

REAGAN IN CRISIS

**DOWN WITH
THIS CRIMINAL
GOVERNMENT!**

LABOR PARTY!

TRUTH o No. 216 o January/February 1987

Organ of the Trotskyist Organization of the USA,
Fraternal Section of the Fourth International,
For a Trotskyist Congress Rebuilding the U.S. Section of the Fourth International

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Editorial Board: Kevin FitzPatrick, Margaret Guttshall, David Mark, Fred Michaels, Barbara Putnam

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Down with the Criminal Government! Labor Party!

Statement of the Secretariat of the Trotskyist Organization

The Reagan administration is in the worst crisis of its six year existence. In fact, this is the biggest crisis of US imperialism since its defeat in Vietnam and the Nixon Watergate crisis in 1973.

This is an opportunity for the working class to take the initiative against Reagan and the entire capitalist system. Down with the Criminal Government! Labor Party!

What exactly is the crisis?

Reagan's advisers on the National Security Council (NSC) have been caught secretly supplying arms to Iran and using the profits to fund the contras trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. The funding of the contras occurred in 1985 when it was expressly forbidden by law. In other words, Reagan, as chief law enforcement officer, has been violating the law!

But that is not all. George Bush, the vice president, has been directly linked to supplying the contras through private firms as the testimony of Hasenfus, the CIA mercenary caught by the Nicaraguans while ferrying arms to the contras, shows. Later, Bush's own press statements on the Hasenfus affair and statements from other mercenaries have confirmed this.

Other crimes that have been exposed include:

- . funding of both sides of the Iran-Iraq war, so that the radicalized masses of both countries would wipe each other out;
- . giving the names of Iranian dissidents to the Iranian government which subsequently murdered all 200 of them;
- . the funding of the contras through the sale of cocaine in the US;
- . the funding of right-wing politicians in the 1986 elections with profits from the arms sales.

Reagan's senior advisers — Secretary of

State George Shultz, Chief of Staff Donald Regan and CIA Director William Casey — have all testified before congressional committees (in secret of course) that not only did they know nothing of these deals but Reagan knew nothing.

This claim is a lie. It is his administration. All of the crimes committed have been in support of policies advocated by Reagan's administration.

Since the crisis began, Pat Buchanan, an important White House aide along with other Reagan supporters, has been leading a campaign to convince the country that Lt. Colonel Oliver North, the NSC member immediately responsible for contra funding, is a "hero;" that the question is not illegal funding but "stopping communism in Central America." While Reagan says "mistakes were made" the White House staff is defending the entire affair! Even worse, Buchanan has even stated that he is "intrigued" by the idea of running for President himself.

For large sections of the working class, it is now becoming clear that at the heart of Reaganism, at the heart of all the recent US administrations and their "democratic" foreign policy, has been a secret government that conducts its policy as it sees fit. But this "secret government" is an open secret among the political circles of Washington, Democrats and Republicans. Only the majority of Americans, especially the working class, have had it hidden from them.

This government has conducted itself like a monarchy, with Reagan as king, looking down its nose at the citizens of the US and the most elementary democratic rights. While professing to be for peace, the administration has conducted a secret and criminal intervention in Nicaragua: while claiming to be for civil rights, it has systematically attacked the gains of Blacks and the civil

rights movement: while saying it is preparing prosperity, it has gutted basic industry of workers and attacked the trade unions.

And Congress, including the Democrats who are now posturing to recapture the White House in 1988, have danced to Reagan's tune. The truth is that key members of both parties in Congress have known about the criminal government all along, and as co-conspirators who have been privy to these secret illegal acts, they have their own necks to save.

The clear and obvious way to uncover the crimes of the Reagan administration is provided for in the constitution — it is for Congress to *impeach* Reagan, that is, to bring him to trial. Instead, congressional committees are frantically trying to determine how much to let out, and who are going to be the scapegoats for the President.

Why has the crisis occurred now?

The crisis has been precipitated by the revelations of the arms sales. But fertile conditions for this crisis to grow were created by the mobilization of the working class, both here and abroad. The US workers have begun to create a movement again — a strike wave has begun, demonstrations against US intervention and apartheid have grown. The Nicaraguan workers and other oppressed people around the world have delivered powerful blows against the dictators that US administrations have supported since World War II — Iran, Philippines, Haiti.

A secret and illegal government, which has existed since the turn of the century, was developed extensively in the last 15 years because of the "Vietnam syndrome." Americans, and workers in particular, remember the truth about the imperialist Vietnam war and are very suspicious of any efforts in that direction again.

Thus, it has been the mobilization and consciousness of the US working class that is in part responsible for the crisis of the Reagan administration.

Labor Party

The real task is to give the mobilization of the US working class, its disgust with the real face of imperialism that has been exposed in Reagan's crisis, a *political expression*. As long as working people can only choose between the bosses' twiddledee and twiddledum parties, that is, the capitalist Republican and Democratic parties, the Nixons and Reagans of history will escape justice. Even today, in the midst of such a deep political crisis, it is fashionable among bourgeois historians to rehabilitate Nixon. *The working class needs a Labor Party.*

This is the lesson of the Watergate crisis.

The top trade union leadership, leading the only mass organizations of the working class, have supported Reagan's imperialist policy through supporting the Democratic Party, and in this sense, it too has been a co-conspirator in hiding the secret government, in the criminal acts this government has committed.

As long as its organizations are dominated by these misleaders, by a class-collaborationist leadership, the working class cannot advance one step against Reagan.

There is a direct link between their class-collaboration and the current crisis of the unions. It is in direct proportion to the working class's isolation that our unions have been weakened. The membership of the unions has dwindled, concessions have been forced on us, plants have been closed. By isolating the US workers, especially from the Nicaraguan workers, the trade union leaders have greatly weakened the workers movement in the US.

This is why it is necessary to struggle for a Labor Party. Only this struggle can break the grip of this leadership on the unions, place the working class on the offensive. As long as there is no broad and deep struggle for a Labor Party, the American workers will sit on the sidelines during every political crisis of the bosses' parties and their government.

The call for the April 25 demonstration against US policy in Central American and

South Africa has been endorsed by three top union leaders — Bieber of the UAW, Winpisinger of the IAM and Wynn of the UCFW. Why? Because they are afraid that the current crisis of the Reagan administration coupled with the workers mobilization could get out of their control, out of the Democrats' control. This underlines the importance of insuring a real mass participation of workers and the oppressed in the building of April 25. It also shows that the Labor Party demand should be one of the slogans of this action.

Nature of the Government

Marxists have said that the essence of bourgeois democracy is a "body of armed men," with elected officials as window-dressing. Now that a small part of this secret government has been revealed, the Marxist analysis is shown to be the truth without exaggeration.

The only permanent solution to the anti-working class government, is a workers government. First, it is a government that would dismantle the entire secret government and place its creators on trial.

A workers government is a government borne of the revolutionary mobilization of the working class and based on its independent organizations: unions, factory committees, workers councils. It is a government that would be truly democratic: all the productive forces of the society would be under its control — the factories, all foreign trade and the banks. Only when the workers government is in power, will the working class' interests be defended and advanced on the level of the entire society.

A Call to Action

The most important thing in face of the Reagan crisis is for the masses of workers, especially those whose consciousness has been shaken, to make their voices heard, to act.

We call on all working class organizations to insure the largest possible participation of workers in the April 25 actions. We also urge organizations to discuss a working class response to the crisis in the April 25

coalitions.

Above all, we call on working class organizations and the trade union oppositions to join in building an Alliance for a Labor Party.

An important step forward was taken by the Trotskyist Organization and the Revolutionary Workers League in signing a joint declaration to build an alliance for a Labor Party. Now, when the criminal Reagan government is being exposed and the workings of capitalism are being laid bare for millions of workers and youth, the organizations that claim to represent the working class — unions and political organizations — need to unite against the bosses' parties by fighting to build a Labor Party.

Furthermore, this fight for a Labor Party to give a political expression to the workers' mobilization needs to be linked now to a common campaign by workers' political organizations, union oppositions, and union locals for a Labor Candidate for President in 1988! This is the central fight that the Trotskyist Organization will put forward in the coming months:

Down with the Criminal Government!
Labor Party!

Build a campaign for a Labor Candidate for President in 1988!

@

Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference -- San Francisco, December 1986

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

The Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference took place as planned December 5 and 6 in San Francisco. In this issue of Truth we are publishing a short report on the conference, the central resolution adopted by the conference and the speech that our delegate presented to the conference.

For an Open International Conference!

The Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference met as planned with representatives of the International Socialist League (ISL), the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), the Socialist Group (SG, Britain), the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP, Britain), the Workers Socialist League (WSL), the Trotskyist Organization and others, December 5 and 6 in San Francisco.

After much debate and discussion the conference decided to call for an *open world conference*, open to all tendencies concerned with Trotskyism and the Fourth International, for a Preparations Committee open to such organizations, and to take up both fundamental political questions of building the Fourth International and practical collaboration, internationally and nationally.

This decision represents an important advance for the working class vanguard, internationally and in the U.S., especially in the fight for a Trotskyist Congress rebuilding the U.S. Section of the Fourth International. It shows the growing realization that the crisis of Trotskyism in America, Britain, or in any country, cannot be resolved outside the struggle in the international working class vanguard to build the International; it shows a genuine effort to break out of the isolation of the vanguard in America and Britain.

Thus the Trotskyist Organization calls on all organizations that make claim to Trotskyism and the Fourth International, especially the Socialist Workers Party, the Workers League, the Internationalist Workers Party, Socialist

Action, and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, to join this struggle. The coordinating committee is now in the process of reproducing the resolutions of this conference. We urge you to read, study, discuss and distribute them. Organize forums around them, engage other tendencies in this fight, raise funds to help finance this work.

At the same time it is necessary to continue to clarify the fundamental differences that continue to exist concerning the character of this international conference, how to prepare it and our balance sheets, methods, and perspectives for building the Fourth International itself. The next issue of *Truth* will include a more detailed report on the conference as well as articles on these questions.

Central Resolution of the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference

Representatives of various working class organizations, as well as individual militants, gathered in the Trotskyist/Revolutionary Conference, discussed the situation and tasks before us and adopted the following motions:

1. For an open world conference: we call on all tendencies concerned with Trotskyism and the Fourth International to join in preparing an international conference, to establish a Preparations Committee open to all tendencies concerned with Trotskyism and the Fourth International and ready to collaborate in preparing it on the basis of workers' democracy.

The conference supports the Workers Revolutionary Party's initiative to call an international open Trotskyist conference in 1987 and the WRP criteria for the conference with the exception of the criteria that participating tendencies must support the building of Trotskyist parties in every country. The conference supports the presence of observers at the international open Trotskyist conference.

The international conference should take up both fundamental questions of rebuilding/building the Fourth International and planning common work on international and national levels.

For: International Socialist League (FI) (USA) (ISL(FI))

Revolutionary Workers League/US (RWL/US)

Socialist Group (Britain) (SG/B)

Trotskyist Organization/USA (TO/USA)

Workers Socialist League/US (WSL/US)

Against: 0

Abstained: Freedom Socialist Party (FSP, USA)

Not Voting: WRP

Addendum:

1. The ISL(FI) calls for an International Trotskyist Open Conference on the basis of the criteria prepared by the WRP and the IWL(FI).

2. The TO/USA favors a conference open to "Fourth International (United Secretariat)" and others who make claim to Trotskyism, without preconditions.

3. WRP criteria (attached):

World Conference of Trotskyist Organizations

1. The resolutions and theses of the first four Congresses of the Comintern.

2. The Transitional Program and the founding conference of the Fourth International.

3. The theory of the Permanent Revolution.

4. Defense of the conquests of the 1917 October Revolution. Defense of the U.S.S.R. and defense of the states of Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam and Cuba. The definition of the U.S.S.R. as a degenerated workers' state and of the Eastern European states, China and Vietnam and deformed workers' states. (The WRP's position on the character of the Cuban state is to be studied and reviewed.)

5. Defense of all national liberation movements and independent governments against the attacks of imperialism despite the fundamental political differences between Trotskyism and these movements. In particular, defense of those under direct military attack and threat of intervention from imperialism (Nicaragua, Libya, Cuba,

Mozambique, Angola, etc.)

. The struggle against Stalinism and the bureaucracy, and the rejection of all forms of capitulation to a compromise with Stalinism and the necessity for political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states.

7. Acceptance of the need for revolutionary parties and sections of the Fourth International based on the principles of democratic centralism in all countries.

We call on all participants to reject unconditionally the resort to calumny and slander as a substitute for political discussion and polemic and the bureaucratic practices which have characterized many organizations including the WRP under Healy.

Central Resolution (continued)

2. We resolve to prepare a discussion bulletin, joint forums and common campaigns, in particular:

a. For an alliance for a labor party to fight for a labor party in the unions.

b. For unconditional defense of all workers' struggles against the bosses' concessions, layoffs and plant closings, e.g., P-9, USX, GM; for a national tour of British miners.

c. For a national action against U.S. support to apartheid in South Africa and U.S. intervention in Central America; for a committee of working class organizations to mobilize the unions, especially those against concessions.

d. For a series of meetings in defense of the Hungarian Revolution and the Solidarity movement in Poland.

e. For a struggle against racism in the U.S.: 1) equal access to jobs, open admissions to schools and integrated housing; 2) workers' defense guards against the Klan, Nazis, and other right wing, racist terrorists; 3) abolish the anti-immigrant Simpson-Rodino bill.

f. For joint demonstrations or contingents to defend reproductive rights in January, 1987.

g. For joint contingents in the October 1987 national lesbian/gay rights march on

Washington.

For: ISL(FI) (USA)

RSL/US

TO/USA

WSL/US

Against: 0

Abstentions: FSP (USA)

Not Voting: SG/B, WRP; British organizations not voting on American questions.

Addendum: The TO/USA favors making the fight for the Alliance for a Labor Party the central campaign.

Trotskyist Organization Delegate's Speech to the Conference

To all tendencies concerned with building the Fourth International

For a common struggle to resolve problems of building the Fourth International: For an Open World Conference.

Comrades:

The growing working class upsurge that has developed from Iran, Nicaragua, Poland and South Africa, to Bolivia, Chile, the British miners and the American meatpackers, as well as the shakeup in the Reagan regime that journalists are already comparing to Watergate, present us with both tremendous opportunities and tremendous responsibilities. But in order to take advantage of this situation, we need to advance in resolving the crisis of leadership of the working class.

The tendencies meeting at this Conference differ on many questions, yet each is concerned with this crisis of leadership. This expresses the search taking place throughout the working class vanguard for solutions to this crisis.

The most significant and healthy feature in these stirrings in the vanguard, taking this term in the broadest sense, is the political ferment within the organizations that make claim to Trotskyism and, in particular, the organizations, tendencies and militant regroupments that are concerned with the struggle for the Fourth International, taking

up a balance sheet of its crisis, its tasks at the moment, as well as perspectives and methods for building it.

The Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International (rebuilt) concluded that this situation both demands and allows the broadest possible discussion in the ranks of the international working class vanguard to clarify the balance sheet of the struggle to build the Fourth International and determine the way to advance. And the Trotskyist Organization is participating in this Conference to urge all tendencies present, concerned with building the Fourth International, to join in preparing an Open World Conference, with principled political struggle and practical collaboration in the class struggle.

Why a *World* Conference? Because there is no solution to the crisis of Trotskyism in the United States outside of an understanding of the crisis of the Fourth International, particularly its breakup as a world democratic centralist leadership. Only such an open world forum of the international proletarian vanguard can provide a framework in which a clarification can take place in relation to the principal international and national organizations and leaderships that have been at the heart of the crisis — Fourth International (United Secretariat), International Committee of the Fourth International, Fourth International (International Center of Reconstruction), the Socialist Workers Party, the Workers Revolutionary Party, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, and others.

Why an *Open* Conference? Because a fundamental political struggle with and between all tendencies in all countries that make claim to Trotskyism and the Fourth International is necessary to clarify, strengthen and develop the principles, continuity and tasks of the Fourth International internationally and in every country. Characterizing and attempting to exclude particular tendencies from this process, before the organized discussion has even been started, is not *political* struggle. It avoids and prohibits serious political struggle, tends to freeze political tendencies

at their current stage of development. We should engage Mandel, Barnes, Healy, Lambert, etc., in a fundamental political struggle in the preparation of this Open World Conference, a struggle that they have long attempted to avoid with expulsions, slanders, etc.

This Open World Conference must be prepared with and take up both principled political debate and practical collaboration in the class struggle, like the fight for an Alliance for a Labor Party based on the unions in the U.S., international campaigns against racist and imperialist oppression, particularly U.S. support to apartheid in South Africa and the contras in Nicaragua, as well as others (in defense of the British miners, workers Poland, the struggle for workers' united fronts and workers' governments in different countries, etc.) Only through such practical collaboration is it possible to test different programs, methods, leaderships, and actually clarify and resolve differences.

Finally, this Open World Conference should not be seen as a "supreme organ" over Trotskyists. Each tendency must be free to preserve its own discipline and follow its own course. Again, this is the only way to actually clarify and resolve differences, to actually build the International and its sections, rather than an uneasy alliance of national organizations that breaks up with the first big test.

Comrades:

Naturally, different tendencies among us will see this Open World Conference in different ways. How do we see it?

For us, the Fourth International (rebuilt) and the Trotskyist Organization, this conference is not an end itself but a step in a process of convergence and unity, between ourselves and other tendencies, on a basis of Trotskyist principles and continuity, internationally and in the U.S. (a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the U.S. Section). We think this convergence and unity must be based not only on Trotskyist principles, that is the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat vs. the line of democracy, but also on continuity, that is the program, methods, leaderships and organizations that have waged

that fight.

For Marxists, the program is not simply a set of ideas. It is the living struggle in the living movement of the working class. Thus it is always necessary to study, analyze and take a position on the actual struggles that have taken place in the vanguard of the working class, in the Fourth International, especially the fundamental struggles that have taken place in 1953, 1963, 1966 and 1971-72.

It is necessary to base oneself on and defend the forces that continued the struggle against those that have abandoned it or tried to liquidate it. Tendencies that refuse to enter into these struggles, make an analysis of them, take a position on them, or do so superficially, have no roots, no traditions, no organizations to guide them.

The Fourth International (rebuilt) originated in the struggle within the International Committee to carry forward the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International as a world democratic centralist leadership after the SWP, the SLL, the POR, and the OCI leaderships had abandoned that struggle. It is the only faction of the International Committee that continued that struggle in 1971-72. The others — Healy, Lora, Lambert — took a different road.

The Trotskyist Organization originated in two factions in the SWP and the International Socialists — the Communist Tendency and the Revolutionary Tendency — attracted to the International Committee's struggle for Trotskyism, to rebuild Fourth International. While others drew back from this struggle, we took it up.

Thus the Fourth International (rebuilt), as an international leadership, as an international center, has been forged in the struggle in the living movement of the working class to rebuild the Fourth International in opposition to the successive attempts to liquidate it. This is why we say that the Fourth International (rebuilt) represents the most important and most tested element of the continuity of Trotskyism (but not the only one). And why we think convergence and unity must be based on continuity, particularly this

element.

We think this question is especially important for the American working class and its vanguard. The break-up of the Fourth International as a world democratic centralist leadership, especially its international center during World War II, and the difficulties in rebuilding it, were important in allowing the SWP and others to degenerate. The federalist character of the International Committee, and the consequent national isolation of its sections, made it difficult for it to wage an effective political struggle against the SWP leadership to rebuild the Fourth International and redress or rebuild its U.S. Section. The successive oppositions to the SWP leadership — the Workers League, the Proletarian Opposition Tendency, the Communist Tendency, the Internationalist Tendency, the Fourth Internationalist Caucus — and the American workers vanguard as a whole have been nationally isolated, prolonging the crisis of Trotskyism and the Fourth International in the U.S. for over 25 years.

We must take the initiative in breaking this isolation and resolving this problem by preparing an Open World Conference in which all the fundamental problems of the construction of the International and its U.S. Section can be taken up by the international working class vanguard. We must bring all the theoretical, political and practical strength of the world proletariat to building the International and its party in America in opposition to U.S. imperialism. This can be an important step in the process of preparing a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the U.S. Section.

But we are not sectarians. We ask all tendencies here concerned with Trotskyism and the Fourth International, whether you agree with us or not, to join in building an Open World Conference. For it is only in the actual struggle to gather together the forces, to clarify differences, to achieve practical collaboration in the class struggle, that it is possible to clarify the principles and continuity of Trotskyism and the Fourth International, to test who is worthy of the name and build the Fourth International and its sections throughout the world. We appeal

to you to take up that struggle together.

Presented by Margaret Guttshall in the name
of the Secretariat
Trotskyist Organization of the USA
Fraternal Section/Fourth International
December, 1986

Wayne State University and UAW local 2071 after the strike

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Looking back, we can see that 1986 was an important year at Wayne State University. Turmoil on the part of students and employees culminated in the most militant strike ever of campus employees in September.

The September strike of at WSU was an important local and state-wide event affecting the Democratic Blanchard government directly. It was linked up with earlier precedents set in anti-concessionary strikes and political ferment at educational centers around the country like the Yale campus workers strike, and the University of Massachusetts sit-in against apartheid. Campuses are once again becoming centers of political and economic struggle, in which WSU will play its part.

The WSU strike came right on the heels of the longest city workers strike in Detroit's history. Therefore, the strength of the opposition to a concessionary contract at WSU and the close vote at the ratification meeting (253-250) is not surprising. Nor is the impact the WSU strike had on the Detroit Public school secretaries strike that took place simultaneously. These primarily young Black women were ready to stage a sit-in at the Board of Education headquarters to get a "livable contract" and did in fact win a 7% increase.

Just after the strike, when the administration declared the necessity to raise tuition due to the "costly" contracts with the unions, employees and students together demonstrated in protest of a 2.5% tuition hike, denouncing President Adamany's lies. A flurry of letters written by campus workers have appeared in the student newspaper, the *South End*, proving that the contracts were *not* a factor in the tuition hike since the unions gave up more than they got. The much bally-hoed "costliness of the contracts" tried to hide how increased medical costs, loss of longevity pay and other hidden take backs, more than made up for the 4.7% increase to the secretaries and clerks.

Dr. Adamany, on the other hand has been amply rewarded for his strike-breaking role by the

WSU Board of Governors which has in fact been dominated by the Democratic Party. He immediately got a fat pay increase, making him the highest paid state university president in Michigan.

For the above reasons, members of Local 2071 unanimously supported a motion at the December membership meeting to form a committee composed of students, and all the campus unions, to *open the books* at WSU, not because the workers want to become bookkeepers, but to reveal the business secrets that result in such things as a demoralizingly high turnover of personnel, cutbacks, and tuition hikes. This struggle should be taken all the way to the end.

An ongoing cross-union group born in the strike continues to meet regularly and organize its intervention in the campus locals, calling the local and international leaders of the UAW into question and fighting to change the unions. A central concern has been a fight to merge the two UAW locals representing secretaries and clerks. We need *one central union!* But there has also been a political struggle. This group implemented the demonstration against the tuition hike, and also made an effective intervention at the "Meet the Candidates" for Board of Governors candidates, revealing the BOG's role in disenfranchizing the employees and hiring Adamany for his strike-breaking capabilities. Local 2071 in its entirety refused to rubber stamp two Democratic Party incumbents for BOG, Pinkus and Atchison, as the UAW International officials wanted. There were also plans for a demonstration on Martin Luther King's birthday to protest the fact that WSU is one of the few "enlightened" institutions in the area not granting this day as a holiday.

Of many militant workers involved in leading the strike, one was our comrade and candidate for an Alliance for a Labor Party in the 13 Congressional District, Barbara Putnam. (Alva Crivens, candidate of the Workers League for lieutenant governor, also spoke at the October membership meeting of Local 2071.) Our candidate received 600 votes in the 13

District, where WSU is situated. We believe that many of these votes came from workers at WSU since the bulk of the results came in after 5:00 p.m. These are signs that the working class parties are beginning to break their isolation from the mass struggle.

We urge workers and students at WSU to join our organization in drawing the full conclusions of the WSU strike and the period we are now entering, one marked by a beginning of renewed upsurge of working class struggle.

(See a related article on student strikes in Europe in Global Conflict, in this issue.)

The Global Conflict

As one year ends and another begins, we want to modify *The Global Conflict* a little in order to give an overall picture of the international class struggle at this moment. We will begin with the two most important developments and then proceed to a summary of other events.

France: In November and into December, French students rallied and demonstrated against a plan to change the French university system into a more elitist model. In the *New York Times* of December 9, 1986, a leading militant of the Fourth International, David Assouline, was described as the press spokesman for the student coordinating committee (see additional materials in this issue). These actions, supported by the unions, forced the right wing Chirac government to withdraw its proposal. In turn, a wave of strikes has erupted in France — including a major rail strike and an electric-power strike that are continuing at this writing.

From the US to France, it appears that the "Tory solution," instituting a reactionary government to attack the workers, is running into deep trouble.

China: On New Year's Day, singing *The International*, the communist anthem, Chinese students marched in thousands into Tien An Men Square, demanding democracy as a condition for the real modernization of China. This capped a series of protests throughout the country, most notably in Shanghai, that show the revival of the Chinese Revolution in all its immense power.

Is this movement merely an element of the struggle between contending wings of the bureaucracy? Of course there is an attempt at manipulation, but the whole history of internal struggle in China shows that these outbursts soon enter into bitter conflict with the Stalinist regime.

(For a wonderful picture of one such episode and the Chinese rebel youth, read the novel, *The Longest Winter in Peking*, by a Chinese writer named Hsia.)

Thus, in the two most decisive areas of the world, the imperialist countries and the workers states (deformed or degenerated), new upsurge of the working class is clearly marked. At the same time, the two flashpoints of the colonial revolution, the Philippines and South Africa, are developing at an increasing speed toward the final confrontation.

And around the world, these signs can be seen in many spots.

Soviet Union: On December 19, with a personal phone call from Gorbachev, Andrei D. Sakharov and his wife Yelena Bonner were freed from internal exile in the city of Gorky. A few days earlier, Kazakh students rioted in Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan (and the city of Trotsky's internal exile in the late 1920s), against the imposition of an ethnic Russian as province chief. Interestingly, this news was actually published in the government press. That month also saw the death of Anatoly Marchenko, an oppositionist of working class origin, from the effects of his hunger strike against the brutal treatment imposed on him in jail.

Eastern Europe: In November, more than a hundred oppositionists signed the "Budapest Declaration," stating that the Hungarian Revolution specifically, as well as Solidarnosc and the "Prague Spring," formed part of the "common heritage and inspiration" of Eastern Europe.

Vietnam: In December, faced with economic problems and foreign difficulties, the Vietnamese Communist Party, one of the most Stalinist and pro-Moscow in the world, was forced to replace its entire top leadership, the remaining companions of Ho Chi Minh, and elect a new party chief. At the same time, the question of the composition of the government is still not settled.

Argentina/Uruguay: In a stunning betrayal, the "democratic" governments in these countries adopted plans to stop the prosecution of the military for their crimes against workers and the people during dictatorial rule. Such is the nature of this "democracy" — it retreats

before the very thugs it was supposed to defeat.

Brazil: In November and December, protests and a general strike broke out against the ending of price controls by the government that had just been elected on the basis of these steps. Another example of the replacement regimes in Latin America.

Spain: In the weeks just following the French student strike, tens of thousands of Spanish high school students followed the French example and went into mobilization for their rights.

Welcome to 1987!
K.F.

The Fourth International and the French Students

On the page opposite this note we are reproducing (reduced) a page from *L'Étincelle*, a newspaper published by the French section of the Fourth International (the Revolutionary Workers League, Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire/LOR) "for a youth organization for equality and socialism." This page shows a number of clippings from the French bourgeois press, denouncing the evil role of the Trotskyists and, in particular, David Assouline, in the recent student uprising in France (see "The Global Conflict" on page 11).

radicalization of the young people and workers develops. Second, the Fourth International declares openly that David Assouline is a member of it, and that it did everything in its power to help this movement to victory. He won his position, as others will in the future, on the basis of his political fight and the respect that this has earned him among his fellow youth fighters.

K.F.

On the night of December 3, the students, faced with the resistance of the government, and elected a national coordinating commission, which in turn elected a steering body — a "bureau" — as public spokespersons. The most prominent of these was David Assouline, a leading militant of our world party and its French section.

Immediately, the French bourgeois press, from "left" to right, launched a campaign of fear, intimidation and lies. Thus, the world famous *Le Monde* — so respectable and liberal — stated: "The Paris students elected, among the fourteen 'spokespersons,' a student whom they did not know and who was revealed to be a communist militant."

Other papers chimed in. David Assouline was, according to these accounts, really thirty-six years old, a militant of the PCI and then the OCI (which would mean, even at the wrong age given, that he had started at about age six), not to mention linking him to organizations claiming to be Trotskyist, which he has always opposed, and which were, in turn, supposed to be "close to the CP." And even worse; it turned that he had been ... born in Morocco!

Furthermore, this desperate character was to blame for the recalcitrance of the students and their insistence on their demands' being what we used to call "non-negotiable." Despite all this, the students persisted and won.

There are two points to be made. First, this is the nature of the capitalist "free press," and we should expect it here as the

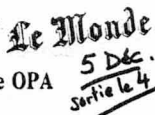
LA VOIX DE LEUR MAITRE

Le rôle de la presse dans les événements.

Dès que la vague de grève a commencé de s'étendre sur les Facultés puis les lycées, la presse de tout bord a essayé de se rassurer ou de pratiquer la méthode coué : ce mouvement, disait-elle en cœur, est gentil et apolitique, il n'exprime que la joie et la bonne humeur. Pour preuve, et parce que la presse a toujours besoin de personnaliser un mouvement collectif, l'«égérie» (comme ils disent) du mouvement est une jeune fille totalement apolitique puisqu'elle fait partie de l'UNEF-id, de SOS-Racisme et en-fin de compte du PS. Mais le PS, ce n'est pas politique pour la presse.

Mais voilà que le mouvement, en prenant de l'ampleur, se structure lui-même. Les étudiants élisent leurs comités de grève en Assemblées générales, ces comités de grève élisent une coordination nationale de grève qui à son tour élit un bureau de 14 membres...

Bref, les étudiants élisent eux-mêmes leurs représentants en les mandant précisément selon leur volonté : retrait total du projet Devaquet. Cela se passe le soir du 3 Décembre.



L'extrême gauche tente une OPA sur le mouvement

Isabelle Thomas
écariée
de la «direction»

En revanche, les «radicaux» des groupes d'extrême gauche, d'autant plus discrets qu'ils avaient largement disparu du paysage universitaire, un peu au fil des assemblées générales et des coordinations, se glissent parmi les délégués étudiants élus et occupent aujourd'hui quelques positions-clés. Ainsi, celle de délégation de province d'écariée

aujourd'hui, établie, que bon nombre de ses «non-syndiqués» étaient en fait des militants du Comité de la Ligue communiste révolutionnaire, de Lutte ouvrière, voire de la Ligue ouvrière révolutionnaire (LOR).

(LOR). Les étudiants parisiens ont vu élire, parmi les quatre «porte-parole» du mouvement, un étudiant qu'ils ne connaissent pas et qui s'est révélé être un militant communiste. Enfin, ces militants d'extrême gauche se sont appuyés sur le réflexe «anti-vote», de bon nombre

d'étudiants pour écarier Isabelle Thomas de la «direction» informelle du mouvement. Egarée des premiers mouvements de grève, militante socialiste et vice-présidente de l'UNEF-ID, cette dernière est donc victime temporaire de cette soule bagarre berrère des années 70.

Chasser le naturel, il revient au galop!
GÉRARD COURTOIS.

qui était tellement apolitique qu'elle n'était qu'au PS : ils n'ont pas du celle que nous avons désigné, c'est un scandale !

Et, quelle que soit la volonté individuelle des journalistes qui écrivent cela (probablement enfiévrés dans l'habitude qui est la leur de fabriquer des stars et leur incompréhension devant le fait que les étudiants ont eux-mêmes élus leurs représentants faisant fi des «égéries» préfabriquées), la mécanique s'enclenche.

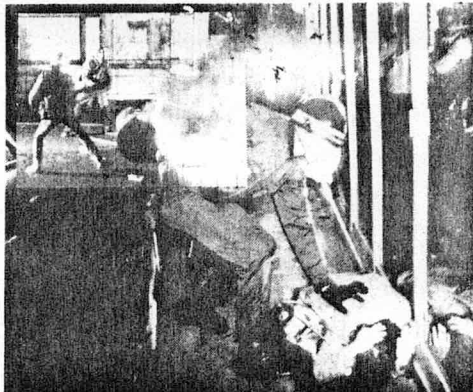
Les provocations policières, contre les manifestations sont aussi vieilles que l'existence des manifestations. L'avantage d'une mobilisation aussi massive des étudiants et lycéens, de son unité, du soutien de plus en plus puissant exprimé par la population (des syndicats, partis, associations de parents, etc...), c'est qu'elle a pu faire ressortir avec netteté le mécanisme de la classique «dégénérescence de la fin de la manifestation par des éléments incontrôlés».

Ce que les militants ouvriers expérimentés connaissent pour devoir s'opposer constamment sur le terrain, ce que les journalistes savent depuis toujours pour l'avoir observé maintes et maintes fois, ce que les policiers connaissent intimement car il est de notoriété publique que certains de leurs services sont spécialisés dans la manipulation du yeux de tout le monde ces derniers jours. Sans doute la crise politique du régime de Chirac-Pasqua a fait basculer les journalistes, tant par calcul pour certains, que par une réaction de crainte salutaire devant l'incroyable arrogance et la brutalité des déclarations et de l'attitude de Pasqua et Pandoz.

Le journal de 20h de TF1 le Dimanche 7 a montré que sont les éléments incontrôlés.

des provocateurs stupéfiés, qui agissent en accord avec la police. L'un d'eux eux, filmé lançant des pierres aux CRS, après une vaine tentative du S.O étudiant de le maintenir, a fourni le prétexte au CRS pour charger les étudiants. Filmé à son insu par les reporters. Il

QUI SONT LES CASSEURS ?



a été suivi et a participé entre 15h et 4h du matin à tous les «bastons», pillages, vols, etc... promenant son écharpe jaune (sans aucun doute un signe de reconnaissance pour la police) à 2 m des CRS, sans jamais être inquiété.

(Un groupe de journalistes de l'AFP a vu également Samedi soir, devant l'Hotel de Ville, des jeunes casqués sortir de la Mairie de Paris, rejoindre la manifestation, avant que commencent les dépressions.)

des activistes fascistes un commando du GUD armé de barres de fer a été pratiquement escorté par un commandant de CRS et son groupe, pour pouvoir «manifester» au Quartier Latin ensuite aux Invalides, où ils ont été filmés et enregistrés. «On est français, on est des blancs...»

«des soi-disants «gauchistes» qui se déclarent «anarchistes du droit!»

Ces images incontestables ont été la réponse du journal l'été de Bruno Massure aux propos de Charles Pasqua qui venait de déclarer : «Les manifestants étaient manipulés par des professionnels de la déstabilisation, de groupes gauchistes et anarchistes de tout poil et de toute nationalité, comme le prouvent les interpellations qui ont été faites.»

Or sur 98 interpellés, 96 ont été relâchés ! Ce qui explique sans doute que les précautions demandées par TF1 sur les «groupes» aient été refusées par le Ministère de l'Intérieur.

LE ZOMBI ET LA JEUNESSE

Dans l'édition du «France Soir», sous le titre «le monome des zombis», Louis Pauwels, penseur atypique de la droite et du libéralisme, et père spirituel de Léotard, Madelin et autres journaux ou vidéos de la réaction, écrit sa haine de cette jeunesse qui, en quelques semaines, par l'action collective et la séduction, a balayé les rêves de sélection, du régime de promotion morale qui les incite nous que par les vieux zombis libéraux.

«Ce sont les enfants du rock débauché, les écoliers de la vulgarité pédagogique, les débauchés du Coluche et Rimbaud, nous de la soupe ethnologique cuite au slow-buzz, abrutis par les saturnales du «touché pas à mon pote», et somme toute, les produits de la culture Lang... qui ont une imagination morale qui leur permet toute la bas pour le haut. Rien ne leur paraît meilleur que n'être rien, mais tous ensemble, pour aller nulle part. Leur rêve est un monde antidroitier où régnerait l'indolence. Ils sont vers une généralité au degré zéro, qui rassemblera de l'amour mais se retourne contre tout ensemble, ou projet d'ordre. L'ensemble des mesures que prend la société pour ne pas achever de se dissoudre : sélection, promotion de l'effort personnel et de la

responsabilité individuelle, code de la morale... lutte contre la drogue, etc... les hommes. Ce retour au réel leur est scandaleux. Ils ont peur de manquer de maux inventés. Voilà tout leur sentiment révolutionnaire. C'est une jeunesse atteinte d'un sida mental. Elle a perdu ses immunités naturelles : tous les virus décomposants l'atteignent. Nous nous demandons ce que se passe dans leurs têtes. Rien, mais ce n'est rien les enfants. Il aura suffi de cinq ans pour fabriquer dans le mou une telle généralité. Serait-ce toute la jeunesse ? Certes non pas. N'ayant pas à couvrir les minutes, nous dire que c'est la fin avec quoi les socialistes ont son visage».

Ainsi base Louis Pauwels, zombi parmi les zombis, vieux réactionnaire qui constate avec rage que des années de manipulation idéologique n'y ont rien fait. La généralité de la jeunesse ne peut se satisfaire de cette soule «libérale» qu'il voudrait imposer pour le plus grand bien des exploités et des possédants. Et c'est ainsi que la jeunesse des années 70, de toute la jeunesse il a sonné le glas de Pauwels. Sans regret, écrit Pauwels !



Un militant trotskiste de trente-six ans

Mais les chefs d'orchestre de la position restent eux fermes sur leurs positions : «Aucune discussion n'est possible, seul le retrait du projet de loi est acceptable», s'exclame Philippe Darnaud, président de l'UNEF, dite «indépendante et démocratique» (socialiste et trotskiste) du nuit de camarade, tout en signifiant de la même manière, avec ses militants, que pour «renverser» à un mouvement qu'il avait largement contribué à déclencher. D'autres manipulations apparaissent avec la découverte, au sein des coordinations étudiantes et lycéennes, initiées à des postes clés, de «étudiants» indépendants : militants notables de la Ligue communiste révolutionnaire de Lutte ouvrière et de la Ligue ouvrière révolutionnaire à la tête de la Coordination nationale, qui prouvent une position intransigeante contrastant avec la facile mobilisation de la base. Pour un homme de trente-sept ans, autrefois chargé de cours à Paris-7, Jussieu et militant trotskiste As-

soloutine David né au Maroc. Ce leader, jusqu'à présent inconnu, est apparu à la tête du mouvement dans la nuit du 3 au 4 décembre.

Le calme et pas la faiblesse

Malheureusement, les introducteurs, dirigés par David Assouline, étaient limités au dialogue. Nous ne retournerons pas le texte mais nous apportons des modifications : nous sommes prêts à changer certaines choses, par exemple sur les droits d'inscription ; les options nationales ; nous sommes prêts à concevoir la sélection, tout bachelier pourra entrer à l'Université. Nous essaierons d'harmoniser la coordination entre les lycées et les collèges de nos étudiants et les propositions des universités. Du on ne confonde pas le calme et la faiblesse. Le dialogue avec les étudiants restera ouvert. Le ministre de l'Éducation nationale précisait également que les modifications qui seraient apportées dans les prochains jours au projet Devaquet seraient «tout à fait importantes».

clair : présenter l'extrême-gauche comme responsable de l'échec des négociations et des violences de la nuit du 4 Décembre. Diviser ainsi le mouvement.

Le 5 Décembre, c'est Toubon qui déclenche la campagne pendant la nuit sur les presses «libres» du groupe Hersant. Il déclare sur France Inter que l'échec et les violences viennent de «David Assouline, membre de la LCR lié au PC». Plus le message est gros, plus il a des chances de fonctionner : c'est Monory qui a rejeté la revendication étudiante, c'est Pasqua qui a fait donné ses CRS, David n'est pas membre de la LCR et les trotskystes sont loin d'être liés au PC. Quatre mensonges en une seule phrase. Et Toubon ajoute : «avec l'UNEF-id, on aurait pu négocier». Et cela revient à dire aux étudiants : ce n'est pas à vous de désigner vos représentants mais à nous.

Dans le même temps, «Le Figaro» puis «France Soir», puis le «Quotidien de Paris» enclenchent sur le même thème

ne serait pas étudiant, il est âgé, «chômeur», extrémiste, pas vraiment français, de quoi faire frémir le bon peuple.

Et France-Soir ajoute un article en forme de scénario d'un complot trotskyste. Ceux-ci auraient une petite armée de 400 provocateurs qui ont déclenché les hostilités le 4 au soir alors que David faisait capoter les négociations avec Monory.

Echec

Mais l'attitude ferme des étudiants fait tourner court la manœuvre. Le bureau de coordination étudiant riposte en disant clairement que ses délégués avaient un mandat impératif : le retrait du projet. David n'a fait qu'une chose : il l'a respecté.

Le gouvernement continue de faire monter la tension en espérant que la coordination nationale du Samedi 6 consacre une division des étudiants et un recul sur leur revendication. Il tue. Mais la coordination répond : «Unité, Grève



La coordination étudiante réunie samedi appelle à la grève générale pour mercredi prochain.

Comment les «couche-tôt» se sont fait souffler les commandes par les «durs» du mouvement trotskyste

A la tête des manifestants, David Assouline, vingt-sept ans, qui a refusé tout dialogue avec Monory



Le mouvement trotskyste est un mouvement qui se caractérise par une ligne politique intransigeante. C'est pourquoi il a été difficile de négocier avec le gouvernement. David Assouline, à la tête des manifestants, a refusé tout dialogue avec Monory.



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La tactique du pouvoir

Le gouvernement saisit immédiatement qu'il y a à la quelque chose à utiliser pour diviser et attaquer le mouvement. Le 4 Décembre au matin, «Toubon téléphone, lui, à quelques uns des collègues de la majorité pour leur faire savoir que la nouvelle coordination étudiante est truffée de trotskystes» ; à son cabinet, certains vont mé-

me jusqu'à assurer que David Assouline «est un permanent politique», «ce soir, je ne vais pas être gentil» prévient le ministre (Monory) en évoquant sa rencontre avec la coordination (Libé du 8 Déc.)

Et en effet, le 4 au soir, Monory oppose une fin de non-recevoir à la délégation étudiante. Et lorsque celle-ci commence à rendre compte de la réponse du ministre aux étudiants rassemblés aux Invalides, les grenades commencent à pleuvoir sur les manifestants. La tactique choisie est

ajoutant mensonges et contre-vérités : «David assouline» aurait 36 ans, il ne serait pas étudiant mais «ex-maître assistant à Jussieu», «militant de la LCR», du «PCI» d'abord et de «TOCI» ensuite (ce qui voudrait dire qu'il est trotskyste depuis les années 50), etc, etc : voilà comment ceux dont le métier est d'informer «informer». Et le «Figaro» de «signaler» qu'il est né au Maroc suivit par «France Soir» qui donne la date de sa naturalisation française.

Général ! La fermeté des étudiants, leur détermination a fait tourner court la manœuvre gouvernementale : Lundi Chirac annonce le retrait du projet Devaquet, Monory retire le sien concernant les lycées.

Les étudiants et lycéens ont gagné mais désormais il y a entre eux et le gouvernement une tâche de sang. Ils n'oublieront pas le rôle joué par la presse dans cette affaire : de «Libération» à la presse ALAIN

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