawyers; Maria Castaneda, a local Filipina activist; and the Alliance for Philippine Concerns.

In introducing the new group to those attending the forum, organizer James Lafferty noted that the group—which does not yet have a formal name—was open to anyone who opposes U.S. intervention in the Philippines. In urging all in attendance to join the group, Lafferty said, "The situation in the Philippines is rapidly deteriorating to the point where even more direct and overt U.S. intervention can be expected. The people of this city—and of this nation—must begin to organize and speak out *now* if we hope to avoid a Vietnam or Central America styled war of intervention in the Philippines." Lafferty added that while the first activities of the group "would likely be of an educative nature," given the rapidity with which events are unfolding in the Philippines, "we will no doubt shortly be moving on to various forms of public protest actions."

Anyone interested in learning more about this group-in-formation can call James Lafferty at 212-269-2710, or Maria Castaneda at 718-446-5109; or write to James Lafferty, c/o Seamen's Church Institute, 50 Broadway, New York, NY 10004. ■



Civilian victim in the Philippines

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST ECONOMY

by Carol McAllister

We just saw a film entitled, "The Business of America." Shot largely in the Pittsburgh region and focusing on the dismantling of the U.S. steel industry, the film provides an accurate and vivid picture of the economic situation in the Mon Valley, its devastating impact on people's lives, and some of the ways working people have attempted to fight back. One might question some of the film's analysis of the causes of steel plant closings, and unfortunately it fails to suggest a viable political strategy for the workers whose situation it describes. But I still find "The Business of America" a valuable educational tool, especially for my students at a small college in Pittsburgh, who are often experiencing firsthand the images the film presents.

From Pittsburgh to Malaysia

Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, is almost exactly halfway around the world from Pittsburgh. It is the other place where I have recently lived and shared closely in people's lives; it is also the other place I talk about a lot with my students.

The current situation in Negeri Sembilan may at first glance appear to be the reverse of that in Pittsburgh. Rather than losing the industrial jobs they and their families have held for generations, many people, especially young women, in this rural area of Malaysia are for the first time in history being drawn into the industrial work force. In particular they are being recruited as unskilled workers for multinational corporations, predominantly electronics companies. The work experience of these young Malays is, however, similar to that being faced by many in Pittsburgh today—low wages, hazardous and unpleasant working conditions, and a total lack of job security.

But the most common responses of Malay factory workers to their new situation are not to form unions to improve working conditions, create unemployed committees when they lose their jobs, or demonstrate in the streets for economic and political rights. These kinds of efforts would in fact be difficult to carry out, given the repressive labor legislation in that Southeast Asian nation. Rather, Malay workers are more likely to turn to aspects of

their precapitalist political economy and to their traditional culture to try to cope with new problems and needs. They thus struggle to retain control over their land, which is still owned in a semicomunal fashion and passed from mothers to daughters; they experience "ghost attacks" or spirit possession on the assembly line, an effective form of work stoppage and also an expression of protest as the "ghosts," through the voices of the possessed women, cry out against the abuses of factory owners and foremen; and finally many are turning to an Islamic fundamentalist revival, seeking emotional security but also a conceptual framework through which to understand and come to grips with their situation as exploited workers in a dependent capitalist society.

It is probably clear from these introductory remarks that my academic training, which helps to supplement all that I have learned in our movement, is not in economics but rather in anthropology. So perhaps it is presumptuous of me to speak on the subject of the global economy. I do so only with the expectation that it will help us collectively begin to explore the questions and further develop the ideas presented here. I especially hope this initial effort will focus our attention on both the fundamental links between the lives of people in nations as far apart as Malaysia and the U.S. and also the important differences in their experiences—links and differences that we need to be aware of in our work as internationally-minded revolutionary socialists.

Continuities in International Capitalism

My focus in this article will be on *new developments* or *changes* in the international dimensions of the capitalist economy and the implications of these developments for the struggles of working people around the world as well as our own efforts to build an international socialist movement. But before we can discuss changes and new developments—in fact, before we can even understand or account for the new—we need to note what remains the same, i.e., the continuities in international capitalism.

First of all, we must keep in mind the continued operation of the basic dynamics of capitalist production and exchange as initially described by Marx. Of particular importance is the ongoing need of capitalist owners to expand or enlarge their enterprises—with the inevitable crises of overproduction and the likely crises of falling rates of profit that result. Such crises not only cause recessions and depressions but also lead to re-

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peated attempts by capitalists themselves to restructure the process of production and exchange and thus renew the economic system to their own benefit.

The second continuity we should be aware of is the necessity of members of the capitalist class to fiercely compete with each other in periods of both economic growth and economic decline. On the other hand, there is also a contradictory pull for capitalists *as a class* to collaborate in their attempts to maintain the system and dominate other classes. This contradictory dynamic—of competition and collaboration—operates both within and across national boundaries.

Third, we need to be clear that in spite of some significant shifts in relations among the nations of the world, we are still living in the age of imperialism. The general distinction between the core and peripheral capitalist countries (or "first world" and "third world" nations or imperialist and semicolonial societies) still holds. It is thus also the case that capitalists from the major imperialist nations—today those of the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan—still attempt (either with the active collaboration of or in spite of the, usually weak, resistance of third world ruling elites) to expand into, control, and exploit the economies of the rest of the world for their own profits. This also includes attempts to manipulate and further transform these peripheral economies in any period of fundamental economic restructuring.

Finally, we should mention one other long-standing characteristic of capitalist economies, their tendency toward periodic crises. We especially need to note that for the past two decades, in spite of short-term ups and downs, the global economy in general and the U.S. economy in particular have been experiencing a long period of stagnation, which shows no signs of immediate abatement. In fact, some observers argue that this may now be reaching a severe crisis point. The most important characteristics of this period of stagnation are: 1) gradually rising rates of unemployment or underemployment and 2) gradually declining rates of utilization of potential productive capacity. In other words, the global economy is presently afflicted by a growing underutilization of available resources—human and otherwise—that *could be* but *are not* sufficiently drawn on to provide for the basic needs of the world's people. It is my understanding that this phenomenon of stagnation is related, as both cause and effect, to many of the new developments we now see in international capitalism.

Export-Processing and a New International Division of Labor

Given this basic framework and keeping these continuities in mind, what are some of the major new developments or changes in the international capitalist economy?

I think four are most important: 1) the creation of export-processing industries and the development of a new international division of labor, 2) the rise of newly industrialized dependent coun-

tries, 3) the explosion of the world debt crisis, and 4) a shift in relations among the imperialist powers and the decline of U.S. hegemony.

I would like to discuss each one in turn and then at the end raise some thoughts about the implications of these new developments taken together for our work as revolutionary socialists both internationally and within the U.S.

Since the dawn of colonialism, capitalist production has been organized on an international basis, but in recent decades there have been important shifts in the particular pattern of that organization and especially in the role of semi-colonial societies. From the beginning, colonies functioned primarily as suppliers of raw materials and primary products to the industries and populations of Europe and later the U.S. The colonies were, of course, also expected to help consume the finished industrial products coming from more advanced capitalist countries. This dual role continued into the postcolonial era and persists today for most third world countries. Malaysia, for example, is still a major world supplier of natural rubber, tin, palm oil, and tropical lumber, and these remain the most important areas of its national economy. At the same time its local markets are flooded with consumer products from the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan.

Following World War II, we see the first significant shift in this pattern with the development of import-substitution industries in some of the former colonies. Producing primarily consumer goods for a local market, these industries were intended to reduce reliance on foreign imports as well as provide the foundation for a process of third world industrialization. They were a response to both heightened nationalist sentiments in semi-colonial countries and a strategy by advanced capitalist countries to export capital goods and technology in addition to consumer products. Import-substitution industries did not, however, prove very successful. They were capital-intensive and thus not well adapted to local conditions; they did not create sufficient employment opportunities; and, finally, the local consumer market simply could not support and sustain them.

Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s there was thus a new development. This was the creation of export-processing industries, also sometimes referred to as offshore-sourcing. In this form of international production, multinational corporations set up plants and factories in third world countries, which then produce manufactured products (or more commonly parts or components of complete products) for export, largely to the markets of the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan. Such industries draw on the large pool of inexpensive labor that exists in most third world countries, a significant percentage of which is female labor.¹

Export-processing or offshore-sourcing represents a fundamentally new pattern in the international organization of production and creates a new international division of labor. It involves the farming out of industrial production on a global

basis, with one product often being made in several steps carried out in different countries. The most labor-intensive, unskilled, and noxious parts of the production process are generally performed in various third world countries, especially by young women workers. But the control over production and the extraction of profits remain firmly in the hands of the multinationals dominated by capitalists from the U.S., Western Europe, or Japan. Some observers aptly refer to this as the "global assembly line." In addition, many export-processing industries are set up in "free trade zones" created by the host country that provide for low or no taxation, duty-free import and export of materials and products, a ready-made infrastructure that sometimes provides services such as electricity not yet available to nearby villagers, and finally a tightly controlled labor force often housed in nearby dormitories. The kind of industries presently being moved offshore—for example, electronics and garment—tend to involve relatively low levels of capital investment. This contributes to the phenomenon of "runaway" shops, as multinationals frequently move production from country to country seeking even more favorable conditions and lower wages.

The results of this new international organization of production are quite positive, at least in the short term, for multinational corporations. They realize increased profits, especially through the extraction of greater surplus value from the labor of third world workers. They also are spreading their risks against both shifts in economic demand and "unfavorable" (i.e., revolutionary) political developments throughout the world. For third world societies, including for their capitalist classes, the results are less favorable. They remain in a dependent, subordinate position with no real transfer of technology, skills, or control over production into their hands. And the economies of most countries dominated by export-processing remain very distorted and unbalanced; in a way they have moved from a situation of monocropping to reliance in a similar way on one or two manufacturing industries. For third world workers the result is, of course, the worst. They are, it is true, being brought into the international wage economy and sometimes find themselves participating in the most modern forms of industrial production. This will no doubt prove beneficial in terms of their future ability to affect political events. (We see a hint of what is possible in countries like Brazil, the Philippines, and Korea.) But for now such participation generally occurs in a situation of superexploitation characterized by very low wages, poor working conditions, insecurity of employment, and lack of political clout.

The development of export-processing industries is also linked to shifts in the U.S. economy. In some cases, they result from a partial move of traditional labor-intensive industries—garment, for example—to third world countries. More often they represent the location in the third world of key parts of the production process of newly devel-

oping and rapidly growing industries. The key examples here are electronics and computer components. Many of these offshore industries are thus on the cutting edge of industrial expansion and development and are involved in the creation or use of the latest discoveries in the current technological revolution. In a way, the recent creation of a two-tier system in the American economy looks more like a three-tier setup when viewed from an international perspective. Third world workers not only occupy the bottom rungs in this system of tiers, but they are coming to represent a rapidly increasing percentage of the worldwide total of industrial workers.² This is especially the case as a larger proportion of workers in the U.S. and Western Europe are shifted into low-paid service occupations while a few gain admittance to the high-tech fields for which third world workers provide much of the basic equipment or carry out many of the production tasks resulting from new technological discoveries.

The future prospects for export-processing are not entirely clear. Some analysts assume this form of industrialization will simply continue to expand along the same lines. Others predict the shift of even more parts of the production process to third world countries, including the performance of skilled labor and the scientific development of technological innovations by highly educated but still low-paid third world workers. A few are suggesting that some of the industries dominated by American capitalists may be shifted back to the U.S., where they will depend heavily on new immigrant labor. Such immigrant workers are often from the same third world countries now dominated by export-processing and may prove even more controllable than their counterparts still residing in their home countries.³ All three of these scenarios project a continued expansion of the world capitalist economy.

The Rise of Newly Industrialized Dependent Countries

The situation we have just been describing remains the predominant pattern in the contemporary third world and characterizes industrial development—more correctly underdevelopment—in the overwhelming majority of semicolonial societies. But a few third world countries have in recent years been able to break out of this pattern and have initiated a process of true industrial take-off that is also much more under the control of local capitalists rather than imperialist powers.⁴

The most dramatic and successful examples of this new development are the so-called Gang of Four of Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Also participating, though less successfully so, in this pattern of industrialization are the Latin American countries of Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. And sharing some of the dynamics of this process of economic growth, though possessing particular characteristics of their own, are South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, and India, as well as those

oil-exporting countries that have a low population density.⁵

Three things characterize these newly industrializing countries and also distinguish them from others in the capitalist periphery. First, they are embarked on a process of extensive and fairly balanced industrial development that is creating a diversity of industries, in many cases heavy industry, including important forward and backward linkages. This industrial production is to a limited extent for each country's internal consumer market, while a much larger proportion is oriented toward export to the world market. Such countries thus show a significant growth in the weight of industry in their national economies and of industrial products, including capital goods, as a percentage of total exports.⁶ South Korea provides perhaps the most dramatic example. In 1961, this East Asian country had a per capita GNP of less than U.S. \$300 and was one of the poorer peripheral countries. It would not have been considered in any way an industrial power. But now in 1987 South Korea has the world's most modern and efficient steel industry, and leap-frogging off the steel industry it has become the third largest ship-builder in the world, producing two times as much tonnage per year as the U.S. and more than Great Britain, France, and West Germany put together. By 1986 the South Korean auto industry had also emerged as a major force in the U.S. and world market. It is projected that by the early 1990s, this third world nation will be the dominant global producer of subcompact automobiles, exporting over one million cars a year.

A second important characteristic of this new pattern of industrial development is that it is controlled to a large extent by local rather than foreign capitalists through either their private ownership of enterprises or more commonly through their administration of state-owned corporations. This also involves the development of the local banking industry and the "appearance of an autonomous finance capital," with the most powerful banks outstripping those of the less important imperialist countries. This means that it is the "big monopolies and financial groups of the underdeveloped countries themselves, often represented, reinforced, or supported by the bourgeois state, that determine the principal fields for investment."⁷ In some cases there is even the beginnings of the export of capital for investment in other countries. Taiwan, for example, is one of the world's largest creditor nations.

Finally, in the more successful examples of this third world industrialization, such as the Gang of Four of Asia, this industrial take-off has led to a rising GNP and per capita income (on the average ten times as large as that of the poorer countries), declining unemployment, and a strong balance of payments or trade surplus. It has also, however, involved increased exploitation of the work force—in other words, increased extraction of surplus value—at the same time as the workers experience a rise in real income and an improvement

in living standards (including in the areas of health, literacy, and life expectancy sometimes approaching the levels of core capitalist countries). Singapore, as described by Linda Lim, a Singaporean Marxist economist, illustrates these points well:

Judged by these conventional economic indicators, Singapore is the world's most successful economy, achieving sustained rapid growth with relative price stability, full employment, a strong balance of payments, rising real incomes, and constant if not declining income inequality. It has also been judged, in at least one major business survey, as the best investment location in the world, based on a system of weighted rankings of various criteria. Most notably, Singapore ranked first among the 45 nations surveyed in "lack of future political risks" . . . and first in "labor force quality."⁸

A footnote tells us that this latter is a "composite measure including labor laws, unions, hire/fire/layoff flexibility, relative labor productivity, worker attitude, and technical skills." Thus, repressive control and superexploitation of the work force, in spite of rising standards of living.

There appear to be two essential preconditions for such successful industrial development in the capitalist periphery. First, the initial take-off often occurs during a downturn or period of recession in the world economy. It appears especially to depend on stagnation in major industries of core countries, such as the steel industry in the U.S.⁹ It is during such periods that third world countries are able to acquire loans on better terms from international bankers who are looking for new arenas of investment and to purchase modern technology at favorable prices from manufacturers trying to unload their equipment no longer purchased by industries in core countries. However, we should also note that if the period of recession is too severe (or occurs after production is well under way), the newly industrializing country will not be able to sell the exports it can now produce.¹⁰

A second and most important precondition of such third world industrialization is the existence of a strong, autocratic state that can 1) organize and coordinate capital accumulation and investment, 2) provide the necessary infrastructure and services for industrial production, including appropriate education and training for future industrial workers, and 3) perhaps of most significance, tightly control the work force, creating conditions that could reasonably be called forced labor. It is important to note that this pattern of industrial development, rather than depending on or resulting in the creation of forms of bourgeois democracy, seems instead to require their notable absence. As Linda Lim states in relation to Singapore, it is much more the "long arm of the state" rather than the "free hand of the market" that is responsible for the success of Singapore's and the other Gang of Four's capitalist economies.¹¹

As a result of these developments in certain third world countries, several observers, including Ernest Mandel of the Fourth International, propose a new categorization of the capitalist periphery, distinguishing between semicolonial countries (which are still the overwhelming majority) and what Mandel calls "semi-industrialized dependent countries" (i.e., those we have just been discussing). While agreeing with the need for some such distinction, others would probably call these newly industrialized countries examples of "semi-autonomous capitalist development," emphasizing not only their industrialized character but also, in comparison to other third world societies and even their own recent past, the independence of the development process from imperialist powers.

How dependent or autonomous is such third world industrialization? This is an important issue that raises questions about classical dependency theory and also has implications for our political analysis. There is fair agreement on the basic facts. Local capital, not imperial capital, owns the industrial enterprises and banks in these newly industrializing countries and controls investment and other major production decisions. These decisions often lead to direct competition and conflict, rather than complementarity, with the imperialist power(s) formerly hegemonic in the country. This represents a considerable degree of autonomy. But the newly industrializing country and its local capitalist class are still dependent on foreign capital for providing loans and transferring technology, as well as maintaining favorable market and trade conditions for sale of the products of its new industries. In addition, local elites are often militarily and diplomatically dependent on imperialism to maintain their political and thus economic power.

There is not clarity or agreement on how exactly to characterize this new situation and especially whether to emphasize the relative autonomy of these semi-industrialized economies compared to those of the semicolonial countries or to emphasize their continuing dependence in spite of industrial take-off and development. This question is still open to debate. So is the future of this pattern of third world industrialization. The matter needs further investigation, and also we will have to wait and see where future experiences lead. This, however, relates directly to our next topic, the world debt crisis.

The Explosion of the World Debt Crisis

The debt crisis is probably the one development in the international capitalist economy of which we are most aware. We often find notice in the mainstream media of the immense and growing debt of third world countries, the inability of many of these countries to meet even their yearly interest payments, and the threat of defaults by major third world borrowers.¹² In Latin America alone, we are told that international bankers are now demanding payment on the \$360 billion of out-

standing loans, nearly 70 percent of which is due from Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil.¹³

What are the causes of this debt crisis in the third world and especially in Latin America? The immediate cause of the onset of the crisis in 1982 was a combination of shocks all related to the deep international recession of that year. These included a rise in interest rates in the U.S. financial markets, declining prices for Latin American and other third world exports, increasing protectionism in industrialized countries, and, finally, the refusal of international banks to provide new loans throughout Latin America after Mexico's difficulties became known.

But the origins of the crisis can be traced at least back to the 1970s when there was "very zealous loan pushing by the international banks and equally ardent pursuit of funds by Latin governments and private capitalists."¹⁴ One way to understand the current problem is to recognize that this process of lending and borrowing operates like a drug addiction. First, there is the inevitable collaboration but also conflict between the pushers (lenders) and users (borrowers). And as in a drug addiction, the amount needed to maintain a "high" or even a normal state must be continually increased. This has to do with the inherent dynamics of borrowing and lending and especially with the requirement of paying interest. Magdoff in a recent article in *Monthly Review* presents a particularly clear exposition of this phenomenon:

Let us assume that a country borrows \$1,000 every year under terms that call for repayment in 20 years in equal installments, plus 10 percent interest on the outstanding balance. As the debt accumulates from year to year so does the amount that must be sent back to the bankers. If we follow through with the arithmetic we find that in the fifth year the bill for interest and amortization on past debt amounts to \$700. Hence, of the \$1,000 borrowed in that year only \$300 is left over for other needs. By the eighth year and thereafter the annual \$1,000 loan is no longer sufficient to service the past debt; the need to borrow keeps on growing. And that is in the nature of the case. Barring a drastic change in the country's situation, borrowing has to continue and even *increase* if only to keep up payments to the banks.¹⁵

Of course, this example assumes that these yearly loans are not invested in a way that leads to economic growth and thus an increase in their value. This has generally been the case in the capitalist periphery. As Pollin and Zepeda note for Latin America: "This vulnerability [resulting from the inherent dynamics of borrowing and lending] was in turn deepened because much of the funds obtained were not spent on productive development projects, but were used to finance military hardware pur-

chases, wasteful construction projects, and capital flight." The exceptions to this pattern are the more successful of the semi-industrialized dependent states, such as the Gang of Four of Asia. These countries also participated in extensive borrowing in the 1970s but their economic growth has been able so far amply to cover the debt servicing payments.

However, there is an even more basic cause underlying the current world debt crisis that itself led to or at least helped encourage such "addictive" borrowing by third world elites during the 1970s.¹⁶ This is the long-standing and continuing balance of payments deficits¹⁷ experienced by Latin American and other third world countries. In other words, the reality is that a major portion of the surplus generated in third world economies has for over a hundred years been "shipped back in the form of profits and interest to the home offices of the Western enterprises operating in Latin America [and other areas of the 'third world']"¹⁸ Magdoff also describes this phenomenon and its relation to the current debt crisis:

In short, the reason for the deficit is the tribute to foreign capital—for shipping, insurance, interest, and various forms of profit. Within the market system, the debtor countries cover their deficits by attracting more foreign investment or borrowing from international bankers, the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and the World Bank. But all that does is to intensify the problem, since still more is going to have to be paid abroad for interest and profits. Therein lies the trap of debt peonage.¹⁹

Given this situation and its causes, what are the present responses and proposed "solutions" to the world debt crisis? In the past, prior to World War II, such large debts might have resulted in quicker defaults and bankruptcies. Now, given the reorganization of the international financial system and especially the creation of institutions such as the IMF, there are attempts to renegotiate loans and thus forestall simple defaults.

To understand the role of the IMF in the current debt crisis we must recognize that this global financial institution acts totally in the interests of the international banks and the governments of imperialist countries, especially the U.S. In fact, the IMF has essentially organized this group into a coherent creditor's cartel.

IMF intervention involves the renegotiation of loans combined with the imposing of certain conditions on debtor countries. These include severe austerity programs and replacing government-managed parts of the economy with private enterprise. Such conditions are intended to make third world countries more capable in the long run of repaying their debts and in the short term of paying the interest on the loans. But the results of IMF intervention have been generally otherwise. Austerity programs and the increasing privatization of the economy have caused dramatic falls in living standards fol-

lowed by popular dissent. This has been particularly dramatic in the cases of Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil, where any improvement in people's living conditions and incomes as a result of a previous period of industrialization have now been wiped out. The fall in living standards and in real wages has in turn caused havoc in the domestic market. One response to this has been growing speculation and capital flight on the part of local elites. In sum, we see increased suffering on the part of the masses with, if anything, a further undermining and weakening of the economies of third world nations.

Because of the failure of IMF intervention to solve the debt crisis, new plans are now being proposed. Of most importance is the Baker Plan, put forth by the Reagan administration. The key element in this plan is the insistence, before old loans are renegotiated or new loans extended, on more radical restructuring of third world economies along the lines of free-market capitalism. This would include dismantling the public sector, welcoming uncontrolled trade, and especially facilitating foreign (i.e., U.S.) investment. There is even the proposal to carry out what are being called "debt-equity swap agreements." Such "swaps" would retire portions of a third world country's debt by essentially turning it into ownership of local properties and industries by foreign banks and corporations.²⁰ In other words, there is an attempt to turn back any trends toward national economic independence and in a sense to "recolonize" Latin American and other third world debtor countries. This renewal of *laissez-faire* capitalism and imperialist ownership will likely wreak even more havoc for the economies of these countries²¹ and will have serious implications for the economic and political futures of the peoples of such nations.

In contrast to both the IMF austerity programs and alternative strategies such as the Baker Plan for recouping the debt, a few voices are calling for third world debtors to default or at least declare a debt moratorium. Most prominent among these voices are those of Fidel Castro and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. There have also been recent initiatives by several Latin American governments to demand at least an easing of debt-servicing terms. But so far, Latin American and other third world ruling elites are reluctant to default or call for a moratorium on debt payments.

Why don't the ruling classes of Latin America default? One reason is that they are not nearly as affected as the masses by the austerity programs, especially since they continue to send money out of the country in the form of capital flight. Also, some aspects of the IMF program or alternative plans, such as cutbacks in social spending and lowering of wage rates, may actually be to the benefit of local elites. And finally, we must take into account their own interest as capitalists, even if junior or dependent partners, in maintaining the stability of the global capitalist system and preventing international financial turmoil.

The future consequences of the world debt crisis are, however, not completely predictable.

There may well be defaults even if the ruling classes of debtor countries would like to avoid them. Many observers indicate this could cause severe disruptions in the worldwide financial system. To attempt to forestall such disruptions, there is also the likelihood of U.S. government bail-outs—not really bail-outs of the third world debtors but rather bail-outs of the U.S. and international bankers. This, however, will not mean an end to the debt crisis but simply a placing of some of its burdens on the backs of American workers as it has been borne on the backs of third world workers for several years.

Before leaving this discussion of the world debt crisis, we need briefly to look at another area of debt—the U.S. debt. U.S. debt is actually larger than the third world debt, is increasing rapidly, and consists of several components: public or governmental debt, private consumer debt, corporate debt, and financial or banking debt, which is the largest of all. The escalation of U.S. debt is related to a whole financial explosion, which involves a dramatic increase in the amounts of money devoted to various kinds of purely speculative financial ventures relative to that actually invested in the production of goods and services.²² This has resulted in the development of a fragile financial superstructure that represents at least an equal threat to the international financial system as do possible defaults from third world debtors.

Only a relatively small part of this U.S. debt is held by the governments and banks of foreign countries, predominantly Japan. But even this represents a significant shift of the U.S. position in the international economy. Though not the same as the third world debt in either cause or consequence, this foreign debt of the U.S. also results from a fairly long-standing balance of payments deficit (in this case, a trade deficit—i.e., imports outstripping exports). It is likewise leading to increased foreign, especially Japanese, ownership of shares in the U.S. economy (at first, bonds and now real property in the form of land and industrial sites), and is being dealt with only at the expense of the American working class through wage cuts (to reduce the price of U.S. exports) and devaluations of the dollar (which reduces consumer purchasing power and thus the level of imports).

The Decline of U.S. Hegemony

What all of this points to is the final new development in the international capitalist economy, which is a shift in relations among the imperialist powers and a decline of U.S. hegemony.

In brief, the U.S., while still a major creditor nation, is now also increasingly a debtor nation, and while U.S. capitalists are still major investors in the economies of other nations, the U.S. is also now a source of foreign investment by other imperialist powers, especially Japan and Germany. In addition, the U.S. economy is experiencing an ongoing and serious trade deficit, and U.S. capitalists are encountering growing competi-

tion from other imperialist powers and even from newly industrializing third world countries, such as South Korea, in selling their products in the world market. The U.S. ruling class can no longer control aspects of the international economy such as currency exchange rates and the terms of international trade. The yen and mark are even challenging the dollar as the primary global currency. In sum, although the U.S. is still considered the major imperialist power in the world, the U.S. capitalist class no longer exercises the kind of economic hegemony it enjoyed in the first two decades following World War II.

What, however, are the primary implications of these new developments in the global capitalist economy for working people and for our attempts to build a worldwide revolutionary socialist movement?

The International Perspective

The most important result of these developments from the international perspective is the rapid and extensive proletarianization of third world peoples and the fundamental transformation of their societies toward a capitalist mode of production. Throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, working people find themselves increasingly involved in wage labor and experience a growing dependence on the world market to meet even basic subsistence needs. This is particularly the case in the semi-industrialized dependent countries, but there is also a significant shift in semicolonial countries as well.²³

But we must not take the importance of this shift to mean that there has been a simple elimination of older precapitalist forms of economy and society. Because of the very rapidity of the changes we have been examining and also the particular character of the current restructuring of the global economy, what we often observe instead is the continuation of traditional forms of political economy that dialectically interact with and often are incorporated into the newly emerging capitalist relations. In some cases, these traditional forms represent a preexisting feudal pattern; in other cases, especially as capitalism reaches further into the remote corners of the globe, they represent older preclass forms and thus fairly communal and egalitarian ways of life.

What this insight leads to is the recognition that an important theoretical contribution of our own movement—the concept of uneven and combined development—is extremely important to comprehend economic, social, and political realities in the contemporary third world. Trotsky first proposed this idea as a framework through which to understand the character of the Russian economy in the early twentieth century and thus to predict subsequent political developments in the Russian Revolution. Throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America today the process of change we see unfolding is also *uneven* in that the capitalist transformation occurs in leaps, at an irregular pace, and to varying

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DEBT AND THE U.S. ECONOMY

by Steve Bloom

The financial world was on tenterhooks in the days leading up to Friday, November 20. Would the negotiations between Congress and the White House lead to agreement on a deficit-reduction plan? Then, at the last moment, a sigh of relief could be heard as the negotiations proved successful: \$30 billion to be cut from this year's deficit, with an additional \$46 billion next year.

But if the goal of the budget negotiations was to quiet the fears on Wall Street they were only partially successful. Perhaps a new collapse of stock prices was avoided, but there was hardly a vote of confidence in the days that followed. Investors remained timid, and that's not too surprising. For all the attention paid to the budget debate in Washington, the fact is that the proposed spending cuts and tax increases—even if they survive the legislative process—will make only a minor dent in the debt crisis which threatens to engulf the U.S. economy.

Role of the Federal Deficit

The federal deficit has grown to unprecedented levels. In 1986 the total owed by the U.S. government stood at *over two trillion dollars*. That was more than double what it was even at the beginning of this decade, and more than five-and-a-half times the 1970 level. The \$76 billion in projected cuts over the next two years represent less than four percent of the total debt figure as of 1986, and we are not even talking about a reduction in the *debt itself* but only in the *federal deficit*—the amount by which the debt *increases* each year. Even with the projected cuts the total debt will continue to grow.

This striking picture is modified somewhat if we look not only at the *absolute quantity* of federal debt, but also at how the debt figure relates to a few other economic statistics.

If an individual goes into a bank and asks for a loan, a mortgage on a house for example, the bank—after checking the creditworthiness of the customer—looks primarily at *two* factors. Only one is the actual amount of the loan requested. The second is the income of the person making the request—his/her ability to repay the loan. If we make a similar comparison of the federal deficit in relationship to the total income of the federal government, an interesting fact emerges: there hasn't been a significant change in the ratio of these two figures over the last 25 years. If anything, it has improved slightly.

In 1960 the federal debt (\$290,900 million) was 318 percent of revenue (\$92,500 million). In

1986 the comparable figure was 272 percent (\$2,112,000 million debt and \$777,100 million income). The lowest figures during this time frame were actually in the 1970s, when the debt was less than two times total revenues. A similar relationship can be seen between the federal debt and the GNP (Gross National Product). In 1960 the debt was 56.5 percent of the total GNP. In 1986 the comparable figure was 50.4 percent. It is interesting that the indebtedness by state and local governments follows the same trend as that for the federal: it is basically constant in relation to both the incomes of the states and municipalities, and the GNP, between 1965 and 1986.

Danger of Collapse

We might be tempted to conclude, then, that government debt in the United States is not so much of a problem as might appear at first glance. But before we jump to such a conclusion there is still one more aspect of the situation that has to be taken into account. The relative stability of the federal deficit in relation to governmental income and to the GNP between 1965 and the present has been possible only because of a significant expansion of the U.S. economy over this period of time. If that expansion should come to an end (perhaps we should say *when* that expansion comes to an end) the picture will change qualitatively.

If a bank gives a substantial mortgage to an individual based on that person's income level and the income should subsequently drop to the point where it is impossible to sustain the payments on the mortgage, the bank has recourse to foreclosure on the property in order to regain its outstanding principal. In the case of the federal government, however, if an economic recession should result in a decrease in income, those from whom it has borrowed money have no such recourse. There is no collateral for these loans, which is why the ads for various government bonds and notes—and for investment funds based on them—talk about the "full faith and credit of the U.S. Government." That's all there is. There are no real values which can be redeemed in the event of default, only the government's ability to tax the productive process which takes place in the U.S. If that productive process begins to fail there is a big problem for the government in trying to pay off its debts.

It follows from this that the extraordinary federal deficit is indeed a cause for economic concern—not because it is getting larger in terms of the economy or is likely by itself to trigger an economic downturn, but because it will be an impor-



tant factor contributing to the *depth* of any recession or depression once it begins. Then the *absolute* dollar amount of the debt does indeed represent a considerable economic weight on the economy as a whole. If the economic production necessary to repay the debt isn't there, the only choices will be default on government bonds or bringing into existence purely paper values through the creation of new money—also known as inflation. Needless to say either one of these will make the resolution of a future economic crisis in the interests of the bourgeoisie much more difficult.

Corporate and Consumer Debt

Two areas where we can cite a major *proportional* expansion of credit over the past 25 years are corporate and consumer debt—particularly the former. The credit market debt of all corporations in the United States was 35 percent of GNP in 1970. By 1985 it had ballooned to nearly 120 percent. For consumer debt the most relevant comparison would be with personal income. In 1965 individuals owed 11.7 percent of their personal income; by 1986 that had increased to 16.5 percent. And since both GNP and personal income have gone up during this period, the absolute amounts of money involved in these debts have increased even more dramatically than the federal deficit.

The obvious danger of a spiraling economic collapse of this mountain of consumer and corporate debt, combined with (possibly triggered by) the well-documented debt crisis of the third world countries, is recognized even by many bourgeois economists. It would not be surprising to see a major default on the corporate level or by one of the important third world countries actually trig-

ger a profound crisis of the system. That is why the government is so quick to provide bailouts and tax breaks to corporations or banks which find themselves (or claim to find themselves) on the brink.

Debt and Crisis of Overproduction

It is no accident that the U.S. ruling class has allowed this massive expansion of debt, which creates a major new contradiction in its economic system—something new it must now contend with. There was simply no alternative means of dealing with the profound crisis of overproduction which has gripped the international imperialist economy since at least the early 1970s. Such a crisis, of course, consists in the production of more commodities than can be sold for a profit—not more useable things than can be consumed. Through the expansion of credit in the U.S. and internationally, markets were found for products which would otherwise have gone unsold. The credit market also created an outlet for money capital which, without it, would have had great difficulty finding areas of profitable investment. Thus the "Reagan economic boom" of the 1980s was fueled to a large degree by pure monetary speculation, a fact that has been noted by many.

But there are limits to such a strategy, and they are apparently being approached with some rapidity. In the end the covering over of the crisis of overproduction through the accumulation of debt will only make it that much more profound and intractable. Even if the budget-cutting process in Washington continues over the next few years it would seem to be far too little, and far too late, to avoid the inevitable consequences. ■

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY AND THE GUATEMALA PEACE PLAN

by Samuel Adams

The agreement signed in Esquipulas, Guatemala, on August 7, 1987, by five Central America presidents for "a strong and lasting peace in Central America" has been widely commented on and analyzed by leading U.S. anti-intervention organizations. For the most part their assessments have been positive, but they have been tempered by recognition of major weaknesses in the plan.

If carried out, the Guatemala agreement could mean an end to overt U.S. support for the contras. Viewed this way, the signing of the agreement was seen as a major diplomatic victory for the Sandinistas. It also provided the U.S. anti-intervention movement and supporters of an anti-contra aid resolution at the AFL-CIO October convention with an additional argument to oppose further funding for the contras.

However, the U.S. government does everything it can to interpret the pact to suit its purposes. Exploiting the imprecision and ambiguities of some of its major provisions, Washington pressed Managua to negotiate directly with the contra leadership for a cease-fire and to grant full amnesty. The plan itself simply called for "a cessation of hostilities [to] be arranged." It stated that "an Amnesty decree will be issued" but did not say specifically for whom. Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega's cosigners to the agreement, three of whom head up extremely repressive regimes, interpret these clauses the way Washington does.

Costa Rican president Arias, chief author of the plan, was especially outspoken in demanding that the Sandinistas negotiate with the contra high command.

In a letter sent to affiliates, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) saw both advantages and disadvantages to the Guatemala plan. Among the latter were that the plan

- does not directly address U.S. intervention in the region, leaves this up to future Contadora negotiations;
- sets up a false symmetry between the contras in Nicaragua and the FMLN/FDR in El Salvador.

CISPES emphasized that "the plan does not require the U.S. to end aid to the Salvadoran and Guatemalan militaries, to dismantle its military presence in Honduras, or to suspend its regional maneuvers and war games." Since the plan required governments in Central America to initiate a dialogue only with "unarmed internal political opposition groups and with those who have availed them-

selves of the amnesty," Duarte has called upon the FMLN/FDR to lay down its arms and trust to his notorious death squad system of "democracy."

For its part, the FMLN, while welcoming "positive efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in our region," expressed definite reservations about the Guatemala agreement. For example, its August 11, 1987, statement declared:

While U.S. aggression persists, it is necessary that our people continue to totally defeat this aggression. As long as the aggression continues, there can be no just and lasting peace.

The Guatemala agreement will be ineffective in achieving peace unless U.S. intervention and actions end in Central America. . . .

The FMLN denounces before world opinion the fact that the Duarte government has solicited from Reagan more and better helicopters and planes, more bombs and rockets, more arms and more millions of dollars. Reagan has promised all of this and has also ordered military maneuvers to take place on both sides of the border between El Salvador and Honduras, in which U.S., Honduran, and Salvadoran troops will participate.

Nothing in the Guatemala agreement proscribes this kind of activity by the U.S. government or interferes with its sending hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to maintain the repressive Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran governments. It is clear that this works objectively *against* the popular liberation forces in those countries.

But what about Nicaragua? Without specifically naming the United States, the Guatemala agreement does call upon "extra-regional governments which openly or covertly provide military, logistical, financial, propagandistic aid in manpower, armaments, munitions, and equipment to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements to cease this aid, as an indispensable element for achieving a stable and lasting peace in the region." Should the U.S. anti-intervention movement therefore support the plan? The Socialist Workers Party, among others, has argued it should.

The Fundamental Issue

Since Nicaragua's 1979 revolution, the U.S. government has suspended credit for wheat purchases by that country, imposed a trade embargo, and closed

the Nicaraguan consulate. It has mounted attacks on Corinto and other Nicaraguan ports, bombed Nicaragua's airports, blown up its main oil depots, mined Nicaragua's harbors, vetoed loans by multilateral lending agencies costing Nicaragua a billion dollars in urgently needed funds, and built a contra army of 15,000. The contras have murdered thousands; robbed, raped, tortured, and brutalized countless more; and burned health care centers, schools, and farms. The U.S. war against Nicaragua has left the country's economy in virtual ruins.

For seven years, the U.S. anti-intervention movement has demanded that Washington end this dirty and inhuman war. The movement's demands have been: End *all* forms of intervention immediately! Cut off all aid to the contras! Respect the right of Nicaragua to *full* self-determination! U.S. Out of Nicaragua!

But the SWP, instead of focusing on these clear demands, now expresses uncritical enthusiasm for the Guatemala plan. For example, a letter to the *Militant* (October 30, 1987) complains about that paper's "exulting over the Guatemala peace accords" and asks instead for "more headlines of the old traditional type, like: Hands Off Nicaragua!" By way of response, in the same issue, Doug Jenness, a top SWP leader, assures the letter writer that "Out Now" remains the basic demand. However, Jenness's further comments emphasize the party's orientation toward highlighting and popularizing the Guatemala agreement.

In fact, the SWP hails the Guatemala agreement as marking a "new stage" in the Nicaraguan revolution. Writing in the October 16, 1987, issue of the *Militant*, Margaret Jayko itemizes steps taken by the Nicaraguan government to implement the agreement. They include allowing *La Prensa* to reopen; allowing Radio Catolica to reopen; lifting censorship from all media; appointment of a national reconciliation commission headed by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, the most prominent supporter of the contra mercenaries inside Nicaragua; allowing the return of three Catholic priests expelled from the country for counterrevolutionary activities; and repealing the decree authorizing the government to confiscate the properties of Nicaraguans who left the country for six months or more. Jayko welcomes all of these moves.

This "new stage" is also marked by the Nicaraguan government's agreement to submit to "international verification" the question of its compliance with provisions of the Guatemala agreement. The secretary-generals of the Organization of American States and the United Nations as well as the foreign ministers of Central America and the Contadora Group will monitor Nicaragua's adherence.

An end to the contra war would give Nicaragua badly needed breathing space. But whatever the outcome of the vote in Washington on further contra aid, Nicaragua faces a future in which the U.S. government will be working nonstop to destabilize and overthrow the Sandinistas.

Nicaragua is surrounded by repressive governments ruled by capitalists and landlords answerable

to the U.S. It is still confronted by the relentless pressures of the Catholic hierarchy. Counter-revolutionaries inside Nicaragua are to be provided considerable space through press, radio, and perhaps TV outlets; the amnesty provisions; continued funding of the right from U.S. sources; the slated lifting of the state of emergency (which is required by the Guatemala plan); and the marches and demonstrations by right-wing groups that are being sanctioned. All of this—but especially the economic problems—will continue to pose extraordinary difficulties for the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan people in consolidating and deepening their revolution. Every step the government takes will be closely watched and monitored by outside capitalist governments. Their representatives will be in Nicaragua to oversee "freedom guaranteed by democracy," as they view it. *This will impose conditions on the Nicaraguan people's right to determine the future course of their revolution for themselves.* In particular it will make it much more difficult for them to finish the process of *dispossessing the Nicaraguan capitalist class in order to complete their revolution.*

Jayko's *Militant* article does concede that "The Nicaraguan government is being forced by Washington to make decisions, including concessions, under duress from the contra war and the extensive trade restrictions by the U.S. government." But she maintains that the changes taking place in Nicaragua—which provide openings for counterrevolution to organize and propagandize—are the *preferred* course of the Nicaraguan government.

But the heart of the matter is that the Sandinista leadership has decided that giving space to the internal opposition and the restoring of civil liberties is the best way to strengthen the mobilization, organization, and education of the workers and farmers of Nicaragua to fight for their interests.

What the Sandinistas considered a necessity, Jayko has made into a virtue. And she is not alone. Writing in the October 30 *Militant*, Steve Craine says:

The reopening of these previously banned organs of the U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary opposition to the Sandinista government was a result of the new opportunities for dialogue and debate opened up by the signing of the Central America Peace Accords in early August.

Of course, if the Sandinistas were exercising their *free and uncoerced* choice in making the changes called for by the Guatemala agreement, that would be one thing. But do Jayko and Craine really believe this to be the case? Isn't it obvious that "giving space to the internal opposition" is a price the Sandinistas felt they had to pay in hopes of getting peace for Nicaragua?

The Guatemala agreement abridges Nicaragua's sovereignty and denies its people the right to

Vietnam and Central American Peace Plans

The position taken by the SWP on the Guatemala agreement stands in stark contrast to its position during a similar discussion during the time of the Vietnam war. Throughout the several years of that war, controversies raged within the U.S. antiwar movement over the question of what the movement's demands should be. The SWP and its allies urged from the beginning that the movement should call for nothing less than the total, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. military forces and equipment from Vietnam.

This demand—"Out NOW!"—was counterposed to "Negotiate Now" in the movement's early years and to "Sign Now" in the concluding period. ("Sign Now" referred to the accord negotiated in October 1972, between the U.S. government, North Vietnam, and the People's Revolutionary Government—the political arm of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. That October agreement called for a cease-fire in place and the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from South Vietnam within sixty days.)

In 1972 the antiwar movement was divided into two national formations: the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC), which was supported by the SWP, and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ). NPAC adhered always to the immediate withdrawal position. It said that if the accords were signed it would welcome the halt to the bombing and withdrawal of U.S. troops. But NPAC never took a position of endorsing the accords. It clearly stated that while Hanoi and the PRG had every right to negotiate whatever agreements they felt were necessary, the U.S. antiwar movement should not endorse concessions wrested from the Vietnamese by force. PCPJ, on the other hand, maintained that since North Vietnam and the PRG had agreed to the accords and were urging worldwide support for them, and since the accords if implemented could end the U.S. war against Vietnam (the same argument raised today with respect to Nicaragua), the U.S. antiwar movement should demand that they be signed.

These differences between the two coalitions over the accords became so intense that it jeopardized their uniting for a counter-inaugural demonstration on January 20, 1973. That mobilization was first called by NPAC to protest the inhuman situa-

tion bombing of North Vietnam that took place in December 1972. Finally, unity was forged around the compromise demands "End the Bombing; End the War," with NPAC and PCPJ each free to raise other slogans in banners and speeches.

One hundred thousand people turned out for the January 20 demonstration in Washington, D.C. On January 23 Nixon announced that a cease-fire agreement had been reached and it was signed on January 27.

The SWP was sharply criticized during this period by the Communist Party and other forces within the antiwar movement for its refusal to endorse the October peace plan. But the SWP maintained its principled position that under no circumstances would it dignify Washington's right to negotiate *anything* with the Vietnamese, nor would it endorse *any* agreement that extracted *any* concessions from the Vietnamese.

Is there some fundamental difference between the Vietnamese and Nicaraguan situations that would justify or explain the SWP's shift in position as manifested by its uncritical endorsement of the Guatemala peace plan? We believe there is none.

To be sure, there are any number of distinctions that can be drawn. The U.S. was a party to the October 1972 accords, it is not a signatory to the Guatemala agreement. The political character of the North Vietnamese government and the National Liberation Front was different from that of the Sandinistas. The U.S. was supporting the repressive government of South Vietnam while today it is supporting a counterrevolutionary movement that seeks to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

But what difference do any of these make when what is at stake is the right of nations to self-determination and when it is the U.S. government—whether directly or indirectly—that is attempting to violate that right?

It is the *principle* we are talking about, the same principle the SWP defended during Vietnam, when it said that while it would certainly respect the right of a people or a government under siege to make whatever concessions to imperialism were deemed necessary, the SWP would not promote any peace agreement embodying such concessions.

Samuel Adams

self-determination because it prescribes how the country will be governed internally and leaves it to outside forces to monitor compliance. In the face of this, it is impossible to justify the position taken by the SWP, as uncritical supporter of the agreement.

Permanent Revolution and Class Democracy in Nicaragua

Today's SWP bears almost no resemblance to the SWP of the Vietnam era, which took a principled

position against endorsing any concessions that imperialism wrests from revolutionaries fighting for their nation's liberation (see box on this page). Since Vietnam, a clique led by the party's national secretary, Jack Barnes, has revised many of the theoretical foundations upon which the SWP was established and upon which it was built. Most significant of all, they have repudiated Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and replaced it with Barnes's particular concept of the "workers' and farmers' government"—as a necessary stage between capitalism and the socialist revolution. During

this phase the economy remains primarily bourgeois for a more or less extended period while the government is in the hands of the insurrectionary classes (both the workers and the peasants governing jointly). The tasks of the revolutionary classes are rooted not in the socialist, but in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It is this line of thinking applied to Nicaragua which is a key element in explaining why the SWP today uncritically endorses the Guatemala agreement.

The theory of permanent revolution holds basically that, in our epoch, only the working class is capable of leading society out of the dead end of capitalist crisis and underdevelopment towards the socialist reconstruction of society. When the working class, in alliance with other social layers such as the peasantry, overthrows the property-owning classes and wins state power, it must move as quickly as it can to expropriate the former owners and transfer the means of production to public ownership and control. The theory rejects the idea that the working class should stop halfway after taking power and limit itself to administering a state which will enforce bourgeois property relations. *Failure to continue to move deliberately but decisively to complete the workers' revolution leaves a base for reversing the process and imperils continued rule by the working class.* This fact does not dictate any particular pace for this process, which may be more or less prolonged in any particular case, but it does dictate a general direction which has to be consciously pursued.

The SWP's leadership now sees revolutions against oppression, exploitation, and underdevelopment proceeding in stages. For example, in the case of South Africa, Barnes projects the overthrow of the "apartheid state" but does not see that leading directly to the overthrow of capitalism. This will come sometime later in his view. (See "The Coming Revolution in South Africa," by Jack Barnes, *New Internationalist*, Fall 1985.)

Nicaragua is today a testing ground for the theory of permanent revolution. The SWP has adopted the view that the actions of the Sandinistas contradict this theory, and prove the validity of Barnes's new ideas. Revolutionary Marxists contend that the course followed by the Sandinistas is consistent with the perspectives of permanent revolution (see *Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua*, by Paul Le Blanc, F.I.T., New York) and that the future outcome of the struggle in that country will be determined by the ability of the Nicaraguans to chart a course toward the completion of the socialist revolution which they have begun.

Since 62 percent of Nicaragua's industry and land remain privately owned, the task of expropriating the capitalists and big landowners remains unfulfilled. No doubt the Sandinista government would like to move expeditiously to "expropriate the expropriators." But constrained by Nicaragua's extreme economic impoverishment, the enormous pressures imposed upon Nicaragua primarily by Washington—but also by the Soviet Union, which seeks a modus vivendi with the United States at the expense

of revolutions elsewhere—the Sandinistas have instituted only limited changes in property relations. They have concentrated on protecting workers' rights and encouraging them to form and build unions; initiating limited land reform; educating and raising the consciousness of the population; organizing neighborhood defense committees, youth groups, women's groups; providing health care; and most of all building an army to defend the revolution.

This state of affairs may be necessary, but it should certainly be viewed as transitional. It is clear that the sooner the counterrevolution can be destroyed and the capitalists' hold on the economy ended, the sooner Nicaragua can continue its march forward and complete its revolution.

What has this to do with the peace plan and the SWP's present attitude? A great deal. If one believes that the present government of Nicaragua is and should be a revolutionary proletarian government, a government whose objectives must be to advance the *socialist revolution* in Nicaragua no matter what limitations and concessions are forced upon it in the immediate period, then certain conclusions follow about the functioning of the state and the functioning of democracy. But if one believes instead that it is a government whose purpose is simply to advance the *bourgeois-democratic revolution*, then the concept of "democracy" which has to be developed is considerably different.

The SWP supports this latter concept, and that is why they support full rights for Nicaragua's capitalist class. But for revolutionary Marxists the test for determining what political rights, if any, should be granted the capitalists hinges in the first place on how that class responds to the revolution itself. In Nicaragua, instead of accepting the majority will of the revolutionary masses, the capitalists turned to terror and violence, killing thousands along the way. They acted no differently from other ruling classes which historically, when they were overthrown, refused to reconcile themselves to their loss of power. Acting as they have, the Nicaraguan capitalists have forfeited any claim to a voice in the affairs of the country.

We have to make a clear distinction between democracy for the workers and peasants of Nicaragua, which any revolutionary government must do its best to maintain and expand, and democratic rights for the bourgeoisie. (We are not talking about rights which the revolutionary workers and peasants might decide to grant to bourgeois classes if they should limit themselves to a *political* discussion and debate, refraining from participating in or supporting armed actions or sabotage.) When it launched its counterrevolutionary insurrection in collaboration with U.S. imperialism, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie clearly abandoned the democratic process.

But that's not the way the SWP sees it. Jayko applauds the scheduled lifting of the state of emergency and the granting of unfettered rights to the capitalists:

The restoration of full civil liberties will create *the best conditions pos-*

sible for the FSLN to wage the necessary battle to increase the political education, mobilization, and involvement of the masses of workers and farmers in the revolution, while politically isolating and defeating opponents of the Sandinista People's Revolution [emphasis added].

The indiscriminate lumping together of social classes—workers, peasants, and capitalists—in the context of advocating "full civil liberties" for all is characteristic of liberalism. It has nothing in common with Marxism, which rejects an evenhanded approach to exploiter and exploited classes alike.

Lenin on Political Rights for the Deposed Capitalist Class

When the SWP scrapped Trotsky's most valuable teachings, its leaders insisted they were deepening their commitment to Leninism, which they claimed was different in basic respects from Trotskyism. Since Lenin is cited as the authoritative figure, let us see what he had to say on the question of what rights a workers' revolution should give the ousted capitalist class:

It is precisely after the bourgeoisie is overthrown that the class struggle assumes its acutest forms. And we have no use for those democrats and socialists who deceive themselves and deceive others by saying: "The bourgeoisie have been overthrown, the struggle is all over." The struggle is not over, it has only just started, because, to this day, the bourgeoisie have not reconciled themselves to the idea that they have been overthrown. . . . The struggle has now assumed world-wide dimensions, and therefore, anybody who opposes us with such catchwords as "democracy," and "freedom," takes the side of the propertied classes. . . .

In order to achieve freedom for the working people it is first of all necessary to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, and since I am faced with the resistance of a whole class, it is obvious that I cannot promise this class either freedom, equality, or majority decisions ("Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom and Equality," May 19, 1919, *Collected Works*, Volume 29, pp. 356-57).

In a 1918 polemic against Kautsky's revisionism, Lenin quotes from an 1875 letter by Marx: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." This requires smashing the bourgeois state machine. But it also means "the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over

which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, as quoted in *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power*, Pathfinder Press, 1986, pp. 325-327).

As to the difference between a bourgeois-democratic state and a proletarian dictatorship: "A state of the exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state (of the exploiters); it must be a democracy for the exploited, and a means of *suppressing the exploiters*; and the suppression of a class means inequality for that class, its exclusion from 'democracy'" (*ibid*, p. 339, emphasis in the original).

No, Lenin would not agree with Jayko and the SWP that granting "full civil liberties" to the capitalists will create "the best conditions possible" for the Sandinistas to increase support from the masses and isolate opponents of the revolution. In fact, he characterized people who hold such views as being common liberals and renegades from Marxism.

The SWP and the Sandinistas

Do such judgments apply to the Sandinistas themselves? Not at all. They have to find their own way and chart their own path—on the basis of the concrete objective conditions they face and the excruciating alternatives from which they must choose. With the tremendous pressures they face, the Sandinistas cannot be bound by any rigid dogma or preconceived blueprints. Obviously, they must do a great deal of maneuvering to survive.

Sandinista leader Tomas Borge said the following about establishing political pluralism and allowing a mixed economy: "The problem is not whether this is positive or negative. It is a fact that cannot be gone around. It has not been easy to establish political pluralism, because in order to maintain



Daniel Ortega and Oscar Arias

this pluralism and mixed economy, the state had to make major concessions to the employers" (*International Viewpoint*, September 28, 1987).

But the need to make concessions to Nicaragua's employers or U.S. imperialism is not a prob-

lem that the SWP faces. The party's responsibility, therefore, like that of the rest of the U.S. anti-intervention movement, is to categorically reject giving approval to any agreement or negotiations which infringe on Nicaragua's sovereignty. Whatever negotiations have occurred or will occur in the future involving the Nicaraguan revolution, the U.S. anti-intervention movement can be most effective in helping the government of that country get the best deal possible by sticking to uncompromising "U.S. Out of Nicaragua!" demands.

The SWP's mistake flows in large part from the fact that they have latched onto a position held by Lenin well before the Russian Revolution *but later discarded by him in favor of an outlook which corresponded to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution*. Lenin's earlier position saw the initial task of the working class upon overthrowing tsarist power in backward Russia as establishing a *bourgeois-democratic* republic and completing the *bourgeois-democratic* revolution. This, Lenin believed, was necessary before the working class could proceed to socialism. Holding this view today, the SWP has been able to arrive at a position which endorses giving the counterrevolution in Nicaragua full democratic rights as a positive step.

While Washington has as yet been unable to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, it remains determined at all costs to prevent the consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution. This means in the most immediate sense preventing Nicaragua from developing its nascent industry, expanding its production of food, improving its system of distribution, having access to loans, and carrying on normal trade and financial relations with the nations of the world. It also means pressing Nicaragua to eliminate Soviet and Cuban aid and advisers, demobilize its armed forces, and liquidate the Sandinista Defense Committees.

Washington has no intention of permitting Nicaragua to enjoy stability or allowing it to build the foundations of a socialist society. The U.S. government holds that Nicaragua must not be permitted to become a beacon for the other Central American peoples as a small country that can stand up to the Yankee superpower, have genuine independence, and build a better life for its people.

But to carry out its policies, the U.S. government needs a force inside Nicaragua. The role of subverting and disrupting every step toward progress has been assigned to Nicaragua's counterrevolutionaries. And Washington now believes that the Guatemala agreement can be *helpful* to them in carrying out this assignment. As one top U.S. official put it, "the more we look at the plan, the better we like it" (*Wall Street Journal*, November 6, 1987).

To ensure the progress and survival of the revolution, the Sandinistas must retain the power to suppress those who have forcefully tried to overthrow it. *Yet under the Guatemala agreement they are committed to protect the political functioning of these very elements.*

The Rest of Central America

The Guatemala agreement is, of course, regional in scope. It purports to lay out a framework for peace for all of the Central American countries.

While the Sandinista government gains a certain legitimacy as a result of the pact, the same is true for the reactionary regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The liberation forces in all of these countries are called upon to lay down their arms and participate in the political process established by the various regimes. This, of course, strengthens the U.S.-backed governments in Central America.

What should be the position of the anti-intervention movement and especially its revolutionary socialist sector with respect to this aspect of the Guatemala agreement? *It should categorically condemn it as reflecting continued U.S. pressures and interventionist policies, and a further denial of the peoples' rights in these countries to settle their own destiny.*

Revolutionary socialists should use the occasion of the signing of the Guatemala agreement to reaffirm our solidarity with the workers and peasants of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras who are fighting for their liberation and to make clear that *we oppose and will expose all efforts by the U.S. ruling class to use the agreement to justify its continued intervention and its attempts to disarm the popular movements.*

As of this writing, the SWP has maintained a scandalous silence on the effect of the Guatemala agreement on Central American countries other than Nicaragua. The SWP's internationalism is on a pick-and-choose basis.

The SWP's single-dimensional approach to the Guatemala agreement is no help to the Nicaraguan revolution. As noted by the publication *Socialist Action*:

But the Nicaraguan Revolution cannot survive in isolation in U.S. imperialism's backyard. . . .

The Nicaraguan Revolution is closely bound up with the extension of the revolution and the establishment of a socialist federation of Central America states (September 1987 issue).

If today's leaders of the SWP understood that very basic point, they would stop addressing Nicaragua's plight in a way that subordinates the significance of the fight being waged in other Central American countries.

A Party Without a Compass Loses Its Way

One of the most massive social protest movements in the history of the U.S. helped deal U.S. imperialism its worst defeat—its forced withdrawal from Vietnam.

The Socialist Workers Party made an exemplary contribution to that struggle. Its cadre played a

key role in building the antiwar movement from beginning to end. SWP forces won leadership among large numbers of students, who provided the mass base for the antiwar movement. The SWP also helped initiate the broadest coalition of that period, the National Peace Action Coalition, which called and organized the largest demonstrations the country had ever seen.

The SWP grew in the process. It recruited many radicals to its internationalist program, its principled positions, its correct strategy, and its skillful tactical moves.

During the Vietnam period, the SWP was guided by its revolutionary socialist theory based on the teachings of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and others in their tradition. While this theory was enriched by the living experience and applied flexibly, it was solidly anchored on a set of fundamental principles.

Today's SWP is in crisis because its leadership has turned its back on the party's invaluable theoretical heritage and has embarked on a revisionist course. The theory of permanent revolution has been scrapped, genuine internationalism severely weakened, opportunism and pragmatism substituted for principle, and many of the party's best cadre undemocratically expelled.

The results are clear for all to see. Consider the SWP's record over the past seven years in one vital area of political work, the anti-intervention movement, where it has stumbled from one mistake to the next. These include the refusal to support an anti-intervention demonstration which resulted in a turnout of 100,000 people in Washington D.C. in 1981; the ill-fated attempt to take leadership of the movement in the aftermath of the "World Front" conference in 1982; abstention from anti-intervention work during much of 1983-'84; and the turn to multi-issuism in the fall of 1986 which resulted in

diluting anti-intervention demands (see "Socialist Workers Party and the Struggle Against Imperialist War in the 1980s," by David Williams, *Bulletin IDOM* No. 37).

Now we have the SWP's uncritical endorsement of the Guatemala agreement which violates Nicaragua's right to self-determination and compromises the party's internationalist responsibilities to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The fact that the party could have arrived at such a position confirms that its theoretical degeneration is now very far advanced and has assumed alarming proportions. Since practice is inextricably linked to theory, the party's errors in its day-to-day anti-intervention work should not be surprising. The same is true for the party's work in other areas.

Revolutionary socialists in the Trotskyist tradition who today find themselves in other formations should take no satisfaction from the SWP's degeneration and decline. It represents, after all, a severe setback for building the world movement and for building a powerful and united section of that movement in the United States. The loss to the working class, anti-intervention, anti-apartheid, and other progressive struggles in the U.S. has also been profound. Imagine, for example, how much stronger today's anti-intervention movement might be if the SWP—with a united-front approach similar to that of the Vietnam era—had been helping to provide leadership and direction.

Discussion, debate, clarification of the issues, and living experience itself—all involving the ranks of the SWP—offer the best hope for correcting mistakes, for reversing the party's disastrous course, for reuniting Trotskyist cadre in this country, and for advancing the struggle for the socialist future. ■



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CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BREAKS POSTAL WORKERS' STRIKE

by Barry Weisleder

"This law is an act of violence against 23,000 postal workers." With these words Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) president Jean-Claude Parrot denounced the legislation that ended 17 days of strike action by mail sorters and wicket clerks that began on September 30.

The strikebreaking law, speeded through the Canadian Parliament by the Conservative government over the opposition of the labor-based New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Liberals, compelled union officers to order their members back to work or be barred from union positions for five years and face \$50,000 a day fines—\$100,000 a day for the union as a whole.

The strike was over privatization—Canada Post (a Crown corporation) is seeking to transform 4,200 union jobs, which pay over C\$13 per hour (US\$9.75), into nonunion, minimum wage jobs by farming out postal wickets to private franchise operators (e.g., drugstores).

during the 18-day Letter Carriers (outside workers) rotating strike in June that roundly defeated the Tory government's plans for layoffs, contracting out, and worsening job conditions.

The Tories didn't want to be defeated a second time, and based on the theory that CUPW, which has been forced to strike three times in the last ten years, is "unpopular with the public," the government reasoned it could get away with an iron-fisted approach.

The Conservatives, who despite the comfort of their parliamentary majority languish in third place in the opinion polls behind the virtually tied NDP and Liberals, used similar strikebreaking legislation against a cross-country strike by over 50,000 railway workers in August. The Tories don't have to face the electorate for at least another year.

But there's no sign that the heightened militancy and strike activity of the past two years is



This and other issues still in dispute will end up in the lap of an arbitrator ordered by the strikebreaking legislation to follow the recommendations of an earlier conciliation report that backs management goals.

Rather than play into the hands of a government that would like to destroy what is regarded as the most militant union in Canada, CUPW leaders said the struggle for jobs and expanded postal services would be continued by other means, including an organized boycott of nonunion postal outlets.

During the strike, which began on a rotating basis, there were numerous incidents of violence as Canada Post bused scabs across picket lines with police assistance.

Many arrests and injuries occurred in these clashes, but not nearly as many as took place

likely to abate. Building on the example of organized meatpackers who defeated union-busting efforts in Alberta, and the gains of auto workers who recently won indexation of pensions in southern Ontario, workers are demonstrating a growing willingness to stand up to employer concession demands and even to fight for improvements.

Workers are also turning increasingly to the NDP, partly as an outgrowth of the wave of labor struggles. The social democratic leadership, however, keeps a studied distance from picket lines and union struggles in its eternal bid for "respectability."

Greater support from the NDP, and other unions, for CUPW on the picket line could have snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, and would have contributed positively to the growing momentum behind labor and the NDP. ■

PHILADELPHIA MAYORAL ELECTIONS: ANOTHER NO-WIN CHOICE

by Haskell Berman

Workers of Philadelphia were faced with another no-win choice on the first Tuesday of November in the election for mayor: incumbent Black mayor Wilson Goode or former police chief and former mayor Frank Rizzo.

In April 1986, Goode allowed his appointees as chiefs of the police and fire departments to fire-bomb and destroy sixty homes in a Black residential neighborhood. This was the notorious attempt to oust members of the radical organization, Move. Eleven persons were killed, five of whom were children.

Rizzo, in the '60s, and '70s, developed a "tough cop," "law-and-order" image. He consistently made racist appeals to the white electorate, while he defended a policy of terror and harassment of the working class and the Black community. Rizzo, a long time pro-Nixon Democrat, reluctantly supported Goode in the 1979 campaign for mayor, after he failed in a referendum attempt to overturn the city charter that forbids a third term for incumbent mayors. Prior to the primary elections that year leaders of the business community decided to support Goode instead of Rizzo in an effort to reduce racial polarization and develop an image of Philadelphia as a "world class city" that would be good for business.

This time, Rizzo switched his party registration to Republican and challenged Goode, accusing him of incompetence. Goode countered by reminding the electorate that during the Rizzo administration the mayor had agreed to take a lie detector test in response to a challenge by Democratic Party boss Peter Camille. Rizzo failed the test. (Camille himself was later indicted by federal prosecutors on corruption charges and served a prison sentence.) The campaign soon degenerated into little more than a series of personal charges and counter-charges.

Two Antilabor Administrations

Goode opened his latest campaign by blaming poor trash collection and filthy city streets on unionized sanitation workers. He threatened, if reelected, to fire all the union trash collectors and hire outside contractors. As an economic measure to improve the city budget, he promised action against other unionized city workers.

Despite his record and his obvious anti-working class program, Goode was able to depend on heavy support from liberals, the Black community, and one of the city's largest local unions: the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT). In 1975 the PFT had endured a bitter three-month strike that

resulted in hundreds of female teachers being strip-searched, and two top union leaders having to negotiate with Rizzo from city jail cells. The majority of the 22,000 PFT membership could be counted on not to vote for Rizzo. The problem was, as usual, that they had no alternative.

The Socialist Workers Party's Campaign

The only other candidate for mayor was the Socialist Workers Party's Richard Gaeta. We have very little evidence to indicate that Gaeta was actually a candidate, and that the SWP was really running a campaign: a picket line of about two dozen in front of a local TV station protesting Gaeta's exclusion from a Goode/Rizzo debate, a short announcement in the *Daily News* of the protest picket line, and two flyers announcing the campaign.

The SWP ran no candidates other than Gaeta. His campaign was in sharp contrast to earlier electoral efforts of the party in Philadelphia. In 1979, for example—during the campaign of Nora Daniels for mayor—many opportunities were embraced to speak before community and labor groups, and there were few people in Philadelphia who did not know that a socialist, prolabor candidate was on the ballot. Daniels debated Goode at a large general membership meeting of the PFT. The party was successful in involving hundreds of protesters in a three-hour demonstration outside the hall where candidates for mayor debated under the auspices of the League of Women Voters, while Daniels was excluded. The protest was so visible and effective that the local TV channels covered the activities of the demonstrators as much as they did the dull debate that took place inside the hall. There were interviews in the three major dailies and in the local Black press.

It should be obvious that the SWP was very much in need of help and support with their campaign effort this year. Despite this, the party refused to even acknowledge the offer made by members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in Philadelphia to work actively on the campaign. A sympathizer of the F.I.T. was barred from the Gaeta campaign forum as part of the party's exclusionary policy. That campaign forum had an attendance of less than two dozen people.

Coalition for an Independent Political Campaign

A coalition was formed for an "independent" city council campaign by Max Weiner, who has a long and active record in the city and state around
(Continued on page 35)

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

16. I Make the Worst Choice

Work days in the editorial office went by quietly. One time the phone rang:

"You don't know? This is Vitya Gorelov. Yes, yes. I'm in Kharkov. Come over this evening; I'm at the Hotel Krasnaya."

I went over. Vitya was living in a hotel room with his wife and child. Not particularly good accommodations. He had long ago shifted to superintendent's work.

They had moved to Kharkov just the other day. He had put on some weight and limped more noticeably than before; but as before, he was cheerful and witty.

Five years ago he had signed my recommendation to the party, and now meeting again in the heat of the pre-congress discussion (a discussion was held on the eve of the Fifteenth Congress) we talked for a long, long time about things that we considered more important than—I can see the sarcastic smile of my grandson, who suspects that my next word will be "football." But he guesses wrong. However, so as not to write "more important than the current bombast," I will accept his variant. Yes, more important than football. And it would be an evasion to say only that the conclusion we arrived at was "mistaken."

In Stalin's time, it was totally unknown—and even now not everyone knows—that at the Fourteenth Party Congress, N. K. Krupskaya, citing Lenin's practice, spoke out against demanding that the oppositionists renounce their mistakes in a public statement.¹ Lenin never demanded that people get on their knees. For example, the more dreadful we might consider Trotsky's mistake during the Brest negotiations with the Kaiser's Germany, the more remarkable seems Lenin's position, from the point of view we assimilated under Stalinism. He did not demand that Trotsky repent, and moreover, he never reminded him either of this mistake or of the past in general. Even in his testament, Lenin proposed that Trotsky not be blamed for his past non-Bolshevism. In the very same way, he did not compel Zinoviev and Kamenev to repent for what in the testament was called the "October episode," which "was, of course, no accident."² No accident! But one was not forced to repent. One submitted to the decision of the majority; that was enough. Beyond that, one's practice or conduct was what counted.

It is another matter if you submit verbally but not in deed. But then, what is the sense of a confession? It is no more than a comedy for the delight of revenge and humiliation.

Stalin's heavy hand turned a public confession into a necessary ingredient of a standard revision-

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. With this issue we begin Notebook III.

ist text. But, no matter how much a person repented, there were continuous shouts of "You did not say everything; confess to more!" What is this if not revenge? In China they copied this method exactly. And, ultimately, they declared that even the confession was inadequate and insincere; so that the only sure way would be to burn the sinner on a bonfire. When this sort of thing was done in our country, we did not notice. But when in China they began to lead about the streets party activists who had been "overthrown" for being insufficiently servile to Mao Tse-tung, wearing wooden signs around their necks saying "I am a venal revisionist," we got upset.

I took part in the opposition, but I will never agree to hang a sign from my neck saying "I am a venal Trotskyist."

What I did, I did according to the dictates of my conscience. I had no self-serving or careerist motives. Even my interrogator understood this.

I began to feel my moral inferiority from the moment I signed the first protocol [record of the interrogation]. Even though it contained no lies or slander against my comrades; even though I knew that the comrades had been in prisons and exile for a long time by then, and others were even dead; all the same, my behavior was beneath contempt. Of course, now it is easier to say than it was then to do. But not to admit all this, or to avoid it, or to keep

silent and keep all these recollections inside myself would be still worse. I did not have to sign a single line. It would have been better to die.

Nothing in my memoirs has given me such difficulty as these words, which I have harbored inside myself for so many years, never venturing to say them aloud.

Apparently, this is not at all the kind of confession that is demanded from a former venal Trotskyist; and it gives any Stalinist plausible grounds to declare that my rehabilitation in 1956 was a mistake, and that it would have been better to have added another five to seven years to my sentence. But to judge all these things in terms of the Stalinists' morality will not do today. It is no longer within their province.

Imagine me as I was then. Imagine Vitya Gorelov, fearless underground fighter, soldier of the revolution, shot by the Makhno forces and by some miracle surviving.³ My interrogator contended that Vitya became a Trotskyist precisely because he had been a longtime enemy of Soviet power and dreamed of restoring capitalism. And I actively took up his refrain and also craved capitalism—was I not the son of a merchant? It was my alien class loyalty coming into play.

It would seem that refuting this nonsense would be as easy as forcing my way through an open door. But it is not so open. Full clarity is needed to expose the political business dealings by means of which the very souls of the people were crippled.

What other real, and not contrived, motives led us—Vitya, Maryusa, and me—into opposition? First of all, the old conception that the revolution could triumph only as part of the world revolution and that socialism could not be built in one country, standing alone.

We will fan the world conflagration
Prisons and churches we will raze
to the ground.

Yeva sang this revolutionary song around the house, while laundering the baby's linen.

And such was our conviction. It lends itself to logical analysis; or one can try to prove it mistaken if one wants to look for theoretical arguments. Our reluctance to change our minds was not strong enough within us that it could compel us, who moreover were very weak theoretically, to hold fast to a theory and for its sake to conduct factional work. However, in this instance, it was enough to begin; and the very logic of the factional struggle, the inertia of any organization—which having once been created, does not want to die—keeps moving you further along. And in fact: all those involved could not drop out all at once, which means that if one left, one had to sever ties of friendship and hear charges of betrayal.

And if a recognition of your mistakes is linked with a need to get on your knees, and in addition tell on your comrades, what would you do?

And finally, I feel there was still another, very strong motive—our high moral principles:

hatred for hypocrisy and lies; revulsion at careerism and self-serving behavior, disloyalty, and the choosing of "one's own men." The disloyalty of Stalin and his methods of selection were already very well known by that time, even in the Komsomol. We remembered the Ukrainian dispute. And we took Lenin's testament very seriously.

At the time of the Fifteenth Congress, it was fully clear to Vitya and me that we were not making careers for ourselves (Stalin's disinterested men always accused their opponents of careerism). But we continued to demand that the party be told the whole truth. We thought that for the cause of revealing the secrets that were most important—and the most dangerous to the party—we could take it upon ourselves to publish clandestinely Lenin's letter (or in the language of the investigation, the anti-Soviet leaflet about members of the Politburo).

It is possible that, if he had won, Trotsky would have also tried to make the party toe the line: he was "given to displaying excessive boldness and gets extraordinarily carried away by the purely administrative side of a matter." But this falls into the realm of pure guesswork: "if 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans." Meanwhile, as regards Stalin, there is no guesswork involved; it all happened. In 1923, Lenin alone understood him. He understood his moral features. And moral criteria cannot be overlooked.

All that I have now written I could have served up under some clever sauce or simply left unsaid, since to remain silent about Trotsky, Kamenev, Bukharin, Tomsy, and Rykov is considered a sign of good form; then I could have gained entry into high circles by keeping totally silent about that part of my past in which it is impossible to avoid mentioning a terrible name.

My one good friend, from whom I did not conceal that I was in opposition, told me that the notes of such a person are doubly seditious: first in the way that any camp literature is seditious; and second, because it attempts to drag out the ideologically defeated Trotskyism. It is not important that two doses of prison have failed to cure the disease: for Trotskyists, there is no cure.⁴

I know, I said, but in order to prove that I am seditious, you will need something with which to compare my current views. And what do you, or I, or any of the judges know about the views of contemporary Trotskyism, if it even exists somewhere abroad as a political current? Where does it exist? Do you know? What views does it profess? Do you know? And in general, can you consider that you know the views of a person if you read only summaries, which are, moreover, presented by that person's opponent who is known to be unreliable? In particular, what do we know about Trotskyism besides the fact that it doesn't amount to a hill of beans, it's unacceptable to the powers that be, it's dry reading, etc. What do we really know?

"But its views about the degeneration of the apparatus are well known."

Are they precisely known? or approximately? And this aspect of Trotskyism is the only one that

has been elaborated upon in any way in keeping more or less with the original sources. But Trotskyism long ago ceased having an ideological monopoly over this particular viewpoint. A great many people now hold it. Can all of them really be damned Trotskyists? No, don't include me among currents about which you know little! Of course, it would be lucrative and enticing to write a novelette in which Zinoviev would be depicted as an inveterate scoundrel, buying supporters for himself, and Bukharin would be shown as an unscrupulous personality, and about Trotsky—to say not one word. But I don't want to write such a thing. And I don't want to depict myself as all good. However, I refuse to wear around my neck a sign saying "I am evil."

Now, then, let's climb the rickety wooden stairs to our little Kharkov room, three meters by three meters. Careful, the step is broken! Listen as Yeva sings "Prisons and churches we will raze to the ground." She could hardly have supposed that her husband would end up in Cell No. 9, a witness to the fact that both churches and prisons can come in handy.

Aha, she has heard that I am not alone. She has known all my friends no fewer years than I have. However, some sort of bias set her against Vitya Gorelov. In addition to Vitya, Volodya Serov, one of my new friends at the *Kharkov Proletariat*, visited me once or twice. She took a decided dislike toward him. She declared harshly to me: "Tell Volodya not to come to our place anymore. If he does, I'll make him leave."

But he had noticed that Yeva did not like him and stopped coming. By magic coincidence, his wife got fired up against me in the same way. Our party wives, who did not know each other, by some miracle came to the same conclusion as to how to save us: don't let us meet each other and have discussions!

In their salutary intent, our wives were not alone. I found still another savior: true, this a secret one.

Once, I noticed from the window of the editorial office a man on the opposite side of the street, keeping a constant, watchful eye on the entrance of our building. In the old days, they were called "pea coats." The "pea coat" assigned to me was not really wearing a pea coat, but a black, lightweight overcoat with the collar up.

When I left the editorial office, the pea coat accompanied me home. In the morning, I saw him sitting in the trolley car. Now, it was no longer boring to go places. This continued for almost a month. Then the pea coat disappeared. I don't know whether he was replaced by someone more masterful or whether they decided to stop making themselves look foolish. There is no reason, speaking truthfully, to spend the people's money on secret service agents when there is a more direct course. For example, simply make an arrest and say:

"You are an honest, upstanding, splendid young man. Why aren't you ashamed to hide things from us? Ay-ay-ay, it's not good. Name the others who worked with you copying these little bits of paper."

Or, another way. Again, without ceremony, grab me and say:

"For confessing, your sentence will be cut in half (nonsense, of course). So name for us—you filthy anti-Soviet scum—all your filthy scum accomplices."

In 1950, I heard basically the latter formula. What got you a reduction of punishment (more precisely, of torture, and of nothing else)?

Names were demanded, names and more names; for this you got a reduction. More accomplices! And then, drag them all in. And having done this, extort from them also names, new names. In the end a grandiose conspiracy will be uncovered and they can cry out to the workers: See what a monstrous Trotskyist conspiracy we saved you from, you and your wife and children! Even your children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will thank us for our struggle!

My investigators loved to orate about the higher interests of the revolution. And I had to listen with my hands folded on my lap. They could convince themselves of their revolutionary purity but not me. Way back in my youth, as a member of a cell of the ISAFR (International Society to Aid Fighters of the Revolution, which was long ago liquidated), I learned to think: the use of torture is a method absolutely alien to revolutionaries and appropriate only to reactionaries. If a participant in the revolution applied torture, that meant that he was deceiving himself—and others, too—if he imagined himself a revolutionist.

The most brilliant of my interrogators, about whom I will speak in more detail later on, orated for hours at a time. The audience consisted of me alone. Because his habit for strong expressions had become part of his nature, the lecture went like this:

"Do you understand" he asked, turning toward his audience of one, "what communism is, you no good so and so? Communism—take note, you lousy such and such—is our bright and noble aim. We cannot allow a rotten, filthy, depraved so and so like you in a communist society."

And on in this same style, but more colorful than my pale pen can depict. You came out of his comfortable office convinced 100 percent; he was such an effective lecturer. He knew what Trotskyism was, its theory and practice; and he had fought against it and won.

Let us remind ourselves how many members of the party passed through such agitation-propaganda offices. I have cited the Ukrainian figure. In the Soviet Union as a whole, according to some historians, it was approximately (there is undoubtedly an exact figure somewhere; but if it is not made public, this means it must be horribly high), 900,000 communists, not counting nonparty circles, writers, scholars, people who told stories against Stalin, saboteurs, and so on and so on. And all of them insulted, tormented by hunger and interrogation, blackmail and torture, were taught Marxist theory by the investigators who explained that the most correct and only way to communism was through all this.

The overcoat left me alone, but Yeva's premonitions began to come true. First, my editor re-

moved me from the management division and put me on the night proofreading shift. Strict duty fought within him against his feelings for this madman, who did not realize how much evil he was creating for himself. His liking for me was clear. Grigory Yevgenevich consistently tried to involve me in all his undertakings. And in every way, he tried to dissuade me from my foolishness.

One must give him credit for his talents. As an editor, he was inventive—even brilliant. In Kharkov, for example, he organized tours for the newspaper's readers (only of the readers!) to the Dnepr electric power construction site and to Moscow. Who else would have thought of such an idea? The tours were arranged with flourish—the tour members filled a whole train. Contacts in high places got us the train. Those on the tour, like true delegates, were chosen at the factories from among the newspaper's subscribers. In short, it was a classy operation.

As one who loved flourish and loved an audience, Tsypin was able to choose the right moment and hit the mark. It seems to me that an assistant with such high initiative and originality must not have particularly pleased Kaganovich. My hunch is borne out by the fact that ten years later, Kaganovich easily handed "his man" over to the slaughter.

Primarily youth filled our tour trains. In honor of the festive occasion, many Young Communists wore their Yungshurturm outfits—a semimilitary way of dressing fashioned after the German proletarian youth movement Yungshurturm. It united the working class, antifascist youth, regardless of whether they were Communist or Social Democratic party supporters.

We, since youth, had hoped for a revolution in Europe, and above all in Germany. The Red Front—an alliance of red militants, a united proletarian front of German workers—had won broad mass support. Volodya Serov (he headed the foreign department of our paper) had not long before organized a congress of journalists in Germany. He returned enthusiastic about the militant spirit of the German workers, of the Berlin workers' district of Wedding—at that time never referred to except as "Red Wedding"—and about Willy Leov, leader of the Red Front. Right at the time of our tour to Moscow, Willy Leov arrived there from Germany, and Volodya introduced us to him.

Yungshurturm, the youth division of the Red Front, fell apart for the same reasons the Red Front did. I do not presume to deliver verdicts without appeal, but I consider justified the view that Stalin's theory of social fascism played a fatal role in the destruction of the Red Front. According to this theory the German Social Democrats were declared direct accomplices of Hitler. This theory, demanding that the German Communist Party break with the united antifascist front, had its convenient aspects: it includes the Trotskyists in the Social Democracy, and of course as Hitler's very best friends. Because of his hatred for the

Trotskyists, Stalin demanded a split in the workers' movement in Germany; and this split facilitated Hitler's rise to power.⁵ Of course, this is not what Stalin wanted. He wanted something else. This is not the first instance in which Stalin's actions led to something he was not looking for.

In 1928, 1929, and even in the 1930s, we remained enthusiasts. So as not to be confused with contemporary romantics, who know all too well that they are romantics, I will add: we were enthusiasts without signboards, labels, or ranks.

With songs and music, our train arrived at the Dnepr electric power station construction site. Seeing the dam alone was enough for one to fully appreciate the enormity of the day-to-day work. The Dnepr power station was built without earth-moving equipment or bulldozers. The earth was dug up with shovels, the stones hauled away on the peasants' emaciated, shabby little horses.

Then, with songs and music, our second train arrived in Moscow. We were met there; Yenukidze made a speech.⁶ We walked about the Kremlin in our Yungshurturm outfits, and in the evening in our living quarters, we sang the song of Ernst Busch, "Red Wedding." We were still expecting that in Germany the revolution was just around the corner.

[Chapter 16 will be continued in the next issue.]

NOTES

1. N. Krupskaya (1869-1939) was an Old Bolshevik and Lenin's widow. She briefly aligned herself with the United Opposition in 1926. At the Fourteenth Congress in December 1925 Zinoviev and Kamenev dissolved their bloc with Stalin and revealed the unscrupulous and unprincipled measures the three had used to crush the 1923 Opposition.

2. Lenin's letter to the Twelfth Congress (April 1923) was finally read to delegates of the Thirteenth Congress (May 1924) after Lenin's death, and became known as his testament. Its full text is in Lenin and Trotsky's Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism, Russell Block, ed. (New York: Pathfinder, 1975). G. Zinoviev (1883-1936) and L. Kamenev (1883-1936) were Old Bolsheviks who initially opposed the resolution, introduced by Lenin at the Central Committee meetings on October 10 and 16, 1917, to make immediate preparations for an armed uprising. When the resolution passed despite their opposition, they issued a statement in the Menshevik paper Novaya Zhizn October 18, in which they attacked the insurrection as an "act of despair." That same day, Lenin in his "Letter to Bolshevik Party Members" (Collected Works, vol. 26, pp. 216-19) condemned the two as "strikebreakers" and demanded their expulsion from the party.

3. N. Makhno (1884-1934) was the leader of small partisan bands of peasants who fought against the Ukrainian reactionaries and German occupation forces during the Russian civil war. He refused to integrate his forces into the Red Army and ultimately came into conflict with it. His forces were finally dispersed by the Soviet government in 1921. The episode with Vitya Gorelov is in Notebook I, chapter 7, Bulletin IDOM, No. 40, April 1987.

4. Baitalsky spent two terms of imprisonment.

5. Trotsky's writings on the rise of fascism are in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1971).

6. A. Yenukidze (1877-1937) was secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets from 1918 until 1935, when he was suddenly expelled from the party. He was executed without a public trial.

(Continued from page 16)

degrees in different areas of life. It is likewise *combined* in the sense that capitalist and precapitalist forms coexist, interact, and combine rather than one simply replacing the other. We thus need more completely to grasp this important concept, develop it, and use it as a framework to help interpret the dynamics of change throughout the third world today.

One important implication of the uneven and combined character of present third world developments is the possibility that people will create forms of resistance and struggle with which we, in the highly industrialized West, are unfamiliar. Several examples are mentioned at the beginning of this presentation—struggles to retain traditional rights to land, "ghost attacks" as a form of protest strike, and movements for Islamic revival that may take on an anti-imperialist and even anticapitalist focus—which have recently emerged among young Malaysian workers in multinational industries. It is very important that we try to understand such actions and choices on the part of third world workers and interpret their strengths and weaknesses on the basis of both lessons from our own revolutionary heritage and a sensitive appraisal of local conditions and culture.

Another important implication of the dynamics of combined and uneven development is the increased possibility—indeed, probability—of a process of permanent revolution in many third world societies. In other words, there is the likelihood of a growing over of national and democratic struggles into anticapitalist or socialist revolutions. This becomes even clearer when we note the extent to which some basic tasks of bourgeois democracy have not been accomplished in third world societies; this is in spite of their increasing participation in the worldwide capitalist system and the emergence of new problems and class conflicts as a result. In particular I am thinking of: the lack of any true national independence in the semicolonial societies being flooded by export-processing industries, the notable absence of democratic forms in successfully industrializing third world nations, the "recolonization" of other semi-industrialized countries as a result of debt enslavement, and the continuing importance of the agrarian question in most areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in spite of the increasing presence of factories and wage labor. But while democratic rights and national independence remain to be won, struggles of working people against the capitalist class (local and international) and against what they experience as a very inhumane system of production have already begun. It is thus no time to abandon or renounce this important theoretical acquisition of our movement; rather, it, too, must be more thoroughly studied and used to interpret revolutionary events that are unfolding around the world.

At the same time, it is also important to avoid applying the theory of permanent revolution in any kind of mechanical or simplistic way. The general dynamics of revolution may be similar in

places such as El Salvador, South Korea, the Philippines, and Brazil. But because of some of the new developments in the international capitalist economy which we have just been examining, the economic and political characteristics of these countries are not identical. Thus, revolutionary events may unfold in somewhat different ways. We need to immerse ourselves more thoroughly in an understanding of each local situation and at the same time use our theoretical heritage to develop an intelligent analysis of revolutionary dynamics.

Implications for American Workers

Finally, I'd like briefly to indicate some of the implications of these new developments in the international capitalist economy for working class struggles and consciousness in the U.S. We should note that the economic impact on American workers of most of these changes in the global economy will not be positive. Rather, they are likely to lead to more cuts in real wages, renewed attacks on the strength of organized labor, and a continuing decline of living standards for the majority.

In contrast, however, there may be increased opportunities for the development of a new kind of political consciousness among American workers. In particular, all of these changes in the international economy open the door to greater possibilities of international solidarity among working people; in fact, they create the necessity for such solidarity. This is the case because the experiences of workers around the world are becoming more similar and also more linked. Thus, while in the past American workers perhaps found it difficult to identify with rural rice farmers and rubber tappers in Malaysia, they are now being asked to join in struggle with factory and office workers like themselves, who are often even employed by the same corporations. But the U.S. capitalist class is, of course, trying to use these new developments in the global economy to create a different kind of consciousness among American workers. This false consciousness would attribute wage cuts to the "competition" from electronics workers in places like Malaysia, the dismantling of steel mills to the "unfair" production of steel by South Korean workers, and the general decline of living standards among American workers to the "failure" of countries like Mexico to pay their debt.

At the present moment in world history, there is a tremendous possibility of forging new bonds of international working class solidarity. There is also the possibility of the emergence of new forms of nationalist competition and hostility, and new levels of xenophobic and jingoistic sentiment. One of our primary tasks as revolutionary socialists is to help create the bonds of solidarity. And the best way to do that is to help explain the realities of international capitalism and current developments in the international capitalist economy to our fellow workers as we learn more about those realities and new developments ourselves. ■

NOTES

1. There is a considerable amount of published material available on the phenomenon of export-processing. I have found especially useful the short account by Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, Women in the Global Factory, 1983. Boston: South End Press. The collected articles by June Nash and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly eds., Women, Men, and the International Division of Labor, 1983. Albany: SUNY Press; and the case study by Linda Lim, "Women Workers in Multinational Corporations: The Case of the Electronics Industry." Ann Arbor: Michigan Occasional Papers, No. 9, 1978. I also discuss this development and its implications for Malay workers, especially women workers, in my dissertation: "Matriliny, Islam, and Capitalism: Combined and Uneven Development in the Lives of Negeri Sembilan Women." University of Pittsburgh, 1987.
2. This does not, however, mean that third world workers are responsible for the largest proportion of industrial production. Given varying rates of technological innovation and worker productivity this is a separate question that requires further investigation.
3. Soon Kyoung Cho ("The Labor Process and Capital Mobility: The Limits of the New International Division of Labor," Politics and Society No. 14, pp. 185-222, 1985) especially discusses this possibility including her own comparative experiences working in electronics plants in South Korea and the U.S.
4. In comparison to the phenomenon of export-processing, there is much less written material available on this new development. Ernest Mandel ("Semicolonial Countries and Semi-industrialized Dependent Countries," Socialist Unity No.1, pp. 5-18, 1985) discusses it and explores its implications for our political perspective. Robert Erickson ("Autonomous Development and the Restructuring of the World Capitalist System: A Study of the South Korean and the U.S. Metal Working Industries," unpublished manuscript, 1987) provides an in-depth case study and also a more thorough bibliography. Articles by Lim ("Singapore's Success: The Myth of the Free Market Economy," Asian Survey XXIII, No. 6, pp. 752-764, 1983), Aidan Foster-Carter ("Korea and Dependency Theory," Monthly Review, Volume 37 No. 5, pp. 27-34, 1985) and Janet W. Salaff ("Women, the Family, and the State: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore—Newly Industrialized Countries in Asia," in Women in the World, 1975-1985: The Women's Decade. Lynne Iglitzin and Ruth Ross, eds. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1986) present additional information and also raise interesting questions.
5. I am following Mandel (Socialist Unity) article on the list of countries involved in this development. His account provides a fuller description of each. Outside of Asia, I myself do not have sufficient knowledge to judge the degree to which these various countries meet the criteria to be considered semi-industrialized.
6. For more exact figures the reader is referred to Mandel (Socialist Unity, pp. 6-8), Lim (Asian Survey), Salaff, and Erickson. It should also be noted that there are differences among even the four Asian countries in which this industrial growth is most dramatic and successful. Thus, Singapore, while showing a significant development of manufacturing industries, remains more of a commercial, communications, and financial center. And for both Hong Kong and Singapore, which are essentially city states with little hinterland (though Singapore draws workers from the rural villages of Malaysia and Hong Kong, I believe, from rural areas in the New Territories), we are seeing not a changeover from agriculture to industry, but rather a shift from small craft industries and small-scale trade—i.e., forms of petty commodity production and exchange—to large-scale modern capitalist industrial and commercial enterprises.
7. Mandel, Socialist Unity, op. cit., pp. 9-10, 13.
8. Lim, Asian Survey, op. cit.
9. I have only seen this point fully developed by Erickson. If his analysis is correct, it indicates clearly that the decline of U.S. industries such as steel and auto is primarily a cause of and not caused by the growth of the steel and auto industries in South Korea and elsewhere. There may, however, be feedback effects; Erickson argues this was the case in the recent reorganization of US Steel into USX.
10. Mandel (Socialist Unity, pp. 13-15) discusses the negative though uneven effect of the current international economic crisis on these newly industrializing countries. This dilemma of needing a period of

global recession to initiate third world industrialization but then the negative impact of such recessions on these industrializing economies is an interesting and tragic example of the essential contradictions found in the dynamics of capitalist development. We should also note the potential contribution of third world industrialization itself to creating recessions since it increases global overproduction without sufficiently increasing consumption because of the low wage rates that are the basis of its profits.

11. Also see Erickson, Salaff, and Foster-Carter on this point.

12. For this section on the world debt, I have found Mandel's articles in recent issues of International Viewpoint ("The Social Impact on Europe of the Prolonged Crisis," No. 96, pp. 14-24; "The Infernal Logic of the Debt Crisis," No. 98, pp. 17-23; "The Beginning Recession," No. 106, pp. 20-25; "The Snowballing Financial Crisis," No. 123, pp. 13-16) and several "Reviews of the Month" in recent issues of Monthly Review—by either the editors or others (Harry Magdoff, "Third World Debt: Past and Present," Vol. 37 No. 9, pp. 1-10; Arthur MacEwan, "The Current Crisis in Latin America and the International Economy," Vol. 36, No. 9, pp. 1-17, and "Latin America: Why Not Default?" Vol. 38, No. 4, pp. 1-13; Robert Pollin and Eduardo Zepeda "Latin American Debt: The Choices Ahead," Vol. 38 No. 9, pp. 1-16; John C. Pool and Stephen C. Stamos, "The Uneasy Calm: Third World Debt—The Case of Mexico," Vol. 36 No. 10, pp. 7-19) —most helpful.

13. It will be noted that these are the exact same Latin American countries which we found in the previous section to be undergoing a process of industrialization. Their international debts in fact are a prime consequence of such attempts at industrial development and also a major threat to any continuation of their industrial growth.

14. Pollin and Zepeda, op. cit., p. 2.

15. Magdoff, op. cit., p. 8.

16. One might also ask about the motivation of the bankers. Were they unwise to extend such large loans? Most analysts seem to agree that especially given the excess of funds held by banks during the 1970s, due particularly to the deposit of petrodollars in their vaults, they needed to expand and diversify their lending—i.e., they had to be aggressive loans "pushers." In addition, as Magdoff notes, "the extension of loans does more than bring immediate profits to the lenders. It serves also as a door-opener and support for other forms of economic penetration: markets, investment opportunities, acquisition of natural resources" as well as functioning as "instruments of diplomacy to widen the lending nation's sphere of influence."

17. This refers specifically to the "balance on current account," not the "balance on capital account." See Magdoff for an explanation of these different parts of a country's total balance of payments.

18. Pollin and Zepeda, op. cit., p. 3

19. Magdoff, op. cit., p. 6.

20. See Pollin and Zepeda for a further explanation of such agreements.

21. This prediction is strengthened by the experience of the successfully industrializing countries of Asia which are often put forth as a model for other countries to follow in proposals like the Baker Plan. But as we have already seen, it is not free-market capitalism but rather tight state control of the economy that has facilitated rapid and successful industrialization in South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.

22. This development is more fully explored in the "Review of the Month" in several recent issues of Monthly Review. I especially recommend readers consult Sweezy and Magdoff ("The Logic of Stagnation," Monthly Review Vol. 38, No. 5, pp.1-19) and Mandel ("The Snowballing Financial Crisis") for further details. International Viewpoint

23. This change is made especially clear if we consider the involvement of women as well as men in wage work for multinational companies or their national equivalents. Thus, in many third world societies, we no longer see relatively intact subsistence sectors, based on household farming carried out largely by women, while only a few family members—usually young men—temporarily go off to work in the modern, foreign-dominated economic sphere. Instead, the whole society is increasingly imbued with capitalist relations of production and exchange.

A VERY USEFUL AND TIMELY PAMPHLET

Organizing for Socialism: The Fourth Internationalist Tendency—Who We Are, What We Stand For, by Bill Onasch. New York, Fourth Internationalist Tendency, \$1.00.

Reviewed by Keith Mann

Since its founding in 1984 the Fourth Internationalist Tendency has published a number of pamphlets and materials dealing with the programmatic struggle against the Barnes leadership of the SWP, aspects of Leninist party-building, and problems of the contemporary labor movement. *Organizing for Socialism*, by Bill Onasch, is a somewhat different though complementary project, aimed at a somewhat different audience. In 32 concise, clearly written pages, Onasch—a 24-year veteran of the revolutionary socialist movement, experienced trade unionist, and current national administrative secretary of the F.I.T.—lays out the basic ideas and principles of scientific socialism.

In a brief one-page introduction, he explains that his pamphlet was inspired by a similar one written by Joseph Hansen in the 1950s. One could go further. As a practical handbook of basic socialist ideas, *Organizing for Socialism* is the latest in a long line of such efforts beginning with the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

This pamphlet will be of particular interest to the growing number of young activists who have been inspired by and involved with such struggles as the fight against U.S. intervention in Central America and U.S. support to the apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as the many workers who have begun to question the bankrupt "business unionism" of the labor bureaucracy. The pamphlet can help them to understand the relationships between their own struggles and other social questions—including the big ones of capitalism, socialism, and the revolutionary socialist movement.

Those already familiar with basic socialist ideas will also find the pamphlet useful—as a first-rate refresher course in how to explain these perspectives to others. Since it is intended simply as an introduction to socialist ideas, Onasch avoids sustained treatment of any one of the many issues he takes up. But a bibliography of basic works is included at the end as a guide to further study.

Organizing for Socialism offers insights into a broad range of questions of importance to radicalizing activists. Among them is a Marxist analysis of the bureaucratic dictatorships in postcapitalist societies like the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe. How does the social structure of those countries differ from a revolutionary Marxist idea of communism and socialism? Onasch explains in simple terms the Marxist view of the contradictory nature of the Soviet Union, first developed by Leon Trotsky. He also asks, and answers, the question:

Are capitalist "welfare states"—such as Sweden—examples of socialism?

One of the more timely issues taken up in the pamphlet is the not-so-new fight for independent working class politics in the United States. As the 1988 presidential campaign heats up, working people and their allies will be bombarded with appeals for support from Democratic and Republican politicians who will offer no solutions to problems such as war, unemployment, poverty, racism, and sexism. Many of those considering themselves socialists will once again fall into the trap of supporting the "lesser evil" of the Democratic presidential nominee in order to "defeat Reaganism." A large proportion have already begun to devote their energies to the Jesse Jackson campaign, with the dual result of sidetracking activists who ought to be involved in organizing mass movements against U.S. government policy and building a machine whose sole purpose is to be a power broker inside the Democratic Party. *Organizing for Socialism* cogently explains the bankruptcy of this liberal strategy. Onasch provides a useful set of arguments for those who wish to fight for an alternative point of view.

Theory and Practice

In making a convincing case for the inevitable demise of the contradiction-ridden capitalist system, Onasch makes a related and quite sobering point: "Socialism Is Not the Only Alternative." He points to the experiences of the working class in Italy and Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, where missed opportunities for socialist revolution were followed by the most barbaric, retrograde fascist dictatorships, and echoes Rosa Luxemburg's famous thesis that the future holds either "socialism or barbarism." This approach gives his argument its activist edge.

As the title of the pamphlet indicates, Onasch and the F.I.T. consider the ideas of socialism to be closely bound up with the practice of fighting for it. The revolutionary movement, Onasch explains, "represents not only the profound ideas of Karl Marx, but also the experiences and aspirations of many millions of working people who over the years have struggled for freedom and dignity." Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of *Organizing for Socialism* is the way it deftly moves from the historical and theoretical aspects of scientific socialism to the actual socialist movement.

Taking up the U.S. socialist movement in particular, Onasch explains how the revolutionary socialist heritage of the Bolshevik party that led the 1917 Russian Revolution was represented in this country after 1928 by the U.S. supporters of Leon Trotsky and the international left opposition—forerunners of the Socialist Workers Party and the

Fourth International—against the counterrevolutionary policies of Joseph Stalin and the parasitic bureaucracy that he represented. Avoiding excessive detail and any trace of the sectarianism that has long plagued the U.S. left, Onasch charts the degeneration of the SWP and the birth of the F.I.T. as an organization dedicated to preserving and developing the theoretical and programmatic acquisitions of the Fourth Internationalist movement. Trotskyist theory was unceremoniously abandoned by the current leaders of the SWP, but remains indispensable for the construction of the mass revolutionary party capable of leading the working and oppressed masses to power. The integrated manner in which these various questions are discussed

reflects the unified approach to defending Marxist principles and participating in the class struggle that has been one of the hallmarks of the F.I.T.

The pamphlet concludes with a general discussion of the activities of F.I.T.ers, the rights and responsibilities of membership, and an appeal for all those in agreement with its program to join the organization—as the best way to help put into practice the vision of the socialist future presented in the pages of the pamphlet. At a moment when the crisis of the U.S. left—largely symbolized by the degeneration of the SWP—has reached epic proportions, the publication of this pamphlet is a timely and useful tool in the fight to rebuild the revolutionary socialist movement in this country. ■

(Continued from page 7)

than a popular revolution, it is utterly utopian to think that this can lead to any *fundamental* changes—unless the masses respond quickly and overwhelmingly to become an inherent part of the revolutionary process (such as occurred in Grenada after power was taken by the New Jewel Movement).

Many revolutionists allowed themselves to be

seduced by hope in the case of Burkina Faso. Perhaps in a country as small as this, with a ruling class as weak as this, some other social dynamic might prove possible. Cold reality has now struck. It's hard to cheat the laws of history, the necessities of the social revolution. The consequences of attempting to do so have been tragic in this case, as they inevitably are. ■

(Continued from page 27)

consumer issues. His organization, the Consumer Party and Association, was initially formed to protest excessive gas rates and the violation by the local administration of the civil rights of antiwar activists. At first the coalition claimed to oppose the program of both the Democratic and Republican parties. His supporters included members of Democratic Socialists of America, the Communist Party, the Concerned Collective, the Internationalist Workers Party, disenchanted left-liberal types, and supporters of the Rainbow Coalition.

An early, open, "grass roots" conference discussed and rejected the possibility of running Weiner or anyone else for mayor. It was decided that "he could win" in a contest for city council because he was well known. And some of those in attendance didn't want the coalition to be blamed or embarrassed in the event Goode should be defeated.

Weiner received over 114,000 votes (around 20 percent) and lost to the major-party candidates.

Wilson Goode was reelected mayor by the slim margin of 13,000 votes, around one percent of the total.

For working people in Philadelphia the cost of living is rising rapidly. The number of homeless is escalating. City resources are being lavished on a vast complex of center city office buildings while the residential sections in Southwest, North, and East Philadelphia are beginning to look like the bombed-out sections of Hiroshima. These are the neighborhoods of the working class inhabitants—white, Black, and Puerto Rican—of this "world class city."

Having been elected, Mayor Goode asked the city council to raise the salaries of all city administrators, and is following through on his threat to fire the city's sanitation workers.

In this election, one more opportunity to begin to put together a truly independent working class political perspective was forfeited. As a result, lesser-evil politics and opportunism continue to reign. As usual, the working class of Philadelphia is the loser. ■

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Find enclosed a check for \$36 to renew our subscription for the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* for one year. This is to commence when the current subscription expires. Your magazine seems to be getting better all the time. We are very confident that—given the economic crisis of capitalism as signaled by the crash in the stock market and the turmoil inside the Soviet bureaucracy which is opening up tremendous possibilities for the Trotskyist movement to intervene in the unfolding discussions—you will soon be making big gains and rapidly expanding the circulation of your very excellent magazine.

Pat and Marian Brain
Birmingham, England

George Breitman Book

I am a subscriber to the *Bulletin IDOM*, and I want you to know that I read every issue. I am not a Trotskyist and never have been. In fact, I have serious political differences with the Trotskyist program. However, I hold Trotsky in very high esteem as one of the greatest socialist revolutionaries in history. The same can be said of my attitude toward the *Bulletin*. I may strongly disagree with its perspective but I am at the same time compelled to a deep respect for its political clarity and integrity.

I am telling you all of this because it is in this context that I read and reacted to the *Tribute to George Breitman* which I recently received in the mail. Like many of the contributors to this volume, I never knew comrade Breitman and I come from a much different clan of the socialist family. In reading these tributes (and Breitman's *Malcolm X, the Man and His Ideas*), however, I could not help feeling a great pride that the American socialist movement has produced a man like Breitman and at the same time a deeply felt shame at my own inadequacies as a socialist. I have resolved to read more of what Breitman wrote in the very near future. I have also been inspired to tackle the works of Trotsky that he edited.

It is clear to me that the passing of George Breitman is not only a loss to the F.I.T. but to the entire Trotskyist movement, and, yes, even to the American left as a whole.

Bob Massi
Brooklyn, New York

Economic Questions

In Steve Bloom's article on the stock market crash (*Bulletin IDOM* No. 47) he states that one of the factors that causes the extreme ups and downs of the market is that the consciousness of investors is always lagging behind the objective reality

of the capitalist economy. However, in a brief article by Ernest Mandel (in the November 9 *International Viewpoint*) he seems to say something contradictory: "What is particularly distinctive about stock market speculation is that it never reflects the current situation. It anticipates—that is, it expresses predictions about what will happen tomorrow." Can you explain this?

Also, it seemed to me that Bloom's analysis of the performance of the stock market from 1965 to 1987 placed too much emphasis on social and political factors, and not enough on economic ones. The fact is that there were severe economic difficulties in the 1970s, and a major period of expansion in the 1980s. These trends would have to be primary in explaining the corresponding trends in the market.

A Reader
New York

In Reply: Mandel and I were simply commenting on different sides of the question. My article also pointed out that present-day investment decisions are based on expectations (or predictions) about future economic trends—in particular about the ability of capitalist enterprises to make profits and return them to shareholders in the form of dividends. These expectations, however, are not based on a crystal ball that can see into the future. Investors rely on current statistics and trends to decide what the future is likely to hold. It always takes a month or so to get statistics about what is happening to the economy. At least several months of statistics are required before any real trend can become evident. Trends to which investors react—according to which they adjust their expectations for the future—have inevitably been going on for some time before they can be consciously appreciated even by the most foresightful.

The second point you make, about economic trends being primary, is completely valid, and perhaps my article didn't stress this clearly enough. Within this context I was attempting to explain that social and political factors also affect the consciousness of the bourgeoisie and their predictions about the future value of their shares of stock. It is worth keeping in mind that there was no obvious economic trend in 1965 which would account for the beginning of a decline in the stock market. The economic contradictions of U.S. capitalism didn't become clearly manifest until the 1970s. It isn't unreasonable to look at the social reality of the late '60s for a good part of the explanation of what was then happening on Wall Street. As for the period from 1982 to 1987, there was an obvious recovery of capitalist profits which was the root cause of the stock market's surge. However, even this was to a significant degree built on a massive expansion of credit (government, corporate, and consumer)—that is, an expansion of confidence in the future—which was in turn made largely possible through the defeats suffered by working people and a more conservative political mood in the population as a whole.

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