

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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ISRAEL'S 'IRON FIST'

by Tom Barrett

There is no hiding the truth anymore. Since the massive Arab uprisings and Israeli army violence and repression of December 1987, there can be no pretending that Zionism is anything other than a vicious, racist domination of one people by another. In less than three weeks (as of this writing) twenty-one young Arabs have been killed. Israeli officials acknowledge that they have arrested nearly one thousand—Arab community leaders claim the figure is much higher. And many of those arrested are from areas where there has not been significant violence as yet.

The street fighting, which began in the Gaza Strip on December 9, quickly spread to the Israeli-occupied West Bank. On December 21, Arab workers and shopkeepers staged a general strike—not only in the occupied territories, but within the pre-1967 Israeli borders as well. Israel has responded with a policy which Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin appropriately calls "the iron fist." Israeli soldiers have routinely used live ammunition against Arab protesters and have surrounded Arab communities with barbed wire and barricades, allowing people to enter and leave only on foot.

Government policy has created a political crisis among the Zionists themselves and among their supporters abroad. Even the Reagan administration has been forced to criticize, however mildly, the use of "excessive force" against Palestinian demonstrators. The repercussions to Israel, in terms of U.S. aid and private fund-raising in Jewish communities in the United States and Europe, could be far-reaching. Jews who have a sincere commitment to justice and opposition to racism will find it difficult to justify continued support to a state which is as committed as South Africa to racial supremacy and its own unique form of apartheid. Before December 1987, it might have been possible to believe the official rationalizations and lies which Israeli officials routinely presented to foreign audiences. But there is no hiding the truth any more.

Press reporting of the events has, for the first time, given people in the United States an idea of everyday life for Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Reading news accounts must make the average person wonder why there has not been a rebellion on this scale before now. There has been resistance, of course, throughout the twenty years since Gaza, the West Bank, and Golan Heights (now annexed) were seized by Israel. The difference this time was that the Arab youths kept fighting even after the Israeli army started shooting.

'The Soweto of the State of Israel'

It is not accidental that the current wave of resistance began in the Gaza Strip. Poverty and overcrowding have made it into what one Israeli defense analyst calls "a human time bomb." The Gaza Strip is an area six miles wide by about nineteen miles long at the southernmost end of Israel's Mediterranean coastline. Prior to 1948 it was a rural area, where people made their living fishing and growing oranges. During the war which established the state of Israel its population swelled with Arab refugees, and it passed from British to Egyptian control. Egypt, however, never gave the residents of Gaza citizenship the way Jordan did for West Bank Arabs.

In 1967 Israeli troops occupied the area and continue to hold it today. Its population is now over half a million, of whom over 99 percent are Palestinian Arabs. Nearly 60 percent are under the age of nineteen. The former fishing and orange-growing area is now 85 percent urban, with one of the highest population densities in the world. Most of the housing is substandard.

A little over two thousand Jews, mainly from extremist religious groups, have settled in the Gaza Strip. Though they comprise only four-tenths of one percent of the population, they own eight percent of the land.

As slums have filled the farmland and the Israeli navy has curtailed Arab fishing, Gaza residents have had to commute to menial jobs in Israel in order to make a meager living—often as day laborers—on farms or construction sites. Forty-five thousand workers a day, approximately half of the workforce, hold jobs legally in Israel, and another 15,000 work illegally or off the books. They are forbidden by law to remain within Israel's borders overnight, though many do. Ironically, Arabs are working in some Jewish communities where there is high Jewish unemployment. The reason is that they are doing the kinds of menial jobs which the Jewish residents, who come from Middle Eastern and North African countries where religion and occupation are closely linked, refuse to do.

The taxes which the Gaza Arabs pay to the Israeli government exceed the amount that Israel contributes to the Gaza Strip's budget. In addition, nearly all the consumer goods available to the territory's people are produced in Israel. A 1986 study of Gaza by the West Bank Data Base Project, headed by Meron Benvenisti, a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, concluded: "It becomes ap-

parent that the occupation is not only self-supporting but in fact may be profit-making." Israeli writer Amos Elon calls the Gaza Strip "the Soweto of the State of Israel."

The December 1987 Uprising

As in Soweto, a feeling of desperation pervades the Gaza Strip. The young Arabs, who have lived their entire lives under the Israeli occupation, feel that they have nothing to look forward to, and, conversely, nothing to lose. Spontaneous acts of violence against the Israeli soldiers have been an almost everyday occurrence for years. Even strikes and protest demonstrations are nothing new in the Gaza Strip or the other occupied territories. The reason why the fighting continued and spread in December 1987 instead of some previous time is nearly impossible to determine.

The spark which touched off the explosion on December 9 was an automobile accident in which four Arab workers were killed. A rumor spread that the Israeli truck driver intentionally hit the Arab vehicle in retaliation for the knifing death of an Israeli in a Gaza market in the previous week.

YOU'VE GOT TO SEE GAZA

by Michael Smith

You've got to see Gaza, several Arab lawyers on the West Bank told us. It's worse than here.

Two years ago I was in Israel as part of a fact-finding delegation of attorneys investigating the impending deportations of four Palestinian leaders, three from the West Bank (an editor, a politician, and a trade unionist) and one from Gaza (a former political prisoner just released—after fifteen years—in a prisoner exchange). Stetieh was his name. Recently married, he was living with his bride and mother and others in one concrete room under a machine-gun tower in the Gaza beach refugee camp known as Jabaliya. It was on the Mediterranean coast south of Tel Aviv in what was, until 1967 when Israel seized it, a part of Egypt.

Stetieh was in prison awaiting deportation, accused of singing nationalist songs at his wedding. We talked with his mother.

In 1967, she said, she owned a farm in Gaza. The Israeli soldiers came. She had no time except to flee. Holding an infant child under one arm and young Stetieh with her other hand she fled the gunfire. Her scarf fell from her head but she had no time to scoop it up. That was the last time she stood on her land. Now it's Israeli. She goes there once a year. She reaches through the fence, takes a handful of dirt and rubs it into her hair.

A month later Stetieh was taken from prison at noon and sent out by the Israelis onto the desert at their Jordanian border—on foot, with a suitcase in his hand.

As frequently occurs, the *shebab* (*shebab* is an Arabic word which is literally translated as the "youths" and is actually analogous to the "children" of the Black South African townships) began burning tires in the streets and throwing rocks, bottles, and gasoline bombs. Israeli soldiers responded immediately with live ammunition. This is standard policy. Israeli troops killing Arabs in the street is a frequent occurrence in the Gaza Strip. However, usually the crowds disperse after the shootings and arrests. This time they did not. Instead, the protests grew and became better organized. They began to include labor strikes and rock-throwing attacks on Israeli businesses in occupied territories. By December 19, sixteen young Arabs had died. To protest their deaths Arabs staged a general strike on December 21. It was not only a total success in the occupied territories, but within pre-1967 Israel as well. This disruption of the Israeli economy, which by now is totally dependent on Arab labor, was what the government could not tolerate. On December 22 the roundups began.

The Worst Repression in Israeli History

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin presented the following explanation: "We are going after those organizers who have come into the schools, their faces masked, and forced pupils, often against their will, to riot." The means these "organizers" used to "force" students to "riot against their will" for three weeks against fully armed Israeli soldiers were not specified, and it is unlikely that even Rabin expected this story to be believed. Still he had to come up with something to try to cover up the brutality of Israel's policies.

In fact, the Israeli army used videotapes and wiretaps to find out who participated in the protests and then moved to arrest not simply the organizers, but everyone whom they could identify as a participant. They sealed off entire refugee communities with barbed wire in both the Gaza Strip and West Bank, hardly an appropriate response to people who were "forced against their will to riot." The protests subsided, but it is not clear whether the repression, or the cold rainy weather, was the chief factor.

The arrested youths have been detained, often in makeshift camps, without access to lawyers, and have been pressured into "confessing" to riot charges. Those who plead guilty are promised sentences of only(!) a month in jail, while those who do not are threatened with more serious sentences, including deportation.

Under Israeli occupation laws, a detainee can be held as long as eighteen days before seeing a judge or defense lawyer. During that period, the army and intelligence agents attempt to extract confessions, since very few guilty verdicts can be expected without them. "Mild physical pressure" is routinely practiced, even after an official government report acknowledging widespread use of torture by the Shin Bet, one of Israel's intelligence services.

'Kill Us or Get Out!' Arabs Taunt As the Toll in Gaza Turmoil Rises

By JOHN KIFNER

Special to The New York Times

GAZA, Dec. 15 — "Kill us all!" taunted the young Palestinians throwing rocks at the Israeli soldiers. "Come and kill us all or get out!"

The band of several hundred at Shifa Hospital in a squalid refugee district was at the center of the fiercest confrontation on the worst of seven straight days of clashes in the Israeli-occupied territories.

A mosque's minaret across the street blared encouragement. "O, you young people, go at them, don't back off!" an amplified voice cried as the youths, in a day of scattered fighting, fell back behind the walls of the hospital's courtyard.

Today the Israeli Army shot to death at least four Palestinians, and possibly as many as six, in the Gaza Strip, according to reports assembled late tonight from various sources.

In what was being widely described here as the most violent week in 20 years of occupation, the death toll rose even higher as a Palestinian died in the hospital today of bullet wounds received in the Gaza Strip three days ago.

Near the hospital, women with heads covered according to Islamic tradition broke concrete into chunks and piled them in grocery bags for the young men. Tires burned in the streets.

Patients wounded earlier in the day — hospitals were treating virtually nothing but gunshot wounds, ignoring

lesser injuries — excitedly watched the fighting from upper-story windows.

"This place is like a time bomb," said a dark-haired, 23-year-old man with a bandage over his stomach from a wound this morning. "It is filled with dynamite and it is going to go off."

Struggling for the phrase in Arabic, he turned to his sister, her head swathed in a scarf, and they came up with the formulation, "It is them or us."

Outside, three short bursts of automatic-rifle fire cut through the chants, then more shots were heard.

One youth went down, blood streaming from his forehead; he got up, then stumbled again. Others around him kept heaving rocks over the walls, running forward in waves.

By the iron gate at the entrance, an Israeli soldier could be seen briefly kneeling and taking aim.

Then the army pulled back down the scorched, littered streets.

Two Arabs Dead in One Volley

Two Palestinians, identified by the Palestine Press Service as Zaher as-Shali and Ibrahim Ali Daqar, both 23, died during this volley of gunfire. Doctors at the hospital and United Nations relief workers confirmed the deaths.

After the army pulled back, more youths began marching toward the hospital, some armed with knives and

axes, according to the Palestinian Press Service, a Palestinian-owned news agency. One of the youths, identified as Khaled Abu Taqieh, was killed in a clash with troops. This death was confirmed by the hospital and the United Nations.

The fighting flared throughout the day and up and down the 30-mile-long, six-mile-wide strip, where some 650,000 Palestinians are packed in impoverished refugee districts and villages.

But the army appeared frustrated, locked in standoffs, as the mostly youthful crowds scattered and reformed.

"It's like trying to empty the sea with a sieve," Bernard Mills, the United Nations director here, said of the army's efforts. "I'm afraid this has gotten out of control. We're in a situation of either total lawlessness or a popular uprising."

In addition to using live ammunition to quell the crowds, individual Israeli soldiers have reportedly committed acts in recent days that seem likely to breed more hatred in the Palestinian districts.

A Palestinian teen-ager was tied to the hood of an army jeep, apparently as a shield against rock throwing, and driven through a Palestinian district, according to Mr. Mills and other United Nations officials. The officials said the incident was witnessed by two of their foreign staff members.

As in recent days, the trouble began today before dawn, with bands of young men setting up barricades and burning tires in an effort to stop Gazans from traveling into Israel to work.

Few of the estimated 45,000 workers, who make up the bulk of the labor force in many menial jobs in Israel, have been going to work during the unrest.

The Political Crisis in Israel

Parliamentary elections will be held in Israel in 1988, and the protests and repression have thrown the campaign into a serious crisis. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that events have thrown the Labor Party into a serious crisis.

The current Israeli government is a "national unity" government, composed of the two largest Zionist political formations. These are the Likud—a coalition of right-wing parties led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and the Labor Party, a social-democratic party which governed Israel from 1948 until 1977. The foreign and defense portfolios in the government are held by Labor leaders Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, respectively, and they are in complete agreement with Prime Minister Shamir in support of the total crackdown on the Arabs of

Israel and the occupied territories. More moderate Labor politicians, including Minister Without Portfolio Ezer Weizmann and former foreign minister Abba Eban (a native South African) have criticized the repression, and have accused Peres and Rabin of "out-Likud-ing the Likud."

The majority of Israeli Jews, like the majority of white South Africans, support the government's policies. Peres and Rabin are, of course, concerned that if they appear to be "soft on Arabs" their party will lose badly to the Likud in the next elections. However, they have to be careful of a liberal minority in their own party, an increasingly vocal "Peace Now" movement, which favors return of the occupied territories, and, most importantly, Israel's imperialist supporters, who wish to maintain important alliances with Arab governments.

The situation is further complicated by the overtly racist rhetoric of politicians like Geula Cohen and Meir Kahane. Cohen and Kahane straightforwardly reject the idea of democratic rights for Arabs and call for their expulsion from Israel and the occupied territories. Peres and Rabin, and to a lesser extent Shamir, need to avoid such openly racist appeals, and have to come up with elaborate justifications for the government's action.

The attempts at official rationalization lead to some ludicrous self-contradictions: Government leaders claim, for example, that the "riots" were caused by Palestine Liberation Organization agitators, who "poisoned" the Arabs' minds. Then they assert that Israel should not negotiate with the PLO because the PLO has no influence among Arabs in Israel or the occupied territories. They claim that the PLO masterminded the protests and planned them carefully, while Israel's own military officers acknowledge that they were essentially spontaneous and broadly supported. The Israeli government asserts, as noted earlier, that only a small number of "organizers" were responsible; however, the repression has been aimed at entire refugee communities, and the army has arrested everyone whom it could identify as a participant in the demonstrations.

The Arab Leadership

It is, unfortunately, not true that the PLO played a significant role in the protests. The PLO has been unable to go beyond an exclusively militarist strategy based on a program of bourgeois nationalism. Its tactics have been limited to commando raids originating outside Israel's borders and, on the part of some fringe elements, acts of individual terrorism. These activities have been woefully ineffective in themselves, and have diverted the PLO away from becoming involved in and leading mass struggles, such as the December uprisings.

The West Bank Data Base Project has kept a record of both external attacks—organized mainly by the PLO—and internally generated spontaneous Palestinian protests and rebellions. Between 1977 and 1984 there were eleven internal Palestinian demonstrations for every externally generated attack. In 1985 the ratio became sixteen to one, and in 1986 it rose to eighteen to one. Benvenisti states, "Palestinian violence is largely carried out in broad daylight by individuals and groups who spontaneously express their feelings, undeterred by the consequences of their actions. The fact that there are more killings shows the rising frustration level of the occupiers and occupied. Before, the Palestinians were afraid of the Israeli soldiers, but they are not anymore."

The discontent of the Arabs within pre-1967 Israel, combined with opposition to return of the territories by a majority of Israeli Jews, has proven the bankruptcy of the idea of a separate Palestinian state—an idea supported not only by the PLO leadership but by some moderate elements in the Israeli Labor Party, Peace Now, and the U.S.

State Department. Any solution in which an exclusively Jewish state continues to exist cannot be true self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs. In fact, Israel has become totally dependent on Arab labor and must maintain either an Arab population within its borders or continue to bring in Arabs from outside to do its least desirable jobs. As a consequence, any Palestinian state alongside Israel must either be kept economically unviable, so that its residents have no choice but to come to work in Israel, or it must leave a significant number of Palestinians on the Israeli side of its border, living as second-class citizens in the Jewish state. A separate Palestinian state begins to look more and more like one of the Black homelands in South Africa. The PLO, however, continues to cling to the idea of a Palestinian state. The most serious response it has made to the events of December has been to consider the formation of a Palestinian government-in-exile for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such a government could, of course, participate in negotiations with Israel, the Arab states, the United States, and Soviet Union for the establishment of a West Bank-Gaza state; however, opposition from Syria, which calls such negotiations a betrayal, and from Jordan, which continues to claim the West Bank, has prevented such plans from going forward.

Some Arab reporters found it significant that though Arab demonstrators have carried the Palestinian flag, they have not carried pictures of PLO chairman Yasir Arafat. Young Palestinians have been quoted as calling the PLO a "Cadillac revolution." The youths' criticism is not far off the mark. The fundamental problem is that the PLO leadership has never represented the people who live in the Gaza slums or the West Bank villages. It has been drawn from the Palestinian bourgeoisie and intellectuals, from those families who have had power and influence in business and politics for generations. These gentlemen are comfortable at negotiating tables as members of "governments-in-exile," and are even willing to organize armed struggle, as long as its focus remains exclusively military. They have no concept of the desperation which drives the *shebab*, with only stones in their hands, to confront heavily armed Israeli troops.

A great dividing line of Israeli history took place with the 1967 war. Pre-1967 Israel's image was the "Jewish David" surrounded by supposedly "Nazi-sympathizing reactionary Arab kingdoms." The fallacy of that image became clear after the war, especially as the plight of the Palestinian refugees became known. However, the Zionist leadership was still able to separate the issues of the occupied territories, the refugees, and the Arabs within its borders. With the events of this December, that lie has been shattered as well. This year's demonstrations are likely to become another historical dividing line. They demonstrate conclusively that Israel, like South Africa, is a colonial-settler society based on the supremacy of the white settler over the indigenous people. ■

December 28, 1987

HAITI

The army and Duvalier's thugs massacre election

ON THE DAY of the general election, November 29, supporters of deposed dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and the army acted with a brutality and force that stupefied many people. The bloodiest massacre took place in a Port-au-Prince polling station. The commando group, made up of soldiers in civilian clothing, seemed to have deliberately chosen this polling station because of the large numbers of foreign journalists there. The killers wanted to impress public opinion, to declare their determination to the whole world.

ARTHUR MAHON

ATTACKS OCCURRED all over the country. The inhabitants of the village of Verrettes had to take refuge in the mountains while the army fired on the presbytery with heavy machine guns.

International reactions were not slow in coming. The United States cut off both its economic and military aid. But it seemed to be looking for a *modus vivendi* with the ruling military council, who had already announced that new elections would be organized under its auspices. However, some Democratic representatives demanded that an "inter-American peace force" be sent. Ottawa and Bonn also claimed to be partisans of forming — in the framework of the United Nations — a "force responsible for assuring the security and freedom in a new election". Already in September Arthur Schlesinger, an ex-advisor to John F Kennedy, went so far as to propose "an international rescue mission" and "some form of disinterested (sic) international administrative supervision".

In Haiti itself there is no doubt that there will be many new developments in what is already an extremely complex situation. A determining factor will be the development of the combativity of the masses. Events in the week running up to the elections have shown that, at least in the capital, the mass movement has matured a lot since this summer's mobilizations. [See *IV* 125.] After criminal arson at a popular market in Port-au-Prince, many districts decided to take in

hand their own defence. In some areas, thousands of people have been involved in self-defence tasks. This represents a considerable amount of experience that can enable the Haitian left to pose the problem of violence in new ways.

The army immediately banned the formation of these self-defence brigades. It made the district of Carrefour-Feuilles pay a high price for the exemplary role that it played in the self-defence movement. On November 28, 46 people from that district were slaughtered at Fort Dimanche, and other executions were reported to have taken place the next day. The following week, the army began new arrests in the same district.

The reformist leaders steered clear of any orientation in favour of self-organization and self-defence. For months they have explained that all the problems would be solved by the November 29 elections. Compounding the effects of terrorist actions and past failures, the consequences of this policy may be grave.

"Take out the old crop of manioc and clear the ground!" — that is, get rid of the National Government Council (CNG) root and branch. Monseigneur Romélus, the bishop of Jérémie, raised this call in June 1987. It gave its name to a campaign against the CNG known as "Operation Manioc". But these strikes and demonstrations were not sufficient for getting rid of the CNG. With the benefit of imperialist support, gun in hand, the CNG held its own

against its adversaries. It faced a strong but unarmed and weakly-structured movement which its so-called coordinators — the Group of 57 organizations — wanted to keep in safe channels. At the beginning of September, Bishop Romélus was to again raise the slogan "Clear the ground" via the elections.

Thus the wishes of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) were fulfilled. At the beginning of September they had launched an emotive appeal for Haitians to take the electoral road: "People of Haiti, let us start out with freedom of conscience and determined hearts, voting cards in hand, towards the peaceful conquest of our only reason for being: to root out dictatorship forever..."

Would it be heeded? On September 5 the newspaper *Le Matin* again noted: "The population's contempt for the CEP is evident" and regretted the latter's "dangerous isolation". And on September 10, the paper predicted: "Now, only a mobilization of democratic organizations has the strength to change the position of the people", who were still hostile to elections being held under the rule of the CNG.

Without analyzing the reasons for the failure of the first "Operation Manioc", the petty-bourgeois organizations rallied one after the other to the new slogan of Bishop Romélus and the standard of the CEP. But after the assassination of one of the candidates for the presidential election they concluded, realistically, that holding elections with the CNG still in place would be impossible.

However, for these organizations, participating or not in the elections was not a simple tactical matter. Their avowed objective was to get the CNG to yield to a deluge of votes. To make this perspective credible, they had to portray the CNG in a new light.

So, on September 17, the National Front for Collaboration — set up by the Group of 57, the Autonomous Confederation of Haitian Workers (CATH) and other organizations — proposed a "security pact" to the CNG.

The leaders of this Front, who shortly before had been calling the CNG a "fascist junta", now demanded that the CNG demonstrate "its will to install a climate of peace and security in the country". They let it be believed that it could, as they demanded, disarm the Macoutes [Duvalier's gangsters], put an end to repressive actions by military or para-military groups and guarantee candidates' security. So for the sake of "encouraging the people to participate in the elections" all the lessons of this summer's massacres were wiped out. The CNG had shown that as far as it was concerned the constitution was only a scrap of paper. But, no matter: "Today", a Front statement proclaimed, "we have a crucial weapon: the constitution of March 29, 1987".

Before and during the election campaign, kidnappings and murders continued unceasingly. Their aim was to terrorize the population. These actions continued the pattern set by massacres in the shantytowns and at the time of last summer's demonstrations. At the same time, the perpetrators — gangs composed of army personnel and Tontons Macoutes — carried out break-ins. General Namphy's own chauffeur was killed during his nocturnal activities: he was executed by the people of a village where he was getting ready to commit some offences.

How can these gangs be disarmed and the roots of Duvalierism ripped out? And what should be done about the army? None of the candidates confronted these fundamental problems seriously. And when yet again one of them — Yves Volel — was murdered by plain-clothes police in front of the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, the response was extremely timid. If the presidential candidates had acknowledged that it was impossible to achieve democracy with the army as it is, that would mean admitting that if they won they would become prisoners of the generals, and admitting that all their fine promises about agrarian reform or defending human rights were only hot air.

The lawyer Gérard Gourgue, a Front candidate, maintained that a "strong democratic wind" was blowing through the army, from the ordinary soldiers to the highest grades. René Théodore, candidate for the United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH), who said that the country's problems could not be resolved by the simple act of voting, called for barely more than "submitting to parliament an administrative bill relating to the armed forces that would point out their established constitutional role, eliminate the notion of 'the enemy within', highlight the question of honour and establish respect for the dignity of servicemen from the first day of their training".

Lacking an alternative, Haitians took literally the slogan "Clear the ground through the elections". Many went to vote on November 29. And when the CEP cancelled the ballot three hours after polling started, the masses found themselves disoriented and feelings of frustration ran high. Political leaders and the churches had failed the Haitian people as they had done in March during the referendum on the constitution. Then they had deceived people about its content — it had been sold as a "liberal", and even "popular" document.

It need only be noted that all the candidates for the presidential elections have to be "householders", and that military officers "cannot be dismissed, taken off active duty, discharged, or given early retirement except with their consent". René Théodore



CNG leader General Namphy (DR)

and Monseigneur Romélus were the first to mislead the Haitian people about the meaning of the referendum. According to the reformist leaders, the adoption of the constitution would allow the page of Duvalierism to be turned once and for all.

Immediately after the referendum, the military took action against peasants who had invaded land belonging to a Canadian congregation, inflicting many casualties. Their officers invoked the article of the new constitution calling for the defence of private property. Then, in June, also citing an article in the constitution on union activity, the CNG banned the CATH.

Without doubt, the Haitian bourgeoisie overestimated its strength, when, at the last minute, Article 291 was introduced. This article excluded from public office for ten years a number of categories of people, notably those "notoriously known for having been, with excessive zeal, artisans and supporters of the dictatorship during the last 29 years."

This Article was a time-bomb that exploded on November 2. That day, the CEP published a list of presidential candidates who had passed the test of Article 291. Out of 35 declared candidates, 12 of Duvalier's henchmen had been eliminated by the CEP. Some former collaborators with the dictatorship, such as ex-ministers and secretaries of state Marc Bazin, Hubert de Ronceray or Lamartinière Honorat, remained in the running. On the other hand, the most sinister Duvalierist figures were thrown out of the electoral race. In response, ex-general Claude Raymond declared: "We have the power behind us, we will win whatever the cost". The same evening, the CEP's office was set alight with flame-throwers. In the days which followed, election offices, party headquarters and candidate's houses were attacked. The capital was under a de facto curfew

from 9pm, and every day there was talk of a coup d'état.

What has been called the "democratic sector" had by and large underestimated the Duvalierists' strength and their position in the army. The latter play an important role in the administration, among the local officials in the countryside and especially among garrison chiefs.

For example, the tactical battalions of the Dessalines barracks are completely loyal to their chief, Jean-Claude Paul. A real hard-nut, he is linked to an international drugs network. His wife was arrested in Miami and the American police also have a warrant out for him. He is very hostile to the US, and has threatened to shoot Marc Bazin, a candidate supported by the US in the presidential election.

Since February 7, 1986, Paul's battalions, like those at Fort Dimanche, have integrated a number of Tontons Macoutes into their ranks, and these gangsters have played a key role in all the repressive actions that they have conducted since this summer, whether at Port-au-Prince or in the provinces. Along with the Criminal Investigation Bureau, they have provided a large part — if not the majority — of the commandos that have been in action these past months. In July, hours of discussion were necessary before the officers of this sector would sign the document reiterating the army's support for the CNG. However, not only did the CNG let them carry on like this, but they completely covered up the officers' activities. Essentially because it shared the same project — to put a brake on the mass movement.

To achieve this objective it reckoned that an alliance with the army and the Duvalierists was indispensable, the traditional bourgeoisie not possessing the necessary internal resources. The United States has not succeeded in Haiti in building a force able to carry out its political and economic projects. But the Duvalierists are deeply rooted in Haitian society and make up a large part of its administrative and managerial personnel.

Thinking wrongly that the Duvalierists were only a leftover from the past, the "democratic sector" misread the import of the actions staged after the CEP had eliminated the Duvalierist candidates. It saw them as the final death throes of a movement condemned by the march of history.

In the week running up to the elections, following the publication of the list of candidates for the legislative and senatorial elections, the attacks doubled in intensity. But CEP members and the "democratic sector" leaders preferred to close their eyes and ears and instead affirm their conviction that the Tontons Macoutes would retreat in front of the mass of two million Haitians registered on the electoral lists.

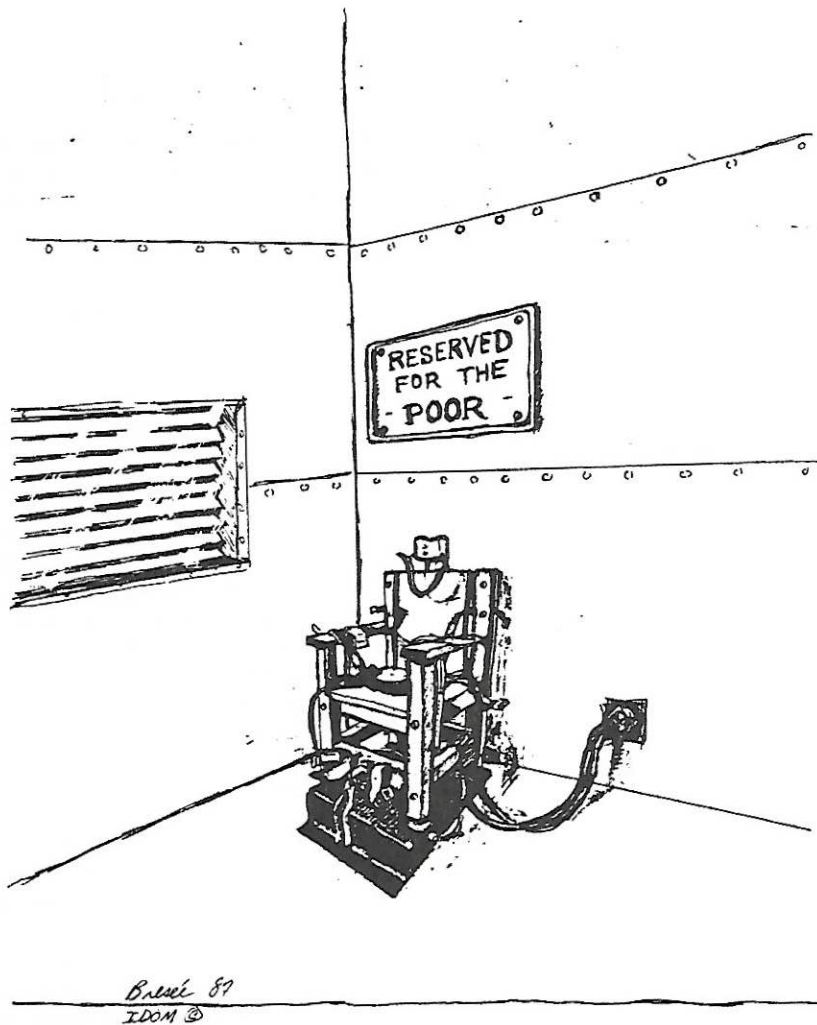
"We cannot let a handful of people prevent the elections being held. So, a word to the wise is sufficient!" asserted the CEP's president, while Monseigneur Romélus begged the Tontons Macoutes to "Seek rather to do what is good and beautiful, be humble, change your behaviour, start afresh and things will be better for you".

The reformist leaders refused to listen when the Duvalierists said: "Without us, there will be no elections", and even talked about civil war. They refused to see what was going on inside the army. The number

of generals went up from two to five, and will soon be 16, allowing the Namphy/Regala duo to clinch their control of the army thanks to a flood of hundreds of promotions. At the same time, military salaries have risen considerably. And on November 6, General Namphy — assuming the prerogatives of a president of the republic — designated himself "commander in chief of the Haitian armed forces". He noted that, therefore, in accordance with the constitution, he would effectively be the real leader, and that the president would be only a nom-

inal one. Hardly anybody denounced this outright power grab.

In fact, at that moment, the leaders of the National Front for Collaboration were not only confident about the future, they were almost euphoric. This was because they were convinced that their candidate, Gérard Gourgue, was going to win the elections — perhaps even in the first round. They failed to realise that it was this very factor that was going to finally sweep away any final hesitations that the army might still have had. ★



62% of those on death row were unskilled, service, or domestic workers. 60% were unemployed at the time of the alleged crime. 49% were non-white.

(since the resumption of capital punishment in the U.S. — Amnesty International, September 1987)

Capitalist Punishment

SOLIDARITY'S CONTRADICTIONARY PERSPECTIVE FOR ITS ANTI-INTERVENTION WORK

by Samuel Adams

The U.S. anti-intervention movement has a continuing need for activists to engage in analysis, discussion, and debate on key questions of program, strategy, and tactics. Toward this end, the positions adopted by groups active in the anti-intervention movement—through their publications, letters, resolutions, and other documents—warrant careful examination. Revolutionary socialists have a keen interest in what all sectors of the movement have to say, certainly those with a socialist outlook.

Solidarity is an organization created in 1986 as a result of a fusion between Socialist Unity, Workers Power, and International Socialists. Because of the history of the Socialist Unity component of this fusion (its members were part of the pro-Fourth Internationalist, pro-Trotskyist current expelled from the Socialist Workers Party during the 1982-84 period and remain fraternal members of the Fourth International today), positions taken by Solidarity have a particular importance in the context of the ongoing discussion among the different currents of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States. The Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, and Socialist Action are other U.S. groups which maintain fraternal ties with the FI.

A number of Solidarity's members—both supporters and nonsupporters of the FI—have been active in the anti-intervention movement. At its August 1987 convention Solidarity approved a resolution, "Perspectives and Tasks," a section of which deals with "Building Anti-Intervention and Solidarity." The most significant theme in the resolution is its commitment to coalition building. It states in part:

While not every broad coalition is necessarily useful in promoting mass action, we believe that broad coalitions have proven indispensable for the kinds of large mass events that CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) and Mobe (Mobilization for Survival) cannot create on their own.

We should fight against the kind of "turf mentality" that sometimes makes the best organizations reluctant to relinquish control and make compromises. Broad, democratic coalition structures and openness to compromise are indispensable to fostering mass action. . . .

We should stress that these coalitions can be important in reaching activists in the peace movement, the labor movement, and

movements of oppressed nationalities and women, activists who will be crucial to creating the broad, militant, anti-intervention movement we desperately need to stop U.S. aggression. The only way to stop U.S. intervention is to organize massive opposition—to threaten social stability at home so much that the ruling class will come to understand that imperialist intervention, no matter how profitable, is not worth the social consequences.

Any possible opportunity to reach and unify people around pro-mass action, non-electoralist strategy should be a top priority of Solidarity's activity in the anti-intervention movement. We should seek unity in action with forces in the broad movement, from solidarity activists to radical pacifists, who oppose the subordination of the movement in practice to electoralist goals.

Unfortunately, other aspects of Solidarity's perspective for anti-intervention work undermine and detract from the positive theme described above. But before considering these—and in order to put them in context—it will be helpful to consider Solidarity's overall political perspectives.

Solidarity's 'Spectrum of Opinions'

The arbitrary and undemocratic regime in the SWP, headed by national secretary Jack Barnes, left a bitter taste in the mouths of many of those who were part of the struggle for a Trotskyist program in the party during the early 1980s. Some of these individuals simply became disoriented and withdrew from political activity. Others, including many who were part of the Socialist Unity current, continued to be active but began to raise serious doubts about programmatic and organizational matters which had up to then been agreed to by the revolutionary Marxist movement in the U.S. In particular, they began to question the idea of working *in the present* to build a vanguard party with working class discipline based on the Leninist concept of democratic centralism.

Many began to accept the idea that if such a party were ever to be established it was a long way off, and the immediate need was to form a looser, network type organization where people with disparate views on basic programmatic questions could nevertheless unite—so long as there was agreement on a few fundamental propositions. This paved the way for the creation of Solidarity based on the following points: 1) socialism should replace capi-

talism; 2) a revolutionary socialist movement is needed to help bring this about; 3) no participation in capitalist politics; 4) establish a labor party; 5) make unions militant, democratic vehicles for class struggle; 6) fight racism; 7) support women's liberation, internationalism, antiwar movement, unilateral disarmament; and 8) build an organization in which people can act together "without presenting a monolithic face to the world" or engaging "in pretenses of being 'the vanguard.'"

Internally the emphasis—within the above guidelines—was on looseness. Everybody was pretty much free to do her or his own thing. Discipline and the responsibility to carry out a democratically determined line even if an individual disagrees—that is a concept that has been alien to Solidarity from the beginning.

The other organizations that formed Solidarity shared Socialist Unity's aversion to discipline, "monolithism," centralism, vanguardism, etc. So Solidarity became a multitendency grouping with its divergent currents and views agreeing to coexist in a live-and-let-live atmosphere.

Thus, in defining its anti-intervention perspective, Solidarity's 1987 resolution states:

We recognize that there is a spectrum of opinions within our group on the dynamics of the Central American revolutions and on what strategies most effectively build opposition to U.S. intervention. Within the broad parameters of our Founding Political Statement (March 1986) all such views are welcome in Solidarity. Naturally, these differing perspectives affect the areas in which members choose to carry out anti-intervention work. We can make this diversity work to our benefit by expanding the range of actions in which we participate.

But "this diversity" can also atomize the utility and attractiveness of the organization for worker and student activists who are essential to a socialist perspective. The attempt to integrate such diversity and to avoid confronting issues which might lead to a clash of ideas has resulted in a resolution which tries to reconcile completely contradictory notions about anti-intervention work within the context of a single document which everyone can vote for. As we shall see, the correct *general* approach cited at the beginning of this article is largely negated by the *practical tasks* which the same resolution calls on members of Solidarity to undertake.

The Lack of a Labor Orientation

One of the threads that runs all through Solidarity's August 1987 convention resolution on "Perspectives and Tasks" is the centrality of work in the labor movement. Indeed, under Section 6, "The Way Forward," the first question discussed is "Campaigning for Solidarity Within the Labor Movement."

But when it comes to the section on anti-intervention work, building labor anti-intervention

activity is strictly a secondary concern. The resolution makes no reference whatever to the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, nor does it encourage Solidarity members to become active in the two dozen or so local labor anti-intervention committees.

Moreover, Solidarity's resolution ignores the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC). This is curious, because Solidarity's prioritizing of the need to establish broad, democratic coalitions is squarely in line with the position advanced and fought for by the ENC since its founding in June 1985. If the ENC's program—emphasis on mass demonstrations, democratic coalitions, nonpartisanship, etc.—is put side-by-side with what Solidarity advocates on paper in its resolution, it is clear that the two have much in common.

Why, then, this shunning of the ENC?

Dianne Feeley, a Solidarity leader, provided the answer in an assessment she wrote of the ENC's January 1986 conference in Los Angeles. For Feeley, the conference was a "sad" event because it was smaller than the ENC's previous conferences in Cleveland and Minneapolis. She ignored the fact that this ENC conference was virtually alone during this period in calling for mass demonstrations against contra aid and for a national coalition to sponsor them. The most important thing for her was the need to avoid alienating "the folks," i.e., solidarity groups like the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the Mobilization for Survival (Mobe), etc., despite the fact that these groups have a completely different political orientation from that outlined in Solidarity's resolution. This is a logical consequence of Feeley's—and Solidarity's—"antivanguardism," which subordinates programmatic considerations to organizational concerns.

Orientation to Solidarity Groups and to Mobe

Solidarity has developed an empirical orientation toward those who happen to be prominent within the leadership of the anti-intervention movement at the given moment. It has decided to focus its anti-intervention activities on certain of the established groups *despite the fact that they have programs with which Solidarity basically disagrees*, while avoiding labor-oriented groups *which have programs more consistent with that outlined in its own resolution*. Thus Solidarity gives its priority to CISPES, the other solidarity networks, Mobe, and even the Pledge of Resistance.

What commends these groups to Solidarity is their relative longevity: "Two national formations have managed to keep going and play a significant role in the antiwar movement—Mobilization for Survival (Mobe) and the Pledge of Resistance. . . . But CISPES has been unique in its ability to maintain itself on a genuinely national scale." In short, since these groups are still around, they must be right! (This same argument is used by pragmatic business unionists to "prove" that Samuel

Gompers, who shaped the early American Federation of Labor, was "right" and the socialists who advocated class struggle trade unionism were "wrong." In the Black struggle, reformists "prove" that the NAACP and Urban League are "right" while Malcolm X was "wrong.")

A more important criterion than "seniority" is how much *labor support* do these formations have? The Pledge of Resistance favors civil disobedience and is rooted among religious activists. It makes no claim to reaching out to or winning trade unionists. CISPES and the other solidarity groups have no significant labor constituency. While major sectors of the labor movement have been involved in anti-intervention activity, it is on the basis of *broad anti-intervention demands*, and in some cases trade union solidarity, not support for the Sandinistas, the FMLN/FDR, or the liberation movements in Honduras and Guatemala.

To be sure, CISPES, Mobe, Pledge of Resistance, and other solidarity organizations have endorsed and built demonstrations with "End U.S. Intervention in Central America" and "No Aid to the Contras" demands. Solidarity makes that point in its resolution. But it ignores the fact that such activities represent only occasional and sporadic efforts by these groups, and are almost always subordinate to their overall basic strategy—which focuses more on lobbying, individual witness, and material aid campaigns. These can be important tactics, but only in the context of a consistent strategy of mass action around the basic right of self-determination for the peoples of Central America. CISPES, Mobe, Pledge of Resistance, etc., don't see things that way. The other side of their occasional involvement in mass action has been their frequently demonstrated role of sidetracking the movement, postponing mass action, scuttling national coalitions, etc.

Solidarity also fails to explain why and how it emphasizes work in organizations which have as their essence solidarity with particular governments or social movements in Central America when life has demonstrated many times over that such organizations cannot win broad labor support to their banner at the present time. Why not instead focus on and build organizations which can go directly to the labor movement on the basis of demands to which the labor movement can relate?

One of the most striking statements about Mobe and CISPES in Solidarity's resolution is that "We basically support their overall political direction." The resolution then goes on to list a series of differences which completely contradicts this statement:

1) Solidarity favors an ongoing anti-intervention coalition, something that CISPES and Mobe have resisted.

2) Solidarity views Central America in regional terms and disagrees with the way CISPES develops campaigns, such as the one to stop the bombing in El Salvador, that "drain resources and energy away too much from campaigns that allow a broader focus on political and regional issues." (CISPES itself,

at its September 1987 convention, attempted to correct this approach in its assessment of the Guatemala peace plan.)

3) Solidarity sees the need to ensure that the anti-intervention movement independently promotes mass action and does not get sucked into capitalist politics. It disagrees with the way "CISPES in particular has acted on occasion as if building a broad coalition necessarily involves electoral alliances with Democrats."

These are all *major* questions involving *major* differences with the solidarity groups and Mobe. It is incomprehensible for Solidarity to say that it basically supports "their overall political direction," unless the resolution is simply trying to satisfy all of the diverse opinions within Solidarity. In that case, of what value is the resolution for defining tasks of Solidarity members?

It is certainly true that the solidarity groups have done valuable work in educating large numbers of people about the nature of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; that they have been in the front lines against U.S. war policies in the region and have been targeted by the government for repression as a result; and that they are unquestionably *one* of the key constituencies in the anti-intervention movement. But there is nothing inconsistent about recognizing the positive aspects of the work of these organizations while recognizing at the same time that basic differences exist between the positions, strategies, and tactics which they advocate and those advanced by revolutionary socialists.

Solidarity Calls for Negotiations

In the initial period of today's anti-intervention movement, U.S. involvement in El Salvador was the most burning concern. The movement's demands were quite clear: No U.S. military intervention! No U.S. "advisers"! End all forms of support for El Salvador's repressive government! U.S. out of El Salvador!

Demands by the U.S. movement have also been directed to the Salvadoran government. These include an end to the bombing and massacre of civilians and freedom for imprisoned and tortured Salvadoran trade union leaders.

In its "Perspectives and Tasks" resolution, Solidarity calls for negotiations between the Duarte regime and the FMLN. While its language in advancing this demand is somewhat contradictory, the thrust is unmistakable:

Like everyone in the anti-intervention movement, we want peace; our task is to make clear that peace will be possible only when the U.S. gets out. Many in the U.S. have illusions about possibilities for peace through schemes like the Arias plan, which would require disarming the FMLN. Well-meaning liberals in the U.S. are also likely to see some connection between dialogue in

El Salvador with the FMLN (*which we favor*) and dialogue in Nicaragua with the contras, who could never survive as a major force in the absence of U.S. aggression. *We should encourage CISPES's tendency to combine calls for peace and dialogue with exposes of such schemes* (sic) (emphasis added).

The convoluted pacifist sentiments expressed in the above passage have nothing to do with the approach revolutionary socialists have historically taken to the question of war and peace. Yes, "we want peace." But we are *quite unlike* many others in the anti-intervention movement in our conception of what real "peace" means in El Salvador. Peace in El Salvador will become possible not just "when the U.S. gets out," though that is of course one key element, but when the government of bankers, landowners, and generals which rules the country is overthrown and replaced by a government of workers and peasants. And a *stable* peace will be possible only when similar revolutions take place throughout the region as well as in the major capitalist nations around the world—especially the United States.

There is not a word about this in Solidarity's resolution. Instead, there is a call for "dialogue"—repeated twice for emphasis!—with Duarte. At a time when the Salvadoran liberation forces are advancing on all fronts—in the countryside where the FMLN is scoring important victories and in the cities where demonstrations and upheavals by workers and students are occurring on an almost daily basis—Solidarity would dilute the clear-cut demand of the U.S. anti-intervention movement that the U.S. get out of El Salvador by adding a call for negotiations. Why? For what purpose? To appeal to liberals and social democratic reformists?

The FMLN/FDR in El Salvador calls for negotiations with Duarte. In this case it is a legitimate tactical step to further isolate, expose, and discredit the Salvadoran government. But the U.S. anti-intervention movement has no need to simply parrot this call, and we do no service to the FMLN/FDR if we do so. The best way we can help strengthen the hand of the liberation forces in El Salvador—whether there are negotiations or not—is to stand firm in opposition to *all* forms of U.S. intervention and in total opposition to *anything* which gives *any* legitimacy to the Duarte regime in the eyes of U.S. public opinion.

As this is written, Duarte himself is calling for negotiations and is actually meeting with representatives of the FMLN/FDR. He has invoked the Central America peace agreement and has called upon the FMLN to lay down its arms and trust to El Salvador's death-squad form of "democracy." There is nothing to be gained by the U.S. anti-intervention movement's joining the call for negotiations.

Solidarity's Preference for a Multi-Issue Movement

Whatever disagreements one may have with the content of CISPES's program and the direction of

some of its activities, it is at least clear that CISPES is solidly *an anti-intervention organization*. Yet in selecting organizations to relate to in carrying out its anti-intervention work, Solidarity accords CISPES at best equal status with the Mobe:

Solidarity members in a few cities have chosen to work in Mobe instead of CISPES. This choice has both advantages (mainly Mobe's explicit commitment to a multi-issue perspective) and disadvantages (mainly its more amorphous structure, its virtual nonexistence in some regions, and the strength of pacifists within it). We feel that the decision to work in Mobe in addition to or instead of CISPES is best left at the local level. Many of the political questions that arise in the work are the same in any event.

Since Solidarity explicitly endorses Mobe's "multi-issue perspective," has it not an obligation in its "Perspectives and Tasks" resolution to spell out precisely *what those issues are* and which of them should be raised in conjunction with anti-intervention demands in an attempt to build a mass action movement? For example, the April 25, 1987, demonstration in Washington, D.C., focused on Central America and Southern Africa. Does Solidarity agree with that kind of focus or should additional demands have been piled on, as many in the movement argue? Solidarity's resolution is silent on the question.

The anti-intervention movement got a good dose of multi-issueism in the fall of 1986 when a group calling itself National Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice called demonstrations in cities around the country for late October. The Mobe was at the center of the effort to organize these actions. Demands varied from city to city but with the exception of Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., which organized their own actions, the prevailing theme was pretty much: go with everything. In Seattle, the demands, sub demands, and sub-sub demands totaled about thirty. Nuclear freeze, star wars, the Middle East, racism, affirmative action, comparable worth, undocumented workers, reproductive rights, gay rights, labor's rights, jobs, environmental concerns—all these questions and many more have been raised by activists of a multi-issue persuasion. They want to see demands reflecting these concerns added to anti-intervention and anti-apartheid demonstrations. But when this was attempted in the Mobe-inspired actions in the fall of 1986, the turnouts were considerably smaller than when actions were clearly organized around the major anti-intervention demands.

Solidarity agrees with the approach of these fall 1986 actions. It favors a multi-issue approach. It supports the "overall political direction of Mobe." But again we must ask, *what about the labor movement, which was conspicuously absent in the fall 1986 demonstrations?* Is that a concern of

Solidarity and, if so, did it not warrant mention and analysis in the "Perspectives and Tasks" resolution? Since life has demonstrated that there are a number of international unions that will mobilize in support of narrowly focused demands—most notably around Central America and South Africa—but *not* around a multitude of demands, are there not political conclusions for Solidarity to draw from this? And labor isn't the only segment of the population which can be mobilized around the crucial issue of U.S. intervention but isn't yet willing to support a whole program of social change.

Groups like the ENC have strongly opposed a laundry list of demands for national anti-intervention demonstrations. The ENC has consistently argued that this dilutes the focus, which should be

However, Solidarity's *concrete* perspective for anti-intervention work—focus on the multi-issue Mobe and solidarity groups instead of labor committees and labor-oriented organizations like the ENC—takes it in precisely the opposite direction. Those forces (with which Solidarity asserts it is in basic agreement) have been instrumental in repeatedly scuttling coalitions on both a national and local level, and in imposing bureaucratic forms of organization on the movement as a whole. Moreover, Solidarity's call for negotiations with Duarte weakens and dilutes the central focus which the anti-intervention movement must have.

Solidarity, like other concerned organizations in the anti-intervention movement, needs a forum where these kinds of questions can be further dis-



President Reagan meets with contra leaders

on Central America and South Africa. Adopting a grab bag of demands, far from drawing in broader forces, fragments and divides the movement and discourages labor participation—as experience shows.

The Period Ahead

In its call for unity and democratic coalitions, Solidarity touches on the key strategic element for putting together a real anti-intervention movement in the critical period ahead. Unity of the movement has always been needed to strengthen it and enable it to mobilize the largest possible number of people in action. That is true today more than ever. And Solidarity's general labor orientation and consciousness should enable it to make a further contribution by drawing more trade unionists into the anti-intervention struggle.

cussed and resolved. A broad, nonexclusionary, and democratic national coalition could provide such a forum. It would also better enable the movement to decide on the best response to events, including the calling of anti-intervention actions.

Reagan is pushing for \$270 million in contra aid with critical votes on further appropriations scheduled in Congress for early February. The fact that the Democratic controlled House of Representatives joined the Republican controlled Senate in again approving several million dollars in contra aid on December 22 underscores the bipartisan character of the U.S. war against Nicaragua. Independent mass mobilizations called by a united anti-intervention movement are needed now on an emergency basis. Solidarity, by speaking out aggressively within the mass movement with a call for a national coalition to sponsor such actions, can help bring them about. ■

THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X: 23 YEARS LATER

A Giant Blow to the Black and Working Class Movements

by Evelyn Sell

Developments over the twenty-three years following the assassination of Malcolm X show how much his absence has affected both the Black struggle and the revolutionary movement in the U.S. When Malcolm was shot on February 21, 1965, the Black revolt was about a dozen years old and heading into a worsening crisis of leadership. The dedication, bravery, and mobilization of Black communities across the U.S. had been phenomenal. But their struggles were increasingly hampered and sidetracked by established national organizations and individual leaders. The proliferation of small, new groups and the strengthening of Black nationalist sentiments testified to the search for a structure and leadership capable of carrying the struggle to new heights and new victories.

Malcolm X had the potential to fill the vacuum existing in the leadership of the Black movement of the 1960s. During his dozen years as a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI, popularly known as the Black Muslims), he quickly displayed his abilities as an organizer and speaker. Accepted into the NOI in 1952, he rose with meteoric speed to the very top ranks of the group's hierarchy, and became second in command to Elijah Muhammad, the movement's leader. When the NOI attracted national attention at the end of the 1950s, it was Malcolm who received the most publicity. His charismatic personality and fiery speaking talents made him the focal point of public knowledge about the movement he represented.

Radio and television appearances, magazine interviews and articles, and speeches at meetings and public rallies introduced Malcolm to increasing numbers of Americans. He was one of the most requested speakers for college debates and forums—where his intelligence, wit, and personality made him a favorite of the most militant students and won him grudging admiration from his opponents and detractors.

I can personally testify to the power he exerted over a campus audience. I first heard Malcolm speak at a Wayne State University debate where he changed a jeering, overwhelmingly white crowd into a respectful audience. Loud heckling was transformed into resounding applause. His power over a group—even a hostile one—was astounding. His impact during more informal discussions was no less remarkable as I discovered when I stayed after the debate to ask him about the role of women in the NOI. For over an hour he devoted as much energy and concentration on a discussion with me and another student as he had on the hundreds who had packed the campus meeting.

Malcolm's influence was not confined to the borders of the U.S. His relations with top African delegates to the United Nations and his trip to Africa to pave the way for Elijah Muhammad's 1959 visit to Mecca established Malcolm abroad. He became known as "the St. Paul of the Black Muslim movement."

It was not his religious message, however, that attracted the attention and respect of Blacks across the U.S. They responded to his searing attacks against racism, his insistence on Black self-reliance, his criticism of compromising Black leaders, and his denunciation of Democratic and Republican politicians who wooed Black votes but failed to follow through on campaign promises. An anonymous Harlem cab driver told *Life* photographer Gordon Parks "that Malcolm ain't afraid to tell Mr. Charlie, the FBI, or the cops or nobody where to get off."

The Black Liberation Struggle

At the same time that Malcolm and the NOI were gaining more influence within the Black community, the progress of the Black liberation movement was affecting him and the Black Muslim organization. There was growing pressure within the ranks of the NOI to join in the civil rights struggles taking place and, as the 1964 national election campaign loomed on the horizon, there was strong sentiment to engage in independent political action. Toward the end of 1963 there were persistent rumors of a division within the NOI, and that a split was imminent between Malcolm, leading the young militants, and Elijah Muhammad, who would not allow the NOI to get involved in civil rights battles.

While Blacks were mobilizing in mass actions to fight against segregation and for equality, the NOI maintained a different goal and strategy: the separation of the races and the creation of an independent Black nation on either American or African soil; the establishment of separate Black businesses, schools, etc.; and a pledge of obedience to all civil authority in the U.S. (with the sole exception of their refusal to serve in the armed forces because this violated their religious teachings).

Malcolm's potential for becoming the most authoritative voice of the Black masses was evident during a November 10, 1963, public rally that climaxed the two-day Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference held in Detroit. The great majority of the audience was not affiliated with the NOI and did not come to hear Malcolm X, NOI minister, but to hear Malcolm X, the most eloquent

spokesperson for Black liberation. As a member of the audience I can report that the cheers, applause, and shouts during Malcolm's talk were clear signs of the extraordinary standing he had within the militant wing of the movement.

Giant Step Forward

A few weeks after this conference, the rumored split between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad was set into motion. The head of the NOI had ordered all his ministers to make no comment about the assassination of President John Kennedy. But in response to a question at a December 1, 1963, meeting in New York, Malcolm noted that Kennedy's death was a product of the climate of violence and hate created

by whites in the U.S. For this violation, Malcolm received a public 90-day suspension.

In March 1964, Malcolm announced his departure from the NOI and his plan "to organize and head a new mosque in New York City, known as the Muslim Mosque, Inc." But there was more behind Malcolm's break with NOI than a simple matter of disobeying an order. This became clear to all when his new independence from Elijah Muhammad made it possible for Malcolm to get involved in the battles of the Black community for "better food, clothing, housing, education, and jobs *right now*." In mid-April Malcolm went to Africa to organize support among the independent nations of that continent for his proposal to carry the American Black struggle into the United Nations. His views were deeply

The Individual and Historical Development

Although Marxists always explain that it is the collective action of social classes, of millions of individuals, which is required to bring about great historical changes, we do not deny that there have been and will be outstanding individuals who affect the course of human events. Marxists don't view "the leader" and "the masses" as mutually exclusive categories, but as mutually conditioning aspects of social change. It would be foolish, in the light of historical knowledge, to deny the existence or the power of great individuals; but it is necessary to see the emergence of such leaders as the *product of social conditions*. They are people whose views and actions express most clearly and most succinctly necessities imposed by a social reality which exists quite independently of them.

Great historical forces are concentrated and expressed through the personality of a leader, much as the rays of the sun are redirected by a lens. The lens could not do this at all without the sunlight, but at the same time the rays of light could not change direction without the special structure of the lens. The unique talents of historical personalities become important within the context of particular social conditions. Under different conditions these same characteristics might, in fact, be historically unimportant, or could produce quite different results.

One example which illustrates the importance of the historical moment is the "discovery of America" by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Actually, the Norse explorer, Eric the Red, had landed in North America some five hundred years earlier. But Norse society had little need at the time for raw materials or foreign markets. So his "discovery" had no significant impact on the course of history. Columbus's voyage, however, came at a time of expanding world trade. It had a tremendous impact on European society and the future course of world history.

There have been times when needs arose in society and when talented individuals were present who could fill those needs, but the social order made it impossible for need and talent to meet and

satisfy each other. Take the misadventure of the ribbon loom—one of the machines that helped revolutionize industry. The ribbon loom was invented around 1530 in Germany, but the city council was afraid it would cause great unemployment among weavers so it suppressed the machine and had the inventor murdered. About a hundred years later the same machine was reinvented. But the weavers rioted at its appearance and it was banned. Following this, an imperial edict prohibited the use of this loom in Germany. One of the major tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions was to sweep aside restrictions such as this so that technology could expand without hindrance—to the everlasting profit of the developing bourgeois class.

So we see that an individual's influence on history is dependent not only on her/his individual talents. It is restricted by the general trend of major objective and subjective forces. It is only within the framework of these general trends that talented individuals can play a role: decreasing or increasing the tempo of events, changing particular features and manifestations, and even altering some of the ultimate consequences. Under no circumstances, however, can the main course of historical development be turned into its opposite—no matter how brilliant or potent the individual.

There is a great deal of chance involved in all of this as well. Purely accidental events might eliminate one or another individual who would have the potential to solve some great scientific dilemma, for example. But the scientific reality of that dilemma will still be there. Ultimately *some* scientist must come along and resolve it. Would society have developed the steam engine if James Watt had died in childhood? As a matter of fact, the principle of the steam engine had been known since the time of ancient Alexandria, and Denis Papin invented a steam engine fifty years before the Watt engine was put to use in industry. Would we know about evolution if Charles Darwin had never taken his famous voyage on the *Beagle*? While Darwin was writing his book on the origin of species, he

affected by his pilgrimage to Mecca and his discussions with government leaders, journalists, students, and others in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. His followers in the U.S. began to receive letters from him indicating deep-going changes in his previously sweeping denunciations of all whites and the goal of establishing a separate Black state. Upon his return to the U.S. at the end of May, he stated that he thought Blacks should stay and fight in the United States for what was rightfully theirs. His public remarks showed that his thinking on political and social issues was developing in a revolutionary direction.

On June 28, 1964, Malcolm launched the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), patterned after the Organization of African Unity which was

founded in May 1963 to unite all Africans in the fight to eliminate colonialism. The OAAU program showed a further development of Malcolm's ideas and a much more concrete approach to the daily tasks of the Black struggle. Its major theme was that the Black community would control its own destiny through its own organs of power.

The OAAU began to hold meetings, set up a liberation school to teach African and Afro-American history, and published a biweekly newsletter, *Backlash*. These initial steps were taken while Malcolm was overseas. He spent the summer and fall of 1964 in Africa and the Middle East pursuing his campaign to put the U.S. on trial in the World Court, and solidarizing contacts with government officials and Black leaders.

received a letter and an essay from naturalist Alfred Wallace who had independently developed the same theory.

Leadership During Social Crises

The course of social struggles is more dependent on the role of particular individuals than is scientific progress. The role of leadership in revolutionary transformations of society often makes the difference between success or failure. Czarist Russia—an economically and politically backward country—experienced the first victorious socialist revolution in history at a time when the working class was being crushed in Germany—a more advanced industrial nation. The primary difference between these two situations was the role played by the Bolshevik Party in Russia, on the one hand, and the Social Democratic leadership in Germany, on the other.

The role of leadership takes on crucial significance, and the role of the individual takes on added importance, when great turning points in history are reached. The presence or absence of a revolutionary leadership, the action or inaction of a specific individual, can be decisive at those exceptional historical moments when all of the social elements needed for bringing about a fundamental change converge. An individual leader with the vision and courage to help move the insurgent masses forward can tip the scales. One example from the history of bourgeois democratic revolutions is the pivotal role played by Samuel Adams in the American Revolution of 1776.

These general points help explain why the killing of Malcolm X had a greater impact on U.S. history than President John Kennedy's assassination. Kennedy's death in 1963 caused no sharp turns in the prevailing economic, political, or social conditions. The same basic governmental policies continued to be carried out, the same problems continued to exist, the same pressures for social change continued to mount.

Kennedy, as a *personality*, had a particular mystique, but there were others who could fill his *social role* of political leader for the U.S. capi-

talist class—as Lyndon Baines Johnson proved. The smoothness of the shift from the "Camelot" White House to the LBJ administration was based on the existence of a broad array of political servants who wish to defend the interests of the capitalist rulers in this country. One politician can be easily substituted for another.

Individual leaders of capitalist society are interchangeable because the fundamental crisis of the system cannot be overcome by the brilliance of particular persons. The loss of an outstanding individual member of the ruling class or its power structure is rarely any great tragedy for the masters of capitalist society. A replacement is usually not too difficult to find.

The death of Malcolm X, on the other hand, was a serious blow to the Black struggle and the revolutionary movement. It is much harder for the working class to develop the leadership needed to confront the most powerful ruling class in history. Although the proletariat is composed of millions of people, individuals are brutalized, educated from birth in bourgeois ideology, and repressed by capitalist institutions. Many of the most talented are bought off by the bosses—incorporated into the trade union bureaucracy, placed in supervisory or other low-level management positions, etc. The working class can ill afford to lose those precious individuals who demonstrate both leadership qualities and a commitment to its cause.

The capitalists and their police agencies recognize the importance of working class leadership. Lawsuits which forced the release of thousands of FBI documents show how that agency targeted Black organizations and leaders. In 1968, for example, J. Edgar Hoover instructed FBI agents around the country: "Prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement. [Blacked out] might have been such a 'messiah'; he is the martyr of the movement today." Looking at the actual memorandum, the name "Malcolm X" would fit perfectly into the blotted-out space.

Evelyn Sell

On November 24, 1964, Malcolm returned to the U.S. and carried out a heavy schedule of activities. The ideas he expressed at OAAU rallies and at meetings across the country showed that he was still going through a process of changing his views and expanding his understanding of society. In the last weeks of his life, he repeatedly asserted that he was a target for assassination. On February 14, 1965, his home was firebombed while he, his wife, and their four young children were asleep. They managed to escape unharmed and Malcolm insisted on carrying out a Detroit speaking engagement although he was suffering from fatigue, strain, smoke inhalation, and a bad cold. As a participant in the meeting that night I could see how tired and ill he was, but it was clear that he had no intention of swerving from his course and that his views were still evolving.

Less than a week later his development as a central leader of the Black movement was cut short by assassins' bullets. His newborn organization was not sturdy enough to overcome the loss of his guidance, although it continued to function for a time. His legacy has been passed down primarily through recordings and written transcriptions of his talks.

Although present and future generations can learn from and be inspired by what Malcolm said and did, his absence from the living movement had a disastrous effect on the development of a Black leadership. Both his accomplishments during his life and the vacuum left by his death testify to the crucial role which can be played by particular individuals in shaping historical events. (See box on page 14.)

Personal Qualities of Malcolm X

The life experiences and the accomplishments of Malcolm X demonstrate his capacity to become the central leader of the Black struggle. His autobiography shows that he was a fairly typical product of social conditions in the Black community. Born in Nebraska during the late 1920s, he experienced the oppression of a racist society. In his late teens he became a successful petty criminal in the Harlem underworld. After several trips to jail, he landed in a maximum-security prison in Massachusetts. It was here that Malcolm began to distinguish himself as a nontypical product of racist social conditions. He read "thousands of books because I wanted to know what made people the way they were." He didn't find answers in the prison library. His brother, a member of the Detroit temple of the NOI, visited him in prison and began Malcolm's conversion to the Black Muslim movement.

Released from prison in August 1952, Malcolm soon became a member of the small Detroit Temple Number One and volunteered his services. When he produced a threefold increase in membership, he was made an assistant minister. At the end of 1953, he went to Chicago to live with and be personally trained by Elijah Muhammad. By June 1954 Malcolm had established Boston's Temple Eleven in three

months and Philadelphia's Temple Twelve in less than three months, and was appointed minister of New York City's Temple Seven. He transformed the small storefront mosque into a large and powerful organization in Harlem, the largest Black ghetto in the U.S.

The ruling class power structure in New York was compelled to recognize Malcolm as a potent force when a member of the NOI was jailed on April 14, 1958. Hundreds of fellow NOI members surrounded the police station. Fearing a riot, the authorities called on well-known Black leaders to handle the situation—with no success. Malcolm went to the station, negotiated hospital care and release for the Muslim brother, and then stepped outside and made a slight gesture to the silent crowd. Within minutes, they vanished. The awed police captain remarked, "No man should have that much power over that many people. We cannot control this town if one man can wield that kind of power."

Malcolm soon reached even greater national and international prominence. He became chief troubleshooter and public voice for Elijah Muhammad both within the United States and abroad. The record of his successes during this period showed that Malcolm had extraordinary abilities—a powerful combination of native talents augmented by his personal experiences, studies, and travel abroad. His leadership qualities were proven. Though there are never any historical guarantees, it seems likely that, had he lived, he might well have proven capable of passing history's test, answering the crucial need for leadership of the Black liberation struggle.

The Civil Rights Struggle

Malcolm joined the Nation of Islam on the eve of the civil rights explosion in the South. Although the majority of Blacks did not support the NOI's religious doctrine and goal of a separate Black nation, that organization did articulate most clearly and symbolize most dramatically significant new attitudes in Black communities around the country: self-reliance, self-confidence, and racial solidarity in the fight against the dominant white power structure. In their schools and publications, the NOI emphasized the true history of Black people in the U.S., the past record of Black contributions to world culture, and the contemporary struggles and achievements of colored people throughout the world.

The NOI played no role in the eruption of civil rights battles in the mid-1950s and the growing movement of the early 1960s. In fact, it rejected the sit-in movement and argued that, instead of "going into those stores where we are neither wanted nor invited," Blacks should concentrate on developing their own businesses. The NOI criticized the NAACP and the Urban League as being controlled by white men, and opposed Martin Luther King's passive resistance philosophy—calling it a "slave philosophy" which preached love for the oppressor.

This abstention from and opposition to the civil rights struggle ran counter to the mood of

many NOI members. After his break with Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm explained: "The Black Muslim movement attracted the most militant young Black people in this country. The most restless, the most impatient, and the most uncompromising Black men and women were attracted to the Black Muslim movement. . . . It actually developed, it grew, it became powerful—but it was in a vacuum. And it was filled with extremely militant young people who weren't willing to compromise with anything and wanted action. More action, actually, than the organization could produce."

Malcolm's personal inclination to get involved in the Black liberation movement was expressed openly after his departure from the NOI. He said that Elijah Muhammad had restrained him from participating more vigorously but "it's going to be different now. I'm going to join in the fight wherever Negroes ask for my help, and I suspect my activities will be on a greater and more intensive scale than in the past. . . . I am prepared to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere."

Malcolm's entrance into the civil rights street battles added a pungent ingredient to a pot already boiling over with civil disobedience actions, rent strikes, school boycotts, and countrywide demonstrations. His statements were a challenge to the recognized leadership of the civil rights movement.

"There's no use deceiving ourselves," he stated. "Good education, housing and jobs are imperatives for the Negroes, and I shall support them in their fight to win these objectives. But I shall also tell the Negroes that while these are necessary, they cannot solve the Negro problem."

"I shall also tell them what has been called the 'Negro revolution' in the United States is a deception practiced upon them."

"I shall tell them what a real revolution means—the French revolution, the American revolution, Algeria, to name a few. There can be no revolution without bloodshed, and it is nonsense to describe the civil rights movement in America as a revolution."

These pronouncements were greeted coldly by the acknowledged leaders of the civil rights struggle. James Farmer, then national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), was quick to disclaim any sympathy with Malcolm's remarks. "All participants in CORE projects are pledged to non-violence in every project," Farmer explained.

Paul Zuber, a Black attorney practicing in New York commented, "CORE can't get 400 members in Harlem, but Malcolm X can draw from 4,000 to 10,000 people when he speaks on 125th Street. I think the power play is now on, and the ultimate decision does not rest with Roy Wilkins [head of the NAACP], Malcolm X, or James Farmer; it rests with 22 million Negroes living in this country."

Promising Developments

The alternative leadership offered by Malcolm was codified in the program of the OAAU. It ad-

ressed critical needs of Blacks across the U.S., advocated a strategy of independent united action to gain Black control of the Black community, and explained, "What we do here in regaining our self-respect, manhood, dignity, and freedom helps all people everywhere who are fighting against oppression."

Specific projects included support to rent strikes and a housing self-improvement program, community action to improve schools and textbooks, and community programs to help unwed mothers, drug addicts, youth, and veterans.

OAAU political action plans included "a voter registration drive to make every unregistered voter in the Afro-American community an Independent voter; we propose to support and/or organize political clubs, to run Independent candidates for office, and to support any Afro-American already in office who answers to and is responsible to the Afro-American community."

In his public speeches, Malcolm attacked the two major parties with equal fervor and stated, "Any Negro who registers as a Democrat or a Republican is a traitor to his own people." The significance of Malcolm's call for independent political action took on added weight when the Michigan Freedom Now Party gained ballot status and ran militant Black nationalist candidates in the state's 1964 election campaign. This was the most advanced expression of independent Black political action in the country.

In order to carry out the goals he envisioned, Malcolm spent the summer and fall of 1964 in Africa and the Middle East where he gained further stature as an outstanding leader. In July he addressed a conference of the Organization of African Unity and urged the members, "In the interests of world peace and security, we beseech the heads of the independent African states to recommend an immediate investigation into our problems by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights." While in Kenya he was given time on the government radio and met with top-level government officials. The U.S. embassy protested according such honors to a person held in low repute in the United States, but the Kenya government rejected the protest. The World Muslim League, founded in 1962 as the supreme religious body in the Muslim world, designated Malcolm as their official representative in the U.S.

Malcolm visited over a dozen countries and spoke with such African leaders as Nasser, Nyerere, Sekou Toure, Nkrumah, Azikiwe, and Jomo Kenyatta. U.S. newspapers complained bitterly that Malcolm was responsible for the African opposition to U.S. policies in the United Nations' discussions on the Congo.

While Malcolm was overseas, the civil rights movement in the U.S. was carrying out intensive activities in the South, and there were Black ghetto explosions in the North. When he returned to New York in November, it was clear that his views had continued to develop. (For a detailed description and analysis, read George Breitman's *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*.)

GEORGE BREITMAN ON 'THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X'

This review by George Breitman of The Autobiography of Malcolm X appeared in the October 18, 1965, issue of the Militant newspaper.

Malcolm X worked on this book because he hoped "that if I honestly and fully tell my life's account, read objectively, it might prove to be a testimony of some social value." That hope is fulfilled; his autobiography is a valuable document helping to explain the development of a remarkable man who had a strong influence on Black and white thought in our time.

The publishers say it is "a classic of American testimony, fit to stand beside Frederick Douglass, James Weldon Johnson, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and the others who have explained what it is to be a black man in white America." This is true, although its literary quality does not compare with that of the writers cited.

Malcolm was not a writer; he "told" this book to Alex Haley. Because Haley did not sympathize with his views, Malcolm stipulated that nothing be in it that he had not said and that nothing be left out of it that he wanted in it. The actual writing and arrangement were done by Haley. As Malcolm had predicted, he did not live to see the

full and final version; he was assassinated on the weekend that he was supposed to visit Haley's home for a last reading of the manuscript.

There is another factor that keeps this from being the "definitive" book on Malcolm. And that is the fact that it was completed during a period of great and rapid change in his life and outlook, and does not adequately reflect ideas and positions he arrived at in his final months.

Original Purpose

Originally, it was to be the story of Malcolm the Black Muslim; the first dedication was to Elijah Muhammad and the royalties were to go to his organization. It was begun early in 1963, a full year before Malcolm's break with the Black Muslims in March 1964, and most of the material was set down in print before the break. If it had been published then, it would still have been a fascinating narrative, but along strictly "orthodox" Black Muslim lines.

Malcolm later wanted to make changes in this part of the book (not in its account of what had happened, but in the opinions and judgments expressed there). However, he let Haley talk him out of making such changes. This was un-

fortunate, because the book attributes to Malcolm formulations and even concepts that he no longer held at the time of his death. In his epilogue, Haley himself brings up to date Malcolm's changed views on intermarriage; but a gap remains in the book on other, more basic questions.

After the split with Muhammad, three or four chapters were added on, but only the report of the split and Malcolm's first trip to Mecca and Africa in the spring of 1964 can be regarded as in any way satisfactory. His second and longer trip to Africa in the summer is barely mentioned, and there is very little about the crucial last three months after his return to the U.S.—which was the period when his ideas were developing most rapidly (on Black nationalism, socialism, etc.).

Until a study of this period in Malcolm's life is published, the new Merit Publishers' book, *Malcolm X Speaks*, and especially its last eight chapters, containing speeches and statements from December 1964 to February 1965, are indispensable for understanding the revolutionary direction of Malcolm's thought which the autobiography presents only in part, and in some parts unclearly or ambiguously.

The first half of the autobiography deals with Malcolm until the age of 27—his birth in Nebraska,

The Black Struggle and the American Revolution

While speaking at a symposium in May 1964, Malcolm was asked what political system he favored. His answer:

"I don't know. But I'm flexible. As was stated earlier, all of the countries that are emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning toward socialism. I don't think it's an accident. Most of the countries that were colonial powers were capitalist countries and the last bulwark of capitalism today is America, and it's im-

possible for a white person today to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism. You can't have capitalism without racism. And if you find a person without racism . . . usually they're socialists or their political philosophy is socialism."

Nine months later, when I heard him speak days before his assassination, he explained the connection between the internal struggle against American imperialism and the external struggle against U.S. imperialism being waged by peoples throughout the world. I am not claiming that Malcolm was a socialist or Marxist at the time of his death. He was going through a process of deepening his under

his childhood in Michigan, his adolescence in Boston, his drift into hustling, narcotics, and crime in Harlem, his arrest for robbery before he was 21, his six-and-one-half years in prison and his introduction to the doctrines of Elijah Muhammad. It explains convincingly why this shrewd young man, who had not believed in anything but how to make a fast buck, was so powerfully attracted to the Black Muslims and why he became Muhammad's most dedicated and unquestioning disciple.

Tireless Work

The second half includes Malcolm's picture of the Black Muslims and his tireless work in helping to build it from a small sect into an influential national organization (1952-64), and some of the events in the brief 50 weeks remaining of his life after he left the Black Muslims. The conception of Malcolm held by the masses in the Black ghetto—of an uncompromising and incorruptible militant—is fully confirmed in these chapters; and with it is evidence of Malcolm's capacity for continued intellectual growth. Some readers may also be surprised by Malcolm's sense of humor, his modesty, his respect and hunger for education,

and his class consciousness (in relation to the Negro middle class).

Along the way, Malcolm expresses opinions on a wide variety of subjects, most connected with race relations, but not all. Some of these are acute, and others are nothing but prejudices (for example, his unenlightened attitude toward women, which stemmed partly from his experiences as a hustler and was reinforced by Black Muslim doctrine on relations between women and men). His predictions that he would die violently, that he would be killed before this book was published, and that the press would then identify him with hate and irresponsibility, proved to be all too correct.

In addition to the autobiography, the book contains an introduction by *New York Times* reporter M.S. Handler (marred by the utterly wrong statement that at the end of his life Malcolm "no longer inveighed against the United States"); a brief afterword by actor-playwright Ossie Davis, explaining why he gave the eulogy at Malcolm's funeral; and a 74-page epilogue by Alex Haley.

The epilogue is quite good where Haley is reporting things he personally witnessed and experienced—how the book was written, the tension under which Malcolm

lived, how hard he worked, how he felt most at ease among the masses on the streets of Harlem, how aware he was of a tendency to shut his mind to problems he couldn't solve, etc. It is not so good where Haley touches on things like the organizational problems facing Malcolm and his coworkers, which Malcolm never discussed with him.

Haley carries the story up to Malcolm's assassination and funeral, but this is for the most part a routine summary of the newspaper articles of that time, which were more concerned with sensationalizing the developments than with digging into them. One exception is Haley's report that Malcolm told him, on the phone the day before the assassination:

"The more I keep thinking about this thing, the things that have been happening lately [attempts on his life], I'm not at all that sure it's the Muslims. I know what they can do, and what they can't and they can't do some of the stuff recently going on. Now, I'm going to tell you, the more I keep thinking about what happened to me in France, I think I'm going to quit saying it's the Muslims." The next day, an hour before his death, he said the same thing to associates in the anteroom of the Audubon Ballroom. ■

standing of long-held views and gaining new insights into social realities and possibilities.

It was the direction of his thinking that was so exciting to Marxists who see the *combined character* of the coming American revolution, that is, a proletarian revolution to provide the preconditions for the establishment of a socialist society and a nationalist revolution to win full equality and liberation for oppressed national minorities. Because of their key role in helping to shape and reshape American society and their social weight in contemporary life, Blacks have acted and will act as a vanguard within the revolutionary movement.

Malcolm's leadership qualities, ideologically and organizationally, marked him as a prime candidate to help forge the needed unity between the working class movement and the struggles of oppressed nationalities.

Marxists celebrate Malcolm's life as proof of the capacity of exploited and oppressed persons to overcome tremendous obstacles as they strive to build a better world. We mourn Malcolm's death as a severe setback to the progress of the Black liberation movement and the development of the revolutionary movement. ■

A RESOLUTION TURNING AWAY FROM SOCIALISM

On the Report Adopted by the 13th Chinese CP Congress

Editorial from *October Review*

The 13th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP) adopted the report given by Zhao Ziyang (hereafter referred to as the Report): the reform of the economic system launched by Deng Xiaoping-Zhao Ziyang will be furthered, borrowing techniques of commodity production and market distribution from capitalism; certain reforms of the political structure will begin; the idea of the "first phase of socialism" is stressed in theoretical terms, attempting to justify, in the name of socialism, imitation of capitalist methods.

Continuation of 'Socialism in One Country'

The Deng policy has made no changes in the Stalinist line of "socialism in one country": the bureaucracy refuses to promote the world revolution but on the contrary seeks peaceful coexistence with imperialism, while in the scope under its control, the bureaucracy carries out economic construction according to the will of the bureaucrats. This line can be seen in the Report: in the name of defending world peace, the worker and peasant revolution of other countries is not mentioned at all.

Socialism cannot be achieved without the perspective of world revolution and the road leading to it, especially in a country with such low productivity as China. In addition, the privileged bureaucracy monopolizes state power and deprives the workers and peasants of their right to practice socialist democracy. Hence, the economic plan cannot meet the needs of society and cannot be drawn up democratically, and the producers cannot manage production directly. This leads to irrational plans, wrong policies, frustrated initiatives of producers, and slow development of the productive forces which cannot even catch up with the general level of capitalist countries. The bureaucracy, refusing to promote the world revolution and refusing to practice socialist democracy, is compelled to turn away from the Maoist line of government by command which has caused production to stagnate, and has forced the bureaucracy to seek the aid of capitalist methods of production and distribution to temporarily revive the economy. Consequently it is confronted with problems generated by capitalist methods.

From Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, to today's Marxists, the position has been: socialism is built on the high level of productivity developed by capitalism; though public ownership is an element of

socialist economy, other elements, such as high level of productivity, worldwide exchange of resources and technology, and socialist democracy, are all necessary conditions. The backward countries can overthrow capitalism sooner than the advanced countries because of their acute social contradictions, yet the conditions for the realization of socialism exist only when capitalism is also overthrown in the advanced countries. Socialism cannot be built within the boundary of one country. Thus, societies in transition have a primary task of promoting the world revolution and practicing socialist democracy so as to raise productivity as quickly as possible through the efforts of the workers and peasants.

The economic reform proposed by Zhao is contrary to Marxist positions and methods. It gives lip service to the development of socialism but in fact it moves away from socialism.

Wrong Guiding Principles

In proposing the guiding principles for the present stage, the Report says that the first one is to concentrate all forces to carry out modernization and develop productivity. It says, "the starting point in considering problems and the basic criterion in examining work should be the question of whether it facilitates the development of productivity." The Report also stresses that "everything that is favorable to the development of productivity corresponds to the basic interests of the people, and so is required or permitted by socialism."

This assertion is apparently correct, because the development of productivity is necessary. The question, however, is what are the methods to develop productivity? The Report uses the development of productivity merely as a pretext—to cover up its encouragement of the development of capitalist factors. Although the Report starts by reiterating that New China had to take the road of socialism, it does not explain why capitalism was unsuitable for China at that time, or why it was not suitable at that time but can help the development of productivity today, or whether the use of capitalist methods to develop productivity today will generate problems as before.

It is necessary to point out that capitalism in China in the early 20th century was underdeveloped capitalism, dominated by the capital and commodities of imperialism and constrained by the world division of labor. The result was impoverishment in the countryside, nondevelopment of national

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industry, continuous extraction of resources from the country, stunted primitive accumulation, serious differentiation between the rich and the poor, and violent class contradictions. Through revolution, the Chinese laboring masses have rejected capitalism and, despite the sabotage of bureaucratic rule, the development of China's productivity in over three decades must be attributed to the practice of state ownership, planned economy, and monopoly of foreign trade.

The Report makes passing mention of these historical facts, but does not explain the historical lesson because this would contradict its present economic policy; the latter in the short term seems to be reviving the economy, but, in the near future, the problems generated by the capitalist mode (such as anarchic production, concentration of resources and wealth in the hands of a minority, transfer of resources out of the country, increasing influence of the world capitalist market on the economy) will in practice hinder the development of productivity, breach the general interests of the people and the state, and endanger socialist economic elements. The Report ignores the burgeoning problems by simply alluding to the importance of the development of productivity; the rightist economic policy is promoted by a guiding principle of pragmatism and utilitarianism. This has nothing in common with Marxism.

The other guiding principle proposed by the Report is that "with public ownership being primary, the planned commodity economy should be fully developed. The full development of the commodity economy is an essential stage of socialist economic development, and a necessary condition for realizing the socialization of production and its modernization."

Capitalist commodity economy is dominated by the law of value, competition, and anarchism. Production is decided not by social need but by the need of those who can afford it. In competition, certain production mechanisms necessary to society will be eliminated. The production of commodities is for the pursuit of surplus value and the reproduction of capital. If commodity production is fully developed, the above laws will dominate China's economy. The theory of the essential stage is in fact an adaptation of the archaic theory that, in backward countries, socialism cannot be projected because of their low productivity level; hence capitalist development is a stage that cannot be bypassed.

Commodity economy is basically contrary to socialist economy. In China, in the coming historical period, the low productivity and the shortage of products condition the existence of commodity production and the market; the law of value still plays a role and cannot be abolished by simple administrative measures. The state should consciously channel and restrain them, and integrate them into economic planning. With the development of productivity and the growing abundance of products, the role of commodity production and the market will diminish. The state should aid the development

not of the commodity economy but of the socialist economy. The guiding principles elaborated in the Report are basically contrary to socialism.

Planned Economy Gives Way to Market Mechanisms

Guided by the above orientation, the Report proposes that (1) planning should be based on commodity exchange and the law of value; the scope of economic sectors regulated by state planning should be reduced; state control over enterprises should be changed to indirect management; (2) the new mechanism for the economy should be "the market regulated by the state and the enterprises directed by the market."

According to the above proposals, the state-regulated sectors will diminish. In fact, centralized planned economy has been reduced by half in the past nine years. In agriculture, except for a few major agricultural subsidiary products which are produced according to requisitional contracts, other grain and cotton products are produced according to the market; directives on their production are not obligatory. In industry, state-regulated products managed by the state planning committee have declined from over 300 in the past to about 60 today; products distributed by the state have declined from 256 in 1984 to 26 today. Further reductions will be carried out. No wonder the term "planning mechanism" does not appear in the "new economic mechanism" mentioned in the Report.

The Report further promotes the separation of ownership and operation in state-owned enterprises. Enterprises will have autonomy in operation and will be operated by the contractors (usually the director or manager) in the form of contracting or hiring. Entrepreneurs will emerge from market competition, and labor discipline will be imposed on the workers. With the separation of ownership and use, ownership retains significance almost only as a legal form of property. More fundamental is that these enterprises operate under the law of value, in pursuit of profits and capital reproduction.

In addition, the form of ownership in certain state-owned enterprises is changing. The Report says that the form of shareholding (shares held by the state, departments, regions, enterprises, or individuals) can continue being experimented with. "The property right of some small state-owned enterprises can be transferred to collectives or individuals with compensation." State-owned land is also being sold to individuals in certain regions.

The market system is to be generally set up, including not only consumer goods and means of production but also capital, labor, technology, information, and property; they "should be competitive and open." "A small number of important commodities and labor costs will be regulated by the state, and the remaining majority of commodities and labor costs will be regulated by the market." The labor market being generally and formally open signifies that labor power becomes a commodity sold in the market. The Report acknowledges that "the issuance of bonds by enterprises to gather capital

will lead to interest gained from the bonds; the development of the shareholding economy will lead to dividends; the employment of a certain number of laborers by private enterprise [some enterprises already employ over 10,000 workers] will lead to the entrepreneurs earning incomes not from their own labor. So long as the above incomes are obtained legally, they should be permitted." This shows that the "exploiting system and exploiting class," claimed by the Report to have been eliminated, are being partially revived.

Concerning foreign trade, the Report proposes that reform should be conducted to allow foreign trade enterprises to account for their own profits and losses, to operate freely, and to integrate industry and commerce. The state's monopoly of foreign trade is relaxed, and certain enterprises (including enterprises run jointly by Chinese and foreign capital) can retain half or even over half of the foreign currency they earn through exports. (Some electronics enterprises can retain all the foreign currency.) The liberalization of foreign trade some years ago led to a sales war among different regions and units which competed by lowering their export prices, thus incurring a serious loss to the state. Now the same thing will be repeated.

In sum, state ownership is the base of the socialist system, planned economy and monopoly of foreign trade its two levers. In the Report, state ownership is further weakened; the market economy is to replace the planned economy; the monopoly of foreign trade is relaxed; the exploiting system is partially revived. All these are retreats from the socialist direction.

These retreats breach both the immediate and long-term interests of the proletariat. On the one hand, control over prices is relaxed and inflation rises. On the other hand, the material privileges of the bureaucracy are not abolished, but the people are forced to "construct the country by leading a frugal life." In addition, it is stipulated that the increased rate of the average wages and bonuses of workers cannot exceed the increased rate of labor productivity.

Limitation of the Political Reform

The Report, while asserting that the "basic political system is good," acknowledges that "some serious faults exist in the leadership system, organizational form, and work methods, manifesting themselves mainly in the overcentralization of power and gravity of bureaucratism." Nevertheless, the Report postpones the establishment of an advanced democracy and a codified legal system to the distant future, saying it is a long-term goal of reform requiring long-term efforts. Meanwhile, "multiparty cooperation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China" is praised as a feature of the system, something superior; "the feature and superiority should not be abandoned to copy the rotation of political parties in exercising power practiced in the West." This means the one-party

dictatorship of the CCP is to continue with the other "parties" playing a decorative role.

A short-term goal of reform is to raise the efficiency of the leadership system. The "crucial" measure is to separate the party from the state. However, since the CCP insists on its leadership, the separation is only something formal; it symbolizes a redistribution of power and a new division of labor, so that within the same administrative unit there would not be multiple centers of power.

Although the Report says that "the party should safeguard the full functioning of state organs, and should respect rather than dominate the work of the mass organizations and enterprises," the party will retain its leadership on important political principles and major decisions, and the right to nominate important cadres to the state institutions. This has nothing in common with the urgent need of the masses: a genuine separation of the state and the party, which means that the CCP's leadership and domination over state institutions, mass organizations, and enterprises must be totally abolished; the party must not rise above the people and the state; the party must not direct the state army; the party must not feed on the material and financial strength of the state. The people should enjoy full democratic rights, and make genuine choices among different alternatives proposed by different political parties; the latter must be able to legally exist, conduct activities, and strive for the support of the masses.

The Report proposes other measures: more decentralization of power; reform of the government structure so that streamlining is not followed, as previously, by unemployment; reform of the personnel system; setting up of a system of dialogue with society; "improvement of certain institutions of socialist democracy"; strengthening of the legal system. Though the Report admits that these are repeated motifs and limited short-term goals, "it might take ten years or longer for the effects to be seen." This reflects the lack of confidence of the CCP leadership.

Even a very mild political reform would at once come into conflict with the privileged interests of the various layers of CCP bureaucrats. To defend the interests of the Chinese people, such minimum reforms are far from adequate. The only way is a radical reform of China's political system, i.e., the abolition of the bureaucracy.

First Phase of Socialism or Transitional Society?

To justify the difficulties, backwardness, and lack of democracy and legal system in the 38 years of CCP rule, to justify the economic reform which turns away from socialist principles, the Report presents the theory of the first phase of socialism. It acknowledges that China's productivity level lags far behind the advanced capitalist countries, but it defines China as being in the first phase of socialism. It goes on to assert that this phase will last at least a century before it enters the more advanced phase of socialism. This is con-

trary to the view of the founders of scientific socialism. They believed that the productivity level of socialist societies is higher than the level reached by capitalism, and socialist democracy is far more advanced than capitalist democracy. China's present conditions do not qualify as the first phase of socialism.

If the reforms proposed by the Report are implemented, the CCP will move further away from socialist principles.

Then, what sort of society is China?

Marx asserts in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* that there is a period of revolutionary change when a society is transformed from capitalist society to communist society (the first phase of which is socialist society); corresponding to this period is a political transition period; the state can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Today's China is in the revolutionary change or transitional period described by Marx. It is a transitional society between capitalism and socialism.

The "transition period" described in the Report refers to the state when "the socialist economic foundation is not yet laid." It seems the criterion is only the nationalization of the means of production, regardless of the low productivity level. This is obviously incorrect. Our position is that all bureaucratized workers' states including China and the Soviet Union are transitional societies between capitalism and socialism. They might proceed to socialism but they might also regress to capitalism. China's present economic reform is moving towards the latter.

The Masses Must Be Master

The new personnel arrangements of the 13th Congress promote younger cadres to top leadership

positions. They might adopt a more liberal rule, in particular towards the intellectuals. Hence, the Report pledges the encouragement of exploration in practical work and contact with various ideologies in theoretical studies.

The broad masses should and will make use of the opportunities to be active in political, ideological, academic, and literary fields and to compel the CCP leaders to make good on their pledge.

The CCP leaders have always engaged in empty talk issuing meaningless promises for democratic reform. While they are talking of promoting democratization, they continue to imprison militants who fight for democracy. If they are to demonstrate their sincerity by action, they must first unconditionally release all political prisoners and dissidents, and reverse wrong political verdicts (including the slanderous charge that Trotskyists are "counterrevolutionary").

The Chinese laboring masses are made to bear the brunt of the economic reform (in particular reforms on prices, wages, and employment). They cannot rely on the authorities to redress the wrongs or to defend their interests. Only by the unity of the laboring masses can they defend their rights.

The proletariat must fight for power to be master of the country. It must organize and fight for the self-management of enterprises in opposition to the monopoly of power by directors or managers. This is the first step towards the proletariat's intervention in state politics, in alliance with other sectors of the population, to struggle against the bureaucracy.

Only in this way can China's political and economic reforms be promoted to facilitate China's progress towards socialism instead of regression towards capitalism. ■

November 10, 1987

Notebooks for Study and Research

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THE BRITISH ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

by Peter Bloomer

This account of anti-apartheid work in Britain is written by a supporter of the British weekly Socialist Action, an anti-apartheid activist, a member of Revolution Youth and of the Socialist League. There are interesting similarities and differences between the situation in Britain and the United States. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the ruling Conservative Party (popularly known as "the Tories") holds right-wing positions—including an inclination to support South Africa's racist apartheid government—similar to those held by the Reagan administration in the U.S. On the other hand, what is roughly the British equivalent to our own Democratic Party—the Social Democratic and Liberal Alliance—is not the primary opposition to Thatcher. The major opposition is represented by the working class Labor Party, containing both moderate reformists and militant socialists. The Labor Party has a solid base in the massive Trade Union Congress (TUC), similar to the AFL-CIO but with far more radical traditions; it also has control of local governments (or councils) in a number of towns and cities. The Communist Party has also had more influence in the labor movement in Britain than is the case in the U.S.—although that organization has recently split into a "Eurocommunist" wing and a more orthodox Stalinist group around the newspaper Morning Star. The British left also has a myriad of groups identifying with the Trotskyist tradition—including the British Socialist Workers Party, the Militant Tendency, the Workers Revolutionary Party, and others; of special importance are two which identify with the Fourth International: the Socialist League and the International Socialist Group. Also, because South Africa used to be a British colony, the anti-apartheid movement has deeper roots and a longer history in Britain than is the case in the U.S. The central organization in that movement has the name Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), which is the focus of this article. Peter Bloomer has emphasized to us that he is only providing the views of an individual anti-apartheid activist in Britain, but we think his article will be of interest to U.S. activists as well. This article is based on a presentation given in October 1987, at the Fourth International's leadership school.

In this article I will attempt to give an impression of the anti-apartheid movement as it is today, and how it can be built. It will not be an analysis or schema on how the revolutionary process will develop in South Africa and Namibia.

Solidarity with South Africa is largely centered within the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain. The AAM was established over thirty years ago, mainly by the Communist Party, and has had varying fortunes since then. From its inception the AAM was primarily a support group to the African National Congress (ANC) and South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), centered around political solidarity and financial aid to the ANC. From this narrow perspective the AAM has broadened out over the last five years and is now conducting a determined campaign for sanctions against the Pretoria regime, for the banning of imports of Namibian uranium, and broadly for the implementation of one person one vote in free and democratic elections within South Africa and Namibia. The AAM's emphasis on the ANC, which is not the only liberation current in South Africa, has been questioned by some on the left who have reservations about aspects of the ANC's approach to the struggle within South Africa.

Of course, since the influence in the leadership of this campaign is the CP—which tries to impose its own perspectives—there are problems with the maintenance of a mass action campaign, but so far

the pressure from below has kept the movement broadly on the right track. Developments within the CP have led to a weakening of its influence (i.e., the expulsion of the *Morning Star* wing) with the smaller *Morning Star* wing maintaining its leadership of the AAM and the "Eurocommunist" CP largely boycotting the movement.

The massive media coverage of South Africa from 1984 to 1986 was actually instrumental in the reemergence of the AAM as an influence in British politics. The growth of the AAM and its mobilizations has been phenomenal in British terms. There has been a big similarity between this movement and the massive Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Yet it differs from CND in having a stronger base within the labor movement and in making demands which can only be fulfilled by a victorious South African and Namibian revolution and so cannot be directly destroyed in the short term (as CND was by the stationing of Cruise missiles in Britain).

The AAM has already won a consensus within Britain that "apartheid is wrong and should end," and probably has majority support on its main demand of "Sanctions Now." However, British politics is centered on elections, which has a special meaning especially since the growth of a substantial left wing in the Labor Party. The Labor Party as a whole is unambiguously against apartheid. But the AAM made no real attempt to campaign for the electorate to vote against apartheid, i.e., against the

Tories and for Labor. This is partially the result of the Communist Party's leadership of the AAM, which has never really had a coherent strategy toward elections. It's also partially due to the tradition of single-issue campaigns, which don't openly take sides in any election in order to keep the campaign single issue and not "alienate" non-Labor voters who might support the AAM.

Nonetheless, the organization has had substantial impact. The AAM's last mobilization attracted at least 280,000 to a march and rally/concert in London in July 1986. It also organized the largest political demonstration in Britain in 1987. This was fairly positive in the light of press censorship in South Africa and Namibia and thus a lowered awareness in Britain concerning those countries.

Socialist Action's Attitude

As revolutionary socialists we have a clear duty to build solidarity with all of the comrades in South Africa. In our opinion it is not correct to take a sectarian attitude to the ANC or any other progressive current within South Africa and Namibia. We seek to build solidarity with all organizations fighting against apartheid. Within Britain, we believe the most effective way to build solidarity is to intervene in the AAM, which we recognize has a limited perspective. We believe there can be no significant movement built outside of the AAM. To attempt to build solidarity within a competing solidarity movement would be sectarian, futile, and merely confusing to people interested in engaging in solidarity work. So we intervene in the AAM, but not just intervene. We seek to build the AAM; we are members of it and devote substantial resources to ensure the AAM's continued growth and to argue for a shift in its orientation. In our experience you gain influence in a movement by being its best activists both in terms of active commitment and in the clarity and correctness of the line you put forward to build the movement.

Since our organization took a decisive move towards work in the AAM we have made some significant gains:

- We have succeeded (with independent forces) in opening up some branches of the AAM, so that now they have regular meetings open to all members and interested people. Formerly only the executive of the branch would meet in a closed session.

- We have won some key branches over to our political line and have successfully proven the correctness of that line by substantially building more branches: Manchester, Huddersfield, Birmingham, Nottingham.

- We have won the demand for the AAM to hold a conference of its youth, to move towards setting up a youth section. This will enable the AAM to more effectively appeal to youth and thus broaden the movement. We have established five youth committees to date in preparation.

So far, I believe, our line has been vindicated. However we now face the more difficult task of leading some branches and hopefully the youth section of the AAM.

During our work within the AAM we have of course attracted interest in our organization. AAM activists have probably been the main area of our recruitment in the last two years.

Trade Unions and the AAM

We aim to deepen the AAM's influence within the trade unions. Already the Trade Union Congress has a policy to boycott all South African and Namibian goods, to campaign for government sanctions against the apartheid regime in Pretoria, and to broadly support the ANC and SWAPO.

This support was reflected by the invitation of Oliver Tambo (ANC president) as a major guest speaker at the 1986 TUC and Labor Party conferences. To see the moderate Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock embrace an advocate of armed struggle in South Africa, after the year before denouncing picket-line violence by the miners in the coal strike, was, to say the least, contradictory. This shows the pressure and influence that the AAM and the South African struggle can exert, even on the likes of Kinnock and Willis.

Every national union affiliated to the TUC and a few others are also affiliated to the AAM. That, in theory, represents over seven million workers. In practice national affiliation means very little, except in terms of financial support. However, in our view, it is important in terms of aiding the process of involving and mobilizing trade unionists in the AAM and its activities. The AAM has now set up a national trade union committee, which already has a few parallel groups in AAM branches. The aim of this formation is to coordinate work in the unions around AAM campaigns. Currently: 1) to release trade unionists imprisoned in South Africa and Namibia, focusing on Moses Mayekiso; 2) for the British government to introduce a total boycott of trade with South Africa; 3) for a ban of all South African coal from Britain; and 4) for workers sanctions (for example, Newcastle dockers' refusal to handle any South African and Namibian goods).

On the local branch level we seek to get branches of trade unions to affiliate to the local AAM branches, to get them to send delegates to meetings, and to mobilize their members for demonstrations, rallies, etc.

Many other revolutionary groups oppose this, as they oppose the AAM itself. Many see rank-and-file "revolutionary" solidarity as the only effective means of solidarity with South African revolutionaries. As they do not even regard the ANC as revolutionary, and may believe that the AAM *only* builds solidarity with the ANC, they refuse to join it and attack it in their press. They have attempted to build alternative campaigns, which are mainly narrow left-wing organizational "fronts" rather than genuine united fronts.

One example of this seems to be the "Campaign for Trade Union Sanctions Against South Africa,"

set up by a few "far left" groups. This organization continues even when a national trade union committee of the AAM has been set up with many AAM branches setting up parallel local and regional networks. This AAM trade union committee expressly calls for trade union sanctions against South African goods. The dockers of Newcastle have already taken this up, using TUC policy to build support, by refusing to handle South African goods. We see this development as a beginning which could be spread throughout Britain, and we see the AAM trade union committee with TUC backing as being a better instrument to carry this process through.

Debate Over 'Direct Links'

Concerning trade union solidarity there has been a great debate over the issue of "direct links" between British and South African and Namibian trade unionists. In theory we have no problem with the concept, in fact, we would claim to have a good internationalist history. However, in practice there were big problems.

Many British "revolutionary" groups (we have at least 30) invited South African trade unionists to do speaking tours in Britain. To build these tours and to get a South African trade unionist to speak they used the concept of "direct links." So the invited speaker was in theory to talk to British trade unionists. What happened was that many groups would set up public meetings, under their name, at which the main speaker was a South African trade unionist. Yet they had no qualms about having one or two of their own members speaking as well, usually promoting their group, etc.

This was happening on a large scale, with at least six or seven of these tours at the same time. So in effect they were not "direct links" between British rank-and-file and South African trade unionists, but were instead used to promote different "revolutionary" groups, which would set up their own appeals for money and their own campaigns over individual South African and Namibian trade unionists who were in prison or on trial. It became a maze in which many people who were interested in building solidarity with South Africa became confused. Adding to the confusion was anger over rumors of money, collected for South African families, unions, etc., going astray. Some British "revolutionary" groups were also directly intervening into South African politics by seeking to win adherents to their own "sister" organizations which they set up in South Africa.

Our attitude was that in the future all money collected in Britain must be passed on through official channels, i.e., identified regional and national trade union and political organizations. We also felt that clarification was required, and publicized the integrity of our and the AAM's methods of collecting and distributing money raised.

Youth and the AAM

Amongst youth there is a strong feeling against apartheid. Already a large proportion of

the AAM is youth. However, within Britain there is a collective youth identity and a substantial "youthist" sentiment (i.e., youth are different and they will not be led by older people). So because of our own positive experience within youth CND we are in favor of the establishment of a national youth section of the AAM.

Revolution Youth, an independent youth organization in solidarity with the Fourth International, realizes the leading role that we must play in this youth section and are gearing ourselves up to meet this challenge. The date of the first national youth anti-apartheid conference has already been set, so we are building it and preparing our participation. There are, however, many problems:

1) The conference arrangements are currently being undertaken by the AAM full-timers, that is, the *Morning Star* group. There is a committee designed to undertake the task, but it is heavily weighted toward the national anti-apartheid structure. So there is some uncertainty about the location—Birmingham (where the youth have particular strength) or London—and there is widespread skepticism as to whether the conference will be effectively built by the national full-timers.

2) The national executive and the conference organizing committee have both agreed on a maximum age limit of 21 for the conference. This is clearly an attempt to ensure that the conference is small. We have submitted resolutions to the national conference to challenge this and suggest a maximum age of 26.

3) The decision to convene a youth conference was taken in November 1986, and the date of the conference is set for January 1988, so there is obviously concern about whether the conference will actually take place. The *Morning Star* group could easily postpone the conference administratively, thus postponing the effect of the youth radicalization within the AAM which threatens its control.

4) The national executive position is still ambiguous regarding the actual establishment of an independent youth section. We have resolutions to the national conference on this point, but the AAM leaders still have room to maneuver away from setting up a youth section.

Hopefully we can take steps to either include the *Morning Star* group politically in the youth section project or organize so much pressure on them that they have to support a youth section.

We see a national AAM youth structure as being key to a mass involvement of youth in solidarity against apartheid. However, this does not mean that we don't mobilize youth now! The two go together. Two years ago we set up Youth Against Apartheid groups that were successful in themselves, but we always intended these groups to become part of the AAM. In Birmingham it took over a year, but we now have an official AAM youth committee. This tactic is part of our strategy of bringing the most radical sections of society into the AAM. Since the youth committee was formed we, as its natural leadership, have successfully attracted youth (regular meetings of 40-50) and have specifically geared activity towards Black youth. We have won a shared

consciousness amongst committee members that Black youth should be given every chance to participate and jointly lead the youth committee.

This perspective has not only involved Black youth in the AAM—which is probably the first time we have successfully integrated Black youth into any area of our work—but has also allowed us to undertake a two-way dialogue with the most politically conscious Black youth. From this perspective we have now successfully established a Black section youth committee (the first outside London) and have won political respect from a significant layer of Black youth.

We have set up five youth committees so far, and have immediate prospects for the formation of another two. In addition to the obvious strengthening of the AAM from this process, we have also increased the pressure on the AAM national leadership.

Labor Party Black Section and the AAM

In the recent past, Labor Party Black sections have formed. They are not recognized as official bodies by the Labor Party. In the last three years there has been a campaign to have them recognized and to defend Black section activists who have been disciplined, expelled, etc. Being the largest and most public Black organization within the labor movement, the Black section's view on the AAM and on South Africa in general is important, especially in regard to the AAM's work within the Black community in Britain.

The Black section takes a clear anti-imperialist stance on South Africa and Namibia, and is clearly against apartheid and for a Black-dominated state which they hope would be a socialist workers' state. However, they are unclear on how this could be achieved, and broadly support the Pan-African Congress (PAC)—a rival of the ANC. Black section activists have little respect for the ANC. Because of this they are not active in the AAM and in reality play no real role in building solidarity with the South African and Namibian struggle.

We are in a position to debate with them on this issue, being the only grouping in Britain to consistently defend the Black section against both Kinnock's witch-hunt and some of the "revolutionary" left's opportunist denunciations. Our argument would be first of all against any exclusive support for one grouping in South Africa and Namibia, in this case the PAC, and secondly to explain that the AAM no longer limits its activities to fund-raising for the ANC, that now its main concern is to campaign for sanctions against Pretoria, which the Black sections agree with. Also, on a tactical level, building the Black sections' activity in the AAM would be fruitful, as the experience in Birmingham shows.

The ANC in Britain

The *Morning Star* groups are substantially influenced by the London ANC office and thus the AAM leadership is also influenced. This leads to

the ANC having a virtual monopoly of public speaking in Britain on behalf of the national liberation movement in South Africa. They actually refuse to speak on the same platform as the Azanian People's Organization, PAC, Cape Action League, etc. In this way they prevent, or at least hinder, the publicizing of other South African points of view to the British public.

However, the ANC has a positive side also, because it takes the building of solidarity very seriously and so consistently provides high quality speakers. Their attitude toward us and other Trotskyist groups has changed in that they realize we are playing a positive role in the solidarity movement and so they will work with us.

Labor Councils Against Apartheid

Almost all labor councils (local governments in which the Labor Party holds power) have "officially" boycotted all South African goods and companies identified by the AAM as having a particularly repulsive involvement in South Africa, for example Shell, Barclay's Bank, etc. However, these sanctions are in danger with the Conservative Party's new local government bill—which specifies that local authorities must consider all tenders for services and cannot discriminate on any grounds except price and quality.

Many labor councils have also aided in publicizing the issue of South Africa. For example, the Manchester Council has consistently financed publicity for regional anti-apartheid demonstrations. Birmingham Council held a big fund-raising event for the ANC on its 75th anniversary. So the increasing attacks on local authorities will have an important effect on the AAM. The Local Government Bill is part of the Tories' attack on local government, which is designed to limit the independence of labor councils. This interference in local council affairs must be resisted. We feel the AAM must pressure these councils to resist this interference and see local government unions as being a crucial ally in this process.

Conclusion

From the above we can see the degree of integration of AAM campaigns with other struggles. This linking of struggles is endemic within British class-struggle politics. It has always been our task to educate and make these political links conscious within the working class. There are obvious opportunities to use these links to draw anti-apartheid activists into other areas of political activity and to draw other activists into the AAM. The high level of debate within the anti-apartheid movement gives us a golden opportunity to nurture a high level of political consciousness among these activists and then draw this real "class-struggle" layer into other campaigns, the Labor Party, trade unions, etc. I see the AAM as being a great resource to revitalize other areas of our work.

(Continued on page 36)

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

16. I Make the Worst Choice (continued)

It is said, "If I hadn't made that one mistake, my entire life would have been totally different." Is that true? Did Vitya Gorelov and Misha Yugov and Maryusa and Rafael perish because of one mistake?

And Volodya Serov? All he did was raise his hand at a meeting—and he spent half his life in camps. He received three terms in the labor camps for one vote that he cast. Can that really be the reason?

The event which I so anxiously awaited took place: I was expelled from the party. Arkady, my young friend from *Kharkov Proletariat* whose name I have already mentioned, played a certain role in this. At a meeting he said: "Friendship compels me to report the truth about a comrade."

A curious friendship! Of course, there was nothing new that Arkady could report about me. He spoke up not to make me look bad but to make himself look good. One was supposed to dissociate oneself; this ritual became as obligatory as the confession. I bore no resentment against Arkady; I only became less open with him. He ended up in camp just the same, even before I did.

I spent several days at home—I was fired from the editorial staff and I ended up among the unemployed (they still existed in those days). Our Nina was quite little, and Yeva, boundlessly devoted to her party work, did not always come home on time to feed her. Once she stayed far too long. I waited and waited and could not stand it any longer. I wrapped the child up in a blanket and rushed to the factory, which fortunately was not far away. I burst into the meeting, thrust my bundle into the arms of the stunned chairwoman, and ran out.

Half an hour later Yeva rebuked me, in tears. I felt a little bad about it, but the malice kept boiling up inside me. The issue was not that she was late to feed the baby. But how can a communist bury herself in the work of the cell and not see beyond her nose?

The father of two children, I was still a child. In order to demonstrate more clearly to Yeva how poorly she sees life, I made a gesture, placing both palms to my eyes, with my fingers forward, depicting the way they put blinders on horses so the horses can only see straight ahead.

"You let them put blinders on you!" I repeated. "And you were taken into the party without a probation period! It's incomprehensible!"

I was astonished at Yeva, and she was astonished at me: "How can you whip up differences when we need to pull together all our forces to expand production? If everyone is busy with discussion," she said, "then who will do the work? It's you

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.

rotten intellectuals" (Yeva, by the way, had an especially good recall of these old abusive Komso-mol words)—"you don't believe anyone, you undermine the strength of the working class, you tear us away from the most important matters!"

There was no disputing that the faction struggle at that time blinded us. About that Yeva was not mistaken. But the struggle against us blinded Yeva as well, and for a very long time. And from that time on she could not let go of the shoulder of her guide even when, in the course of events, he shifted from plainclothes detective to hangman.

Nothing changed, whether one, or one hundred, or five hundred were driven out. What difference would it make if Maryusa Yelko were still alive?

In the early autumn of 1928 we saw each other again. She visited us for a few days on her way to Moscow. Yeva was able to rent a dacha for the summer in Ryzhov, a small junction near Kharkov. It was a dark evening. Maryusa and I listened to the nightingale.

We sat together on the dacha's wooden steps. Yeva and our son were asleep. The forest rustled around us and a nightingale was singing. In our youth, we meant something very good by the word "conciliatory."

A conciliatory nightingale sang to us.

We sat for a long time. The dew had already fallen. Maryusa asked me to bring out a coat for her. She wrapped it around herself and asked:

"Don't you want to go to sleep? It's late."

"No, I don't want to."

"I don't either."

She began to talk about being a woman, that she could not become a beauty, but that a dress makes any woman look prettier.

Surely the nightingale had made her think about these things.

"Think a moment," she said. "What is the point of a dressing gown? I've never had one in my life. I don't want one, do you believe me? These things, these rags." She began to shout for the whole forest to hear. "This window dressing!"

I didn't interrupt her and she continued to speak, a little disconnectedly, but we could understand each other even then. I listened to Maryusa and involuntarily applied her words to myself, to Yeva, and to our friends. It's possible I don't recall exactly what she said, and I may be confusing what I heard in Ryzhov with what she said other times; but I remember that moment as though it were yesterday.

"Do you think I wouldn't look good in a pretty dress? But in spite of them, I don't want one. Never! Never! Someone must constantly remind them, damn them, what things are most important. What is the sense of talking to them? I am not good at small talk. I can only talk the way I'm talking now. So there, you miserable accumulators, take that!"

She tore the coat from her shoulders, hurled it to the ground, and quickly ran to her room. In the morning, smiling with embarrassment, she said:

"I'm a strange duck, right?"

No she wasn't strange. What she loved, she loved completely. And what she hated, she hated with her whole being, with her every action.

And she hated lies. And when she learned that Stalin was lying to the party, she took the only course that her conscience, her convictions, her very character could demand: she duplicated the letters that he concealed.

Maryusa could not tolerate lies. But Yeva wanted to remain true, no matter what it cost her, or her family, or her husband.

"Get this, Misha?" she said. "If I see that you are still bringing your papers into the house, I will have to tell the Regional Committee. Don't you realize that I have no choice? It is dishonorable to hide things from the party!"

Yes, Yeva was sincere with the party. I thought up an ironic retort:

"My dear, you do not lie to the party, but Stalin does. You are a plus sign. The likes of you number around half a million. But he is only one person, and a minus sign. Multiply plus half a million by minus one, and you get minus half a million."

Alas, Yeva did not understand my math. She resisted it with all her strength, and we ended up with a very difficult family life. At first Yeva simply never asked me where I went in the evenings, and then later on she became quite indifferent. I would go either to Vitya's or to Lena's. Lena did not worry about politics and didn't argue with me about anything. She was worried about literature,

and a great share of my tastes I owe to her. She also loved the truth. But I did not show her my hectographed leaflets; I spared her. And I did not involve her in criminal activity, although the investigators wanted to make it otherwise—one more accomplice in the "case" won't hurt.

When Tsypin demoted me, and later fired me, Lena—not a party member and not understanding the circumstances—was full of indignation. She declared: "That's a dirty trick!" For her, my successor, a zealous servant, became unbearable. And he had his uses. Lena openly expressed her opinion of him, and he very quickly hounded her out of the department of workers' correspondence. She was sent to the proofreading department, the penal squad.

Lena's family life was no better than mine, although in quite another way. Her husband was a competent journalist, but so saccharine and unctuous that after being around him for a while it became sickening to live on this earth.

I asked her how she could not have discerned this in him.

"I was a foolish young thing. I thought he would lead me somewhere ahead. We are going to separate soon. He has already agreed. I'm glad we have no children."

Lena had well-defined views on a mother's responsibilities; and on a father's as well.

"The strongest love of a husband will not move me as would the thought of his children," she said. It was a decisive evening. Nothing was resolved.

Once during a serious explanation to Yeva of my party affairs (we had stopped speaking about our affairs of the heart) I described my successor at the editorial office and told her why he had kicked Lena out. In a fit of temper I compared him with Yeva, and she, becoming angry, cried out:

"I won't put up with you anymore!"

She spoke in the heat of the moment. I knew her well enough. Devoid of hypocrisy and the ability to conciliate, she did not vacillate in choosing a point of view—her consciousness was totally permeated with fundamental party law, arising from the voluntary nature of membership: the majority is always right.

From my side, it was cruel to vent all my bitterness on her. Very likely, my attacks set her still more strongly against me and my idiotic papers, as she called them.

"Okay, Yeva, if you don't want to read them, you don't have to. But what was written in *Pravda* during the discussion, you read that, didn't you?"

"Not all of it, but a comrade from the Regional Committee gave us a report."

Yeva accepted an exposition of the views of the opposition, made by one of its opponents. She felt no obligation to observe the most ancient rule of justice: *Aldiatur et altera pars*—And now let us hear the other side. Thus, my statement of the views of the opposition was unnecessary to her. No one will say it better than the reporter from the Regional Committee.

At that time, the end of the 1920s, neither Yeva nor I could have thought that for displeasing

Stalin in the slightest, his most ardent supporters would be shot, and that she herself would have to raise her hand to vote for their execution. How can one condemn her? In the 1920s, she behaved honorably and in the 1930s consistently. That is all.

Our family happiness pulled apart at the seams. Our life together became intolerable, and I left to live with Grisha Baglyuk. Since demobilization from the army, he lived in Kharkov, on Katsar Street.

It was crowded at Grisha's. He and his wife and their child—Vitaly, born the same week as our Nina—his younger sister Nyusya, and myself. We were crowded together in one tiny room. There was

no room in it for boredom and melancholy. Once Nyusya let out an unusual scream: a rat was running across the floor. Grisha adroitly drove it against the little oven with a broom and threw it out.

He himself rushed around more than that rat. The child was very ill. Nyusya never put him down. But Grisha was full of plans.

"The very time one should be writing," he told me, "and these problems come along. We have to grub for food. Never mind. We'll write what we have to yet."

So I am writing, for myself and for him, to the best of my abilities. ■

[Next month: "My First Arrest"]

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AN ASSESSMENT OF GLASNOST

The Waking Giant, Gorbachev's Russia, by Martin Walker. Pantheon Books, New York, 1986, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Haskell Berman

Martin Walker was the *Manchester Guardian's* third resident correspondent in Moscow. As a result of his extensive interviews and contacts with many persons at all levels of Russian society, he provides some important insights and detailed information that make this book worth reading.

To develop an understanding of the pressures that have resulted in the initiation of Gorbachev's reform movement, Walker describes the enormous social, political, and economic changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union since the demise of Stalin. He demystifies the usual stereotypes found and promoted in the bourgeois press and provides much detail about the problems and contradictions faced in this vast bureaucratic system which Gorbachev now seeks to reform.

He describes four periods of change in both domestic and foreign policy that were previously initiated under the leadership of Khrushchev, Kosygin, Brezhnev, and Andropov. He discusses how each of these regimes sought to confront its serious contradictions. He notes and quotes extensively from Russian sources and provides "insider" information. For a bourgeois journalist his objectivity is above normal, and his analysis is interesting and refreshing. He understands and describes the tasks, the potential for success, and the limits posed for Gorbachev and his program of reform.

Walker observes that Gorbachev is the youngest head of government since Stalin, and represents a new strata. His peers are the intelligentsia, writers, professionals, lawyers, economists, journalists, "who know the system well enough to campaign for their own privileges, prerogatives, and freedoms." "Mikhail Gorbachev did not come out of nowhere. He is a product of the surging growth in Soviet education and new professions." Walker points to the million trained lawyers and economists who have been produced since 1970, far younger than the existing strata of leadership in the Communist Party.

While not a Marxist, Walker has a sense of history and some sense of class. These come out in his analysis. He explains that Gorbachev could not resort to the earlier methods of terror and repression to bring about change; his specific approach is not due solely to matters of personal style. The Russian "population was no longer a nation of docile and demoralized peasants. They would not stand for it." "He faced a task that had been set by no other leader since the revolution, to bring about a fundamental change by consent."

"In his speech to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress Mikhail Gorbachev sought to *calm Western fears*. He began most unusually by talking of Trot-

sky and the defeat of Trotsky's ambition for a revolutionary war to carry socialism into other countries. 'The views of the left communists and the Trotskyites were firmly rejected. Today, too, we are convinced that pushing revolutions from outside is futile and inadmissible and doubly so when done by military means,' said Gorbachev."

Walker himself writes accurately and sympathetically of Trotsky's role in the Russian Revolution. "Trotsky's success in recruiting tsarist officer corps to train and lead the Bolshevik Red Army was a key factor in ensuring the State's survival." It is Walker's contention that Stalin's purge of the officer corps and the party leadership in the 1930s was a blow from which the soviet system only recently has begun to recover. He states that in 1934, of 138 members elected to the Central Committee of the Soviet party, 98 were ultimately arrested and shot.

He gives this history and the present reality his own particular, non-Marxist, interpretation: "The relative stability since the end of World War II has resulted in the emergence of a class system. The offspring of senior officials receive the advantage of a good education and graduate smoothly into the elite in turn." "Soviet laws on inheritance are not punitive. . . . A country cottage, or privately owned apartment in the city, can be left to heirs. Consequently a curious new class is developing in the Soviet Union. It is misleading to see it as a new middle class. It neither enjoys the state-provided privileges of the political elite nor shares the comparative lack of consumer goods and comforts suffered by the industrial urbanized workers. They are middle class only by virtue of their possessions. . . . They should best be described as a professional class with tastes for consumer goods and possessions. They have benefited from the explosion in education in academic institutes. They have become the intelligentsia. A rebellious generation has at last become a key part of the Soviet cultural establishment."

Walker attributes the escalating corruption of recent years to Brezhnev's policy of artificially raising money wages and a system of false production quotas. High levels of state subsidies on basic food and transportation meant that a large proportion of the average pay could not find consumer goods, or could purchase only shoddy ones. This, in turn, encouraged the black market which has in many cases established a semilegal existence.

Some key issues that provide pressures and problems for the bureaucracy and the central leadership of the party, pointed out by Walker, are:

- Low and uneven levels of production in industry and agriculture.
- Red tape and inefficiency, as a result of bureaucratized centralization and planning.
- The weight of the military budget.

● The decline in GNP and an inability to keep up with the West in technological and scientific advances.

● Pressures to improve the quality of life.

● Nuclear war and nuclear energy.

Walker believes that Gorbachev's central problem is in trying to convince the party leadership and the bureaucracy of the necessity to carry through the kinds of measures he proposes. He seems to be overly optimistic about this compared to other knowledgeable writers who have had personal experience with reform movements in the bureaucratized workers' states.

Two recent interviews, one with Zhores Medvedev ("Where is Gorbachev Going?" *New Left Review*, No. 157, May/June 1986) and Zbigniew M. Kowalewski ("Gorbachev Through Polish Eyes," *Workers' Liberty*, No. 7, June 1987) describe previous attempts at implementing changes similar to those suggested by Gorbachev. Medvedev finds that the methods of Gorbachev are not too different nor any more effective than those of his predecessors. He says, "The 27th Congress has undoubtedly been a disappointment for most intellectuals and for reformers. None of this means that the new leadership has set its face against any sort of reform. They know they must try to adapt the system to make it work better. They know there is an urgent need to produce results.

But they are still not clear on how far they should go. Above all, they are very concerned to *maintain tight control* over any changes they do make."

Another side of the problem was addressed by Kowalewski: "You can't really modernize the economy without completely changing the methods of control." It is not just a question of Gorbachev obtaining support for his policies. The problem requires a strategy of a political nature. In whose hands shall control rest? Where shall decisions be made? What sector or class shall be free to overcome the limits of the existing bureaucracy?

The dilemma is thus posed for the leadership of the Soviet Union, and the bureaucracy seeks to solve it in sequential tactical steps through administrative economic measures. That is like trying to change the direction of a runaway horse by swinging its tail. The horse's head must be grabbed and controlled. The Soviet bureaucracy is not in a position to change its fundamental direction. Only the working class, which the bureaucracy must keep in check for its own survival, has that potential. The awakening of the Soviet masses is the real pressure that has brought forward the reform movement in the bureaucracy. Walker's book is important because it recognizes and reports this, yet he is unable to grasp the massive potential historic impact of this crucial reality. ■

MASS MEDIA AND THE ORIGINS OF FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media, by Michael Parenti. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1986. 258 pp., \$12.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Michael Livingston

The objective conditions for socialist revolution have been present in the advanced capitalist countries for some time now, while the subjective conditions remain absent. The absence of these subjective conditions has a number of concrete manifestations in the U.S. One is a crisis of leadership in the working class. Another is an absence of a developed, militant class consciousness in the majority of workers. Instead, the actions of many people are shaped by what Marx called *false consciousness*—beliefs, attitudes, and opinions that contradict the reality of their lives, hurt them as individuals, and hurt their class interests. This false consciousness benefits the ruling class by preventing challenges to its rule. It acts as the first line of defense, to use Antonio Gramsci's phrase, for the capitalist order. As activists we encounter the manifestations of this false consciousness every day in people's fear of communism and the Soviet Union, in the belief that "you can't fight City Hall," in antilabor sentiment, and in the idea that it's only important to "look out for number one." False consciousness created by the domination of society by bourgeois ideology is a powerful obstacle to the achievement of a democratic and just socialist order in the United States and the world.

Though some individuals are able even now—to a greater or lesser degree—to see beyond the limits of this ideology ingrained by virtually every institution in capitalist America, *mass consciousness* will only change as the life experiences of U.S. working people begin to convince them that they have to organize and actively oppose a system of class exploitation, of racial and sexual discrimination. Even then, however, there is no automatic guarantee that an effective revolutionary alternative will be arrived at. The misleaders of the working class are always at work, trying to divert any new anticapitalist consciousness that might arise into a reformist or ultraleft direction—as a means of helping the bourgeoisie to ride out the wave of radicalization and preserve their system intact.

The revolutionary Marxist movement needs to be conscious of this dynamic, to analyze consciousness and develop strategies and tactics to aid the transformation of the current subjective conditions in a revolutionary direction. The transitional program and the transitional method are two powerful tools for doing that, but by themselves are not enough. Other things are necessary, such as a Leninist party. One important weapon is a Marxist analysis of the current characteristics and roots of false consciousness.

The mass media are one of several important means by which false consciousness becomes mass consciousness. Michael Parenti's book, *Inventing Reality*, is a readable Marxist introduction to the

mass news media and how they influence the ideas of Americans. Activists will also find Parenti's book a valuable tool for education.

Parenti's major thesis is that the mass media are a key institution in maintaining the dominance of the ruling class, functioning as a propaganda instrument that legitimizes capitalism and depoliticizes the working class. Parenti's work can be divided into three parts. In the first he examines the class character of the mass media. The second and largest section of the book is composed of "case studies" of how the media foster attitudes and behavior, such as an antilabor bias, support for U.S. imperialism, and anti-communism. In the third part, Parenti discusses the techniques used to invent reality and the contradictions in the media that can be exploited by activists fighting for social justice.

Class Structure

Parenti demonstrates the class character of the news media by showing who owns them, who runs them, and why. The first point he makes is that the various mass media are highly concentrated, profitable businesses.

Ten businesses and financial corporations control the three major television and radio networks (NBC, CBS, ABC), 34 subsidiary television stations, 201 cable TV stations, 62 radio stations, 20 record companies, 59 magazines including *Time* and *Newsweek*, 58 newspapers including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, 41 book publishers, and various motion picture companies like Columbia Pictures and Twentieth-Century Fox" (p. 27).

Each year the media industry becomes more concentrated.

The class character of the media is not determined solely by who owns the corporations, but also by who runs them and how they are run. The media corporations are run, as are all large corporations, by boards of directors made up predominantly of members of the elite, most often executives of other large corporations. As one example, Ford Motor Corporation, a powerful business interest in its own right, has directors on the boards of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. With few exceptions, these top people are conservative or right wing in terms of their political perspectives.

Media corporations are run as tightly controlled hierarchies, from the top down. The chain of command runs from the board of directors, which represents the owners of the media and other large corporations—to the producers and editors, who exercise considerable control over what gets reported and how it gets reported—to the reporters. The chain of command and ownership accounts for the media's characteristic self-censorship. They are con-

trolled not so much from without (although advertisers, government agencies, politicians, and pressure groups do have an effect) but from within. The censorship is self-imposed. Conspiracies and evil intentions are not the cause of the media distortions of reality. Control by the owners and managers of the media corporations, and the institutional structure of the corporations themselves, insure the presentation of the owners' point of view and class biases.

Parenti also describes other factors that strengthen the media's class character. For example, many reporters share the class background or prejudices of the owners, editors, and producers. Much anticipatory self-censorship by reporters, editors, and producers also occurs. The hierarchical system, with its rewards and punishments, serves to socialize reporters into the viewpoint and values of the owners.

In describing the class character of the media, Parenti also deals with one of their major contradictions—the need to be perceived as objective and unbiased so that the product can be sold to the public. He describes how the myth of objectivity is maintained, and in the last chapter proposes a few ways this contradiction might be utilized.

Case Studies

Parenti's case studies of distortion and bias illustrate how the class character of the media exists not just in their ownership, control, and functioning, but also in the content of what passes for news. These cases are important also because they show the specific content or message the media give to the people. Chapters discuss consumer ideology, the treatment of labor and protest movements, anti-communism and anti-sovietism, the treatment of terrorism, and discussions of the third world and U.S. imperialism. These chapters are both interesting and useful.

One example is how the media treat labor in this country. The entertainment media (prime-time TV and movies) "consistently underrepresented" working people "and portrayed [them] in denigrating and patronizing ways" (p. 76). The news media typically ignore labor's views on most questions. Labor is only covered when strikes occur, and in these cases the strikers are portrayed as greedy individuals who will possibly wreck the economy. Reasons for strikes are rarely presented. The point of view of the corporation and its behavior during the strike is generally given favorable coverage, while the activities of the strikers—such as mutual support, solidarity from other unions—are ignored. Violence by strikers is emphasized, violence by scabs or police is minimized. The news media also emphasize how the strikers are being unreasonable and destructive to the community or economy. Other than strikes, the media emphasize the lack of democracy in the unions or their corruption and links to organized crime. Parenti concludes his case study of media coverage of labor by pointing out:

The continued antilabor, antiunion media propaganda helps to divide organized labor . . . from unorganized labor. A negative image of unions discourages workers from unionizing and leaves them suspicious of labor organizations. With its monopoly over mass communication, business has been able to present a largely unchallenged picture of "Big Labor" as an avaricious, narrowly self-interested, and often irrational force that does itself, the economy, and the public no good, driving up prices with its incessant demands, making gains only for itself while creating costs that must be passed on to the rest of the public (p. 87).

Techniques of Falsification

In the third part of his book, Parenti describes how the media misrepresent reality and the limitations and contradictions of media as an instrument of propaganda. Of particular interest is his summary of general techniques for misrepresentation: unbalanced treatment, framing, graying of reality, and auxiliary embellishments. He takes material from his case studies to illustrate how these techniques are used.

Journalistic standards require balance in reporting. Yet lack of balance, or false balance, is one of the main techniques of misrepresentation by the media. In most articles only one side is presented, most often the side of big business or government. When both sides are presented they are not given equal space or position, or treated unequally in some other fashion. The inclusion of "two sides" may actually minimize balance in certain articles when, as often happens, the two sides are not really very different—for example, when a moderate Republican's position on Central America is compared to that of a moderate Democrat, both of whom want to

maintain U.S. dominance and power in the region and only disagree about how to do so most effectively.

A distorted picture is sometimes achieved through a false balance—for instance blaming both sides equally for violence when one side is mostly or completely responsible. Yet another technique is to use a double standard in interviews, treating the official line uncritically while posing probing questions for alternative views.

Framing is another powerful means of misrepresentation. This refers to the way a story is packaged to create a desired impression. The headline, placement, tone, vocabulary, and amount of exposure all serve to create a specific impact on the reader.

Style and content are also manipulated by the media—most often to "gray reality," to blunt the implications of facts and neutralize the impact of events. The use of a passive style and euphemisms are important tools to accomplish this. A final technique is to manipulate cartoons, music, camera angle, and the newscaster's authoritative voice and image to frame the news.

Useful Overview

The main strength of *Inventing Reality* is that it is a highly useful overview of how the media shape consciousness. Readers already familiar with the analyses of the media by Noam Chomsky, Ed Herman, and others may be disappointed that Parenti's book does not contain more detail about how the media operate. But it is a summary intended for a wide audience of activists and nonactivists, and does not pretend to be an in-depth study. A more serious weakness is that very little of the book deals with what we can do to counter the media's propaganda. This may, however, be an unfair criticism given the limitations of the book's objectives—to describe how the media operate and why.

Many activists will find Parenti's book well worth reading. It should serve to aid them in their everyday, practical political work. ■

Trotsky in the *Moscow News*

In the November 8-15th issue of *Moscow News* (the weekly international newspaper put out by the USSR) there appeared on the second page something quite unusual—a picture of Leon Trotsky standing next to Lenin.

The occasion for the appearance of this photo was the release of a TV film in the USSR entitled "Cinedocuments," which consists of all the known film clips ever taken of Lenin. What is of special interest is that the *original, unedited* clips are shown.

Moscow News explains that in previous films, such as *The Living Lenin* (1958), "the people standing around [Lenin] are impossible to identify because their faces are darkened. In 'Cinedocuments' the same scene is shown in its original uncensored version."

It is interesting that although Trotsky's picture appears in *Moscow News* he is nowhere mentioned by name. Although we can applaud the acknowledgement made of past censorship and falsification there is still a long way to go. We demand the complete rehabilitation and proper place in Soviet history not only for Trotsky, but also for the rest of the original Bolsheviks who were slandered, framed up, and executed, by Stalin and his bureaucratic apparatus.

No ruling clique, bureaucracy, or class has ever voluntarily given up, or reformed themselves out of power. The present campaign of glasnost and perestroika are designed to increase productivity and help sidetrack growing discontent in the USSR. If the real construction of socialism in the USSR is ever to proceed, the Soviet workers will have to take matters into their own hands and overthrow the bureaucracy.

Rich Foland
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Canadian Auto Workers

I don't know why you think that it is useful, in an article on the Ford and GM contracts in your December issue, to depict White of the Canadian Auto Workers as one who would *if he could* "sell the kinds of concessions demanded by Detroit," or why you would claim that the split that White led in forming the Canadian CAW "has led to a weakening of auto worker bargaining power on *both* sides of the [Canadian-U.S.] border."

The CAW split is far from having weakened auto workers' bargaining power on the Canadian side of the border. White has become a sort of cult figure for all Canadian union militants—CAW has become a mobilizing force, a cutting edge that the CIO was in the upsurge of the 1930s. Right now CAW has inspired through its recent auto workers' settlements a massive cross-Canada struggle for the indexation of retirees' pensions. Any day now we can expect CAW to really open up on the Food and

Chemical workers. CAW has replaced Steel as the chief force for independent labor political action behind the New Democratic Party (Canada's labor party) in the union movement.

Ross Dowson
Toronto, Ontario

Karen Brodine (1947-1987)

We deeply regret to inform you of the recent death of our friend and comrade Karen Brodine, socialist feminist poet and political organizer.

Karen valiantly battled cancer for almost two years. She died in her San Francisco home on October 18 after lapsing into a coma. She was 40 years old.

Karen devoted her life to the arts and to revolutionary politics. As a dancer and dance instructor during her twenties she was loved and respected by her students. In her thirties, as a poet and creative writing teacher, she expressed in her art what she lived as a typesetter, political activist, and trade unionist.

She cofounded the Women Writers Union, a San Francisco organization of writers who are political activists, and was a respected leader and organizer of Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party since 1978.

ALICE SNIPPER

As we are preparing this issue of the *Bulletin IDOM* we have been informed of the death of Alice Sniper, longtime member of the SWP until her expulsion in the 1983-84 purge of oppositionists, and subsequently a member of Socialist Action. A memorial meeting is being planned for San Francisco, some time in February. For information call Socialist Action, 415-821-0458.

The following few words describing herself and her life in the movement were prepared by Alice for an August 1986 San Francisco rally celebrating 50 years of revolutionary activity by Alice and others.

"I joined the Trotskyist movement about 1939 because of the Moscow trials. I joined because the Socialist Workers Party was a fighting party. During World War II Henry and I were asked to move from Los Angeles to San Pedro to do the work the famous workers' fighter Jimmy Higgins did: leaflets, mailings, selling the press, contact work. During our seven years in San Pedro I worked in the shipyards, CIO Local 9 at Firestone, and about three years as a cannery worker (Seafarers International Union). Back in Los Angeles, I worked in the SWP office. I ran off leaflets on an old A.B. Dick hand-run mimeograph machine, etc. In 1983 I, along with many others, was expelled from the SWP solely because we were loyal to Trotskyism."

During the last five years Karen also coordinated the Merle Woo Defense Committee, which brought Woo, an instructor and poet, victory in a multiple discrimination suit against the University of California at Berkeley. Karen also edited and produced Gloria Martin's *Socialist Feminism: The First Decade 1966-1976*, a widely distributed account of the FSP's first ten years.

Stephen Durham
Freedom Socialist Party
New York

Hypocritical Christians

Christmas is over! As an ex-Catholic I saw, and heard, and felt much which reminded me of the time before I became a Marxist and an atheist. I admit to a little nostalgia, but the overwhelming sensation was one of bitter irony.

Christ taught the destruction of the state, and the value of working and poor people. This was

revolutionary and for this he was executed. The Three Wise Men had foreseen his bitter end at the time of his birth and therefore brought him frankincense and myrrh—funeral spices—along with a gift of gold. Or, at least, that is how the myth goes.

But reality or myth, most Christians today, especially in the U.S., seem to forget Jesus the revolutionary. This man, if he existed, had guts, brilliance, and the willingness to fight and die for working people. These are qualities we can all admire—whether we are atheists, Christians, or of some other faith. What I can't stomach is the cynicism which surrounds his life today. Jesus described this kind of hypocrisy during his own time in no uncertain terms: it would make God sick.

The amazing thing to me isn't that a revolutionary can recognize the true value of this myth, but that so many Christians seem to have no problem depoliticizing and derevolutionizing it.

Jack Bresee
New York

(Continued from page 27)

Our strategy to gain influence is straightforward. We aim to build the AAM by encouraging the most radical elements of British society (i.e., Blacks, women, lesbians and gays, the labor and trade union left) to take South Africa seriously. Building the AAM with this emphasis will ensure that the *Morning Star* wing cannot maintain its control. The AAM by its social composition and with our intervention will not tolerate undemocratic practices and will elect a representative left-wing leadership.

So the building of a youth section is an important tactic within our strategy. We will ensure the youth section is integrated into the AAM structure and that most of its members are also active in their local branches. With our influence in the youth structures it is very likely that they will support *Socialist Action's* approach within the branches and at national conferences.

In summary, the AAM involves a significant layer of politically conscious workers in Britain. Objectively, it does have mass appeal within Britain.

While the prospects of forcing a Tory govern-

ment to introduce real sanctions against the Pretoria regime are small, it does present the Labor Party with a real opportunity—if it would seriously champion the anti-apartheid cause in order to start a process of revitalizing its support within Britain by turning itself outwards in support of progressive struggles and incorporating their demands into its program.

The AAM itself is growing, but is still far smaller than it should be considering the level of support for its policies. However, with the growth of its membership will come a change in its leadership—though the Stalinist *Morning Star* group is very experienced in maintaining control of organizations through administrative means. A new leadership would probably include supporters of *Socialist Action*. With our growing influence will come a clearer line of march for the AAM, which I believe will contribute to the growth of AAM influence. With a correct orientation the AAM can be sustained (as was the Vietnam Solidarity Committee some years ago) to continue to provide solidarity until the South African revolution succeeds in the overthrow of the white-dominated apartheid state in South Africa. ■

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